Retirement is My Icing on the Cake

After going to school and growing up, I went to work, and more work, and more work. It was called a “job” or a “business”.

When I retired it was time to stop the daily selling, building, or servicing. It was time for the “Icing on the Cake.” It was time to really do only the things that brought me pleasure and fun.

Since 1984, my icing keeps piling up and up. Each “hobby” lasted only as long as it was inspiring, full of enjoyment, and bringing wonderful new friends to add to the old ones.

My return to Yiddish was back in 1989 and then other hobbies came and went, but Yiddish keeps going on and on. New challenges crop up and some are only dead-end streets like trying to form the International Association of Yiddish Teachers. It was an idea to have a website with the letters IAYT, but it seems that was taken by the International Association of Yoga Trainers. So the next best thing was to get IAoYT, with the “o” standing for “of”.

Not wanting to be wasteful and to make good use of my new venture of having a Yiddish translator’s association and clearinghouse, IAoYT.org will be the future link.

The Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, MA recently had a very successful meeting for translators on translation and now has an online list of translators even longer than the one on Der Bay’s website which can be found at: http://www.derbay.org/translation.html.

The Contents of the Proposed IAoYT Website

There is no universally accepted accrediting body for Yiddish teachers or translators. Therefore, anyone can consider him/herself a translator. At first the IAoYT list should consist of a combination of the existing lists. Later criteria then may be established for future listings.

Second, the site can be utilized for posting translation jobs by including the contact information and the nature of the material to be translated.

Third, Der Bay’s website has a listing and a discussion on the caveats for both the translator to consider before undertaking the assignment and the pitfalls the “translatee” should avoid in choosing the best possible match. For example, what is the criterion upon which the translator will be paid? It can be by the entire job, by the hour, by the page, or by the word. Five other caveats are discussed at Der Bay’s website.

The Rationale of the Proposed IAoYT Website

As companies, organizations, institutions, and governments become larger, they tend to become moribund. It takes longer for creative ideas to be tried and innovations implemented.

This is intended to be a challenge for the major Yiddish groups to get behind the idea of the IAoYT. Since Fishl is already an aged and still aging old man, the actual site should be taken over by one of the major Yiddish organizations.
Yiddish-style “kuwabara kuwabara!”
By Yoshiji Hirose, PhD.

Among the unique expressions of the Yiddish language is the expression keyn eynhore. Keyn is of German origin and means “no.” Eynhore comes from Hebrew and means “the evil eye.” For example, if someone were to ask, “How’s your son?” instead of responding, “He’s fine, thank you for asking,” one would respond, “He’s fine, keyn eynhore” (or, “akuma no me ga sosogaremasyōni, kuwabara kuwabara” if you happen to be speaking in Japanese).

As Leo Rosten explains in his book The New Joys of Yiddish, the expression keyn eynhore contains a magical essence meant to ward off the curses of various gods or demons envious of the speaker’s good fortune. Although Judaism is a monotheistic religion, the use of such an expression suggests a history of interaction with polytheistic religions. In Christianity, the English expression “Thank God” is often used when conveying one’s gratitude or relief. These two phrases are analogous, but the nuance is a little different. Keyn eynhore is more similar in meaning to English-speaking people going through the act of saying “Knock on wood” and touching something wooden when making a favorable observation or boasting of oneself.

In Japanese there is the expression o-kagesamade, which probably has no English equivalent. This expression includes both thankfulness to the gods and a sense of gratitude towards the people around you. Like above, if someone were to ask, “How’s your son?” the response would be, “He’s fine, o-kagesamade” (thanks to the gods and I appreciate your kindness in asking). Each culture has its own subtleties of language.

Well, back to Yiddish expressions. When asked, “Vos makhstu? (How are you?), a Yiddish-speaker would respond in much the same way an English speaker would, with “gut” (good) or “gantz gut” (very good). In textbooks by such world-renowned Yiddish linguists as Uriel Weinreich this is regarded as being correct. However, for a Yiddish-speaking Jew or one who is conscious of old culture the usual response would not be “gut,” but “nishkoshe!” (It’s bearable. / So-so.) This bears a close resemblance to Japan’s Osaka dialect, which is heavily influenced by the city’s mercantile history. In Osaka, the exchange would go something like this: “Mōkarimakka?” (Making any money? / How’s business?), “Bochi bochi denna” (I’m getting by. / Not that bad.). This too is an expression for eluding the wrath of a devil’s jealousy, in this case that of a fellow bargain hunter.

In the same spirit, it was not rare for a child to be named “Alter,” meaning “aged” or “old,” in Jewish society in pre-World War II Eastern Europe. In days past, when safely, giving birth to and raising children, was both blessed and difficult, children were purposely given names such as “Aged One” so as to avoid attracting the jealous attention of devils or demons.

Michael Wex (1954 ~), author of the widely talked about book Born to Kvetch, during a humor-filed special lecture at the International Association of Yiddish Clubs 14th Conference (held in September 2011 in Detroit) noted that when one is asked “vos makhstu?,” the Jew who answers “gantz nishkoshe!” (not bad at all!) “is roughly equivalent to saying, ‘I feel about the same as I did when I won the Nobel Prize and my son graduated from medical school on the same day.”’ This is Jewish humor, of course; but one can feel the Jewish pessimism coming within a whisker of optimism. This may be sapience born from a history of 2000 years of persecution. They fear not only the envy of devils and demons, but that of people as well.

Editor’s note: “Yoshi” has been a regular presenter at our IAYC conferences.

Present-1998: Professor of English Department, Notre Dame Seishin University (Japan)
2000 Ph. D. from Kansai University (Osaka, Japan)
1998-1987 Associate Professor of English Department, Notre Dame Seishin Univ. (Japan)
1995 Diploma in Jewish Studies (Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies)
1980 MA from Kansai University (Osaka, Japan)
1978 MA from University of Washington
1977-1973 BA Kansai University (Osaka, Japan)

Works (in English)
The Ger Mandolin Orchestra: A Living Memorial to Poland’s Jews
By Eric Stein

Over the last year I have had the great privilege of participating in a unique new musical project. The Ger Mandolin Orchestra is an 11-piece ensemble comprised of some of the world’s leading mandolin players. The project is the brainchild of a San Francisco-based Israeli named Avner Yonai.

While searching for his family’s roots in Poland, Yonai discovered a 1930s-era photograph of his grandfather and two other relatives playing in a Jewish mandolin orchestra in the Polish town of Góra Kalwaria, known in Yiddish as Ger. Intrigued and inspired by the photo, Yonai set out on a quest to revive a modern version of the Ger mandolin group, to serve as a living memorial to his Polish-Jewish forebears, and more broadly, to the rich cultural life of Jews in pre-World War II Poland.

In partnership with the Jewish Music Festival in Berkeley, California, Yonai began his quest by enlisting as musical director Mike Marshall, a Bay Area resident and one of the world’s greatest mandolinists. Imagine my excitement to have received a phone call from Marshall last January inviting me to participate in the group.

After hearing the list of other participants my excitement only grew. Each of the players in the group is a virtuoso in his own right, and the stylistic expertise amongst the members ranges widely from Jewish and East European folk music to bluegrass, jazz, Irish, Brazilian, classical, and much more.

One of our great challenges was determining what repertoire the original Ger orchestra had played. Despite prodigious efforts, little information specific to the original group’s work was discovered. So, like many great archaeological tasks, much was left to inference and historically-educated guesses. There was little doubt that such a group would have played its fair share of Jewish music, and on that count I was thrilled to be able to contribute five of my own original arrangements for mandolin orchestra of Klezmer and Yiddish music.

Ongoing research and general theorizing about the historical and sociocultural context of the original Ger ensemble led to the completion of our repertoire with the addition of Polish, Slavic and Italian music.

The group came together for the first time in March in Berkeley. Over two intensive days of rehearsal, eleven musicians who had never before worked together were transformed into a finely-oiled mando machine. Our debut performance at the venerable Freight and Salvage Coffeehouse was a smash success, and we all knew instantly that we were part of something very special. Within two weeks of the Berkeley performance, Yonai received a letter of congratulations from the current mayor of Góra Kalwaria, which included an invitation for the new Ger Mandolin Orchestra to return to Poland and perform in the town of its origination.

Plans had coalesced for the group to make good on the Mayor’s invitation and travel to Poland the first week of September. My excitement was tempered by a degree of anxiety about what instrument I would play. All the members of the ensemble trade off on different instruments of the mandolin family, but I volunteered to play bass if no one else was willing.

In California I had played a beautiful customized, fretless 1920s Gibson mandobass \ . But being an American instrument, mandobasses are hard to come by in Europe. I suggested that a bass balalaika or bass domra would be the next best thing (despite never having played it). After many emails and tireless work by Yonai’s team of tour organizers in Poland, the rental of a contrabass balalaika from a musical ensemble in Lodz was arranged, for 150 zlotys ($50)!

Notwithstanding my initial musical challenge of conquering this imposing, three-stringed beast, reuniting with the group in Poland was a joyful and moving experience. We were greeted in Góra Kalwaria as guests of honour at a variety of civic festivities. Though once home to over 3,000 Jews (approximately half of the town’s population at the outbreak of WWII), only two Jews remain today as residents in Góra-Kalwaria.

Now in their 90s, Henryk Prajs and Felix Karpman provided crucial information in efforts to research the original Ger mandolin group. Having them in attendance at our concert, along with an over-capacity audience of mostly non-Jewish residents of Gora-Kalwaria, was extraordinarily meaningful.
Our concert took place in the Tzadik Synagogue, an elegant but neglected old building that had not had this many people in it for 70 years. The atmosphere at the concert was electric, and the Orchestra rose to the occasion with a terrific performance. I was thrilled to have a chance in the second half of the show to escape the grasp of “Big Ethel” (our loving sobriquet for the bass balalaika) and perform a Jacob do Bandolim tune on mandolin in a trio with Mike Marshall and Portland’s Tim Connell.

Our concert concluded with a rousing version of the famous Polish folk song Szła Dziweczka. The image of 400+ Poles swaying back and forth, arms linked, while singing with us in the old Ger Synagogue will remain etched in my memory.

The following day was jam-packed, beginning with a morning workshop in Warsaw attended by 150 young Polish children who are part of mandolin orchestras in and around the area. Later that afternoon we performed a full concert in Warsaw’s ornate Nozyk Synagogue, one of the only original Jewish buildings in Warsaw to escape the near-complete destruction of the city during WWII.

Our concert took on a momentous gravity, re-animating a Jewish building with music and heartfelt emotion. Later that same evening the group performed a song as part of the Singera Festival Finale, before an audience of many thousands at an outdoor stage constructed in the shadow of some of the few remaining original buildings from the WWII-era Warsaw Ghetto. This performance was broadcast live on Polish Television to an audience of millions, serving as a fitting climax to our whirlwind week of cultural and musical reclamation.

It has been a month now since my return from Poland, and like many of the other members of the ensemble, I am suffering Ger withdrawal. All of us are eagerly anticipating our next opportunity to come together. There are plans afoot for a CD recording this winter, a return to Poland next July, and participation next September in the 2012 Ashkenaz Festival here in Toronto. We are all incredibly grateful for, and awed by, the supreme efforts of Avner Yonai in spearheading this extraordinary project.

To learn more and hear clips of the group, search “Ger Mandolin Orchestra” on YouTube or Google, or contact Eric Stein at: estein@sympatico.ca
Fishl’s Friend Cookie

My name is Rukhl Privin Blattman. Mama never gave me an English name and Rukheleh was too hard for my 18 month old brother to pronounce, so he said Kuckeleh and Bubbie started calling me Kookeh, Papa called me Kucki, an American woman came to my crib and said why don’t you call her Cookie, then she’ll have an American name—so I have been called Cookie all my life.

I was born in Boro Park, Brooklyn, New York to a cantor, marriage performer and shoykhet named Alter and my Mama, Deena, but Papa always called her Dinsha. My parents were Orthodox Jews and I was one of ten children. My job was working in the Garment District as a bookkeeper. Then I married Lenny Blattman and had two children, Lori and David.

Life went by, my parents passed on, and upon retiring we moved to Florida. I was yearning and searching for Yiddish. I longed so to hear once again those beautiful sounds of my first language, which we had spoken in my childhood. I hadn’t spoken it in 35 years when I found the Circle of Yiddish Clubs where all the heads of clubs met once a month. I joined, started singing Yiddish, and increased my repertoire of Yiddish songs, helped someone with his Yiddish club, and took over when he could no longer be its leader.

I volunteer two Fridays a month at a senior center now for almost 20 years, I turned myself into a Yiddish entertainer, with stories, jokes, and songs. I have organized and performed gratis in 11 shows for abused Jewish children here in South Florida in 11 years. I go to independent and assisted living facilities and monthly run their Cookie’s Yiddish Hour. I also lead a Yiddish hour here where I live in Kings Point, Tamarac. My performing has expanded and I sing professionally for various organizations.

Editor’s note: Cookie is an IAYC Board Member and recently attended the convention in Detroit, MI where she once again was a performer.

Cookie’s regular programs are at:

2nd Mon - The Preserve at Palm Aire, FL 11 - 12 AM
3rd Tues. - Kings Pt. Yid. Club Tamarac, FL 1 - 2 PM
2nd & 4th Fri. - Cantor Sr. Ctr. Sunrise, FL 12:45 P.M.
4th Mon. - Forest Trace Sunrise, FL 11 - 12 AM
4th Wed. - Garden Plaza Inverrary, FL 11-12AM

DANNY BOY - Yiddish V ersion
Al Grand © 2006

Oy Dovidl, di fayfn rufn oys tsur dir
fun tol tsu tol, un fun di berg mit shteyn.
Zumer iz oys, un blumen iz nito far mir—
 du geyst avek, un ikh blayb do aleyn.

Kum gikh tsurik ven zumer kumt shoyn nokhamol,
oder ven shney makht ales vays un reyn.
Ikh vel zayn do un ikh vart far dir alemol—
Oy Dovidl mayn Dovidl, bist azoy sheyn!

Oyb du kumst ts’rik ven ale blumen zaynen toyt
un ikh bin oykhet toyt, vi toyt ken zayn,
du vest gefinen vu ikh lig in toynbet
Un du vest faln koyrim glaykh arayn.

Un ikh vel hern vi du veynst un benkst nokh mir,
un af mayn keyver vestu kumen gikh.
Du vest onbeygn zikh zeyer noent tsu mir,
un ikh vel fridlekh zayn ven du zogst “ikh lib dikh!”

I acquired a proficiency in and love for Yiddish—as well as my earliest exposure to Gilbert and Sullivan—in the pre-television era of the 30s. In A Walker in the City, Alfred Kazin recalls his childhood in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn with such olfactory specificity that readers could smell “that good and deep odor of lox, of salami, of herrings and half-sour pickles” that emanated from the neighborhood pushcarts.

The East New York section of Brooklyn, which is coextensive with Brownsville, is where I grew up. Both sections were like transplanted shtetls heavily populated by first-generation Yiddish-speaking settlers from eastern European countries such as Russia and Poland. Thus as I grew up I learned Yiddish from my Yiddish-speaking parents as well as from the parents of my friends. Many of the storekeepers spoke Yiddish and the Yiddish radio station WEVD could be heard blaring from open windows in my neighborhood and was well-loved in my own home.
Sarah Traister Moskovitz  
Professor Emeritus, California State University at Northridge

Professor Emeritus of Human Development and Counseling, Dept. of Educational Psychology, CSU, Northridge. Taught at Northridge for 28 years and Attained full professor rank.

Ph. D. Educational Psychology and Human Development, Yeshiva University, NYC, 1970.

Instrumental in creating the first Child Survivor Groups in Boston, Chicago, Sydney, and Melbourne Australia, and in London, England that formed after I lectured in these places.

Selected Presentations


Chair and Organizer of Second International Child Survivor Conference in Oxnard, CA 1994


Chair of panel, "Psychological Effects of Being Hidden in WWII". First International Hidden Child Conference, NYC. May 25-29, 1991 Interviewed and quoted by Time Magazine

Poetry

2010 Established website http://poetryinhell.org for 153 translations of the Yiddish poetry that was buried in the Warsaw ghetto in milk cans during the Holocaust by the Ringelblum Oyneg Shabbes people. You can access the original Yiddish and the translations of the poems.


2006. Presented poetry at the opening of the Ringelblum Archive Exhibit at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles.


Books


2002. Presenter at the International Association of Yiddish Clubs Conference in Milwaukee, WI.


Honors and Awards

2003 Scholar in Residence at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum finding Yiddish poetry in the Ringelblum Archives microfiches sent from Warsaw to the US Holocaust Museum.

1985 "Invitational research conference “The Meaning of Survival” sponsored by the University of Texas Medical School at Austin, Institute of Medical Humanities.

It was a small shtetl in the province of Volhynia (northwestern Ukraine, bordering on Poland). It had about 8,000 people, 90% Jews, 5% Poles, and 5% Ukrainians. The railroad tracks divided the shtetl in half: called “this side of the tracks” and “the other side”. This side was more popular; it had a beautiful pine forest where sick people from all overcame to be healed by the pure air. It had the large retirement home, and Geller’s villa, the theater, and many tradesmen. That shtetl was my Maniewicze.

Every Jew ended his life in this world on “the other side of the tracks”, and it was not voluntary. Why, you will ask—because that’s where the cemetery was. They called it “the holy place,” and the one who accompanied people to it was Lyulke (Yiddish for pipe), because he was the only gravedigger. I don’t know if anyone chose him or how one qualifies to be a gravedigger.

Lyulke was past sixty. He had a small face and a pair of burning eyes that were piercing when he looked at you. His nose was large in comparison with the rest of his face. He had a salt-and-pepper beard and a long mustache; one end curled upward to his nose and the other curled downward to his neck, because he never trimmed it. His forehead was very wrinkled. He was of medium height and always wore his black silk coat and a black hat.

The brim of the hat was not lacquered and was made of the same material as the rest of the hat. One could see part of the dirty white collar of his shirt, which his coat-collar failed to conceal. His once black boots, with worn-down heels, now had a weird color. He had only a few upper and lower teeth. Lyulke didn’t look so good, and many Jews didn’t like the idea that he would be the one to accompany them to their eternal rest, even those who were sure that they were going to Paradise.

They called him Lyulke because he always kept his pipe in his mouth even when he wasn’t smoking. He bit on the pipe with his few remaining teeth, which were almost concealed by his mustache. Lyulka lived on Vonska Street (narrow street, in Polish). He prayed on Sabbaths and holidays in the old shul. What the heretics did there didn’t bother him. They took the towels down from nails on bare poles with which the Levites dried the hands of the kohanim before they gave the priestly blessing, curled them up into tight balls, and threw them at the congregation when they stood up for shmon esre.

That morning Lyulke arose early. It was a very beautiful morning. He poured the negl-vaser (nail-water), recited his blessing, and dressed himself. He put on his talis and tfiln, and with intense fervor, rocking back and forth, said the morning prayers. When he finished shmon esre, taking three steps back and three steps forward, he quickly took off his tfiln and put them in the oily, brown, tattered tfiln-sack, on which one could barely make out the Star of David.

He prepared breakfast by grating a clove of garlic onto a crust of black bread and salted it. He said his blessing and bit into the bread with difficulty, for it was old and dried out. He took off the two bricks that covered the little pit in the clay floor and took out a herring, which was wrapped in a Polish newspaper, the Gazeta Polska. He unwrapped the newspaper and laid the herring on a tin plate, took his pocket knife out of his pants pocket, cut off the head and tail of the herring, and took out its milts (male gonads, which are internal in fishes). He used the same knife to spread the milts on his crust of bread and continued eating his breakfast.

That morning the herring tasted good and he ate another piece. Most of the time Lyulke ate a piece of potato with skin, but on this morning he didn’t have time to boil the potato. He washed everything down with black chicory, washed his hands, put on his coat and hat, kissed the mezzuzah on the door-jamb, and went out into the street.

The sun, which was still very low in the sky, was casting long shadows of the pine trees onto the nearby cottages. The air smelled delicious after the previous night’s rain, which helped melt the snow; it smelled like springtime. Lyulke was in a hurry, because he had to bury Yosl the short, a butcher from this side of the tracks,

Yosl had died the previous night. They said he had “a crayfish” (A play on words: the same Yiddish word means both crayfish and cancer Yosl had clearly died of cancer); nobody understood that a crayfish was a living creature that Christians ate.
Lyulke set out for the little house in the cemetery to pick up the mita (casket used to transport the body to the cemetery), to bring it to Yosl's house. It took twenty minutes to reach the cemetery. He knocked on the gate and repeated several times: "It's Lyulke—surely you know me." He waited a few minutes, very softly singing a melody. Then he took the key out of his coat pocket, put it into the old rusty lock, and opened the gate.

He walked through a large puddle from the rain to reach the house. Inside it was quite dark; only a few rays from the morning sun succeeded in breaking through the moldy glass of the little window. The rays illuminated only a small part of the mita, and it looked sad. Apparently the residents were still sleeping, because not a rustle was heard.

It wasn't long before he heard the whinnying of a horse and the scraping of the brake on the wooden wagon with iron wheels. It was Motl the wagon driver with his old mare. Motl had the privilege of bringing in the mita, "the bed" for the deceased. He always worked hard at consoling the family of the deceased, to get a few dollars.

The mita was about 6 1/2 feet long, 2 1/2 feet wide, and 1 1/2 feet deep. Two poles ending with knobs were attached to the mita, one on each side. Yankl the carpenter (may his memory be for a blessing) had made the mita from pine boards and had seen to it that there were no cracks. He'd say that he was sure that he would lie on the mita some day, and, to be sure, his prophecy came true two years after he finished it. The mita was painted black and had a black covering cloth that lay inside.

"Today you're not late," Lyulke said to Motl, "what happened?" (Motl was always late.)

Motl answered: "My old mare seems to feel better, and she has a better appetite. Today she ate all the hay I gave her and a bit of oats besides, and drank a whole bucket of water."

Lyulke grabbed the mita by the front handles and then Motl grabbed the rear handles. Lyulke was preparing to lock the door when he remembered that he had forgotten his tin pot with the tin ears, which collected a few dollars at every funeral. Motl closed the gate; it was easier for him for he was younger. They laid the mita on the wagon. Motl gave the reins a pull, yelled, "Ho, horsie", and lashed the mare. Lyulke looked back and said "I'm going back to my neighbors," and the wagon with the mita left the cemetery.

Yosl had been a butcher on this side of the tracks. As fate would have it, there was another Yosl who bought a butcher shop not far from his. So how could one distinguish between the two Yosl? Leave it to the women—they had an answer: "We'll call one of them Yosl the short and the other one (who was a bit taller) Yosl the tall." The women said that Yosl the short was not stingy; he often threw in a few marrow bones for soup. Some of the women said that his meat was tastier, and he even koshered it, salted it, and saw to it that the blood ran out.

It appears that they needed a butcher in gan eydn, and Yosl the short was chosen out of all butchers. Even his wife, Tsivia, agreed. Why else would the merciful Almighty inscribe on the previous Rosh Hashone and seal on Yom Kiper that a man in his forties, and observant of all the mitsves in addition, should die, if they didn't need him in Paradise? After all, he didn't have the honor of leading his only daughter to the wedding canopy.

It seems that the Almighty had planned it well. He had provided Yosl with a kadishl. The women didn't know what to do without Yosl. Who would give them bones, a piece of kishke, the lungs and livers? They could go to Yosl the tall and tell him what the other Yosl did for them. Each butcher had his female fans. In those days it was harder to change butchers than for a khosid to change rebbes.

Yosl lay almost naked on straw in the dining room. A candle in a large candlestick was burning at his head. There were pans of warm water and wet towels on the floor. The khevre kadishe had completed Yosl's purification, because the floor was very wet. Now they waited for the shroud. Yosl's eyes were not fully closed. People said it was a sign that he still wanted to live. Every decent Jew prepared a piece of white linen for his shroud; Yosl's ws made from the finest Bulgarian linen.

Perhaps it was only an accident that the shroud and the mita arrived at the same time. Munye, Velv's apprentice, brought the shroud, which was as white as snow, and Tsivia gave him a dollar tip. Munye had just left the house when Lyulke and Motl arrived with the mita.

Lyulke cried out, "The mita is here, the mita is here—open the door!"
So, nu, you remember I told you that old people are small. Very small in stature. They shrink with old age. They also start to stoop over and don’t care about standing straight and tall. What for? If you are already nearly a million years old, what is there to be proud of or to want any more? That’s what I thought they thought when I was too young to know how to think for myself in a proper way.

There was a little old Jew who lived somewhere on our street. Nobody knew exactly where, but the wee fellow would be there early in the morning, shuffling along, with little baby steps, slow, slow, slow so that if he were any slower he might as well be dead. On the way to school, we would pass him by, racing to get ahead, because if he caught you at the corner, reaching his tiny hand out of his too big sleeves, like a giant, he would never let go until you got across the street. Then you would be late, so watch out.

All the cars and trucks had to stop on busy 47th Street, the route to Israel Zion Hospital (now Maimonides) and everyone in their cars or on the sidewalk would stare, because it was a spectacle, an embarrassment, something more interesting than almost anything except maybe an accident. Though he seemed an eternal menace that we tried to avoid throughout our years of P.S. 164, one year he stopped being there. No one knew what had happened. No guesses, wild as they might be, seemed to have a shred of fact behind them. That was the way things were back then.

In high school, four and a half years later, my French teacher was also short, shrunken, and collapsed in on himself. The stories running around the school were plausible, I thought. A few years before he had been a tall, handsome, powerful man, a good teacher, a person you could respect. Then he became ill—a heart attack or a stroke, most people said, a broken heart, said others—and began to fade away, to lose his selfrespect along with his inner vigor and muscle tone.

From being a middle-aged man and a mensch, he quickly became a decrepit dwarf, a whining and nervous martinet. To learn the French language from him was to be asked everyday to stand up and recite—la récitation—verbs and nouns, adjectives and adverbs. Maybe sometimes it would be a whole sentence, but never a paragraph, let alone a narrative or a conversation.

Monsieur Halbwachs would wear a suit that was twice as big as he, with a crumpled shirt whose collar showed tufts of hair, even above the big red bowtie he wore everyday. His voice was low and intimidating.

His whole demeanor, therefore, was such as to make us fascinated, as though we were sure that he would either fall down, fade, and disappear any day now, or that, just as suddenly, he would fill up with his own airs and pretensions, like a thin rubber balloon, and float away, out the window, and sail beyond the clouds. Il est disparu.

Meanwhile, my own grandpa Dave, a man of more than six feet, robust and rough, who learned to fight for himself when he went into the Deep South to bargain with red-neck farmers and Georgia crackers for the fruit and vegetable markets of the City, also changed in this same disturbing way as he grew older and older before my very eyes.

One day, he was a hearty, red-faced workingman, a Yidl who could defend himself against any anti-Semites in the countryside or in the dank streets around Washington Street Market. The next day he was a half-blind, confused old man. All my life, he towered over his wife, his children, his grandson, me; he came early in the morning to deliver the freshest produce—lettuce, cauliflower, carrots, watermelon, whatever he deemed best—and to force me to eat it for breakfast.

He shlepped me to the ball games at Ebbet’s Field or Yankee Stadium, and made me drink cardboard cups of beer with him, because I was too scared to walk by myself to buy a Pepsi or a cherry soda. Then I had to walk with him, holding his hand, down the street, across the avenue, to his appointment with the optometrist for his big, thick spectacles. He was the same height as I was, and that made me feel strange and ashamed. It wasn’t natural. Or maybe it was. It is our common fate, keyn eyn hore.

Editor’s note: The first two childhood stories by Norman Simms were published April and May 2009 in Der Bay.

He retired as a professor from Waikato University in Hamilton, New Zealand (on the north island). He is a longtime member of our Yiddish Network and can be reached at: nsimms@waikato.ac.nz
An Anonymous Gift
by Philip Fishl Kutner

One day the following letter arrived from America.

To the Wise Men of Chelm

Many years ago my great grandfather was expelled from the Chelm Yeshiva because he was stupid. He was so embarrassed that he fled to America. After many years as a peddler in the Lower East Side of New York, he opened a store that grew into a small department store, and became wealthy. He recently left us. In his will there was a small gift to the Wise Men of Chelm to be spent for the benefit of Chelm.

Signed: An Anonymous Donor

When the letter arrived, the Wise Men of Chelm immediately called a meeting with the prime purpose of determining how to spend the money for the benefit of Chelm.

There was no agreement, and even though they met many times there was no solution. Everyone in Chelm began arguing for a different way to spend the huge gift. As the days passed and turned into weeks and even months, it became obvious that something had to be done and done soon. Children were not doing their lessons and women forgot to go to the mikve—that made the men very unhappy. Even the animals were agitated, for they were not fed on time—but what to do?

Malke, Mayer the Mayor’s wife, said, “We must find out who was this anonymous donor?” The Wise Men of Chelm all agreed, but how were they to find out if the donor had been in New York and they were in Chelm. It was decided to send someone to New York to speak with the letter-writer and once and for all settle this dilemma.

The emissary to New York had to be bright to be able to deal with the clever Americans. He would also have to be young, to be able to withstand the dangerous and tiring trip across the Atlantic Ocean.

Pincus was the unanimous choice. After all, wasn’t he the brightest yeshive bokher! His other attribute was that his father Petricov (a converted Jew) was a peddler and often visited other towns around Chelm. Besides Pincus was the tallest and strongest yeshive bokher—he was perfect for the task.

At first, his mother was hesitant because she didn’t want to lose her son and what might happen to him in New York. However, all of the other women pestered her, and reminded her that otherwise Chelm would fall apart, and that this was a mitsve.

So very early the following Monday morning Pincus said goodbye to his parents, brothers, sisters, and all of his close friends and set forth to America to find out who was this anonymous donor.

Pincus Arrives in America

When Pincus arrived in New York City, he immediately phoned the Chelm Landsmanshaft. He learned that its name had been changed to the Chelm Brethren Benevolent Society of New York City. For a full week he walked around The Lower East Side asking all the storekeepers if they knew anyone from Chelm.

Finally he got a yes answer and learned that the man came into the deli every once in a while. Pincus decided to go to the deli when it opened and stay there all day until it closed.

Each day he ate the same sandwich of pastrami and corned beef on rye bread with a sour pickle. After a week of this schedule, he decided that this would not work and another method would have to be used. However, when he looked at the money he had left, he realized that there was not enough money for the ship ticket back to Chelm.

The kind deli owner took pity on Pincus and offered him a job and to live free in the back of the store. The deli owner had a daughter who already was 20 years old and there was no suitable match. Out of pure necessity he offered Pincus a small partnership if Pincus would marry his daughter. It was a plain wedding with few guests. Mrs. Pincus was not attractive (to be honest, she was homely), but she was an astute business lady.

After the deli owner died, Mr. and Mrs. Pincus took over the deli. If you visit New York, walk into the Pincus Deli and mention Chelm—you will be given a free, Giant Pincus Pastrami sandwich.
21st Birthday
by Philip “Fishl” Kutner

It used to be that boys became an adult on their 21st birthday, now so many things have changed so that 18 is that age. Since I was not yet 21 when I married my lovely Serke, (she was 18), I needed my parents permission.

Fortunately in New Jersey women were able to marry without parental consent at 18. At the wedding they chided her about “robbing the cradle.”

While I am a big boy now (64 years later, with three children, four grandchildren, and one great-grandchild, and Serkele still by my side), I still speak to Mama and ask her advice about articles in Der Bay. Unfortunately when it comes to using my computer to e-mail, Skype, Facebook, blog, etc., Mama shrugs her shoulders and says, “Zol ikh visn fun aza zakhn azoy vi fun doktoyrim.”
Sitting at my Mac for 6-8 hours a day is tiring. The print is enlarged and my nose is about eight inches from the screen. So I periodically swivel my chair around, close my eyes, and just let my mind go blank. Sometimes my breath slows and I almost fall asleep. At other times my mind races taking me far, far away somewhere with all sorts of exotic people and places.

About an hour or so ago I was whisked to Gan Eydn. At least that was what the large royal blue letters spelled out on the huge banner across the gateway. Come to think of it they were in the Roman alphabet and somehow it did not strike me as being odd at that time. Now I ask myself why weren’t they in the Hebrew/Yiddish oysyes? Anyway, let’s not waste time with that and get on with the rest of my imagination.

Most of all it seemed totally real. The colors were vivid, the people, animals, and plants were perfectly proportional. My first recollection was that of trying to name the plants and animals in Yiddish. When I could not and attempted to identify them with their English names, there was an odd feeling and an outside force seemed to prod me on to try even harder.

The first animal that I encountered was a Yellow Lab slowly approaching me. Here on Earth they are great service dogs for the visually impaired. She did not bark, but started to sing Bay mir bistu sheyn. It was a pleasant voice and at that time, I did not think it was odd. After finishing singing two refrains, she asked, vi zenen mayne shvesters un brider by dir in di heym?

I was surprised at the question and all I could respond was, “Nisht kosher.”

“Vos meyn kosher?” she responded. It seems that Gan Eydn doesn’t have any treyfe khayes. No animals are ever killed and nobody eats meat.

Ich hob ir gefregt, “Vos tustu do in Gan Eydn?”

Zi hot geentfert, “Mir zingen un hulyen.”

Nokh dem hob ikh gefregt, “Darfstu nisht arbetn mit blinde mentshn?”

“Neyn, do in Gan Eydn ale mentshn hohn gute oygn, zey zeen, gute oyren, zey hern, gute tseyn, zey kayen, gute fis, zey loyfn, gute shtimes, zey zingen, u.a.v.”

“Ober vos tustu mit di kranke layte?” Hob ikh gefregt mayn nayem fraynd, dos hintl.

“Ale mentshn do in Gan Eydn zenen gezunt. Mir hohn nor reyne vaser, un di zun shaynt do alemol.

Next time I feel that urge to swing around and close my eyes, there will be that attempt to visit the same place. If it turns out that it isn’t Gan Eydn, I’ll be very disappointed. While I’m not in any rush to actually find out, it surely will be a positive time for me. While my family and good friends may shed tears, once and for all, I’ll know for sure. Of course, if it turns out to be in a hot climate and the food treyf, then all will have been in vain. Of course there will not be a second chance and once on that spaceship there will be no turning back.
I am in the midst of translating the Yizkor Book Sefer Zembrove, from Yiddish and Hebrew, to create The Zambrów Memorial Book in English, where I came across an interesting entry. In this entry, the writer attempted to document and codify the various “Yiddishisms” that were prevalent in his particular shtetl. This was the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and into the early part of the twentieth century.

In this case, I purposely transliterate the Yiddish, as well as translate it, because what seems nonsensical in English turns out to be a rhyming artifact in Yiddish. For example, “Red oranges” have no significance to the subject here, other than to provide the word pomerantsn to rhyme with the word tantsn.

But this is not why I am writing and bringing it to your attention. What caused me to communicate is the disturbing image of what transpired in the home lives of these people, who gave rise to this children's song.

The image of 'spousal abuse' and wife beating comes to mind, as well as the old saw of keep 'em barefoot in summer and pregnant in winter.

This is what is reported. How prevalent this form of behavior might have been, is a different subject for which we can only now conjecture.

We would sing  

Tsigele Migele

Tsigele Migele, veks in krigele
Baby goat, wax in a jar

Royte pomerantsn
Red oranges!

Az der tate shlogt der mamen
When the father beats the mother

Geyen di kinder tantsn
The children go off to dance!

Az der tate fort avek
Should the father travel away,

Geyt di mame arayn in bet
The mother takes to the bed.

Az der tate kumt tsuform
When the father travels back,

Vert di mame a kimpetorn.
The mother becomes with child.

Khapt der tate a fayertop
The father grabs a coal-scuttle,

Un makht der mame a lokh in kop!
And makes the mother a hole in the head!

Veynen di kinderlakh: oy vey
The children cry out: oy vey!

Shrayt der tate: s’iz gut azoy
The father shouts: it's good this way!

This particular work of the author, Yom Tov Lewinsky, forms a somewhat extensive 'Lexicon' of the colloquialisms that made a life long impression on him. In his own words, he says: "The larger part of these I have never heard in any other place. A part of these I have indeed heard elsewhere, but often with a different meaning, with a verbal explanation giving it an opposite meaning. I present this material as I heard it, and the way it was articulated in Zambrów."

Accordingly, this section of the book obtains added value from a linguistic point of view especially for Yiddish language scholars who study subtle linguistic variations of this kind. The United Zembrover Society contemplates authorizing the publication, of just this one chapter, as a stand-alone monograph, independent of the rest of the translation, which also will include it in any event.

Editor's note: Our dear friend, Dr. Steven Lasky was a presenter at our IAYC conference in La Jolla, California and the Founder and Director of the Museum of Family History at: wjc@museumoffamilyhistory.com

He is the current First Vice-President and Cemetery Liaison - United Zembrover Society
Meyer Galler was one of my first friends at the Agricultural University (SGGW- Warsaw University of Life Sciences - Szkoła Główna Gospodarstwa Wiejskiego) in Warsaw. We met the first day after I arrived at the school in September 1935. We went together from the school to the Praga suburb, hoping to find a room at the Jewish university student house (Żydowski Dom Akademicki). There were a few empty rooms but they had been reserved for students who would be returning from vacation.

All we were able to rent, was a room on the third floor, but only for eleven days. We took it immediately, deciding to look for another one closer to the school on Rakowiecka street. The distance was also of concern, as it took half an hour by streetcar to reach SGGW and this was considered a considerable loss of time in those days.

On each floor of the building there was a common washroom with running water and toilets, but there were no showers anywhere. We learned that the Praga suburb had a communal bath nearby and we went there for our showering. The first time I did not realize that for the thirty groszy paid for the use of the shower, I had only exactly thirty minutes of hot or cold shower. I was still soaped when the water stopped running and I had to pay an additional thirty groszy to get the soap off.

The students were "governed" by one who acted like a dictator and who belonged to the ultra right faction of followers of Zabotynski. There were many Zionists and some communists. The latter were distributing leaflets with propaganda and in one I read that not only the Soviet Union, but also Outer Mongolia were "red". For the first time I saw the Utar Baton name of the capital of that remote country in this propaganda literature. At night the illegal, in Poland, communists were staging so-called "Masówka" meetings, turning off the electric lights of the building and giving speeches.

During the following four years I got to know Galler very well. He was a year older than me and tried to enter SGGW a year earlier but was not admitted then. He came from Białystok, where another of my Jewish colleagues, Chaim Meyer Galler was admitted. He came from a "proletarian family", his zionist leanings were cited by a committee member as "capitalist and unfriendly" to the regime.

Years later I learned that in September 1939 Galler escaped from Warsaw and Białystok to Lwów in the Soviet-occupied part of Poland, where he enlisted at the Agricultural University in Dublany. His application was reviewed by a communist student committee and, at first, he was rejected. Although he came from a "proletarian family", his zionist leanings were cited by a committee member as "capitalist and unfriendly" to the regime.

The chair of the committee was our former colleague from SGGW, Myszka Jonas. She changed her mind. Galler was admitted and he continued his studies till June 1941. The outbreak of the German-Soviet war forced the closing of Dublany and Galler escaped on the last east bound train out of Lwów. He came to the Don-Bas, the industrial coal mining district at the river Don, where he was put to work in a coal mine.

One day, he was approached by two men at the bus stop and shown their secret police credentials of the feared GPU (NKWD). The men were polite and asked Galler to come with them to the police headquarters. He wanted to leave at home the books that he had carried with him, but they assured him that he would get home shortly after they asked him a few questions. However, he never got home.

He was arrested and kept incommunicado for four months. In solitary confinement he had to sleep with his face upwards and the electric light was never turned off in his cell that had no window. Whenever he tried to turn away from the light, the door would open and he was reminded that turning away from the light was not permitted.

The food was very salty and there was too little water to quench the thirst. Finally, after four months, he was taken to the warden. He was treated with a good meal, cigarettes, and vodka.
The gray headed, polite warden told him that there was a mistake made, and that he had just taken over the jail. He found that Galler was in solitary confinement but never charged with a crime.

He then presented Galler with a "protocol", a typed statement. It said that "tovarish"(comrade) Meyer Galler admits that he is a German spy. Galler vehemently denied this and the warden changed his polite attitude and ordered Galler back to his cell. Four months passed and again he was called before the warden, this time another well-behaved and intelligently appearing man. The same apologies were made that it was a mistake, and again the same "protocol" handed to Galler to sign. He tried to explain that he was a refugee from Nazi Germans who had occupied western Poland and that he certainly was not a German spy. Again he was sent back to his cell. It was nearly a year since his arrest at the bus stop when the same procedure, now with a new warden, was repeated. By then Galler decided to admit everything they wanted, just to get over with the tortures. He was ready to die as he could not take the treatment any longer.

When the gray haired warden asked if Galler was a Nazi spy, he replied: Yes, sir! This is true. He was asked to sign the statement admitting his guilt, and he did. Then the warden asked: Who was your contact with the Germans? Galler, who never spied for the Germans, replied: I had no contacts. The warden took the signed statement and tore it up.

Then he removed another statement from his drawer and handed it to Galler. Read this, he said. It stated that "I, Meyer Galler, admit that I expressed my desire to leave the Soviet Union when the war will end, to return to the city of Bialystok". Galler admitted that this was, in fact, his hope and desire, and that, in fact, he mentioned this to some workers in the coal mine in the Don Bas a year earlier. The warden asked him where he was from and when he stated that he came from Bialystok. He asked in which of the Soviet Republics this was located, as he had never heard the name of the town. Galler then explained that this was not in the Soviet Union but in Poland, and added that his parents and siblings were living there and that he hoped to return to his family after the war.

The warden stopped Galler from signing the statement. "Do you realize that if you sign thus, you will be executed because according to our constitution, leaving the Soviet Union is considered treason. During the war, treason is punished by death". "Yes", Galler replied, but this is the truth that I stated this, and since I came from Bialystok in Poland, I hoped to return there after the war will be over. The warden calmly said that he understood Galler perfectly well, but law is law, and every Soviet citizen must obey the constitution.

Finally Galler signed the "protocol" and was taken back to his cell. This time he was permitted a few hours with other prisoners. When he told them what had happened, they thought that he would be executed promptly. The following day the warden summoned him and explained that Galler had now a choice, whether he wanted to appear before the judge in the town where he was being jailed, or whether he wished to chose the "Troika".

“What is the Troika?” Galler asked the warden. The Troika consists of three judges in Moscow. "What is the difference insofar as my fate is concerned.” The warden explained that the local judge will pronounce the death penalty and the execution will take place within 24 hours. The Troika, which will not see the accused, and will make their decision in Moscow, sometimes might give the accused "spy" a long jail sentence instead. Galler immediately chose the Troika. A couple of weeks passed before the reply of the three judges arrived. Galler was sentenced to 10 years of hard labor. Everybody congratulated him for getting such a "mild" sentence. But his ordeal had only started.

He was sent to the Gulag where he spent the next ten years in several hard labor camps. Years later; in the United States, he published a dictionary of terms used in the Gulag; “Soviet Prison Camp Speech: A Survivor's Glossary” (The University of Wisconsin Press, 1972). This dictionary enables readers of Solzenicyn, who know Russian, to understand the jargon of Soviet prisoners.

At the end of his life, in California, Galler described in English his years in hard labor camps, in the book entitled "Plowing the Steppes". A week before his death, in 2000, the Russian version of this book was also published by the Judah L. Magnes Museum in Berkeley, California. He dedicated the book to Tamara Galler, to his late parents, to his wife and his brother, who were murdered by fascists in October 1943. He wrote in the book mailed to me: “To Karl and Irene - study Russian by comparing my English and this edition.” It was dated July 24, 2000.
Teacher of the Month: Kathryn Hellerstein Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Germanic Languages, University of Pennsylvania

Dr. Kathryn Hellerstein is Associate Professor of Yiddish in the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures at the University of Pennsylvania. She served as Undergraduate Director of the Jewish Studies Program from 2001-2010. She is a member of a distinguished Cleveland medical family and educated at Wellesley and Brandeis (BA), and Stanford (PhD). Last fall she also was Acting Undergraduate Chair of the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures


Her translations of poems and her own poems appeared, too. She presented papers at both the American Literary Translators Association Convention, and the (AJS) Association for Jewish Studies, and organized and chaired a panel at AJS on "The Place of Yiddish in the Academy." Her lectures included two on women Yiddish poets at the University of California San Diego and the Clara Sumpf lecture at Stanford University, as well as a talk on "China in New York's Yiddish Translations," at Penn's Un/Translatables Conference.

Prof. Hellerstein continues to serve as Coordinator of the Yiddish Studies Literature Section for the Annual Conventions of the AJS, on the Executive Committee of the Yiddish Discussion Group for the Modern Language Association, as poetry editor of two journals, Kerem and Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies and Gender Issues, and on the Editorial Advisory Boards for Nashim, Yiddish, and Studies in American Jewish Literature.

She was finalist judge for a national Yiddish poetry translation contest, sponsored by the (CIYCL) California Institute for Yiddish Culture and Language. She was a keynote speaker at the IAYC (International Association of Yiddish Clubs) conference in 2007. Her plenary lecture at the Marriott Cleveland East Hotel was the Poetry of Kadya Molodowsky.

In January, Hellerstein was awarded a School of Arts and Sciences Language Teaching Innovation Grant to develop digital cultural materials for the Yiddish courses' Blackboard sites, working with Sonia Gollance, doctoral student in Germanic Languages and Literatures and Falk fellow.


Hellerstein is a poet and a translator, as well as a scholar of Yiddish poetry.


She is also a major contributor to American Yiddish Poetry: A Bilingual Anthology (University of California Press, 1986). Her own poems have appeared in journals—Poetry, Tikkun, Bridges, Kerem, Gastronomica, The Drunken Boat, Prairie Schooner—and anthologies—Without a Single Answer, Four Centuries of Jewish Women's Spirituality, Reading Ruth, and Common Wealth: Poets on Pennsylvania. Her many scholarly articles on Yiddish literature, and most recently, on women poets in Yiddish, are found in journals, anthologies, and encyclopedias.

Her current projects include Anthology of Women Yiddish Poets and a critical book, A Question of Tradition: Women Poets in Yiddish, forthcoming from Stanford University Press. She has received fellowships from the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, the National Endowment for the Arts, The National Endowment for the Humanities, as well as the Guggenheim Foundation.
A Tribute to Adrienne Cooper o"h

Here are two completely different responses that were selected from among the many emails when word was received of Adrienne’s death at the age of 65.

I hope you will devote a special edition to the life, work, and persona of Adrienne Cooper.

Dr. Leon Levitt, Los Angeles, CA

I was so sorry to hear about Adrienne’s passing. What a loss for Yiddish. She was so knowledgeable and dedicated to Yiddish. She will be sorely missed.

I want to plant a tree in Israel, and need to know to whom to send the certificate, and what she was such as a Beloved Daughter (if her parent is alive) wife, mother, etc. I need the name and address of the person to whom I am sending the certificate.

Cookie Blattman, Tamarack, FL

It should read "Beloved daughter, mother, sister, and life-partner." Send it to her daughter: Sarah Gordon, 612 Argyle Rd, #4E, Brooklyn, NY 10023

Editor’s note: So many people have expressed their love and admiration for Adrienne and how much of a loss it is to the greater Yiddish community.

These two letters came from two people from completely different areas and backgrounds. Leon and I were both on the Workmen’s Circle’s National Executive Board and had personal contact with Adrienne. Leon has fairly recently moved from Dearborn, Michigan to Los Angeles.

On the other hand, Cookie, who is a well-known entertainer from Tamarack, Florida, is a long-time board member of the International Association of Yiddish Clubs and met with Adrienne when Adrienne performed and programmed the IAYC, featured programs that the Workmen’s Circle sponsored for many conferences.

These have been on Facebook, Twitter, etc. To these accolades must be added the tributes from long-established publications such as the Forverts and the English Forward.

Fishl’s first thought was, what could be added to all the other accolades

Cookie’s idea is wonderful one and will honor Adrienne while also being of benefit to our beloved State of Israel.

Another possibility is to do something that will remind you of Adrienne on a frequent basis. The thought is to do a deed that will bring recurring memories of Adrienne. This would be especially appropriate for those of us who have not only been entertained by her, but also worked alongside her on events whether it was at the Arbeter Ring, IAYC, KlezKamp, Circle Lodge, etc.

One suggestion is to purchase a Yiddish book, CD or DVD that might cost more than you would otherwise spend, and put Adrienne’s picture or name on it. Thus every time you listen, read, or watch, this memento, your sweet memories of Adrienne will return. For all the struggling writers, musicians, singer, and artists, this would be a blessing.

Please let us know how you honored Adrienne’s memory.
Lyulke and Motl brought the mita in and laid it down next to Yosl. Lyulke, with the help of one of the khevre kadoshe, pulled Yosl's pants and the lower part of the shroud onto his body. Lyulke wrapped a string around Yosl's waist instead of a belt, and knotted it. Then they put on Yosl's jacket. Both the jacket and the pants were too big. Velv1 the tailor, who sewed the shrouds, always used the same measurements for both short thin men and tall fat ones; he said that one should use the whole piece of linen, because "...the corpse is not a rebbe who leaves melodies behind for his khasidim."

They laid Yos1 him in the mita. Tsivia brought in his beautiful talis in its blue talis sack. A talis is the only thing a corpse takes with him. Tsivia took the talis out of the talis sack; it had creases where it had been folded, looked new, and had narrow and wide blue strips at the ends, where the tsis was attached. The talis had beautiful embroidery of the Tablets of the Ten Commandments and the bluish-yellow letters of the blessing for putting it on. From the expression on Tsivia's face, you sensed that it was difficult for her to part with the talis, which her parents had bought in Kowel (now in the Ukraine).

They put Yosl's yarmulke with the little white Stars of David on his head and Lyulke laid a piece of pottery on each eyelid. They say that people have big eyes in God's world and are never satisfied with what they have; now Yosl wouldn't be able to be envious of others. That's why this piece of wisdom is written in the Good Book": "That man is wise who is satisfied with what he has." They covered Yosl with the black covering cloth, except for his head; perhaps he would see his shetet and his devoted customers for the last time.

Now the mita was in the street. Zalmen, the shames of the old shul, and Sender, Yosl's relative, carried the mita on their shoulders. Lyulke walked ahead shaking his little tin pot, which had a few coins in it to jingle, and kept saying: "Alms, alms to ward off death." Jews and non Jews threw pennies into his pot. They walked to Agradova Street, to the old shul. Buzie, her only daughter, and Yos1's kadosh followed, weeping: "Yosl, why'd you leave us?"

Tsivia cried out, tearing her hair: "We need you!" "May he be a good pleader for us," said Rokhl, their neighbor, sneezing at the same time. "Pull your ear!" a number of people cried out, and Rokhl did so. The people who were standing next to Rokhl said it was indeed true that Yosl would be a good pleader "for all of us."

Jews and Christians stopped and said to one another: "That's Yosl the short."

The sun was now high in the sky and was casting small shadows on the mita. The procession turned left into Agradova Street, and now it neared the shul. Yos1 had been a pious Jew after all, he had had a kosher butcher shop. Though according to his age Yosl belonged in the new shul, where younger Jews worshiped, he attended the old shul, presided over by Rabbi Gordon.

The shul was open. They put the mita on four chairs near the Ark, The women sat on one side of the rnekhitse and the men sat on the other side. Yosl's little family sat on the platform where Rabbi Gordon stood next to the lectern from which they read the Torah every Sabbath and on holidays. The rabbi was in his fifties. His long peyes covered part of his kapote. His black gartl had a big knot in it. He was wearing a black shraym with brown fur. His big, fluffy eyebrows drooped over his brown eyes; they also stopped the wrinkles from spreading to his cheeks. His gray white beard extended from his mouth to a thin pointy end.

Rabbi Gordon told the congregation to rise while he recited Eyl Moley Rakharnim. After that, he recounted Yosl's background: 'Yosl was a pious Jew who observed the mitzvot; he was God fearing; he would go to Gan Eydn. Little Moyshe, Yosl's son, was barely able to finish the kadish because he was sobbing so hard. Tsivia and little Buzie, Yosl's only daughter, cried even harder when they heard Yosl's kadish saying: Yisgardal, v' yiskadash. Rabbi Gordon turned toward Tsivia and said that Yosl would be a good pleader for the family.

Lyulke sat on pins and needles by the platform. He turned his head from right to left and back from left to right, and took a pinch of snuff. He was hungry having had only a meager breakfast. Rabbi Gordon again told everyone to rise. Zalmen and Sender lifted the mita onto their shoulders and gave the
deceased the honor of going out of the shul first while everyone else waited. The procession turned left onto Lutska Street; it had become smaller, because not everyone was accompanying Yosl to the cemetery. The only thing that hadn’t changed was Lyulke and his little pot. He walked in front and kept repeating, like a parrot, the same request: "Alms, alms, to ward off death."

The noise from the little coins of the silver tongued Jew, who said they could ward off the Angel of Death by putting alms into the little pot, was getting quieter.

Lyulke liked the quieter sound, which meant that coins had covered the bottom of the pot. It would contain enough money for tobacco for his pipe.

The procession crossed the railroad tracks, and a little later it reached the cemetery. The two bearers of the mita lowered it from their shoulders and set it down next to the gate. Lyulke knocked, waited a few moments, and knocked again. This time he added: "It's Lyulke I've brought you a good neighbor." None of the permanent residents answered him. He took the key out of his pocket and opened the gate. The shoes of some of those present sank into the mud from the previous night's rain, and they tried to pull them out.

Everyone went to the gate of the cemetery. Zalmen the shames helped Yosl put the mita and also the little tin pot into little house in the cemetery. Yosl moved the pot around on the windowsill several times to make his life giving pot comfortable. It would be a great shame if someone should leave this world because it was said: "He's in a better world now." Tsivia looked on with a pained expression and didn’t know whom to believe. Before she went into her house, her neighbor brought out negl vaser so she and her children could wash their hands. She then went into the house and started to prepare for sitting shiva.

Lyulke had made enough money for tobacco. He was also sure that Tsivia would give him a couple of dollars. He knocked on the door of his neighbor Yoyne, who brought out a half pitcher of water so he could wash his hands. Lyulke went into his house, very tired. The sun illuminated the spotted clay floor. Lyulke poured himself a glass of whiskey, said L ’khayim and wished everyone a good day.

He went to the pit in the floor and took off his coat and hat. Wearing only his yarmulke, he lay down on the straw mat on his iron bed and quietly fell asleep, snoring.
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- Kids’ Klezmer Ensemble
- History of Klezmer
- Encounters Between Yiddish and Slavic Musics
- Lukshn & Macaroni: Ashkenazi Music in Italy
- Perform at the Two Lunchtime Cabarets

Family Activities

Here’s an opportunity for your children to learn the songs, dance, stories and language of Jews from Eastern Europe. We have youth programs for ages 6-12 that include Yiddish songs, dance, stories and language, kids’ klezmer ensemble, and crafts.

- Shabes Candlesticks
- Stories, Language, Yiddish Singing
- Awesome & Easy Yiddish Stunts & Dances
- Fabric Collage Without Sewing
- Make Shabes Candlesticks
- Kids’ Klezmer Ensemble

Workshops for Dancers

Klezmer music was nearly lost by the end of WW II. Yiddish folklorists pieced the dances together so that we can enjoy dancing like Ashkenazi Jews did throughout Eastern Europe. Learn the figures, steps, and flavors of wedding dances, freylekhs, and shtetl horas. The Festival has 5 dance workshops and 2 dance parties.

- Learn Klezmer Dances
- How to Lead Klezmer Dance
- Awesome & Easy Yiddish Stunts & Dances
- Build-a-Sher Workshop

Workshops in Yiddish Literature and Language

Study Yiddish literature in translation, learn Yiddish proverbs, or just have a good time speaking Yiddish over a good meal.

- FREE - Sunday 5:00pm Yiddish Sing-Along.
- Study Yiddish Literature in Translation
- Bobe Mayses: A History of the Yiddish Language
- 100 Yiddish Words in the Average NY Puerto Rican Vocabulary. Not for children.
- Yiddish Through Its Proverbs
- Yiddish in My Family
- Yiddish Conversation During the Two Lunches!

Eastern European Jewish History

- The World of Our Great-Grandparents: The Early History of Eastern European Jewry
- School, Love, and Death in Nineteenth Century Russian Jewry
- History of Klezmer
- Bobe Mayses: A History of the Yiddish Language

Musical Cultures

Martin Schwartz and Francesco Spagnolo will guide you in understanding Yiddish/Russian and Yiddish/Italian musical connections.

- Encounters Between Yiddish and Slavic Musics
- Lokshn & Macaroni: Ashkenazi Music in Italy

For more Festival information:
Phone: 415-789-7679
Website: www.klezcalifornia.org
My Yiddish Club, Freylekhe Menshn of Temple Solel, has a mission to outreach to the preschool children of our Temple and teach them very basic conversations and songs in Yiddish. During the past several years, I have worked with a pre-school group of children who know me as Zeyde Eyle or in English, Grandpa Owl.

At a recent shiva of a Temple member that I attended, there was a background clickity, click noise during the service. This was caused by a four-year old great-grand- daughter of the deceased, walking in her mother's high heel shoes on the bare tile in the adjoining room.

When the prayers were over, everyone joined in the food and drink to socialize. I spoke to the grandfather of the four year old girl and mentioned my pre-school classes. The girl was seated nearby with a big smile on her face, since she knew me. Shortly afterwards, the girl's mother approached me and asked if I was willing to come to her four year-old class to celebrate her birthday and sing happy birthday in Yiddish!

I accepted with a sheynem dank. In class after the birthday cake was presented and candles blown out, I appeared to do my song. Since the children knew the song "Geven iz a frosh mit a grin samet kleyd, KVA, KVA" and another song "Di grine katshke mit a royte noz, Quack, Quack", I wore a frog T-shirt. The children were delighted and joined in chorus!

Perhaps, some of the readers could outreach for such times when Yiddish could be offered to children. You, too, can be a "Joshua Yiddishe Seed"!

Editor's note: The article above was submitted a month prior to Al's passing. As a fellow board member of the IAYC and as a leader of one of the IAYC member of Yiddish clubs, there were many opportunities for interaction with Al. These occurred at our board meetings, and at online discussions.

In all instances Al voiced his opinion that did not always agree with mine, but it was well thought out. His priorities were always dealing with getting the younger children involved in learning Yiddish through games.

During WWII He was in the Army medical corps, 742 Amphibious Tank Battalion and remained in the service until 1946 when he was discharged at Camp Beale, California with the rank of Sergeant Technician 5th grade.

At the International Humor Conference at Tel Aviv University in 1984, he presented a paper on Yiddish Humor and attended then attended the Tel Aviv International Board of Governors "Jewish Rediscovery of the New World" Study Cruise in 1998. Lectures were given on the history of the Jews and highlighted "Jewish Humor".

Al continued his interest in Yiddish and continued updating his background when coming to Arizona with classes at the Jewish Community Center of the East Valley and with Morrie Feller at Temple Solel in Scottsdale, AZ as well as in Morrie's leyen krayz.

Al was an active International Association of Yiddish Clubs (IAYC) board member and a presenter at several of the conferences. He started the first Temple Solel Yiddish Club in 2000, and it is now a participating chapter of the IAYC. He was most proud of teaching Yiddish to preschool and primary classes. Another first was his "Yiddish in English" a class at Scottsdale Community College.

He wrote Yiddish and English short stories for children. Besides his interest in Yiddish, his hobbies centered on nature and history.

His leaves his wife Irma of 58 years, children, grandchildren, and Thea, a great-granddaughter.
Confucius Was Jewish
by Philip "Fishl" Kutner

If he really wasn’t, he should have been.

One of his most profound sayings and real common sense, summarizes my life and one of the best bits of advice one could give. “Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.”

Watch kids play. They are full of laughter and really enjoying themselves. Thus comes the question, what is play? It must be anything you really enjoy.

This can be extended to be around people you enjoy and avoid the others. Remember, to have friends whom you enjoy, you yourself must be joyful.

Of course it is not always possible to be around only people who are pleasant and we cannot always do only pleasant tasks. The answer then is to make the tasks and the people as pleasurable as you can. If it is the job, think of the rewards. It could be the money you make or the goods you make or sell. If it is a person, challenge yourself to see if you can make that person laugh or be nicer. You may be surprised he or she may be hurting and looking for a kind word, or even a friend.
Bonding relates to the relationship you have with family and very close friends. Bridging relates to casual acquaintances and is the basis of networking. At my orientation sessions, stress and emphasis is on networking, networking, networking!

When stepping back from having edited articles sent in last year by Al, Aliza, Alva, Ann, Archie, Arnold, Avner, Baila, Barney, Ben, Boris, Dan, Diane, Doris, Ed, Elizabeth, Frida, Gerry, Goldie, Hale, Harry, Harvey, Hershl, Hindi, Irv, Jack, Johnny (Finland), Judith, Karl, Leon, Meyer, Mike, Miriam, Murray, Norman, Pearl, Rochelle, Sheva, Stanley, Steven, Troim, Will, Yoshi, and Zane, I go into a deep thought mode and think of areas tangentially related to Yiddish. How can various other bits of information be applied to Yiddish? (My apologies to any omissions in the above list. Letters to the editor are not included.

The aim of this article is to have us take a close look at our Yiddish human resources and see how they can be better utilized in fulfilling our Yiddish objectives. This is a two-way street. Each of us knows and has exchanges with “givers” and “takers”. From time to time we have played both roles.

It is interesting to note that Yiddish resources fall into several categories. Money is one of them. There is a list of Yiddish philanthropists, albeit relatively small, who are the names that headline YIVO and YBC. Most of them zenen nisht fun undzere layte. When we need funds for publishing a book, releasing a DVD, funding a scholarship, an institute, a conference, a convention, etc., then we look for a/n benefactor/s. Who is/are yours, or are you from the small group of wonderful givers?

A second resource regularly needed is in the area of Yiddish words and grammar. To whom do you turn when Weinreich Harkavy, Stutchkoff, or Mark can’t help with those unknown words or grammatical usages?

A third resource deals with religious/shtetl customs, especially those that are rarely, even if at all used today. My own memories of childhood includes the farm experience and among them is the activity of what one does to a chicken after the shoykhet does his ritual slaughter. Most people could not pluck a chicken without tearing the skin, know what is done to remove the hairs after plucking, or slicing open the gizzard (pupik).

**Inventorying Your Yiddish Bonding & Bridging**

First make a list of your family members and very close friends who are interested in Yiddish culture and/or the language. These represent the easiest and the quickest resources.

Second make a list of the Yiddish groups to which you attend. Within these groups note those who are most approachable and good resources.

Third, do the same with major Yiddish groups; YIVO, YBC, WC / AR, etc. Use Der Bay and other publications for FREE publicity. Remember to succeed you need to Network, Network, Network.
It was 1945 and World War II was over. After more than 25 million casualties, Germany was defeated, and Adolf Hitler had committed suicide. Germany was divided among the four allies: United States, Great Britain, France, and The Soviet Union. There was a sea of people with nowhere to go, and nobody wanted them. There were those who survived the concentration camps, those who survived in other countries, and those who didn’t care to return to their homeland because of the political system.

Trains had broken windows and doors that didn’t close. Although the trains were constantly in service, you never knew when a particular one would leave or start, where it would stop, or when it would ever reach your desired destination.

I was one of those who didn’t know where to go or where I would wind up after leaving Uzbekistan (Soviet Union), which is where I was from 1941 until 1945.

I almost remained in Uzbekistan because I learned that nobody survived from my family—my father, mother, three brothers, and sister. They all had been killed by the Nazi murderers with the help of the local Ukrainians, and, to a lesser extent, by the local Poles.

As a Polish citizen, I was able to leave for my homeland although I didn’t know if I would be able to emigrate from there. Before the war, we had lived in Maniewicz, a small town in Volhynia in Eastern Poland. It became part of the Ukraine when Germany and the Soviet Union divided Poland between them in 1939.

About 700 of us (Polish citizens) boarded a cattle car train in Andizan (Uzbekistan). It took us about three weeks to reach Poland. When the train stopped in Tarnow, which is in Southeastern Poland, I was approached by two boys and two girls who invited me to join them in their Kibbutz, which I did. After five weeks, we legally crossed the border into Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, and then to Austria.

We stayed in a former concentration camp in Ebenzee and finally wound up in a D.P. camp in Wetzlar am Lahn Kreis Aalen in the U.S., German zone. Little did I know that I would be in Germany for six very long years. It was to take me that long before I would be able to come to my uncle Izzie Gladstone, who was my mother’s brother and lived in Kansas City, Missouri.

You would think the authorities in charge would know better than to send Holocaust survivors to Ebenzee, where the crematorium was still intact and where thousands of innocent Poles died. There was a big cross that someone had put up in his or her memory. Then they took us to Wetzlar to live in the same four-story barracks where the German soldiers and maybe the members of the SS had lived when they trained to kill people.

Perhaps an SS man who later had taken part in the brutal killing of Rabbi Gordon and my family in Maniewicz had slept in the room that I shared with two other young men. We were supported by UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) and also by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. There were about 600 of us, most of whom were Jewish.

The front gate had a sign that read, “Halt/Stop”. This was to let everyone know that it was a gated community. Anyone entering the camp had to show an ID to the policeman, who was a member of the DP Police Department.

The camp slowly came to resemble a shetel in Eastern Poland, with a market where you could buy and sell small items. The hottest items were American cigarettes, which the Germans liked.

You could buy as little as one cigarette. The office occupied the entire four-story building. There always was a shortage of workers who knew English. Jeeps with American officials and Jewish representatives from the American Jewish Joint Distribution were always present. Very seldom did you see a German city official.

All the Zionist organizations were functioning. Hashomer Hatzair, Betar, the right-wing Poale Zion, and the left-wing Poale Zion had discussions in the theater hall. There was a synagogue on the premises. There were colorful marches on Jewish holidays, such as Lag B’Omer and the First of May.
As always, there were Jewish entrepreneurs. The Latinger Family started to sell fruits. Janek from the City of Luck opened a restaurant in his apartment.

You could order Hungarian goulash, chicken, fish, a large variety of soups, and coffee and cake. The only thing you had to remember was to order your favorite meal in the morning. You could have a glass of wine without making reservations. Chaim Joine became the boot maker for the Polish officers.

All of the men, and especially the younger generation, became fascinated with the fashionable high boots that the Polish officers wore. These boots had a high back (pylej). Chaim’s brother, Josh, who had been a shoemaker in Poland, became the special favorite of the officers. Sometimes you had to wait two months to get a pair. Schmerl the tailor became the specialist in producing the “galife” pants (riding pants), which had eyelets in the front and which complemented the officer’s boots. They were a great combination.

There was a beth sefer Tarbut (a Hebrew school). Dr. Kagan, who was from Riga, Lativa became the principal, and I taught Hebrew to the second graders. It was a special treat when schoolchildren from the States sent letters, toys, and even clothing to the children in Tarbut for distribution in the Wetzlar DP camp.

There was a theater where the local actors performed. Performers also came from other DP camps. There was an ORT school (Organization for Rehabilitation Through Training). This is a Jewish organization whose aim is to teach Jews trades. I attended one to learn electricity and electronics. Others were trained to become dental technicians or car mechanics.

And, could you guess who the teachers were? They were two German engineers. One of them had been in the Luftwaffe, the German air force, and had flown Messerschmitts and Junkers to bomb innocent people. He also bragged that he had improved the capability of saturation bombing.

I was sure that the ORT officials would have liked to employ a Jewish instructor rather than a German pilot. Unfortunately, there were not any available. On the other hand, how would Adolf Hitler, Adolf Eichman, Joseph Goebbels, Herman Goering, Heinrich Himmler have felt about Germans teaching young Jewish men? There is a Jewish proverb, “Oyb zey voltn oufgeshtanen, voltn zey nokh a mol geshtarbn.” (If they had arisen, they would have died again.)

In 1947, the majority of countries who were members of the United Nations sympathized with the Jews who had lost six million of their brothers and sisters, one-third of the 18 million worldwide, and voted for the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine.

Many young men signed up to join the “Gius” to fight off the Arab armies whose aim was to destroy the young Jewish state. The ones who didn’t volunteer to join the fighting were the ones raised by Jewish vigilantes who had obtained guns and threatened to shoot them. There was a blacklist near the office building that listed their names as cowards and traitors.

Special agents took the volunteers to a small post somewhere in Italy. To save money, they found a captain who had a fishing boat. They hoped he would take them to the Eastern Mediterranean, to Israel. Many times, the boat didn’t make it. When the captain called for help, he ran into trouble with the Italian navy because of the “illegal cargo” he was carrying.

Representatives from Israel came to speak in the auditorium to convince the inhabitants of the camp to settle in Israel. I remember one occasion an elderly lady stood up and asked the speaker if there were prisons in Israel. His answer was that there was very little crime in Israel, but crime and prisons exist in every country.

The City of Wetzlar was known because the Leitz camera was produced there. At that time, it was the best in the world. Everyone wanted to have one, but very few could afford it.

The assembly workers realized that there was a big demand for their product. They came up with a solution that enabled them to make some extra money and make the camera more affordable; although it wasn’t as good for the owner, Ernst Leitz. Each worker took the part that he added onto the camera as it moved along on the assembly line. Notice, I said took and not stole. They assembled the camera and sold it on the black market. It was cheaper, but it didn’t have the serial number and the warranty.
The ladies in camp loved the silk stockings that were still a novelty, and were available from the United States. So, the lucky ladies who had relatives in the States were able to get them. In order to immigrate to the United States, one needed a sponsor who would guarantee to take care of the new immigrant in case he couldn’t get a job, so that society shouldn’t have to support him. In my own case, it was Uncle Izzie in Kansas City who fulfilled this requirement.

One also had to pass a rigorous health examination. And, guess who the doctors were? You guessed it again; they were German. I would not have been surprised that some of them might have conducted experiments on innocent Jewish victims in the concentration camps.

The future of the Jews was again in German hands. They were the bosses again. They had the power to decide if a Jew like me would be permitted to immigrate to the United States and be united with the only relative that he had left in this world. I had to take the train to Augsburg, which is a half an hour ride, as I recall, a half dozen times to a German medical facility.

They put the date and type of examination on a special bulletin board according to the last name, and that became a source of income for some. I would not have been surprised if one of them, or even several of them, had conducted experiments on humans. They traveled to Augsburg daily. Their responsibility was to look up the date, time, and what kind of test someone had to take, for a special fee.

If someone could afford it and didn’t care to take a particular test that was part of the examination, he could always pay off that doctor, who would forget it and say you passed it. It required several months to complete all tests. I qualified to get a United States visa to enter because I was a “political” refugee who did not care to return to Poland because of the political system, but it took six years to get it. After someone had his visa and had passed all medical tests, the authorities from the immigration service notified the eligible person of the date, the name of the ship, and from which port the ship would sail.

I was one of the lucky ones. The immigration authorities issued me a visa—my health was perfect. The immigration authorities took me with many other eligible refugees by the train to Bremenhaven, a German port in the U.S. zone on the Baltic.

The ship, The General McRae, was waiting for us. It looked very tiny in comparison with the endless sea. It was an old army ship that had brought American troops to Germany and took refugees back to the States. The McRae was about to take three hundred people full of hope to the United States.

It took us almost two weeks to cross the Atlantic Ocean. I was assigned to help in the kitchen. The ship docked in New Orleans, Louisiana, where I disembarked along with many others. They took us to a large room near the port, where there were tables with representatives from the various nationalities. The Jewish representative who interviewed me happened to be a lady.

After answering a battery of questions we were taken to the YMHA in New Orleans for a few days. We rested, shaved, and were given clean clothing. They also gave me a ticket for the Kansas City Southern train to Kansas City and $20 pocket money. She called my uncle and notified him when I would arrive. My aunt Clara and my cousin Donald came to meet me at the railway station and took me home, which was in a very nice area on 63rd Terrace.

After six years of traveling almost halfway around the world, I had finally reached my destination in America. It was in January of 1951, and I remained in Kansas City, Missouri until 1953, when I left for New York.

Unfortunately, my beautiful wife of 43 years, Trudy, passed away in 1996. We have four children—all of whom are professionals. In addition, I have seven beautiful grandchildren, whom I cherish very much. It certainly was worthwhile waiting.

I attended City College in New York for sixteen very long years and then became a teacher of technology and mathematics. For almost twenty-five years I enjoyed teaching in the New York City school system. This fulfilled my long-time dream of having success in this land of opportunity where so many others had done so before me.

Thank you America!
In 1958 I was invited to present in a symposium on viruses, at the International Microbiology Congress in Stockholm. This was my first opportunity to visit post-war Warsaw. My wife thought that I should not go, because travel to Poland from the U.S. was rarely undertaken. The seven symposium speakers had all been invited by the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) to come to Warsaw, where Prof. Przesmycki, a Polish microbiologist, had hoped to get all seven to present lectures. Neither Andre Lwoff, Traub, Shope, nor the others accepted, and I was the only one to do so. Instead of leaving after the congress, I decided to visit Poland for four days before the start of the meetings in Sweden. I traveled first to Bratislava and Prague, and went by train to Poland.

Two microbiologists expected my arrival: Drs. Roman Pakula and Tomasz Dobrzański. Neither knew that I spoke Polish nor that I had lived in Poland for 20 years. They spoke in English but a few minutes later I switched to Polish, to their amazement. Neither Pakula nor Dobrzański knew that I was a Jew. I got a room in the Hotel Grant and Prof. Pakula came to take me by car to show me Warsaw. When we arrived at the ruins of the ghetto, only one structure still existed—the Pawiak jail. Not a single house was standing.

There were signs indicating the names of former streets. We came to the monument of the Ghetto Fighters, and Pakula started to explain what had happened to the Jews. Of course, I knew it and I told him that I was Jewish. I also told him that I had several colleagues who had studied with me, but I did not know whether any of them had survived the war. I mentioned Galler and Samuel Fiszman. Pakula replied that Fiszman was well known to him, and that both he and Fiszman once lived together in the same room. “How strange - you, Prof. Pakula, shared a room with a Jew?” I asked. “Of course”. Pakula replied, "I am also a Jew". “If so, what was your "maiden" name, before you changed it to Pakula?”

Pakula told me that he had always been Pakula and that his uncle, by the same name, was living in the Bronx, New York. But he had been Ryven, not Roman Pakula before the war. When I finished my lecture I was at first surrounded by numerous Polish scientists. Suddenly they moved away when a slim man approached and started talking to me.

He stated that he and I had been students in the same high school before the war. "You are mistaken" I said, “because I did not study in a Warsaw high school." To this he replied: “Not in Warsaw, but in Kolomyja”. I did not recognize the man, but, after looking around and seeing that others were a few steps away, he added: “My name now is Dr. Sawicki, but in Kolomyja my name was different. My father was a very poor Jewish tailor and I was the youngest of his eight children.” Then he told me his family’s name and I immediately recalled the boy, four years younger than I, who had a great writing talent. In the high school paper "Nasza Niwa" he had published a moving story about a dog that I still remembered; he was only fourteen at the time. Dr. Sawicki asked me to stop by his house the next day, but I was not sure whether I would have the time for such a visit. He left, and by then only Dr.Tomasz Dobrzański and I were still in the room.

When we walked out, I noticed that Dobrzański had become very silent. “What happened?” I asked. At first he did not reply. It took several minutes before he said, "I did not know that you were a friend of Sawicki". I explained that Sawicki, whom I had not seen since 1934, was in the same high school where I was a student, but I was never his friend. I wondered what was wrong with Sawicki? Again it took a long time before Dobrzański explained that Sawicki had a high position in the communist Polish government where he became feared and hated for jailing numerous university professors whom he accused of capitalist leanings. This job in the Ministry of Education had ended a couple of years earlier, and Sawicki had been ostracized by the scientific community ever since.

The following day I was picked up by a driver and taken in a limo of the Polish Academy to my old Alma Mater, the Agricultural University main building on Rakowiecka Street No. 8. The driver turned to me and explained that he had been ordered by Sawicki to stop en route at Sawicki’s apartment. I had no intention of doing this and told
the driver to proceed directly to SGGW. The old driver stated then that Sawicki no longer was the feared and powerful man he had once been, but that he still had sufficient influence to hurt the driver.

He begged me to visit Sawicki - to do the driver this favor so he would not be harmed by the vicious former education "commissar". I agreed, and we stopped at the apartment house, where Sawicki introduced me to his wife. What he wanted was help in leaving Poland for the United States. When I asked him whether he was a party member, he told me that not only he, but even more so his wife were both very active in the communist party. He added that his life in Poland had become unbearable and that he had decided to leave. I explained that communist party members would not be able to receive immigration visas, and that unfortunately I could not help.

My next stop was at the SGGW, where I was received by the Rector (university President) and several professors. I requested my file and the rector agreed. We found it in the archives, but the thesis, which I submitted in 1938 and which was in the university library, was not handed to me. I was told that it had to remain in Warsaw.

A few years later I was able to have my thesis removed from the Warsaw SGGW library and mailed to me. I was very anxious to get the original, because in 1938 I had not known how to type and my thesis had been typed by Irene Ludwinowska, whom I married a few months later.

Dr. Sawicki was persistent, and he finally succeeded in coming to the U.S. A few years after my visit, Dr. Albert Sabin, the inventor of the live polio vaccine, came to Warsaw, where he lectured. Sabin was born in Lodz, Poland, but at the time of his birth it was still in Tsarist Russia. Therefore, in Sabin’s biography it states that he was born in Russia. He spoke fluent Polish, as well as Russian. After his lecture, Sawicki approached him, and thanks to Sabin’s intervention, an immigration visa was granted by the US Consul in Warsaw. Sawicki became a microbiology professor at the Flower and Fifth Medical School in NYC. We never met in the States and he passed away a few years ago.

A few months after my visit to Warsaw in 1958, Galler escaped from the Soviet Union and arrived in Warsaw, where he found out that I was living in the United States. He decided to go there too, and wrote to me from Warsaw that he would leave for Paris and from there fly to New York. I went to Idlewild (JFK Airport) to expect him.

Driving from the airport to Scarsdale with him, I listened to his story. I was so nervous that I paid no attention to the speed and, at that time 35 mph was the speed limit on the Bronx River Parkway. We were stopped by a motorcycle policeman. “Do you know how fast you were going" he asked. "No" I replied, “I was too nervous.” “Nervous? Why?” I turned to Galler and said, in Polish: “Smile!” When Galler tried to do this and his full set of stainless steel teeth showed, the policeman was stunned.

“What happened to him?” I told the policeman that Galler was in the Soviet Gulag for many years and that we were colleagues and that we had not seen each other since 1938, etc. The policeman let me go without a ticket, saying that he had stopped me at 65 miles/hour. “Drive carefully”, was all he said.

What Galler told me was how, after the ten years, he was confined to Alma Ata in Central Asia, where he was working on constructing buildings. He was stealing three bricks daily and from them he was able to build a house on the outskirts of Alma Ata—his own house, built with his own hands. He wondered whether he did well leaving this house and coming to USA. After Stalin’s death the GPU called him to their office and told him that he was now free to go wherever he wanted. For the 17 years—ten in the Gulag camps and seven in Alma Ata—they handed him 300 rubles. This was the only time he broke down and cried.

Then he began his trip west. He worked in chemical labs and stole platinum wire wherever he could. He accumulated one kilogram of platinum by the time he came to Warsaw. This gave him some cash, and when he sold it, he could continue his trip to the United States. In Scarsdale, he spent a month with us and decided to study further, to get a Ph.D. degree. He was admitted to UC Berkeley, but during the first year suffered a heart attack. We invited him to stay with us, and he spent several weeks recovering in our home.

Irene suggested that, instead of getting his Ph.D. degree in chemistry, he should start library studies, because the work later would be easier physically. Galler did not consider the work of a librarian as “reputable”, but he took Irene’s advice and got the degree in library science. He worked until his retirement as a librarian in Oakland, California.
Tayere khaznte,


Ikh bin geven gliklekh fun undzer batsiung [relationship]. Ober letstns, iz mir nimes [tiresome/bored] gevorn. Mir zenen farkrokhn in a lokh [stuck…], vi an alt khasene-gehate porl [old married couple], khotsh mir zenen bloyz 27 un 33 yor alt. Ikh trakht az s’iz shoyn tsayt [it is time already] ikh zol zikh tsesheydn [separate] mit im, ober efsher hob ikh a toes [mistaken]. Vi meynt ir [What is your opinion]?

Nimes gevorn


==

Tayere khaznte,

Mayn tate hot keyn mol nisht geredt vegn zayne iberlebungen beysn khurbm [experiences during the holocaust] un me hot undz gelernt im nihts fregn vegn dem.

Itst geyt es barg arop mitn tatns gezunt [health declining]. Bederekh-klal [in general] iz er bay di klore gedanken [clear-headed], ober amol vert er tsemisht un heybt on tsu redn oyf yidish, ruft mikh bay zayn shveters nomen.

Mir zenen frier keyn mol nisht geven azoy naygerik [curious] tsu visn vegn zayn khurbm geshikhke, ober haynt halt ikh [however, today I believe…], az di tsayt iz gekumen ven me darf dos hern. Mayn bruder un shvester zenen niht maskem [don’t agree] un haltn me zol im lozn tsuru [leave him alone].

Vos halt ir iz mervikhtik [important] – tsu visn vos s’iz geshen [happened], oder tsu lozn undzer tatn tsuru?

Tsvyeter dor [second generation]

Tayerer tsveyter dor,

Mir dakht, az aza bashlus [decision] ken ayer tate nokh alts aleyn makhn kozlman [as long as] er iz baym zinen [sane]. Ir un ayer bruder un shveter muzn zogn ayer tatn klore diburim [not mince words]; im dertseyln az di mishpokhe geshikhke iz viikhtik [family history…important] far aykh, un ir vilt visn fun vanen er shtamt […]origin], vegn zayne kinder yorn, un ver iz geven in der mishpokhe far der milhomke [family before the war], un azoy vayter.

Oyb s’iz im tsu shver aykh tsu dertseyln, volt im efsher laykhter geven [perhaps it would be easier] zi tsu dertseyln an andern menshtn fun der fremd [someone else], velkher ken zayn geshikhke oytshapn oyf video [capture on…]. Zol ayer tate zikh meyashev zayn [your father should reflect]. Ikh hof az er vet bashlins [I hope that he will decide] aykh tsu dertseyln zayn lebns-geshikhke [to tell his life story].
Received in a Yiddish speaking-and-reading home by parents who were radical garment shop workers and a Yiddish-only nanny as his

started at the fabled Bronx afternoon kindershul No. 1 at age 5, already able to read both Yiddish and English. His supplemental Secular Jewish education continued through the college-level School for Teachers and Higher Jewish Education (hekhere kursn), earning dual degrees in Yiddish education and journalism — a distinction he shared with the late May Stein, the young woman who would later become his wife for 44 years.

His journalism training led to his becoming the first-ever native born Yiddish newspaper reporter (morgn frayhayt —Morning Freedom) and his education degree brought him back to his alma mater as an instructor, and to his now 55-year career leading Secular Jewish Sunday schools on Long Island, NY and in Los Angeles. He has been Principal and Education Director of The Sholem Community, L.A., and its school since 1967.

Sholem’s annual Adult Seminars, which he leads, including this year’s series on Yiddish literature, have been co-sponsored by the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism and SoCal Arbeter Ring (Workmen’s Circle). See http://www.sholem.org.

Although he has never taught Yiddish language (“a skill I never mastered,” he says), Hershl writes the Der Vortsman column in YidBits, the on-line newsletter of Yiddishkayt, answering readers’ queries about Yiddish words and phrases and campaigning for the use of the YIVO Standard in English transliteration. His columns are archived at Yiddishkayt.org, among which one may find a .gif of his “Guide To Spelling Yiddish Words in English,” based on the Standard.

Hershl’s most Yiddish-intense activity is as a professional Yiddish/English/Yiddish translator and telephone interpreter. In addition to hundreds of handwritten letters, he’s translated a journal scrawled by Isaac Bashevis Singer; several published novels and autobiographies; chapters of yizker bikher (memorial volumes); poet Itsik Manger’s Megile; and scores of poems and song lyrics, especially those by victims of the khurbn (devastation, holocaust) and of Stalinism. Unlike many others, he strives to translate Yiddish poetry in its original meter and rhyme, so that the reader can fully appreciate the poet’s talent. His translation of two chapters of Mendele Moykher Sforim’s autobiographical novel, Shloyme reb Khayims, not previously available in English, can be read at: http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/slutsk/slu388.html#Page397

As a Certified Secular Jewish vegvayzer/Leader, Hartman officiates at weddings and other life-cycle events, creates holiday ceremonies for use in community and family settings — almost always including Yiddish poetry in the original and translation — and trains others to take up that role. He has just convened the second three-year course of twice-monthly seminars in advanced Jewish studies, “The Secular Yeshiva.”

Hershl is listed as an editor with Harvey Pekar and Paul Buhle in the graphic book Yiddishkeit: Jewish Vernacular & The New Land, which includes some of his translations and a 3-page comic strip rendering of high points in his life. The Sholem Community often has reprinted his brochures on the Jewish New Year Festival and the Khanuka Festival — For the Rest of Us, as well as his Sholem Family Hagada.

Hartman is a member of the Executive Board of the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations, was on the National Executive Board of the Arbeter Ring and serves on the District Committee of SoCal Arbeter Ring.

“Just to fill up some spare time,” he agreed to take on writing a column on Secular Jewish culture—Yiddish, especially—for the distinguished quarterly magazine, Jewish Currents www.jewishcurrents.org. He was editorial assistant at that magazine’s predecessor, Jewish Life, back in the 1950s and wrote a monthly column there in the ’60s.
REVIEW

In Part I, I stressed the importance of continuing on an ever more determined basis the translation of Yiddish works, not just literature per se, but all forms of Yiddish writings, including non-fiction works. This is not to say that all Yiddish texts ever written should be translated. There are “experts”, or “those in the know”, who might be able to suggest to us what our priorities should be, but such a list of priorities is generally a subjective matter, as are most such lists. Ultimately, a volunteer translator will choose what is valuable to them and choose that to translate; a paid translator simply will translate what someone is willing to pay for. This is a matter of course.

At the current time and for the foreseeable future, there simply won’t be enough volunteers or paid translators to do all the work that needs to be done. It appears that such organizations as the Yiddish Book Center, the Arbeter-Ring and YIVO, as well as other educational institutions are offering courses in Yiddish language, which is all well and good. However, the question then arises to what end will the student be studying Yiddish, and after completing their studies, what purpose will it serve?

It is my fervent hope that each such student will find whatever Yiddish-language work appeals to him or her and translate that piece, for it is when a person is most enthused about their chosen task that they will do their best work.

Then the question arises, “How can be best increase enthusiasm, not just of students of Yiddish, but of the masses as a whole, the potential audience, each of whom is a potential translator of Yiddish works?”

LIVING LANGUAGES

When one speaks of a “living language”, the implication is that the language is “modern” and evolving, and is spoken regularly by the population of an existing culture. On the other hand, Yiddish is often deemed a “dead language”, because it is neither spoken nor read regularly by the majority of any particular population, although there are segments of the world’s population who still speak it. In a declining, native Yiddish-speaking world, Yiddish is still trying to find its place, or at a minimum resisting its purported demise. Yiddish was the language spoken and read most commonly among European Jews, though in such countries as Hungary, it was not the dominant language among Jews.

Thus Yiddish was indeed a “living language” in pre-World War II Europe (and elsewhere) because there existed a vast Jewish population who spoke it, and it was thus a vital part of Jewish culture and expression. Yiddish was used daily among neighbors, friends and within the family unit. For many it was a daily ritual to read a Yiddish-language newspaper. Many journals and periodic editions were written in Yiddish. Jewish novelists, playwrights, and journalists wrote creative works of both fiction and non-fiction. It was a “living language” because it was spoken and read by the greatest Jewish population that has been in existence in modern history.

The Holocaust, of course, did the greatest damage to Yiddish culture and language; assimilation within the non-Jewish secular world has also been a significant factor. Not only is Yiddish not spoken within most segments of our population, but also a general awareness of Yiddish culture, history, etc. often wanes once we reach adulthood. For many of us, we then make our way into the secular, non-Yiddish speaking world. So one question to be asked is, “What can we do in such a word to increase awareness and inspire others to make a commitment to Yiddish in its many forms, to make it more a part of their lives?”

RECREATING A YIDDISH WORLD

We cannot literally go back in time. Vos iz geven iz geven, as they say, “What is gone, is gone”. I am reminded of the movie “The Time Machine” where actor Rod Taylor sat in his time machine outside a store with a mannequin in a window, where her clothes changed rapidly as he passed through time.

If we could do this, we could undoubtedly travel back in time and truly visit any place or time in Jewish history. We could walk among our Jewish masses and experience our world as it once existed and reinvigorate our yidishkayt (we could relive our youth, assuming we’d want to). However, since we cannot do so we can only employ our imagination and act in positive ways as Jews that will have meaning both to us and to others. All we can do is utilize our mind, our sense, and this will allow us to create images from our memories. If history is the study of past events, then each of us must learn more fully how to appreciate and embrace our
history, not only our own but that of our family and Jewish history as a whole.

If we can learn how to embrace history and inspire others to do so, we can recreate a version of our former Yiddish world, though in a virtual way. By working to achieve this goal, we will at the same time increase our own awareness and Jewish identity. As we augment our base of knowledge, we will more fully appreciate our own culture and the experiences of those who came before us. By ‘touching’ our own history, we will become more aware of the beautiful aspects of the Yiddish world that once existed.

Hopefully we will be drawn deeper into this world, feel good about it and thirst to learn and do more. We will want to familiarize ourselves to a greater extent with Yiddish culture, e.g. read more literature written by our Jewish authors, journalists and playwrights. Each positive experience we have adds to the image we have of our past Yiddish world and brings us closer to it and helps recreate the past, at least in our own minds.

WHAT’S BEING DONE

There are well-known and not-so-well-known organizations and groups who offer programs, as well as other opportunities, to learn not just Yiddish language, but history, literature and the like. Here I shall mention one, and continue this once again in Part III of this article.

THE YIDDISH BOOK CENTER

The Yiddish Book Center is one such organization, which represents the future (and preservation) of Yiddish culture, literature, translation, etc. Founded by Aaron Lansky, the Center has saved many Yiddish books from the dustbins of obscurity and made them available online, free for all to see, at the Internet Archive at www.archive.org. The Center also offers Yiddish-language books for sale, either as used copies or as reprints, all at reasonable prices. Importantly, they have a beautiful building in Amherst, Mass. in which they offer lectures, courses, and workshops in Yiddish language and culture. They currently offer a free, seven-week summer course in Yiddish language and culture for high school juniors and seniors. One can only hope that such courses will be offered by many other such institutions in the not-so-distant future, especially those that come tuition-free, though obviously funding can be an issue. The Center also offers their “Wexler Oral History Project”, which “explores the question, ‘Why Learn Yiddish?’ In this compilation of interviews, teachers, students, scholars, and performing artists discuss their reasons for learning the language, the joys along the way, and the access they have gained to a new world in the process.”

What also is new at the Center is their joint project with the Montreal Jewish Public Library to digitize more than 1,500 hours of reel-to-reel tapes for their audio library. Included in this collection are some precious recordings in which Yiddish writers read from their own works. At least initially, English subtitles have been added to the Yiddish audio.

Those of us who are Yiddish lovers should very much admire Aaron, his staff, and supporters for the work they do. They realize the importance of interesting the younger generation in the joys of Yiddish. Visiting the Yiddish Book Center is also recommended (if not in person, then online). For the Yiddish lover, it is like a child going into a candy store. So much to choose from!

THE YIVO INSTITUTE OF JEWISH RESEARCH

Having visited YIVO (15. W. 16th Street, New York, New York), or rather the Center for Jewish History building in which YIVO is housed, I can attest to the fact that this organization, as well as the others that exist there, i.e. the Center for Jewish History, the Leo Baeck Institute, etc., hold a treasure of all-things Yiddish. It must be visited, when possible, by every lover of Yiddish. YIVO originated in Vilna, Poland (not Lithuania) in 1925. It was founded in order to preserve the history and culture of Ashkenazi Jewry. It has been in New York City since 1940 and is the number one source for Jewish Eastern European Studies in the world, whether it be about Yiddish language or literature and the like. It holds nearly 400,000 volumes, and its Archive contains millions of pieces of material, e.g. manuscripts, documents, photos, sound recordings, etc.

YIVO is not just a repository of Yiddish material, but they also offer interesting lectures and other cultural events. Importantly, for this topic of discussion, it offers classes in Yiddish and adult education, which includes a six-week intensive summer program, not to mention opportunities for all of us to conduct research to our heart’s content.

Sadly, there are so many thousands of books and other pieces of text that have never been translated into English, which means that without a concerted push to educate a dedicated army of volunteer translators, so many of these Yiddish-language texts will forever remain on their shelves, or sitting in boxes within their Archive, only useful to those of us who can read Yiddish.

See the concluding part III next month.
Yiddish Teaching Fellowship

A two-year teaching fellowship is offered promoting Yiddish Language and Literature and support for the first year Yiddish Language Course. It builds upon an existing relationship between the University of Manitoba, Gray Academy, and the I. L. Peretz Folk School Endowment Trust. The teaching fellowship is created to support the teaching and promotion of the Yiddish language and literature in Winnipeg.

Since 2002, the university and academy have worked together, along with support from the I. L. Peretz Folk School Endowment Trust, to support an instructor for the intermediate and senior-level high school class, and a six-unit first year university course. Student numbers have grown to nearly fifty in the high school classes and, until this year, have averaged nearly twenty in the university course.

Securing a qualified instructor capable of teaching a range of students is vital for the continuation of the growth that has been achieved and to more fully support and develop Yiddish language instruction.

Teaching Fellowship

A search for a graduate-level instructor is being conducted by Professor Ben Baader of the University of Manitoba in cooperation with Gray Academy. The ideal candidate will be a recent graduate of a Yiddish language and culture Ph.D. program or an advanced (ABD) Ph.D. student with a commitment to the promotion and preservation of the Yiddish language.

Engaged for two years beginning in the fall of 2012, the Fellow will teach both high school classes at Gray Academy and launch a second year Yiddish language and literature course at the University of Manitoba. The first year Introductory Yiddish course will continue to be taught by the existing instructor.

The Teaching Fellow will outreach to the Jewish community. This fellowship will address the need for qualified Yiddish language instruction, and increase the status of Yiddish in Winnipeg.

For additional information:
Dr. Benjamin Baader, Assoc. Prof. of History and Co-Coordinator of Judaic Studies
(204) 474-9150 - baader@cc.umanitoba.ca
http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/department/s/judaic_studies

Generation Y – 18 to 30 Year Olds
By Philip “Fishl” Kutner

Let’s call Generation Y, Generation Yiddish. Maybe this one will see the wisdom of remembering the hardships and the beauty in the language and culture of the ones that came to foreign shores for a better future for themselves and their families.

What is this bit of generation names? When I was a preteen and still living in the Bronx, our family belonged to Papa’s landsmanshaft, The Glovner Young Men’s Benevolent Society, Inc. It was founded January 21, 1924 and the list of founding members includes my father and his father. Absent are the names of my two paternal uncles who were much more “Americanized”. The name Glovner refers to the town Glowno in Polish, and it is not far from Łódź.

Today it still exists as only a burial society with plots on Long Island. However, I remember our entire family went to two major annual events. There was the Picnic in the Park and the Chanukah Party, and that was what they were called.

All three generations attended. I went with Mama, Papa, my younger twin brothers (Mama had 3 boys in 53 weeks), Grandma Kutner. That’s what we called Papa’s folks. Mama’s parents were Zeyde and Bobe. That was because Papa’s folks spoke English, and Mama’s folks spoke only Yiddish.

The “great” was rare. I was too young to remember Zeyde’s Mama, and she was too old to know that I existed. Today we live longer and still have our “marbles”. Kids are much smarter at an earlier age. I am not only able to recognize my ur-eynikl, but am also able to enjoy our little Lyla Sophia.

This is an example of a list of classified generations.

- The Lost Generation fought in World War I.
- The Greatest Generation, the G.I. Generation, veterans who fought in World War II.
- The Silent Generation born 1925 to 1945, were children of the Great Depression.
- The Baby Boom Generation was a demographic bulge that rejected traditional values.
- The Generation X born after the baby boomers.
- The Generation Y, the Millennial Generation, came of age at the turn of the century.
- The Generation Z, aka Internet Generation.
Kh’ob gemakht a toes
by Philip “Fishl” Kutner

Ikh bin zikher az di name hot gezogt: “Ikh zol azy visn fun azelkhe...” (plural) nit “fun aza...” (singular).

Hershl Hartman, Los Angeles, hershl@earthlink.net

Hershl, thanks, thanks un nokh a mol thanks. How often have we heard about people being afraid to speak Yiddish because of being afraid to make an error. When some caring person takes the time to correct you in a positive way, it is indeed a mitsve.

Fishl was raised on a chicken farm on the Hunterdon Plateau in New Jersey where the only other Jewish boys were his brothers. There was no mitlshul and the only Yiddish heard was what Mama spoke.

So, dear readers, redt yidish, correct others (in a balebatish veg) be thankful that others think enough of you to want to help. It’s like helping the proverbial “little old lady” cross the street.

No, the error was not made on purpose. If the message comes across, then it’s like making “lemonade out of a lemon”.

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- Please make checks for chai, payable to Der Bay. If you’ve been blessed, please do send a LITTLE extra. Label date is when you LAST contributed.
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- Listings in Der Internatsionaler Kalendar in the hardcopy and the website are free.
- Send a notice of Yiddish club meetings, lectures, classes, a DVD release, or gigs.
Yidiphiles – Lovers of Yiddish

Water Over the Dam

It means something has happened and nothing can be done about it. The bottom line is, forget about it, and move on.

My thoughts are completely the opposite and that water over the dam represents a real challenge of unutilized energy. Falling water has power. The force of falling water can be harnessed to turn turbines to create electricity or power machines. The higher the waterfall, the greater is the force produced. This is waterpower in its basic form. Some people even think of harnessing the tidal flow to capture its energy.

The current thinking of the majority of our “Jewish brethren” is, that Yiddish is passé, “Water over the Dam”. What we need to do is emphasize Hebrew and put Yiddish in the category of Aramaic. Readers of Der Bay are Yidiphiles (lovers of Yiddish). We know that the rich heritage of our Eastern European ancestors is only at the precipice of the waterfall in its quantity of translated material. The rich tapestry of poetry, literature, theater, and music is a treasure worth a pirate’s ransom.

So how can we take the Yiddish water that is locked behind this Hebrew dam and have it surge over the top. We need only to raise the level of our effort a small amount to have this overflow. It has been said that water just below the boiling point has little power; however, raising it that single degree converts it into steam and releases all that pent-up energy to turn turbines to power our electrical grid. It’s that easy.

Changes in Der Bay

It has become more and more evident that the need for translating our rich storehouse of Ashkenazi material has reached a boiling point or ready to be water over the dam.

The marvelous Yiddish Book Center recently had a “conclave” and compiled a list of translators.

Der Bay for a long time had a page on its website entitled, “Yiddish Translators & Suggestions for Translation Jobs.” First there od s discussion of six caveats that both the translator and the “translatee” need to consider in order to avoid problems with disagreements. These were compiled from the painful experiences learned by others.

This is followed by an updated list of translators with their contact information and divided into U.S., Canada and overseas. Go to Der Bay’s homepage, www.derbay.org and click on the first item on the left column listing 29 areas of Yiddish. If your friends haven’t signed up for the abbreviated edition (free), encourage them to do so.

To place greater emphasis in this area Der Bay’s “editorial staff” has unanimously agreed that we:

• Form the IAYT, the International Association of Yiddish Translators with the website www.iaoyt.org to act as a clearinghouse for translators and jobs.

• Der Bay will become a bimonthly and increase the amount of coverage in the free online version where the readership has been skyrocketing.
Marcia Gruss Levinsohn – Yiddish Educator of the Month

Academic Background includes; a Master of Education degree in Human Development from the University of Maryland with emphasis in Early Childhood Education, YIVO’s summer Yiddish intensive at Columbia University, NYC, Yiddish Book Center’s Amherst, MA weekend Seminars, the Workmen’s Circle Yiddish Teacher Seminars in NYC, and study with the late Rochelle Shusterman at the Rockville JCC, Dr. Max Tictin at the District of Columbia Community Center, the late Dr. Dorothy Bilik, and Professor Miriam Isaacs at the University of Maryland.

Marcia’s teaching experience includes; Director / Teacher in CO-OP Nursery Schools, lecturer in Early Childhood Education, Practicum with Workshop at Montgomery College MD, Chaim Weizmann Yiddish/Hebrew Folk Shule, teaching beginning Yiddish, literature, and crafts. She is a board member of Yiddish of Greater Washington and was chairperson of the (old) CAJE Yiddish network.

She offers workshops at NewCAJE, (with a granddaughter). With her late husband, Maurice, she hosted a Yiddish radio program. They founded the J.E.W. (Jewish Educational Workshop), and hosted two weekly “Mishpokhe Yiddish” classes for three to six year-olds, and an after-school program at the Hebrew Day Institute, and presented Yiddish puppet shows and workshops for children 3 to 103 years young. (Senior Centers, Public Libraries, Ethnic Fairs, JCCs, etc.)

J.E.W. hosts a weekly Yiddish Leynkrayz in Leisure World, Silver Spring, MD and conversation classes at Riderwood as well as at the Har Tzion Senior Nutrition site.

They have produced three Yiddish picture books, as well as a thirty-minute to one-hour-long program using each of these stories. We can include related songs and crafts with each program. The first is "Goldylocks Apologizes" on the theme of Rosh Hashone-Yom Kippur, a "puppet show" with foot-tall stuffed bears "acting out" the story on a set that fits onto a card table.

Second is our Yiddish translation of Eric Carle's "The Very Hungry Caterpillar," which is told with props and related crafts.

"Der Retekh, Khreyn af Pesakh," is third. It is the Yiddish version of the old Russian tale, "The Great, Big, Enormous Turnip" and the Israeli tale, "The Tremendous Carrot". This utilizes six audience participants who mime as it is told in Yiddish.

We also have a play, "Di Goldene keyt," in which audience/participants (teen through adult) can take turns reading the parts. "Di Goldene keyt" features five characters and a chorus composed of everyone who sings several popular Yiddish songs. Words in Yiddish and transliteration are supplied.

The "fee" for these presentations is a donation to The Jewish Educational Workshop (not for profit) in the amount of whatever you would like to give. One hundred percent of the donations to the JEW are used to cover the cost of producing various materials for beginning Yiddish learners. Donations have enabled us to publish our books and we are working on a fourth book, "Yentele, Royt-Mentele," where Little Red Riding Hood brings Purim "shalokh mones" to her "bobe" living on the other side of the woods. The "puppet show" of the story is ready and waiting to be enjoyed.

We can create a program to fit your needs. Would you like to know how to read Yiddish when you already know Hebrew? This is a great presentation for post Bar and Bat Mitzvah teens and adults. Would you like to learn about Yiddish websites?

Elterbobe mashinkie presented at Century Village’s Yiddish Vinkl, and in Coconut Creek’s Hebrew Academy where children and staff enjoyed, "der zeyer hungiker opfreser". The kindergarteners thanked her by singing "Tumbalalayka" and "Afn Pripetshik". Marcia had the pleasure of learning Yiddish on her Bobe Sarah’s lap. "Bobe Sarah passed the "goldene-keyt" on to her and it is her privilege to share this treasure with you."

Marcia can be reached at: mashinkeg@verizon.net
Chayale Ash-Fuhrman
As Told to Her Daughter Chana Taradalsky

My name is Chayale Ash-Fuhrman and I remember Czemowitz very well. As the daughter of the Yiddish actors, Polia and Abram Ash (Ash was their artistic and theatrical name), I traveled extensively throughout Europe from the early 1920's till World War II broke out.

We toured and performed in Yiddish in many cities, towns, and villages. In Czernowitz we performed many times. From the first day of my life, as a tiny baby, I was shlept around with my parent’s Theater group, from shtetl to shtetl, little towns, big towns. We traveled in covered wagons.

At the age of 2, I had a non-speaking part in a play, and got hooked. I loved the applause! By the age of 6, I had my first speaking part as the youngest daughter in “Tevye”, and as Shiomale in the play "Kiddush Hashem" by Sholom Asch. By the age of 10, I became officially part of the theatrical troupe.

My father was an artist, set designer, and an actor. My mother had a sweet soprano voice. With my brother Jacob and my parents, I toured the years prior to the war. Czernowitz was one of our favorite stops. Since it was such a huge Jewish cultural center, Yiddish actors and writers frequented the city and brought productions of highest quality to the Yiddish speaking audiences.

I am enclosing 2 photos from those early years. Photo #1 - was taken in 1930. I was 10 and my brother was 8. My Parents Polia and Abram Ash are posing with a group of actors in Czernowitz.

Photo #2 - was taken in 1931 in Czernowitz. The troupe is from the play "Mazel-Tov" by Sholem Aleichem. Abram Ash was the director. I was 11 years old in this picture.

Editor’s note: Two Communication arts students from Stanford University approached Chayale and Fishl to be in a video that they chose to make for a class project. The boy was Jewish, but the girl was not. They chose to interview Chayale for most of the time, and to a lesser extent, Fishl alone, and then for a period of time with some of his students.

This great interview can be found on YouTube online under the title of Yiddish Is.

Chayale Took Her Last Bow

It always is sad to lose a dear friend, but when the play is over, the curtain goes down—both the actors and the audience leave Theater Earth. Chayale has gone home.

A search of Der Bay shows 21 references to Chayale. It all started at Circle Lodge when Chayale was there one summer and Fishl attended a Workmen’s Circle NEB meeting. It was a mutual friendship that was to last to the end.

While it was heartbreaking to see this Yiddish Helen Hayes lose her speech, she never lost her regal manner. The hardest part was getting reports from her devoted daughter, Chana, who was the caregiver that all parents pray to have.

In November 2002, Chayale wrote to Fishl, “Oyb du darfst mayn hilf oyf der teme yidish teater literatur un yidishse shrayber vegn yidishn humor, bin ikh shtendik greyt dir helfn. Yidishe aktivitetn darfn vos mer hilf un vege dem bin ikh shtendik tsufridn tsu arbetn. Chayale Ash-Furman, San Jose, CA”

It is these fond memories that remain of articles to which she was the source of information. Like other previous giants; Mordkhe Schaechter, Itche Goldberg, Zelig Bach, Iz Kugler, and Lilke Majzner, Chayale was a giver always ready to help when it came for a Yiddish cause.

Fishl’s favorite has been Yiddish Geography—in 2005. “Chayale Ash mentioned these places.

Bessarabia from Russia. Today this region is the country of Moldova.
Bukovina from Austria. It straddles SW Ukraine and NE Romania.
Transylvania from Hungary. It is in the west central part of Romania.
Dobrogea from Turkey. It is between the Black Sea and the Danube River (the second largest river in Europe next to the Volga).

Finally, Fishl wrote in Yiddishe Whistler’s Mother, “Speak to me in Yiddish, Mama. I remember how you drawled my name so that it sounded like Fi’she-le, Fi’she-le. When Chayale calls and she says it the same way, a chill and goose bumps cover my skin.
It was a sunny Friday afternoon in February, 19 years ago, when I arrived in Kansas City, Missouri. It took us two weeks to go from Bremerhaven, Germany, to New Orleans, Louisiana. We didn’t mind the long trip; we were glad to reach the United States after we spent six years in a DP camp in Germany. I had learned how to fix radios in an ORT course.

My cousin found a job for me in a place where they specialized in fixing car radios. It was a long store with benches on one side. The customer drove in and while he was relaxing or reading the paper, we fixed the radio. I knew how to fix radios, but I had language difficulties. When a customer spoke to me, I didn’t understand what he was saying. I couldn’t take a message when the telephone rang. Many times, the caller hung up when I asked him to repeat whatever he was trying to say.

I knew that my job would not last long. I was right. On Saturday, the owner paid me my weekly wage of $34 and told me that I could not work there any longer. I asked him why I was being fired, and he told me that I had to improve my English.

Before I left, the owner told me to look for another job in a place that also specialized in car radios about three blocks down the street. He promised me that he would talk to the owner. On Monday morning I was in the new place ready and willing to work. The owner told me that he would give me a chance in order to find out how much I knew about radios. It was a smaller store than the other.

He didn’t have to wait long. A customer drove in complaining that his radio had just stopped playing when he reached the city limits. I was told to take care of it. Somehow, I was always under the impression that the more somebody knows, the fewer questions he asks. I decided not to ask questions and I opened the front door. I lay down on the floor in order to check the radio. That particular radio consisted of two parts instead of one. I had never fixed that kind of radio before. The two parts of the radio were installed on the firewall instead of the dashboard. Two cables ran from the dashboard to the radio. The radio was dead. After checking the fuse, which turned out to be all right, I decided that the radio had to be removed from the car in order to be fixed.

At that moment, the owner, Mr. Smith, asked me, “How are you doing. Without hesitation, I answered, “I’m doing all right.” I also said that the radio had to come out. He said go ahead. Now, my troubles began. I did not know how to remove the cables from the radio. A cold sweat covered my face. My job depended on this repair. I thought if I asked how to remove the radio, Mr. Smith would fire me. I had to decide quickly what to do. My whole body was sweaty from worrying.

After trying unsuccessfully to pull out the cables, I decided to remove them from the dashboard. I removed the two bolts that held the radio to the firewall—the radio fell down. I was about to take the radio to the bench when Mr. Smith walked in. He saw what I had done and became hysterical. He said, “Why didn’t you ask me how to remove the cables?” All I had to do was to twist the cables to remove them from the radio.

He told the bookkeeper to pay me. I had earned only one dollar and twenty cents. Heartbroken, I left the store. I knew tailoring, and had worked about a year helping my father in Poland. I could have acquired a job as an operator, but I decided to continue fixing radios and learn how to repair televisions because electronics fascinated me. After all, I had more experience now. I knew how to remove the cables from a car radio.

Returning to my first employer I told him what had happened. I said I would even work for less than a dollar an hour, for I was still single and didn’t need much money. He said he would start me off with seventy-five cents an hour—I was overwhelmed with joy.

My English steadily improved. I went to night school four nights a week. I tried to do my best. I never had to ask for a raise. Mr. Smith always raised my salary. At the end of the first year, my hourly salary was $1.50 an hour. The following summer, I had a week’s vacation and took off another week in order to see New York City. Realizing New York was a city of opportunities, and I decided to stay there. I have never regretted my decision. New York has been very good to me. I got married and raised a family of professionals. I had a good job though in a different field.
Preserving The Jewish Legacy
A Perspective on the Future of Yiddish Translation in a Modern and Technological World
Part III: Hopes and Dreams of a Strong and Vibrant Yiddish World
by Steven Lasky, Founder and Director, Museum of Family History

REVIEW

In this last part of my article on preserving Jewish legacy and the Yiddish language, I’d like to continue a short discussion of institutions and organizations that offer opportunities for further Yiddish learning, as well as how I, the founder of the online Museum of Family History, have worked with diligence and great determination to work toward this goal, with the hope and dream of reinvigorating the interest and appreciation of our collective Jewish history. Lastly, I will offer a few suggestions for all to consider.

THE ARBETER RING (WORKMEN’S CIRCLE)

The Arbeter Ring, with multiple locations, offers courses “ranging in topic from cultural study of Jewish traditional texts, to the history of Jewish progressive movements, to Yiddish language and literature and conversation groups.”

They also have choruses that sing Yiddish music, and they even sponsor free summer concerts and music festivals.

YIDDISH EDUCATION IN HEBREW SCHOOLS

I cannot speak factually as to whether the Yiddish language, in general, is being taught in Hebrew schools to pre-bar and pre-bat mitzvahs, and if so, to what degree. Wouldn’t it be nice if they were not only taught how to read, translate, and speak Yiddish (at least in its rudimentary forms), so they would at an early age be exposed to the language and hopefully be shown how beautiful and meaningful it is? Perhaps within a particular curriculum there could be opportunities to recite Yiddish poetry within the classroom, as well as a period of discussion, or perhaps a class could participate in an in-class reading of a Yiddish play. Nothing would stand in the way of such invaluable experiences if those in charge could be made to believe that the Yiddish language must be preserved, that it must be introduced in a positive way, with imagination, to our children while they are very young and impressionable.

SUGGESTIONS

It is my fervent hope that many other institutions will offer tuition-free courses in Yiddish culture and translation; this will strongly encourage those with an interest to take up this cause. Of course it is easier to do this when an organization has sufficient funding to do so. Teachers need to be paid, so it is necessary that those of us who can afford to give, donate to such organizations and institutions, perhaps sponsoring as individuals or as part of a group programs where some aspect of Yiddish is taught.

Perhaps some programs could offer a certificate to each student upon their completion of it, e.g. in Yiddish translation, with the proviso that, since they are receiving this education gratis, they sign an agreement promising to translate Yiddish material (which material to be translated to be determined by the sponsor) for a specified period of time (for low wages or gratis). Then, afterwards, their names could be added to a master list of translators, detailing their translation experience, availability, etc. Then they would have the opportunity to work as a paid translator and derive some income from their further work. What kind of courses and what content these courses would contain, and how long a student must study, etc., must be determined by those more qualified than I.

One type of program could have as its goal to teach their students to be a “decent” translator, albeit not a “professional” one. This suggestion will undoubtedly be controversial to some. This is not to say that an organization shouldn’t also offer longer programs that “graduate” students who are more proficient, whose work would likely be more worthy of the money that might be paid to them.

This goes back to an earlier point I made in Part I of this article, where I suggested that less-trained translators be encouraged to translate works that don’t need the precision that more literary works might require. What the parameters of the “decent translator” courses should be, in practical terms, can be established if this suggestion is to be seriously put into action.

THE MUSEUM OF FAMILY HISTORY

I have not written this three-part article in order to promote my museum, though I wish that many more people around the world could be made aware of it and could be encouraged to pay it a visit. It is simply that I feel strongly about preserving Jewish history, in all its many facets, lest our knowledge of it get lost over time due to
apathy, or perhaps more tragically, due to a lack of awareness of all that is out there, available, just waiting to be appreciated and savored.

Saying this, let me nevertheless tell you how I have, for the past seven years (since the launching of my website), tried to practice what I preach. How have I put into practice my philosophy that a language (such as Yiddish) can only stay vibrant and viable if the culture from which it takes its fuel flourishes as well? There is certainly no great rush to make Yiddish more visible in books or spoken outside the classroom, home, school, etc., though I wish I could tell you otherwise. In the absence of Yiddish being spoken and read en masse and being taught enthusiastically to our children, we nevertheless need to continue translating Yiddish works, making them easily available to all. We must also find some way to make Yiddish more a part of our popular culture, if this is possible, so that knowing Yiddish would be considered “fashionable”, so that even non-Yiddish speakers could be exposed to it, so that more people might learn to appreciate the Yiddish word and thought.

More than a year ago, I began the largest project I have ever undertaken for the Museum of Family History, i.e. the translation of Zalmen Zylbercweig’s “Lexicon of the Yiddish Theatre”, a work that exists in seven volumes (six published). In all, there are more than 2,800 individual biographies (and group histories) within these tomes, most about those men and women who were once involved in some aspect of Yiddish theatre—not just actors and actresses, but playwrights, journalists, prompters, etc.

I chose this project because of my love for the Yiddish language and theatre and my admiration for all the Jewish men and women who chose to become involved in this field. Not only will I be presenting translations, but also excerpts and full airings of the Yiddish-language radio programs that Zylbercweig and his wife Celia presented weekly during the 1950s and 60s, broadcast out of the studio that they built in the back of their home in the Fairfax area of Los Angeles, California. By doing all of this, I will be presenting and promoting important aspects of “modern” Jewish culture, i.e. Yiddish theatre and radio. I am attempting to preserve Jewish cultural history by taking my audience back in time, rebroadcasting dozens of Yiddish-language program segments that would otherwise fall into oblivion. My wish is to present both the Yiddish and the English translations of these programs, but in the absence of volunteers to assist me in translating the Yiddish audio into English, this is impossible, and often only Yiddish will be available for one’s “listening pleasure”. By presenting histories of the famous and not-so-famous Yiddish personalities, I am keeping our memory of them alive, while at the same time allowing the listener to learn more about their lives, both in the personal and professional arenas.

There is really much more to the Museum of Family History’s Yiddish World than just the Zylbercweig presentations. I expect to announce the initial stages of my Zylbercweig online exhibitions soon, so please visit the Museum at www.museumoffamilyhistory.com when you have the time, and you will be able to share in this wonderful journey that I have created for you, my fellow lovers of our Yiddish world.

Within the confines of my virtual (Internet-only) museum, there is so much more ready for your perusal. Among other features, I have tried to create a memorial to our collective Jewish history, featuring exhibitions about life in pre-World War II Europe, life after the war, immigration, Jewish life in America and the like. The museum has arguably the largest collection of online photographs of world Holocaust memorials and former European synagogues. So please explore the museum at your leisure (and don’t be afraid to volunteer your time to help me in whatever way you can). I try to show what Jewish life was like, is like today, and could be if only.... An important characteristic of my online museum is that I ask the public to participate in my work, so that in this sense it is a “people’s museum”. I give everyone the opportunity to preserve the memories of their own family and Jewish culture as a whole.

CONCLUSION

Hopes and dreams of a strong and vibrant Yiddish world.... Yiddish is a beautiful language that is worth preserving and nurturing in all its forms. While interest in the language is greatest in only a small percentage of the overall Jewish population, it is up to us to try to make it relevant to others in the world, to members of our families, to ourselves. We cannot force anyone to love the language (let alone become a translator), but we can encourage them to learn and enjoy the language, via the reading and understanding of literature, a Yiddish newspaper article, a song, a poem, etc. We can show the world the beauty of Yiddish, of Jewish thought and how it has expressed itself over these many years. For each person we have successfully interested in our language and culture, we will become more hopeful that the promise of a re-flourishing of the Yiddish language is real and attainable for all.
Chelm During the Ghetto Uprising
Chelm Yizkor Book
B. Alkwit

With all that the yizkor books, chronicles, and scrolls tell of their cities and shtetlekh [towns], they describe Jewish Poland in depth—describe, so to speak, the hinterland of the great Jewish uprising. How was it possible? From where did it get its strength so that those suffering and bowed rose up, became fighters, became heroes—they, the heroes of eternal tolerance, the carriers of Job’s patience—heroes and martyrs in the struggle against the enemy in a time when the entire world hit them in the face?

One of the cities was Chelm—the first ghetto uprising was in Chelm.

Chelm, yes, Chelm of the Chelm stories. Who has not heard of Chelm? It was a small city, a poor one and, it was said, a very foolish city, as in the stories—of fools, and they also say, sages. But there is no sage whose wisdom is as famous in the world as the nonsense of Chelm—unless, indeed, it is the wisdom of the biblical King Solomon.

The glory of Chelm is like the glory of a wonderful story. There are people who even think that Chelm is itself a story, a fable. But there was such a city—and for the Chelemer it was a city not just of jests. But the uncertain truth, which gave the city its name, can sometimes be the cause of a mistake that Chelm is also Chelmno, or the opposite. That was probably motivated by the publisher of a Yiddish book—it is quite a distance from Chelm to Posen [Poznan] on the other side of Warsaw. Chelm is also east of Lublin, not far from the Bug River; Zamosc, where Y. L. Peretz was born, is to the south.

Chelm was a very old Jewish city, on a mountain—just as it is in the stories—but Jews lived down in the valley in great poverty. There was only one street there with stairs. It was the oldest Jewish street, but it was called Naye [new] Tsal and the stairs led down to the market, to commerce, and to Minkhe-Maariv [it is the afternoon and evening prayer] in the large synagogue, in the ancient House of Study. Going back to the 1930s, the population of the city of Chelm numbered thirty-thousand souls, approximately half of whom were Jewish.

The beginning of the history of the Jews in Chelm is in the wall of the synagogue. Here in the wall is hidden the grave of the groom and bride who perished under the khupa [wedding canopy] in the synagogue courtyard during the slaughter by Chmielnicki’s Cossacks.

The Cossacks slaughtered 400 Jews. With the strength of a new Jewish generation, Chelm restored itself. The famous Chelemer Yeshiva [religious secondary school] grew. Reb Elihu bal Shem [miracle worker] arose there, and in our time, a Shmuel Zigelboim (Artur). Zigelboim was the manager of the worker is home, which the Bund founded in Chelm.

How the treasure of folklore was created here is hard to say. Researchers have found that by the 16th century stories were told in poor Chelm about other foolish cities—Gotham in England, Schildberg in the former Germany settled by Jews. But the Chelm stories are different, different in their morals, their general fantasy—their communal assemblages.

A meeting is called about all of this. The rabbi is here; the pames khoydesh [city official for the month] is here; but Chelm, Jewish Chelm is the oldest democracy in Europe. Even if someone comes in with a wild idea, for example, let us capture the moon in a barrel of water, he is heard and the pames khoydesh calls a meeting.

The bloody scroll of the events after the meeting is now assembled. The first news, the yellowed clippings that lie before me like sacred old documents, was written by Yitzhak Fajgenbaum, a well known worker for Poale Zion in Poland, on his return to America at the beginning of January 1941.

He described:

"This that happened in Chelm has no equal in the entire martyrdom of the Jews of Poland under the Nazi regime, because in Chelm there was something that could not be expected, namely, an armed resistance of Jews against the Nazis; there the Jews fought like lions—"
"This was in November, when the Nazis hung out announcements across the entire city that all Jews in Chelm must leave the city during the course of three days and go in the direction of Lublin. Chelm is not far from Lublin, but a spirit of rage and opposition enveloped the Jews and voices were heard that they would not go. The Chelemer Rabbi turned to the Nazi commander asking to be permitted to call several businessmen to organize the departure from the city.

"There were three different opinions among the Jews who assembled with the rabbi. One, obey and surrender to their bitter fate. A second opinion was that it is better to die here before dragging themselves on the roads and being tortured by the Nazis in an unfamiliar place. And the third opinion was fight against the Nazis. Yes, there were those who said that they would not let themselves be chased like dogs. Before they would leave the world, they would give the smell of gunpowder to the Nazis. They would fight and take as many Nazi bandits with them to the other world as they could.'

Yitzhak Fajgenbaum says that the representatives at the "third meeting" were "two prominent Chelemer Jews, one a doctor and the other a lawyer." No one tried to argue with them, against them. "There were no arguments." The situation was just discussed a little; the bestiality committed by the Nazis in the city, the looting, the violence, and rapes, were described.

Now, however, the Nazis began to go through the houses, to violently drag the Jews to Lublin; they had to "respond with a blow"..., and the murderers were answered with fire.

The uprising was carried out with guns. The guns and a few bullets were brought home from the army when the Polish army crumbled, by young people, former soldiers, and reserves.

The power that the Germans then had in Chelm was not enough when the Chelemer opened fire. The Nazis called out reinforcements to defeat the uprising. And here is a report from the “Silesian Zeitung” [Newspaper], dated the 12th of January 1940.

"In Chelm," the Nazi newspaper relates with sadistic pleasure, "our fighters had both a difficult and an easy assignment. The easy assignment was when they entered the Jewish houses in order to send the Jews to Lublin. It was discovered that they had committed suicide. The Jews did not wait for us to be done with them, but eliminated themselves.

Others presented a fight against the government and shot at our soldiers with Polish guns. These were reservists who were dropped from the Polish army and did not surrender their weapons. The local regime immediately set the houses on fire, smashed and annihilated the attackers."

Thus the great regime of the Third Reich, in its conquering march across Europe, also led to the uprising of the Chelemer Ghetto and the Chelemer Jews. “The Silesian Zeitung” writes, "The Jews received a lesson about how to conduct themselves against the German army."

Those who remained alive were forced onto the road to Lublin.

But the plan for a "reservation" for Jews in Lublin collapsed, and some of the Chelemer returned to Chelm. In time, Jews from the surrounding shtetlekh began to arrive and later also from other countries.

At first it was not known what this meant. Some time passed and nothing was heard; there was enough to be heard, so they did not ask about Chelm. But frightening rumors began to arrive and then confirmed reports so horrible that the Jewish world, as well as the non-Jewish world actually was struck with fear about them.

The Germans transformed Chelm into a death center for Jews, not only from Poland. Jews were brought here from Ukraine, from White Russia, from Czechoslovakia, Holland, Belgium, and from Greece. It was a slaughterhouse, and here they experimented on the Jews with scientific death.

They tested gases; Jewish old men, women and children were gassed in order to see how the gasses worked, whether they could be used in gas attacks for finally annihilating, exterminating, the Jews from Poland, from Europe.

This was while seeking and researching chemical methods of war, which Hitler’s chemists worked on for gas attacks on the Allied armies or also on the population.
Anthony Eden, England’s Foreign Minister, read to Parliament the reports about what was happening in Chelm in the form of a declaration, and the American Secretary of State included the declaration among the State Department documents, that he presented to the public.

This was at the beginning of 1943. Later, when Hitler’s collaborators were tried in Nuremberg as war criminals and criminals against humanity, it was learned what they had done in Chelm.

Then an issue of a German journal “Di Handlung” [The Action] arrived in America with a memoir by a German, Paul Herzog, who served in the German army in Chelm. His memoir is called: “Chelm—a Mountain of Skulls”. And this "mountain" was received in America as the first confession of regret by a German.

In his confession he describes the systematic routine savagery of the Germans against crushed and trampled people when they fell at work. He describes the prisoners’ camp, how beaten and wild non-Jews were incited to take revenge on the Jews for the debasement they endured, for the blows they received from the Nazis; how the imprisoned were held in earthen stalls in the camps and literally were transformed into cannibals.

Part of this memoir by Paul Herzog needs to be included in the scroll of Chelm, the nearly legendary city, on a mountain that once swarmed with stories about fools, stories of jests. But the German devils made a mountain of skulls out of the mountain of stories and a valley of death out of the valley of Chelm.

This was in 1943. At the end of May, in that year of destruction, a famous Chelmer Jew Shmuel Zygelboim, the Jewish representative to the Polish government in exile in London, united the hearts of the world with his suicide in protest against the indifference to the annihilation of the Jews in Poland.

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Lance Ackerfeld is the dedicated, and extremely helpful, coordinator for the Yitzkor Book project for all of Jewish Gen. Chelm is of particular interest to him because of what “we” have managed so far and the general interest in it. He resides in Israel and can be reached by email at: lanceackerfeld@gmail.com

The Chelm Yizkor Book Translation Project

The reply to the e-mail sent to Lance for permission to print the Chelm Ghetto Uprising article.

“If Leah [Dr. Davidson] is OK with this, I am also. Would it be possible to note the address of the online book in your article? Only if this is appropriate... http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/chelm/chelm.html

All the best,

Lance

Reprinted from the Der Bay issue Vol. XIV No. VI

“Help with the translation of the Johannesburg Chelm Yizkor Book, published in 1954 and edited by M. Bakalczuk (740 pages). This effort has been started, and is online at JewishGen. www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/chelm/chelm.html —project coordinator is Dr. Leah Z. Davidson. She is the granddaughter of R. Zygelboim, and can be reached at lzd2@juno.com or her office: 212-799-0642

“Dr. Davidson is a remarkably dedicated person with an international reputation in her psychiatry career. She is unselfish in her time and effort in getting the Yizkor Book translated into English.

“How you can help. If you know anyone who is a Chelmer or a descendant of one, please send in the information. Second, if you can, help support the Yizkor Book translation.”

The Big Picture

Chelm is only one of the over 7,000 shtetlekh where the Jews were decimated.

A listing of places where one can find collections of Yizkor books is at: http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/database.html

There is a great need to get the work done of documenting and translating this information while there is still a small number of Holocaust survivors living.
Shayles un Tshuves in “Hilkhes Libe”
Fun der khaznte Khane Slekt
“Forverts” – 7/22-28/2011
[transliterated and annotated by Goldie Adler Gold]

Tayere khaznte,


Mer Nisht Fet

Tayere m…n…f…,

Es kumt aykh a yasher-koyekh [well done] vos ir hot dergreykht ayer tsil [reached your goal]. Es iz gut tsu hern, az ir lebt zikh oys oyf a gezintern lebn-shteyger [healthier way of life].

Molt aykh [imagine], az ayer ibereike vog hot gedint vi a vant tsvishn ayer atsomes-ikh un ayer zelbst-vert [personal torture…self worthlessness]. Di iberike vog hot aykh gegeben epes tsu batrakhtn un faynt hobn [excess weight gave you something to think about and hate].

Ven ir hot gekukt in shpigl, iz aykh nisht gefeln geven vos ir hot gezien [didn’t like what you saw]. Ir hot gemeynz az ven ir farlirt di vog, veln ayere negative gefiln vegg zikh aleyn oykh farloyrn geyn. Azoy vi dos iz nisht geshen [didn’t happen], nemen mir on az es zenen faran sibes far ayere gefiln

[assume…reasons for your feelings]. Es zet oys, az nor nokh dem vi ir hot farloyrn di vug, farsheteyt ir az di iberike vog iz nisht geven di hoypt-problem [lost weight was not the main problem].

Ikh legy for, ir zolt zikh tifer aranytrakhtn in dem inyen [think deeper into this matter]. Vosere teyln [what parts] fun ayer perzenlehkhkeyt vilt ir yo ihergebt su ayere kinder un velkhie nisht? Vi kent ir baytn di aspektfn far zikh [change yourself], kedey ir zolt vern der mensh vos ir vilt zayn?

Beshas ir makht durkh dem protses, gedenkt! Men darf zikh batsien tsu zikh mit derkherets un libshaft [accept yourself… respect and love].

Tayere khaznte,

Vi zol ikh zikh firn mit a mensh, mit velkhin ikh fil zikh umbakvem [how to behave with someone I’m uncomfortable with]? Es iz do a man vos kumt oft in mayn byuro [office] un shikt mir blitspost-briv [e-mails] in velkhie er flirtevet mit mir un drikht oys tsufil komplimentn [he flirts with me and express too many compliments]. Ikh hob im nokh nisht geentfert.

Er hot mir letstns geshikt a geboyrn-tog-kartl [a birthday card], khotsh ikh veys nisht fun vanen er hot zikh dervust vegg [learned about] mayn geboyrn-tog. Ikh bin a khasene-gehate un er veyst dos. Das kartl loybt [praises] mayn sheynkeyt un hot a lid [song] far mir. Ikh hob nokh nisht geentfert. Vi zol ikh im bahandlen [How shall I deal with him]?

Umbakvem

Tayere umb…,

Azoy vi ir veyst nisht vos der doziker man hot in zinen, leyg ikh for ir zolt redn mitn shef fun zikherkeyt [security chief] in ayer byuro. Efsher ken er zikh trefn mit im un lozn visn az ir vilt nisht mer bakumen di blitsbriv. Zol men kontrolirn zayn biografye. Zayt forzikhtik, un nisht heflekh [be careful…not civil]!
The Yiddish Avant-Garde?
by Philip “Fishl” Kutner

What is going on at the cutting edge of Yiddish in its various aspects?

There have been great gains in learning theory and immense advances in Internet communication, data transfer, and use of search engines.

Who is doing and publishing this information and how can we get the information out faster to more people?

This project is to compile a list of the top people in as many component areas of Yiddish language and culture as possible and in order to get their input to determine:

• Who is doing the cutting edge work in each of these areas?
• What are they doing?

It will then be our task to see that these projects are funded and give the results widespread coverage.

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Der Bay
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• Please make checks for chai, payable to Der Bay. If you’ve been blessed, please do send a LITTLE extra. Label date is when you LAST contributed.
• Networking, Networking, Networking, is having others help you get what YOU want. Der Bay is a great networking tool.
• Contribute in memory of a dear one, or send someone a Der Bay subscription.
• Listings in Der Internatsionaler Kalendar in the hardcopy and the website are free.
• Send a notice of Yiddish club meetings, lectures, classes, a DVD release, or gigs.
New Mission Statement - New Directions - Service Over Information
by Philip “Fishl” Kutner

Online Mission Statement Revised

The emphasis/activities of Der Bay has slowly but gradually changed from eliciting and publishing information to personalizing needs and interests of our readers. Check your listing for accuracy or ask to be listed at: www.derbay.org/translators

Merchandising and marketing Yiddish to and for translators, authors, speakers, musical group leaders, and especially Yiddish club leaders has evolved into the major effort of Der Bay’s and Fishl’s activities. While this does help in fostering the Yiddish language and culture the stress is on people and not just disseminating facts.

One of the major areas of change has been in the stressing of Yiddish translation. There has been a definite increase in requests for material to be translated and people who are entering the field as translators.

Current Status of Yiddish Translators

There is no:

• accepted organization for certifying translators.
• school program of courses in Yiddish translation.
• central clearinghouse for translators.
• accepted scale for reimbursement for translators.
• website specifically for translators

Several translating contests are incentives for translators and the Yiddish Book Center recently held a successful conference on Yiddish translating.

Current lists of Yiddish translators include: Der Bay, Yiddish Book Center, JewishGen, Commercial, and YIVO.

Resource

A Yiddish Short Story Sampler: A Guide for Yiddish Classes and Clubs by Bennett Muraskin is an excellent reference source for Yiddish stories that have been translated. He notes that Yiddish literature was first translated in the United States just before the beginning of the 20th century. The first edition of this book was distributed to the IAYC member clubs. It has been reissued as the Guide to Yiddish Short Stories.

Other Areas of Der Bay Reader Services

• Help with:
• information in publishing your article or book.
• publicizing your band, lectures or club meetings.
• Yiddish club programming
• attracting, indoctrinating and retaining members

Other than the hardcopy ALL services of Der Bay are, have been, and will continue to be FREE.

Remember to Network! Network! Network!
Nikolai “Kolye” Borodulin - Teacher of the Month
Director, Center for Cultural Jewish Life - Workmen’s Circle

Nikolai Borodulin affectionately known as “Kolye” came to America from his native Birobidzhan. He has lectured widely about Birobidzhan and it’s origin as a Jewish state.

In 1984 he graduated from the Khabarovsk Teachers College with a Bachelor of Education degree and a major in teaching English and German languages. He had additional professional training from the National Seminar of Yiddish Teachers, Moscow, five years later in 1989.

In 1991 Kolye traveled to Israel and attended the Bar-Ilan University Summer Yiddish Program, in Ramat-Gan.

Education has always been important to Kolye and he has received scholarships that enabled him to continue his studies. They include; the Atran Foundation Scholarship (1992-1994), Columbia University President Scholarship (1992-1994), B’nai B’rith Youth Organization Scholarship 1992, and the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research Scholarship (1992-1994).

His advanced training degree enabled him to receive a Master of Arts in the Yiddish Program (1992-1993) from Columbia University Graduate School of Humanities in New York.

Next came attendance at the Vilnius Yiddish Institute Yiddish Teachers Seminar in Vilnius, Lithuania where (2005) he received their certificate:

His rise in the Yiddish community has been rapid: through the ranks of the Workmen’s Circle/Arbeter Ring as a teacher, Director of Education, and currently Director for Cultural Programs.

At the Workmen’s Circle, his activities have included writing and publishing a Yiddish language textbook and educational packets that are being used in elementary grade WC/AR schools. Also he has designed and produced an international intergenerational experiential family education program, “A Trip to Yiddishland”.

For the Workmen’s Circle Camp Kinder Ring and Kinderland he developed a program and designed and implemented a Yiddish Day Experiential Program, “A Week in Yiddishland” language and culture immersion program for adults at WC/AR resort Circle Lodge.

Starting in 2005 and still ongoing, he started the Wiki Secular Jewish Schools network linking curricula and communications resources for twenty Jewish supplementary schools in Canada as well as in the U.S.

Developing Yiddish programs represents only one part of Kolye’s effort to stimulate interest in Yiddish. His interest has also been in leadership, directing and participating in programs with a widespread geographic makeup.

At the Klezkanada’s Festival of Yiddish/Jewish Arts and Culture, Camp B’nai B’rith in Lantier, Quebec, he has been the coordinator of the Yiddish Programs since 2000. He coordinates all Yiddish courses and activities at this weeklong festival of 500 participants in language classes, panel discussions, symposia, and Shabbat programs.

The impressive list of activities and achievements include Yiddish Ulpan and Yiddish language and culture-related workshops at CAJE – 2007 (Saint Louis, MI), during 2008 in Burlington, Vermont He taught an intensive introductory Yiddish course for Jewish educators and provided teacher training in language acquisition methodologies.

Publications include:

• “Voyage to the Yiddish Alphabet” (Yiddish Literacy for Curriculum for WC Schools), forthcoming in 2012

• “Yiddish Year Round” (Yiddish Curriculum for WC Schools) NY: WC, 1999; Second ed. 2005.

• “Alef-beys Tsimes” (Yiddish teaching games) NY, 2000.


Dr. Jack Berger & Abe Foxman

Our Temple had the unique privilege of being host to Abe H. Foxman the Natl. Director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), and his colleague Etzion Neuer, who serves as the Director of the NJ office of the ADL.

Because my work on translating the Baranovich Memorial Book was just completed, with the final product arriving only a day before, I used the opportunity to make a personal presentation of a copy of the book to Abe.

There are two points of significance here:

1. Abe and I both are schoolmates, having attended the Yeshivah of Flatbush High School together. Accordingly, our friendship extends back over a half century.

2. As I came to discover, Abe is a scion of Baranovich, who enthusiastically joined the list of supporters, who helped make this project a reality.

His history is well known, having been surrendered by his desperate parents, after the Nazi invasion of Poland, to the care of a Polish Catholic nurse, in the hopes of saving his life. As a result, he became one of many “hidden children” who were eventually repatriated by their families, after the war. His family immigrated to Brooklyn, NY in the United States, where his path eventually crossed mine, during our school years.

It was a signal act of closure, and fitting conclusion to his talk to us, that we marked the occasion with the presentation of this work. The work removes a serious linguistic barrier, that might otherwise impede the capacity of future generations, from engaging in the very remembrance we deem so critical, to assure that such a calamity never befalls, not only the Jewish people, but anyone else in the world again.

Finding My Yiddish Niche
By Philip “Fishl” Kutner

While walking in a forest of Redwoods, the Muir Woods National Monument that is a section of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, I noticed how bare the ground was. The towering trees blocked out all the light. However, there was an opening in the far northeastern corner where the soil and terrain wasn’t conducive for the growth of these giants of the plant world. Here flourished one Douglas Fir among all these much taller trees.

It occurred to me that here is an analogy of how we “little guys” can “compete” with the “big boys”. How can we “challenge” the organizations that have an office building with an executive director, receptionist, secretaries, IT experts, fundraisers, public relations staff, groundskeeper, accountants, a director of membership services, librarians, a program director, educational specialists, and a marketing director.

All is not hopeless. My home office is comfortable with a Macintosh computer, Hewlitt Packard printer, Canon scanner, home phone (650-349-6946), “business” phone (650-573-6600), and cell phone (650-483-3636). As befitting this station in life, there even are TWO FULL bathrooms.

So what are the job requirements for the “opening in the forest” that I have carved out for my own little domain. It requires no profit and an expense that can run up to hundreds in some months. It requires spending 6-8 hours a day, six days a week on the computer, and to receive no salary.

On the other hand rewards are great. Imagine skyping regularly with dear friends in the Yiddish community in Tamarac, Florida; Los Angeles, Calif.; Winnipeg & Toronto, Canada. On the phone it is far more often and a larger number, Norman in Israel and all over the U.S. Without Yiddish, chances of ever having the opportunity for these friendships, is zero.

I respect the wonderful work that the “Giant Yiddish Redwoods” do and admire the “guys and gals” like Ari Davidow, Eric Edelstein, Shulamit Seidler Feller, Refoyl Finkel, Goldie Gold, Lee Goldberg, Steven Lasky, and Iosif Vaisman. This is not the entire list. You can add many more to this group that helps foster our mame-loshn.
Exodus: Memoirs of Jacob Plassmann – Part I
Translation by Philip Bibel z”l

There was a formal declaration of war by France and England against Germany, but the war was called: "The funny war". Germany invaded and swallowed Poland in 1939, after a very short period of fighting. Paul Reynaud headed the French government and Mr. Daladier, the prime minister, was defeated.

At that time I was traveling and selling underwear. I never sold so much in such a short time! I even beat my own record, which was very high. On May 9th I arrived in St. Quentin, in the north of France, where my in-laws lived. They were astonished to learn that I was successful in that time of war.

I invited my sister-in-law, Jeanne, and my niece, Bernadette, to see the great artist Victor Boucher in a play at the Municipal Theater. The play was: Les Vignes du Seigneur; it was a pleasant evening.

I phoned my wife and children; they felt terrible and were scared. I got in my car and rushed home. It was a terrible journey; all along the road I passed vehicles and soldiers going back to the northern front, and families from Belgium and northern France on the move in the opposite direction—some on bikes, some in trucks and wagons, and the richest in cars. They piled in some belongings and headed south; some even brought their livestock.

Nobody really knew where they were going, but they had to get away from Hitler's bombing of their villages and towns. The news got worse. Holland surrendered without a fight.

It took me over 12 hours of driving to reach my home in Meriel. My family was in distress. We knew that we too must leave our home. The war was real now. The destiny of France would change for the next 4 years.

We decided first to see for ourselves what was happening in Mérý-sur-Oise. Indeed, the radio for once didn't lie. We saw the result of the bombing: homes were flattened, people killed. This was no longer a funny war.

The "Exodus" was in full swing. The roads were packed with Belgians and people from the north; they headed to the west and south of France. The streets of our town in Meriel were full day and night with the escaping families. It was terrible to watch them, very sad and we knew that we too would be part of this fate.

The radio announced that the Germans were advancing on all fronts. The French army put on a show of resistance, but when the Nazis cut off Sedan and Givet from the rest of the army forces, there was little resistance. The government headed by Paul Reynaud tried to calm the population, but it fell on deaf ears.

We made up our mind to start our Exodus. I loaded up our car with indispensable items, children's beds, our mattress, some linen and kitchen utensils, a clock, and the radio.

My wife sat in the front seat holding our six month-old son, Jacquot, and Monique sat in the rear among the sheets and clothing. We were on our way. No sooner did we leave Meriel than we heard that Mussolini was bombing the people trying to escape. His planes flew over Meriel; we headed for Mérý-sur-Oise, and had to hide from them. We found a cave where they grew mushrooms. It was cold and wet. My little baby, Jean-Claude, caught pneumonia. Our destination now was Montluçon. I knew that near the village of Durdat I would find a place to hide and live with my family. I knew the country people—I grew up among them and I was sure that they would give us asylum.
Zdzisław Stokalski – The Doctor
Charenka – His Wife
Jacek – Their Son
Jadwiga – The Housekeeper
Piotr – The Groundskeeper
Luke – The Gravedigger
Luzer- The Barber
Schmerl – The Cap Maker
Frédéric Chopin – Polish Composer
Bazaks – Hose & Wagon Owners
As – Stokalski’s Dog

Maniewicze, located in Volhynia, Eastern Poland, was divided into two “sides” by the railroad. Avrom, the tailor from Rozyszcz, lived with his family on “this” side. On “this” side too was Gurvitz’s Hotel, with eighty rooms. Geller had his beautiful villa there. Birar’s pinewoods with fresh air was there. People from all over Poland came to repair their health, especially Tuberculosis. The police department was there; it only had eight officers. The old and new synagogues were there.

The “other” side of Maniewicze had two important institutions. One dealt with healing and life, while the other had to do with death. The first one was “Przychodnia Rejonowa Kasa Chorych” (in Polish) - “Medical help covered by special insurance in the area.” Dr. Zdzisław Stokalski was the “CEO” in charge of the institution. The second important institution was the Jewish “Beys Oylem”, also called “heyliker”, Holy Place. Luke, the gravedigger, was the CEO of that institution. Both individuals tried their best to help the dwellers of Maniewicze, the Maniewicznikes”.

Dr. Stokalski, who was Polish, healed the people who lived in Maniewicze, including the Jews. He tried to keep the Jews alive for a hundred and twenty years: “Biz hundert un tsvantsik”. Luke tried even harder and was more generous to his Jewish believers. He promised the next of kin of the deceased that their relative would live forever in “Gan Eydn”, Paradise. Most Jews of Maniewicze chose Dr. Stokalski’s offer. They preferred to live to a hundred and twenty.

Dr. Stokalski’s medical institution took up two rooms in a large building on Zwyciestwa Street. When you walked in, a nurse sitting behind a large gray desk greeted you. On the desk were open and unopened letters. An inkwell was set in a special hole in the center of the desk. Near it was a blotter, pens, and many books stacked on one end.

The nurse registered the patients, checked their insurance, and decided whom the doctor should see first. There were chairs where the patients waited to be called by the doctor, and two tables with newspapers and periodicals. Among them was “Gazeta Polska”, a Polish newspaper, “Kurier Warszawski”, the Warsaw Express, and “Sport Ilustrovaný”, the picture sport paper. The walls were decorated with paintings dealing mostly with Polish history. One of them depicted Polish infantry marching from Krakow to Warsaw on November 11, 1918 under the command of the first Polish Marshal, Józef Piłsudski.

On the bottom of the painting was written in large Polish letters: “Chociaż do Warszawy mamy długą droge, ale przejdziem migiem, byle tylko w nogę”. It meant: “Although we have a long way to Warsaw, we will get there as long as we keep on going”. There was a print of an airplane with a large square and four smaller squares on its tail. Two small white squares were located diagonally across from two red ones. (Red and white are the colors of the Polish flag). Below it read, “L.O.P.P.”, the first letters of the logo, “Liga Obrony Powietrznej i Przeciwgazowej”, “The League to Protect Coventry Against Air Attacks and Poison Gases.” In somewhat larger letters, it read, “Support the Polish Air Force”. There was a large print of a small girl dressed in Polish garb. She had red cheeks and flowers in her hair. Below it read “Cukier Krzepi”, “Sugar makes you strong”. Does it still apply? You could see hanging paper coats for the patients to be examined. They were gray and some of them were very long.

Dr. Stokalski examined the patients in the adjacent room. He sat on a velvet, upholstered chair with arms. The chair had a high tufted back, trimmed with a narrow piece of mahogany wood that matched the color of the four legs. His brown mahogany desk was big and very shiny. The half-round blotter, the pen, and the upper part of the inkwell had a greenish tint. The two antique brass handles on the drawers had turned green. On one end of the desk were many medical books with brown leather bindings. The bookends were unusual: they had a cross super-imposed on the solid wood. There always were red flowers on the desk in the summer. A widow who lived in the same building replaced the flowers weekly. A card near the vase read, “In memory of my husband, Jan Skrzetuski.” On his desk also were pictures of his wife, Charenka, and their son, Jacek. He had pictures hanging above his desk. One was “Panorama Raclavecka,” which dated back to April
4, 1794, Kościuszko Uprising against the Russians to defend Polish independence. The Poles lost the battle. There was a picture of Jozef Piłsudski, the first Marshal of Poland. Near it hung a picture of President Ignacy Mościcki and one of Tadeusz Kościuszko, the best friend of the poor. There were prints of the human nervous system, digestive system, and other prints of the human body.

Dr. Stokalski was never in his office by himself. Another human being always kept him company. It looked as if his companion had starved himself to death or had been deprived of food by other humans. Maybe the doctor knew more about him. At this point, he was a skeleton. He looked at you with his empty eye sockets and yellow teeth. His facial expression was morbid. Maybe he resented his small nose. His eyelids curled up. His eyebrows were thick. His eyelids covered part of his eyes, almost reaching the dark brown pupils.

Dr. Stokalski owned a beautiful home on Chopena Street on “this” side of Maniewicze. He was proud to live on a street named after the Polish composer Frédéric Chopin. The five-bedroom home was furnished with antique furniture. His wife, Charenka, changed it every few years. The housekeeper, Jadwiga Trojanowska, was single and took care of the building. She cleaned, cooked, and baked. Jadwiga didn’t have special hours. She slept in her small bedroom in the attic after finishing her work. Piotr Wyzyna took care of the grounds. He was credited with the green grass in the yard, which resembled a rug. Piotr had a green thumb. The flower garden was also beautiful.

The Stokalskis had a cellar, which might have been the only one in Maniewicze. You went down a dozen steps to reach the green-painted metal door. The cellar walls were made of fired brick instead of “surufka”, non-fired brick. There were shelves across the walls where flour, meat, milk, potatoes, onions, and sugar were kept. Jadwiga bought food for a few days in advance. The roof of the cellar was covered with sand sown with grass. The grass was a continuation of the rug-like lawn. The heavy green-metal door blended in with the green lawn and kept the contents of the cellar cold. The long iron hinges made by Jewl the “Kowal” assured easy opening and closing of the heavy door, which was always locked. When in the cellar, Jadwiga used special low-flame candles.

They had a big gray Shepherd dog with shiny hair. One of the dog’s eyes was yellow around the pupil instead of white. He was part of the family and was treated with the same love as Jacek. He was big for his age. They used the “newest technology” to keep “As” mobile, as he could protect their property. One end of the chain was attached to his collar, the other end of the chain ran on a ring along a long wire. The wire was suspended between the house and the cellar. This enabled “As” to run back and forth. He enjoyed a comfortable doghouse near the cellar, lined with soft black velvet. The Stokalskis shared their food with “As.” It was Jadwiga’s job to feed “As” and make sure that he had enough water to drink.

We knew Dr. Stokalski very well. My father sewed his clothes and his son’s. My father sewed four pairs of pants at a time for Jacek, but I had to wait for Rosh Hashanah to get one pair. My father bought the fabric from Schmerl, the cap-maker. It was cheaper than at Borah and Nechome, but was
of cheaper quality. My father made a very warm coat for the doctor; it was made of the same fabric as his brown coat. Avrom lined it with white sheepskins. When a farmer picked him up in an open horse-driven sleigh, the coat kept the doctor warm, regardless of the weather.

Dr. Stokalski was a very good customer. He paid my father well. My father went to his home to fit his suit and coat. My brother, Syto, delivered the finished clothing. He tried to guess when the doctor would be home...Why? Only Dr. Stokalski gave Symcha “Bronf gelt”, money for a drink, “a tip”. Charenka never tipped him.

There was no prenatal care in Maniewicze. The midwife helped with delivery. Sometimes things didn’t go smoothly. That was the case with my mom when she gave birth to my twin brothers, Motl and Mendl. Motl was born without any problems, but the midwife could not deliver Mendl. Avrom rushed to call Dr. Stokalski for help. It was midnight on a cold, wintery, snowy night in January.

No public transportation existed in Maniewicze. There wasn’t time to call one of the Bazaks, who owned a horse and sleigh. Dr. Stokalski’s house was a twenty-minute walk from Mlynarska; my dad and the doctor came into the house covered with snow and half-frozen. The doctor delivered Mendl two and a half hours later. He wasn’t breathing. Dr. Stokalski asked for a cold pail of water and a hot one. He held Mendl by his feet and alternated submerging his body in the cold and hot pails of water. He kept brushing his back in between. When Mendl’s back turned red, Dr. Stokalski sighed with relief. I heard this story from my mother. Mendl cried out. He was always sickly.

Mrs. Stokalski, Charenka, complained that her husband worked too hard and didn’t spend much time with the family. Charenka looked much younger than her husband, Zdzislaw. I wasn’t sure if she was a natural blonde or colored her long, curled hair, which was parted in the center. Her forehead was small and had no wrinkles. Her eyebrows were black and thin. There was talk among the women in Yosl’s, the small one-butcher shop, that she used a black pen for her eyebrows. Charenka colored her eyelashes blue, including her eyelids. They matched her blue eyes. Her high rosy cheeks had dimples when she laughed. She used bluish lipstick to make her thin lips look somewhat bigger. Her chin had a thin line facing down, forming almost a circle with her chin. One golden tooth in her upper jaw was lined up with her right eye.

Charenka always wore a white silk blouse. Her skirt had two folds in the front, with four unusual black buttons. Each button had a raised image of a standing dog resembling As; she must have been a dog-lover. The black stockings she wore had a seam in the back, with tiny embossed flowers on each side. The black, high-heeled shoes had criss-cross straps with buckles. Her red apron, which she wore very seldom, had a white, single-headed Polish eagle on it. You could read below it, “Niez yzie niepodlegla Polska,” “Long Live Independent Poland”. Only a Polish patriot would wear an apron like that. Jacek did not have his father’s traits. He was a below-average student. We attended the same school, “Szkola Powszechna”, Peoples School, in Maniewicze on the other side. We were in the same grade. My marks were always higher than his. He got the official monthly school magazine, “Plomyk”, “Flame”. I didn’t get it because my parents couldn’t afford it.

It was the first of September 1939. Germany attacked Poland. The Soviet Union and Germany divided Poland among them. Our territory became part of the Ukraine. They confiscated all private businesses and estates. The new city government made an exception when it came to the Stokalskis; they let him live in his house with the family. They found out how nice and helpful he was to the working people of Maniewicze. He took care of them when they didn’t have any insurance or their insurance ran out. The city government of Maniewicze let him continue to practice medicine.

After a few months of the new rulers, there was a shortage of almost everything. You had to go in “ozeret”, a line. You had to get up very early in the morning to join the line, which led to the “magazine”, the government-owned store. Many times the items were sold out before you reached the store. Charenka wasn’t happy. She would not be able to wear the same clothing. Charenka tried to persuade her husband to leave. Her main reason was “equality”. She might have had to wear the same clothes as Jadwiga. Dr. Stokalski resisted. It was hard for him to leave the inhabitants of Maniewicze, whom he liked to help.

Charenka persuaded her husband to leave for Western Poland, where the Germans ruled. There were rumors that the Stokalskis left everything to Jadwiga and Piotr. The shtetl was in mourning. The Jews prayed for the Stokalskis’ well-being in the synagogues, and the non-Jews prayed in the church and cerkva. Another doctor came, but he was no match for Dr. Stokalski. We never heard of them again. Dr. Stokalski will be remembered by Maniewiznikes as a humanitarian and a most unselfish person. We all wished him well.
Finding George Burns
By Peter Salzer

There was a strange message on the answering machine when my wife and I returned from the movies that Saturday Night. The man calling asked that I get back to him as soon as possible in regard to the ad I had answered in Backstage earlier in the week. The ad was looking for performers who could imitate musical stars past and present for a review to be presented in Atlantic City. I had answered the ad on a lark, stating that I could do Al Jolson and George Burns, neither of which I had ever done.

I returned the call and was told by an excited voice on the other end that they had not thought about a George Burns character for their show but that it would be the ideal thread for the show. He asked to hear me do a Burns imitation over the phone. I said, “Say goodnight Gracie”, the first and only thing that came to my mind. He said Great! and that he would get back to me in a short while when he spoke to the others and after their plans had solidified.

Not ever having done George Burns before that, I went out the next week and collected as much material about him as I could find in books, videos, and audio recordings. It was then that I decided my approach to the character would be best if it were from an actor’s perspective.

Then the question came to mind as to how I could try this character out. My wife and I had planned to go on a cruise and if they had an amateur talent night I would try it out there. I wrote a five-minute routine, purchased a pair of large black-rimmed glasses, a cigar, and reconstituted one of my old hairpieces.

When I finished the routine on the stage of that cruise ship, I knew I had that character down—the audience loved it.

Many weeks later I met with the producers of “Dreams of Broadway”, read for them, and they told me I had the part of the Burns character. Two weeks later there was a dress rehearsal in New York and I found myself wondering what I was doing among all these talented performers. I felt intimidated by the experienced Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland, Al Jolson, Cab Calloway, the Andrew Sisters, and Tom Jones look-a-likes. By the end of the rehearsals I felt more comfortable. “Dreams of Broadway” was performed as a showcase before an audience of two-thousand people at the Tropicana Casino on the Boardwalk in Atlantic City. It was an unbelievable experience.

Not long after appearing at the Tropicana Casino, I went to an impersonators convention, where I learned about the business and eventually put together enough material to do an hour of standup comedy as George Burns.

At one of those conventions I met Lynn Roberts, a talented musician and tribute artist. Together we developed “George Burns and Friends”. This is a two-act show where Lynn portrayed Jack Benny, Bob Hope, Red Skelton, and Jimmy Durante.

For over ten years I have paid tribute to George Burns at venues throughout the country. It has been a wonderful complement to my other acting activities and given me the opportunity to meet talented performers who have taught me many things about this fun business.

“There is no business like show business.”

P.S. My next performance will be in Jackson, New Jersey for the Westlake Yiddish Club. It may be too late for your readers when they receive this issue. I know that you will have it listed on the website and hope some of your readers will attend.

Editor’s note: This note is a reminder that the next IAYC conference, our 15th, will be in Pittsburgh, PA, late April of next year.

Sol and Lin Toder, the wonderful couple who will be chairing the event, have assembled an excellent team for their committee and have done the basic planning. They shortly will be in the scheduling phase, assembling a first-class list of speakers and talented performers. This will be in addition to a group of exhibitors and vendors that will make your attendance a memorable one.

If you have participated or attended one of our previous conferences follow the news in Der Bay, e-mail Sol and Lin at: Linandsol@verizon.net
Memories and Politically Correct Words
Norman Simms (Nachman Toivya Simnowitz) – Hamilton, New Zealand - nsimms@waikato.ac.nz

Yeah, I know I should know. But you want me I shouldn’t use such old-fashioned words. They might insult somebody. Editors, shmeditors? If they are so dumb as not to know the difference between a voice I create out of memories in my mind for over fifty-five years and what I, or any person in his right mind, would say today, I should worry? Ffeh. Isn’t it allowed to say shvartse or sheygets or shikse or what else? And who knows but such a concept still maybe exists and when these words come back from deep in my sleepless nights to make a noise in my writing it is not because exactly the people I grew up or even myself actually talked in such a way (God forbid!) but only you should know a little that this is not from today a voice about what we feel all the time now.

In the olden times, when the people I met in my house, at shul, on the street, in school, were born in the 19th century, it was a real time, no myth, and just as they dressed differently, with hats and gloves, and walked in a different way, it shouldn’t be thought that old people and young people could look the same or speak in the same rhythms. Look at an old American movie from the 1920s, and then from the 1930s, you can see the difference and hear too; or listen to an old recording of radio shows. Just like Woody Allen? Not exactly. I am not his Zelig and what goes on between me and the text has nothing to do with him, Mr Big Shot.

To make a story, whose rules do you want me to obey, those who have no imaginations and no memories or those who do—who did? I can still imagine who they were and remember what they sounded like; like it was a phonograph or a photograph but so it makes on the page a kind of reproduction protected from all that is around me and can be felt in the kishkes as a piece of the whole world that no longer exists for those too young already to have had parents and grandparents who remember with a continuity that is real.

And because all this could be a make-believe past and all these episodes are as if they were real, then why not go back even further to the people I did not know or who exist sometimes with nothing more than a name—whole lifetimes on a tree of ancestors you buy in a book and write in the names—and maybe for us because so many of these ancestors were killed in pogroms and they don’t even have names any more it is necessary to make up their genealogy and their substance.

It was somewhere in Central or Eastern Europe, probably in Galicia, Poland, Latvia, or Lithuania, men and women in the 18th century or the 17th, back to Meylekh Sobieski’s yorn, but is there a name, a little something to show who they were? Where they lived, how they made a living, what they dreamed of becoming, what frightened them and kept them from sleeping at night. Ikh veys nisht nit, kine hora I would want at least once in every generation, please God, that there should be someone like me, a person that reads books, that thinks a little, too, that maybe writes what is here called a poem or a story, a person that lies in bed broyges at the whole world and who goes to make pish too often to have a good night’s sleep ever. Somebody had to exist like that or how could there be me; a mixture, a mishmash, of people from Romania, Hungary, Poland, and the Ukraine. Am I dreaming there was such a mentsh?

That my ancestors lived, whoever they were, is beyond a doubt. Would I be here if they didn’t? But how can I or anyone grasp what they thought and felt in the actual substance of everyday life, because, like all of us, they lived from moment to moment, day to day, year to year, and not just in a little square box on a page that you buy in a store to make a tree. If I were to try to write in fancy modern critical jargon and discourse, vey iz mir! What would it make of their reality and my connection to them? So, whether true or not, whatever such a thing can mean about these things, nebekh, these sentences would be dead, worthless, like a tale told by an idiot on a dark night who thinks to himself he is a candle or a star flashing out of the heavens from a million billion years ago.

Editor’s note: Prof. Simms letter to the editor March 2001. “We’re fighting a deadline on the Kupka Kaka Case. The Israeli ambassador said that the universities (Waikato and Canterbury) committed world-class blunders in their handling of Holocaust Denial and Neo-Nazism. The inquiry is a touchy one, perhaps a major turning point in the history of NZ Jewry. It is the first time Jews all over the country spoke out on any issue as Jews.
Ver Hot Dos Gezogt? – A Yiddish Club Activity
By Beverly Rocklin

1. Ikh hob a kholem ..............................................................................................................................................................

2. Freg nit vos dayn land ken far dir ton:
Freg vos du kenst ton far dayn land ....................................................................................................................................

3. Mir veln aykh bagrobn ........................................................................................................................................................

4. A hun in yeder tepl ..............................................................................................................................................................

5. Der himl falt! ........................................................................................................................................................................

6. Mir darfn zikh shrekn far gornit akhutz shrek aleyn ........................................................................................................

7. Shpigl, shpigl oyfn vant,
ver is di shentste in ayer bakant? ......................................................................................................................................

8. Zoln zey esn lekekh ..............................................................................................................................................................

9. A toyznt pintlekh fun likht ....................................................................................................................................................

10. Oyb ir kent nit nemen di hitz, geyt aroys fun kikh .............................................................................................................

11. A hoyz tsuteylt tsvishn zikh ken nit blaybn ........................................................................................................................

12. Es tut mir layd vos ikh hob nor eyn lebn
tsu farlirn far mayn land ........................................................................................................................................

13. Ikh hob nokh nisht ongeheybn zikh tsu kemfn ....................................................................................................................

14. Ikh vil zayn aleyn ...................................................................................................................................................................

15. Fri shlofn un fri oyfshteyn
makht a mensh gezunt, raykh un klug ..................................................................................................................................

16. Tsu zayn, oder nit tsu zayn, dos is di frage ......................................................................................................................

17. Ikh aleyn hob aruntergehakt dem karshnboym ..................................................................................................................

18. Nor mishugene hint un Englander
geyen aroys in der mitog zun ......................................................................................................................................

19. Ikh trakht, deriber bin ikh ....................................................................................................................................................

20. Emeter hot opgegesn mayn kashe! ........................................................................................................................................

21. Zog a gutn nakht, Gracie ....................................................................................................................................................

22. Ikh ken nisht krignt keyn koved. ........................................................................................................................................

23. Der vos hot faynt kinder un hint
ken nit zayn in gantzn shlekht ........................................................................................................................................

24. Ikh hob gekumen, ikh hob gezem,
ikh hob ayngenunem .............................................................................................................................................................
Fishele, s’iz do ale farshidine mentshn. S’iz do shnayders fun kleyder, shnayders vos zenen moyels, un shnayders vos zenen shoykhets.

Fishele, di andere layt do zenen kokhers, zey kokhn esn, zey ramen di tep un fendlen vos di andere nutsn tsu kokhn far di yidn, un ramen di telers, goplen, mesers un leflen vos di yidn nute tsu esn.


Fishele, ale yidishe kinder in di yidishe mames baykher zenen gemakht do in gan eydn. Zey heybn on zeyere lebn do un got shikt zey tsu di yidishe mames baykher tsu vaksn un vern geboyn.

Mame, vos tustu in gan eydn? Fishele, ikh dervart dayn kumen do, zoln mir ale zayn do far dem kumendikn peysakh.

S’iz tsu shpet far peysakh—mir’ln darfn vartn a yor. Fishele, gedenk az du bist a yidish kind. Du darfst… .
Changes Here and on the Horizon

The IAYC News is the latest effort the International Association of Yiddish Clubs is better servicing the member clubs. Vol. 1 No. 1 was e-mailed and also hardcopies sent to those not receiving e-mail. Choices for paid-up members include:

Books

1. The Waterfall: Rhymed Yiddish Couplets by Dr. Barney Zumoff – Original Yiddish side by side with translation made to rhyme.
2. A Yiddish Short Story Sampler: A Guide for Yiddish Classes and Clubs by Bennett Muraskin

Cassettes

4. Dr. Jack Berger: History’s Orphans: The Yizkor Book Story
5. Frank Handler: Rescue of the 6th Lubovitch Rebbe by Nazi Soldiers – Impact on Yiddish
6. Gerry Kane: Tsum gast baym zeyde mendele
7. Prof. Eugen Orenstein: Pionirn fun der yidish-forshung

CDs

8. Sabell Bender: Melodrama and Shund
10. Prof. Meinhard Mayer, z”l: The Yiddish and German Poets from Czernowitz
11. Dr. Julius Scherzer: Growing up in Czernowitz
12. Dr. Kenneth Waltzer: The Rescue of Jewish Children from Buchenwald
13. IAYC Conf.: Bender, Handler, Hartman, Majzner

The International Association of Yiddish Translators - (IAYT)

On the horizon is an organization of Yiddish translators and a clearinghouse for those looking for post cards, letter, articles, or books to be translated.

The Yiddish Book Center has already made a giant step in that direction. Here we are compiling a master list of names from Der Bay, YIVO, and the Yiddish Book Center. Many of the individuals have changed phone number, e-mail, moved their domicile or left us completely. There is a small number who no longer wish to be listed.

Pittsburgh, PA, Site of the IAYC 15th Conference

It is hoped that Yiddish translators will be able to meet at other venues to piggyback onto these Yiddish/Jewish events. To form an organization it usually takes time and committees working to form a cohesive group.

Our conference in Pittsburgh April 26-29, 2013 will be an opportunity for translation lectures, workshops, and the opportunity for translators to swap ideas and make important contacts. Fishl’s mantra is—network, network, network.

Der Bay’s Contributors of Articles

All editors are constantly on the lookout for fascinating and unique human-interest stories. You may have noticed that this has increasingly become a hallmark of Der Bay’s issues.
"Honor Thy Father And Thy Mother"
by Ray Davidson, (Overland Park, Kansas) – Leader of IAYC Club #132

Ray’s Letter to Fishl

Yesterday, the second of June, was the first anniversary for our “Yiddish Circle For Learning” and I wrote and presented the enclosed article so that all of our attendees might know just how our Circle came into being.

I am enclosing a copy so that you also might know of the motivation for our beginning. If you find it of interest to others, please feel free to publish it as you might wish.

It was so nice to speak to you the other day and I am so excited to become a part of the wonderful organization you had such a part in bringing into being. I hope that we can be an acceptable addition to that organization.

We here look forward to being a part of the IAYC over the many years to come.

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"Honor Thy Father And Thy Mother"

This sentence that is read in the “Gates of Prayer” each and every Saturday Morning has been a problem for me since 1955, when I lost my mother, and even more so when in 1964 my father also joined those who were bound up in the “Bonds of Life Eternal”. It originates from Exodus 20, verse 16. As long as they lived, this commandment was no problem, for I truly honored both of them with love and affection—with my presence and my attention to their smallest need, never needing to be prodded or cajoled to comply. But once they no longer walked this earth— once they physically were out of reach for me, I was so at a loss to know what I needed to do to continue to honor them.

As time passed and the years flew by, I found myself reaching my eighty-third birthday and a friend of mine was having his second Bar Mitzvah. As I sat spellbound listening to him go through the entire Saturday morning, I kept thinking to myself how very nice this was and how much I too would like to have a second Bar Mitzvah. Well, March was six months away and the Rabbi and I both figured that was plenty of time for me to get ready and even to write my own "Machzor" for the occasion. And so the die was cast and I set about becoming proficient enough to "carry it off".

I elected to call my Machzor "Memories to Live By," and featured pictures on the front of my father, my mother, and my wife, Frieda, also of blessed memory. I thought of quotes to go under each picture, and it was automatic that those thoughts for my mother and father were in Yiddish, for that is how they spoke to each other, and to me as a young child and a young man, and as I matured.

If I came to my father with a problem, he would listen carefully to what I said, go into a heavy thinking period, and then say to me, "Es vet shoyn git zayn". If I questioned my mother on some item she made for a meal that didn't come out the same as usual, she would say, "Ikh glaykh es azoy". Under Frieda’s picture the quote was, "Ray, you just don't know how to get old."

That occurred over five years ago, but the Yiddish from my parents awoke the thoughts of all of the Yiddish they spoke to me and how much I loved the language, almost completely forgotten over the past forty-seven years since I lost my father. Yes, almost, but not completely. Perhaps the correct word would be dormant. For as the months passed, I found myself thinking of that language and mentally once again speaking it.

I began to study the history of Yiddish, and last year presented an adult-education class on this fascinating subject. The response to that class was so positive that it encouraged me to form a "Yiddish Circle of Learning," which began just one year ago this past first week of June and has grown in one year to over thirty people who share my need to know more about our people’s language and culture.

And above all I now know how to "Honor My Father and Mother." Perhaps it is this feeling that courses thru each of us that is responsible for the growth of the "Yiddish Circle of Learning."
Motl the slaughterer was in his fifties. He was of medium height and well built. His white beard was a continuation of his hair, which could be seen sticking out from his hat, which had a small visor, but his whiskers were still black. His small nose was separated from his reddish cheeks by creases. When he got hot, he removed his hat in order to wipe the sweat from his forehead. One could see a black skullcap, which he never removed.

He kept a large red bandana in his back pocket to wipe off his perspiration. He wore a “fashmoltseve kapote”, a greasy coat, and pants tucked into his boots, which had short bootlegs. When he spoke to you, he looked straight at you with his dark, brown eyes decorated with graying eyebrows.

Motl was the only slaughterer in Mankiewicz, a little town in Volhynia. Three nights a week, he worked in the town slaughterhouse, which was located on its outskirts. The slaughterhouse had two sections. One section was where the gentiles slaughtered pigs, oxen, and sheep, and the other one, the Jewish section, was where Motl worked. He had two helpers who held the steer’s head while he, saying a prayer to the Almighty, which nobody could hear, used his sharp, glistening knife, “khalef” to cut the steer’s throat.

Motl owned a large house on Lucka Street, where he lived with his wife, two sons, and a daughter. It was an impressive piece of property. There was a “ganek” (porch) in the front of the house, a special place to sit in the summer. There was no plumbing in Mankiewicz and this is why he had an outhouse in the backyard. On the other side of the yard, he had a miniature slaughterhouse where he worked during the day, slaughtering fowl.

My mother, Leah, she should rest in peace, like many other housewives used to buy live chickens in the market. I remember she performed a whole ritual before she would buy one. She would take the chicken and shake it a few times to check its weight. Then came the second check. My mother would blow at the backside of the chicken to see if it had a yellow color and not bluish. Then came the price bargaining. Finally, the deal was made, my mother saying: I am paying too much money.

Our Ukrainian neighbor held a chicken sideways, put the head on a stump of wood, and chopped it off with an ax. But in the Jewish religion, only a slaughterer could slaughter fowl, or it wouldn’t be kosher. And although many Jews were not Orthodox, no Jew slaughtered any fowl.

It was my job to take the chicken to Motl, who was always busy. Before Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, there was a line of people waiting to have chickens, geese, and turkeys slaughtered. His tiny slaughterhouse had the shape of a square. It had a cement floor that sloped toward the edge, with small windows on the opposite walls. There was a small door, which was always open where Motl was working. The smell of blood was always there, although a few times I saw the floor being rinsed with water…but maybe not often enough.

Motl’s favorite spot in his slaughterhouse was near the door and facing the yard. Here he was less formal than in the slaughterhouse. He wore only his yarmulke and no “kapote”. Instead, he wore a sleeveless jacket. One could see the “arba kanfes” underneath it. His pants had blood spots on them, as did the boots. Motl had his sleeves rolled up. I always admired his clean fingernails.

Motl stood with his legs apart, with the handle of his C in his mouth. He grabbed the chicken, which had its legs tied, and held it in in his hand so that he could reach its head. Next, he tilted back the neck. The chicken, not knowing what was happening to it, kept closing and opening its eyes, not being able to make any sounds. Motl plucked some feathers from under the chicken’s neck and while quietly murmuring a short prayer, he took the “khalef” from his mouth and cut the chicken's throat with one swift thrust. Next, he pushed out the windpipe.

Motl then put his “khalef” back in his mouth and threw the chicken on the cement floor near the wall, where it joined other chickens. Some lay still, ready to be picked up by their owners to become the next meal. Others were flapping their wings, which caused them to lose blood faster and die. My chicken convulsed, flapping its wings somewhat slower, as if to say: I am not giving up—but it was a losing battle. Blood from its throat formed a
stream of red liquid, which joined the blood of the other chickens and finally reached the troughs near the wall on the way to the special containers.

As I waited for my chicken to die, I saw Motl as a killer. It is true he did say a prayer before each killing, but who gave him the authority to kill God’s innocent creatures? If Motl hadn’t been around, many fowl would have survived, because the Jews themselves wouldn’t kill them. I would have stopped eating chicken. I stared at the poor creatures and couldn’t take their sufferings.

I looked at my chicken and couldn’t believe my eyes. It opened its mouth and looked at me with one eye. It started with a low voice and got louder. “I blame Motl for my wound, but you, you are also guilty. You are the one who brought me here. You bound my legs so that I would not be able to run away.” Realizing that my chicken was right, I started to plead with it. “I didn’t do it on my own. Please forgive me—my mother sent me.” My chicken continued. “It took me a long time to reach the stage where I am now, before the killer, Motl, got a hold of me.

My chicken said: “I remember how my mother suffered when she released me as an egg. I fell. Luckily, there was straw in the crowded cage where there were hundreds of chickens. Otherwise, I would have suffered a concussion. I was cold and thought I would freeze to death. My dedicated mother came to my rescue, but she almost squashed me to death when she flopped down on me with all her weight. I said, Ouch. My mother said, Please forgive me, but I am tired from giving birth. I don’t know what happened to the midwife, why she didn’t show up to help me. I felt warm and stopped shivering. After a few days, I felt as if I were coming to life. The prison cell was too small. I used all my strength to pip and finally made it—exhausted and unable to move. I was wet and could barely stand. My mother hen watched over me. I was hungry and couldn’t wait for my first meal.” I waited to hear more, but the voice stopped.

I looked at my chicken—it lay motionless—it was dead. I regretted that it couldn’t finish its autobiography. I felt guilty and wanted to repent, but knew not how. I walked over and carefully picked up my chicken from the floor. It was full of blood. I put it in my bag, making sure that I didn’t hurt it. I paid and left.

On the way home, I wished I could talk to and understand the fowl family. The first thing I would do is organize them and attack Motl the shoykhet. I was sure that he would protect himself with his sharp knife, and that many fowl “revolutionaries” would die, but enough would survive to get rid of the mortal enemy who always took their lives. It would be enough if they pecked out his eyes and blinded him so that he couldn’t use his knife.

The timing was perfect for a revolution. It was before Rosh Hashone, to be followed by Yom Kiper. Before Yom Kiper, every Jew “shlogs kapores” with a chicken which represents a scapegoat in the pre-Yom Kiper atonement ceremony. A male takes a rooster, spins it around his head 3 times, and says a special prayer. The prayer ends with the saying, “You will die, and I will go on living.” The man puts the rooster on the floor. Women use the same procedure, but instead of a rooster, they use a hen. It is common for the same rooster and hen to be used by other members of the family if there aren’t enough to go around. Then they are taken to Motl to be slaughtered.

Motl was working overtime, so this was the right time to organize the future martyrs in order to save lives. However, I couldn’t speak to my winged friends and didn’t understand their language. I thought perhaps I should kill Motl myself. But this would be murder, which is against the Jewish religion, and Motl had a family to support. The Jews respected him because he had more education than they and could answer their questions.

Mama asked me why I was late. I couldn’t tell her the agony I went through while at Motl’s. I said that he was very busy. I kept looking while my mother plucked the feathers and cut off the head. I looked at its right eye, which had stared at me, complaining while lying on Motl’s floor. Now, it was quiet. Mama asked me why I kept looking at the chicken. But this was no ordinary chicken—this was the first one that had stood up for its right to live among humans.

Mother cut the chicken into ten parts, spread them on a board and salted and soaked them to get rid of the blood. That Friday she made a delicious chicken soup. I hardly swallowed a spoonful. I left the table saying that I had a stomachache. I couldn’t forget the extraordinary chicken that will go down in history as the first one to revolt against the oppressors.
Memoirs of Jacob Plassmann – Part II
Translation by Philip Bibel z”l

Marcel of Gannebatros

It was painful and sad for us to leave our beautiful home in Meriel and set out towards the center of France. I knew that we had to get out. The invading Germans were at the gates of Paris, and I knew what would await me as a Jew.

We packed our Citroën with a few essentials and started our journey. I knew that we had to reach Durdat and the small hamlets clustered nearby. It was a long way, about 350 kilometers. I had grown up in this area and knew everyone and everyone knew me. They called me the “Marcel of Gannebatros.” I had come there as a baby and was raised in Gannebatros.

As I described earlier, it was impossible to travel on the road. It seemed as though the big, and even the smaller, passageways were all full with the French, Belgian, Dutch and others fleeing from the Nazis. They were in cars, bicycles, horse-drawn wagons, or carriages were pushing carts, or were just walking. The wagons were filled with goods and livestock, even cows. Everyone pushed on, feeling lost and with tears in their eyes. The planes were overhead, strafing and scaring everyone.

Mussolin, too, had to get into the act, "Me too" he indicated. He sent his planes to bomb the cities and villages, but mostly to shoot at the fleeing innocent people. These poor people did not know that they would be in even more danger on the southern roads of France than in Paris.

We had to take refuge from the planes in a damp cold cave, where they grew mushrooms. That was where my youngest baby child, Jean-Claude, developed a fever and pulmonary congestion. The next night we slept in our car, off the road and in a ravine.

We had to reach Durdat so that we could ask for asylum from the family Gourichon Defouret. They were friends from my childhood and when they came to Paris, they were my guests. I had entertained and showed them the best of the city, but Mr. Defouret had died and his widow had taken in to her home her daughter, son-in-law, and their child, and could no longer accommodate us, not even my wife and sick child.

So we had to spend the first night in the stable, a cold barn with the animals. We slept on the floor, which was dirty and smelly. We will never forget our first night of asylum. The next morning I approached Marcel Baret, a man who as a child always entertained me by making me jump all over him, to sit on his shoulders or jump on his knees. His mother had died a long time ago and her small home was empty. He offered this to us. Oh how we welcomed this place although there was no electricity or running water, and no toilet, of course. We moved in with all our belongings. Mr. Baret gave us a few more furnishings and we felt temporarily safe. I bought a butane burner so we had heat to cook and warm our food.

I returned to my home in Meriel, alone, to salvage some more of our belongings. I loaded up my car with anything that I could pack in or on top of the car. I had a load a meter high.

The Mayor of Meriel, a confirmed reactionary, came over and asked me why I was leaving. He told me that my actions could cause panic in the community. He didn’t know that I was a Jew, but I knew what awaited me when the Germans arrived.

I resumed my journey to Durdat-Larequille. I could hardly exceed 60 kilometer per hour, arriving at night and unloading everything that I had brought with me. I connected my precious radio and learned that the French Government had left Paris for Tours and then again for Bordeaux, and that the final battle of Lille was now over. The Germans were the winners, and at Dunkirk the terrible rescue of 300,000 soldiers was on. The continent was abandoned to the Nazis. We listened and cried. The exodus from the North and West went on, unabated. The world would never know how many civilians were slaughtered on the roads by the marauding planes.

On June 14th the Germans entered Paris! The city was half empty, as the population had scattered before the enemy came. On June 17th Marshal Petain, the old hero of the First World War, had formed a new government in Vichy and announced to the world that as a soldier he had negotiated an honorable cease-fire with the Germans. He said it was a peaceful solution and would save France. He
felt it was an honorable agreement between soldiers and that it would be obeyed.

To my wife and me, it was as if a bomb had hit us. We were defeated. France was invaded. What next? Paris was occupied but was not bombed. The exodus was now reversed and people tracked back to Paris and the surrounding areas.

The Germans didn't keep their promise; they extended their complete rule over the whole Northern part of the country and the entire Atlantic coast. We remained in what was called the "free zone" but for how much time? Our own fascist people collaborated with the occupiers; Jews were hunted and turned over to the enemy—even children and babies, who eventually were sent to Poland to their death.

Installed modestly in the hamlet of Durdat, we felt safe. It was good that we left on May 10th. In June I decided that in order to survive I would go back to nature, to my childhood and youth, and grow our own food to be able to partially feed my family. And I did it!

The family Defouret-Gourichon had a large parcel of land suitable for growing vegetables. I arranged with them to let me cultivate the land. I would do all the work, and when the crops matured we would divide them evenly. They agreed. I bought all the necessary tools, seeds, fertilizers, and turned the soil. I planted peas, carrots, beets, lettuces, leeks, and tomatoes - everything was edible.

It was a good thing that we hadn't bought the home in Meriel. Where we had lived was now the occupied zone, and besides, we needed cash to buy meat and dairy products. I didn't have a job anymore. Still, I had merchandise to sell. I had all the samples but who would have been able to deliver? My firm, "Solfin," was dissolved and hidden. All the Jews were in hiding and we lived from day to day with whatever means we had saved and with new skills of survival.

We heard on the radio from the BBC about the call of June 18th by General De Gaulle. Thousands were joining his French Liberation Army. America joined the war; the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor and later were badly defeated. The atomic bomb was launched and soon France would be free. The Germans would lose this war too.

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**Muzeum Historii Żydów Polskich**

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**The Virtual Shtetl Portal Visits Belarus**

Members of the Virtual Shtetl team visited Belarus again. It was the 4th study trip of the Virtual Shtetl folks in this country. We asked representatives of Belarusian Jewish communities and cultural organizations to join us and discover the past together. We were accompanied by renowned Polish experts Eleonora Bergman from the Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute and Andrzej Trzcinski, from the Center for Jewish Studies at the Maria Curie Skłodowska University in Lublin.

**‘Memory in Stone’ Project Goes to Szydłowiec**

The ‘Szydłowiec Shtetl’ Center of the LOgos Association is just about to launch the ‘Memory in Stone’ project in close cooperation with the Virtual Shtetl, the Internet portal of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

**A Virtual Shtetl Workshop in Góra Kalwaria**

Another educational youth meeting dealing with the history of the local Jewry was organized in Góra Kalwaria. The previous edition was staged in September 2011 and attracted great interest of young participants. At the request of teachers and pupils from the Primary School Nr 2 and the Junior High of the Sajna School Complex, the Virtual Shtetl team visited Góra Kalwaria once again.

**Lithuanian Virtual Shtetl to be launched soon**

The Lithuanian version of the Virtual Shtetl portal (www.shtetl.lt) will soon publish new materials, including pictures, articles, and news related to the history of the Jewish community. This new portal is the fruit of the co-operation between the Jewish Historical Institute Association, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews and the Center for Jewish Culture and Information in Vilnius. more Workshops for teachers: Warsze, Warsza, Warszawa – the diverse richness of Jewish Warsaw

The Museum of the History of Polish Jews invites you to workshops called ‘Warsze, Warsza, Warszawa – polifonia żydowskiej Warszawy’. The classes are on history, civics, and Polish language teachers. The classes, based on a multimedia presentation about Warsaw Jews, help prepare Polish and history lesson plans and teach issues related to local heritage and multiculturalism.
I have often wondered how far back I can remember events and experiences from my childhood years. At this point in my life, age 71, my memory is certainly weaker and less efficient than it used to be, but some happenings and experiences I can remember very clearly and others only vaguely or not at all. I recall an event going back to 1935 when I was seven years old or slightly older. It was a visit in my home in the small town of Dębлин (Poland) by friends of my parents from the town of Chełm. These friends were to leave shortly for Johannesburg, South Africa.

As hard as I try now, I cannot remember many of the details surrounding this visit, the correspondence, any preparations, but I vividly remember these friends, the Zygielbojms. And what was especially unique about the visit was that the couple was also joined by their daughter, who was about my age, and that during the short time the Zygielbojms stayed in our home I and my older brother became very good friends with Luncia (an endearing version for the name Leah). Joined by our local friends, we played various games, usually outdoors. I can almost still feel the excitement of having guests from so far away.

Although the distance between the two towns, 140 or 150 kilometers (less than 100 miles) may seem negligible measured by current standards of fast cars and air travel, in the 1930's in Poland traveling such distances often took on the character of going to a different world. It certainly did so to a boy my age. Besides, our visitors were soon to depart for a different universe.

As was customary at that time and in our culture, we children called the friends of our parents "aunt" and "uncle". I remember that the very thought of being with an aunt and uncle who are going to travel so far away was enormously exciting to a seven-year old boy. I am sure that my parents must have heard from Uncle Israel (Srul) and aunt Fania and perhaps there was some note also from Luncia, after they settled in Johannesburg. But here is where my memory does not serve me well, as I cannot recall any details about any correspondence after the visit of the Zygielbojms. Besides, I was again fully occupied with all the activities of a school boy. In addition to my regular public school which I attended mornings, I also had to go to Yiddish school where I studied the Yiddish language in all its forms, Hebrew, and Jewish history. I do remember that I was often thinking and dreaming that some day I would travel to South Africa and visit my friends. This wish has always stayed with me.

World War II put an end to my dreams. I had to grow up very fast and learn to participate in the greatest reality of all, the need to survive the Nazis. First came the ghetto in Dębлин, then the forced labor camp at the Dębлин military airport (one of the largest such airports in Poland), and in the summer of 1944 the deportation to the city of Częstochowa near the German border. It is not my purpose here to describe the details of my experiences during those years. In 1995 I recorded my war experiences for the Visual History Foundation, established by Steven Spielberg under the heading SURVIVORS of the SHOAH (the Hebrew word for HOLOCAUST). I was later given a video copy of that interview. I also hope to write more about those years of pain and degradation, but here I want only to relay my Zygielbojm saga.

Although in the forced labor camps we were totally isolated and unable to communicate with the outside world, from time to time we received news, either through the clandestine radio or from people who worked and lived outside the camp. At some point, probably in late 1943, we heard the very sad news that Szmul Zygielbojm had committed suicide in London. To us in the labor and concentration camps, suicide was not a real option, so strong was the desire and will to survive the Nazis. The greater the pain and suffering and humiliation, the stronger the will and determination to go on living. My parents, especially my father, explained to me that Szmul Zygielbojm - whose first name was changed to Artur - was an older brother of Israel Zygielbojm. Artur Zygielbojm was a prominent Jewish labor leader and well respected in the labor movement. My father knew this labor leader since they met and worked in the "Bund", the Jewish Labor Organization.

The news of the suicide shocked my parents, but on reflection they understood. Artur Zygielbojm was
in the Warsaw Ghetto, he helped organize the Bund underground groups, and he was selected to serve in the "Judenrat" (Jewish Council). To avoid arrest by the Nazis and to save his life, he escaped from Poland at the end of 1939 and arrived in London where he became a member of the Polish Government-in-Exile. In London, Artur Zygielbojm devoted all his energy and time to making the Western World aware of the German atrocities and of Hitler's plans to annihilate all Jews of Europe. As we now know, his pleas, and those of many others, fell on deaf ears. His personal life was not in danger, but he decided to use it as an ultimate means to shock the world into its collective sense of responsibility to try to save Europe's Jews.

Most of these details I learned much, much later. My parents and I were in the forced labor camp in Dęblin in 1943. My brother Srulek (Israel Aaron), who was two years older than I, was not with us. He worked in another area in Dęblin and in 1942, when all major deportations to the extermination camps began, his entire group was rounded up and sent away. We later heard that most probably the transport went to Treblinka. The news about Szmul Zygielbojm's suicide also served to emphasize our desperate situation. We had no way to verify the news, but I recall that we accepted it as fact. Needless to say, the tragic news about the heroic sacrifice of their brother made us think of our friends in Johannesburg. However, we could do no more than think about them.

In July, 1944, as the Soviet army was approaching our camp, the Germans loaded all of us into freight cars and sent us west to the city of Czestochowa on the Polish-German border. We wound up in an atrocious camp called "Hasag". The conditions were far worse than in Dęblin but we also felt that perhaps the Nazi hell would soon end. For me the War did end about six months later, but what a price I had to pay! By December there were rumors that the Russians would soon start a new offensive. The Germans began to deport their victims in the Czestochowa camps deeper into Germany. Along with other women, my mother was taken on December 21 to, I learned, the notorious women's concentration camp of Ravensbruck.

My father and I were pained and distraught about my mother's fate but we also tried to be somewhat hopeful that perhaps the Germans would no longer have the time or the will to hurt the women on this transport. Obviously, the Germans knew they had lost the war. But Hitler's henchmen did not give up. Early in January, 1945, we learned that the Russian army was advancing toward Germany, and rather fast. The Germans were determined to transport all camp inmates deeper into Germany. On January 15 a transport was sent from Czestochowa to, I later found out, Buchenwald. I was totally devastated. My father was in that group. On January 16 the Russian army marched into Czestochowa and liberated all camps.

I stayed with an aunt of mine - my mother's younger sister - and her son. After a few weeks we made our way back to Dęblin to begin the search for and inquiries about our families. My aunt's husband and another uncle and two cousins were also on the January 15 transport. We felt that whoever survived would either return to Dęblin or try to send messages. For several months I heard nothing from or about my family. The War was not officially over until early May. Slowly, individual survivors began to return to Dęblin, also searching for family members. One day a neighbor, who was on the same transport to Buchenwald as my father, returned to Dęblin and this neighbor described to me how my father, along with my uncles and many other people, perished from starvation outside the Buchenwald camp. About that time I also received confirmation that my brother's transport was indeed sent to Treblinka. More than fifty years later I cannot describe how I felt or reacted to the news. Whatever illusions or hopes I had left were shattered, but I remember that I did not or could not cry. I still had not heard anything about my mother - I was afraid to hope.

Late in summer (1945) the mailman brought a telegram, sent from Sweden and written in English, which we did not understand. It had my mother's name on it but we could not tell what the message was. I found a person who knew English. He told me the telegram stated that Estera Bergman and another woman from Dęblin were alive and gave the address in a small town in Southern Sweden. I was elated and immediately traveled to the large city of Lublin. I sent a telegram to my mother telling her that I was alive and would come to her, and that she should not try to return to Dęblin. Getting to join my mother in Sweden was rather difficult and protracted, but in August of 1946 I was united with her. We stayed in Sweden for nearly five years, until we received our American visas. We arrived in Chicago in April, 1951, where I have lived since then.
Klezmer: The Soundtrack of the Jewish World Renewal in Central & Eastern Europe
by Yale Strom

Since the collapse of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989 (ironically, precisely fifty-six years after Kristallnacht, the beginning of the end for Jewish life in Central and Eastern Europe) the very countries that bore witness to the shrieks and cries of Jews being rounded up in the streets is now home to the vibrant sounds of klezmer music and Yiddish singing. Klezmer music has become the soundtrack to the renewal of Jewish life in Central and Eastern Europe today.

In such cities as Berlin, Budapest, Prague and Warsaw, one can find Jewish life manifesting itself in various ways: Jewish day schools, synagogue services, Jewish food shops, kosher restaurants, Jewish summer camps, books fairs, film festivals and literary salons. And the engine that has driven this astonishing and ironic revival has been the advent of Jewish cultural festivals. And these Jewish cultural festivals have been energized primarily through klezmer.

Many Jews who lived in the former East Bloc and wanted to begin the search for their Jewish identity found going to a synagogue or any kind of religious event either completely foreign or against their agnostic or atheistic beliefs. However, the “pintele yid” (Yid. the quintessence of one’s Jewish identity) still throbbed inside them. How could they seek and express their yearning to be Jewish but not have to learn Hebrew or take “Judaism 101”? For these Jews, the answer lay in going to these Jewish culture festivals and listening to klezmer bands from Western Europe and America.

Just by sitting and listening to the violin or clarinet play a doyne, they began to understand the beautiful and complex (and often sad) history of the Jews of Eastern Europe. With the strains of an upbeat freylekh ringing in their ears, they could imagine what a Jewish wedding must have been like before the Holocaust.

By learning how to dance a sher, they began to learn of the sheer excitement of klezmer music and how Jews in the shtetlekhs and cities came together to celebrate as a community at a Jewish wedding. At a klezmer concert, these Jews were often hearing Yiddish for the first time, the language that was tinged with secretiveness and stained with the memories of entire families who perished in the Holocaust.

They could sit in the corner of a club nursing a beer, listen to the haunting sounds of klezmer and learn more about themselves and their culture and have this transformative experience without exposing themselves to any kind of embarrassment because they knew nothing to very little about their own Jewish heritage.

Meanwhile, the gentiles who began attending klezmer concerts and/or began playing klezmer after the Berlin Wall came crashing down were driven by exoticism, guilt, capitalism, enjoyment, or any combination of the four. When Jews in these countries began to rediscover, write about, and publicly display their religion and culture, many non-Jews became fascinated by these local exotics. Forty-five years after the Holocaust, the grandchildren of those non-Jews who lived during the war were far enough removed in time to be able to understand the consequences of the large cultural hole that was created in their lands where most of the Jews were killed. They did not have to look across the ocean for some exotic group to admire and study – they just had to look in their backyards, and here were the Jews. The prevailing attitude was, "let’s study these exotic people and help them be more Jewish since there are so few of them". (This paternalistic, ignorant point of view was no different from that of many Americans toward the Native Americans as of the 1960’s). Instead of studying and hanging with the “Last of the Mohicans”, many non-Jews decided to study klezmer, Hebrew, Yiddish, Jewish literature, customs, history, etc…. and hang with the last of the Levine’s.

For some non-Jews, guilt was the driving force behind their enthusiastic support of klezmer and other things Jewish. This was their way of not only asking forgiveness but also bearing a collective responsibility for the sins committed, not by them, but by their parents and/or grandparents.

Consequently, going to Jewish events – even participating and taking the time to learn some aspect of the culture – was the equivalent of saying:
“Jewish culture did not and cannot completely vanish from our land.” Jewish culture had been so intrinsically part of Central and Eastern Europe’s development and history for nearly one thousand years that it was almost inevitable that, two generations after the Holocaust, non-Jews discovered the great loss they suffered when 90% of Central and Eastern Europe’s Jewry was murdered.

For Jews and non-Jews alike, rediscovering klezmer helps fill a void that was created by the Holocaust. And for many places throughout Central and Eastern Europe, the Jewish tourist trade today helps fill the void in the cash registers. Large numbers of tour groups from North America, Israel, and Western Europe, driven by nostalgia and intellectual curiosity, have descended upon Russia and Central and Eastern Europe. Though the vast majority of the Jews are gone (although there are significant numbers in Hungary, Ukraine and Russia), synagogues, cemeteries, former Jewish schools and hospitals, homes, books, poetry, songs, music, paintings, photographs, ritual art, and more remain. Ironically, some of the largest Jewish cultural festivals are in cities where there are few indigenous Jews.

One such festival is the Krakow Jewish Festival (the largest in Europe drawing some 15,000 people at the finale concert) held for a week every summer since 1990. At such festivals, where the local Jewish artists and visitors are greatly outnumbered by non-Jewish and Jewish artists and tourists from abroad, klezmer fills the air and kitsch marks the business. This kitsch, sometimes bordering on the offensive, takes the place of reality, while fetishism of the victim (Jew and Rom) has become a kind of secular religion, especially for the non-Jews.

For example, one can take a tour of the former concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau during the day and relax in the evening at a Jewish café, eating Jewish-style cuisine while entertained by pseudo-klezmer musicians dressed in pseudo-Khasidic garb, stay at a hotel in Kazimiercz that was a re-creation of a nineteenth-century Jewish inn, and fall asleep looking at all the paintings and wooden figurines they have bought that depict the itinerant klezmer musicians... and it is possible to not encounter a single Jew during this entire "Jewish" experience.

Today the revival of Jewish culture in Central and Eastern Europe is sustaining itself through other artistic and scholarly pursuits, and not just through klezmer. Since most of the former klezmer musicians have died, and those that are still alive have been thoroughly interviewed and most of the archives thoroughly pored over, klezmer musicians and enthusiasts have had to find another angle to sustain the public’s interest. The popularity of klezmer reached its peak in Central and Eastern Europe in 2000. This other angle has been to research the symbiotic relationship between the Jews and the Roma (Gypsies). For many, the Roma are an exotic group of misunderstood people who are known for their musical heritage.

There are klezmer musicians who have done some significant scholarly ethnographic field research among the Roma and have discovered some lost klezmer melodies and learned more about the special relationship Jewish and Rom musicians (specifically in Transylvania, the Carpathian Mountains, and Moldavia) had before the Holocaust. Unfortunately for some klezmer musicians, this new found interest in Rom culture, specifically the music, is merely a way to give a new spin on their repertoire and to exploit the exoticism the Roma hold for the gadje (non-Rom). Most of the time, these bands do not even include one Rom musician, their knowledge of Rom history and culture is limited, and the music is anything but Rom. Many of these musicians (Jewish and non-Jewish) have succumbed to the same need to fetishize and romanticize the “other pariah” of Central and Eastern Europe. Thus, you have these pseudo-Rom bands headlining many Jewish cultural festivals in Europe today. Often their main impetus for playing what they play is based upon how many gigs they can obtain and where. For some venues these days in Central and Eastern Europe, playing “just” klezmer is passé.

One might ask: “So what’s wrong with these bands playing this music? Whether it is or is not authentic Rom or klezmer or some kind of hybrid, as long as it is entertaining and being respectful of these two cultures that were nearly annihilated during the Holocaust, what’s the harm?” On the surface, one might say nothing is wrong. But if Jewish culture (and Rom culture) is going to continue to grow in its myriad ways and attract more adherents, a more critical, honest and
Karen had published an article by the Chicago Jewish Historical Society about the Lodz-born Nathan Vizonsky, the Jewish dancing master of 1930's Chicago who choreographed the great 1933 Chicago pageant, Romance of a People. Known mainly as the writer of a rare book, the 1942 Jewish Folk Dances of the title, Vizonsky was a prolific choreographer and teacher. He wrote an article in Yiddish in 1930 for the Yiddish literary journal Shikage (Chicago), "About Jewish Folk Dance." Karen has translated the article and presents it for this exploration of the characteristics of Eastern European Jewish folk dance.

She produced a documentary/instructional DVD, COME LET US DANCE (2002) with insightful explanations of Yiddish dance by Miriam Rochlin, who learned Vizonsky's dances in 1950's Los Angeles. She also was an assistant to the great Jewish dance master Benjamin Zemach.

Miriam herself had produced a 27-minute film, The Art Of Benjamin Zemach (1967) of four of Zemach's choreographies, which span a period from the early 1920's Moscow to 1960's Los Angeles. One is on Mendele Moicher Sforim's "The Travels of Benjamin III," and the last work is based on Chaim Bialik's poem, "Dance of Death," which Zemach recites in both Yiddish and Hebrew as he moves.

There is so very little footage of dancing from those pre-WW II Yiddish-speaking communities that the Zemach film is a great treasure, which has rarely been seen since early screenings on public television. The DVD can be purchased from Karen Goodman: ph: 818-753-0973 - goodmandance@sbcglobal.net

Karen’s honors and grants include a National Endowment for the Arts Choreographer’s Fellowship, a Lester Horton Award for Individual Performance, and a Detroit Jewish Women in the Arts Award. She has choreographed 46 works, including four solos, and had contributed biographies on Bella Lewitzky and Margalit Oved to the Encyclopaedia Judaica, she lectures on Yiddish dance and continues documenting and teaching this endangered world dance form.

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Karen Goodman  
Visit my special exhibition. With the cooperation of Zylbercweig’s stepdaughter, I have a large exhibition about her stepfather (and her mother and birthfather, both Yiddish actors), and his work, an opus of seven volumes titled "Lexicon of the Yiddish Theatre", a compendium of nearly 2,900 biographies of those once involved in the Yiddish theatre—actors, directors, theatre workers, playwrights, critics and et al, as well as histories of dozens of once-vital Yiddish theatre troupes and organizations.

You will learn about Zylbercweig, the man, his work, and the history of the creation of the "Lexicon" and more. Over the past year, I have translated over 1,700 of the biographies (from one sentence in length to dozens of pages) from Yiddish to English. There are still many more translations to go, so this is an ongoing process, which would be sped up if only I could find volunteers to help me translate. The biographies are of the famous, such as playwright David Pinski, Jacob P. Adler, Aaron Lebedeff and Muni Weisenfreund (better known to us as film star Paul Muni. Did you know that Edward G. Robinson was in Yiddish theatre before being a film legend?

Another treat for you will be the Museum’s "On the Air!" radio program, where I will present English and Yiddish-language radio programs, including many from Zylbercweig’s own radio program ("Zylbercweig’s Daily Radio Hour"), in Los Angeles 1949 and 1969. With the help of a well-known Jewish organization, more than sixty reel-to-reel tapes and cassettes of these old radio programs have been converted to a digital format, enabling me to present them to you on the Internet.

You can begin your tour of the Zylbercweig exhibition (which includes the link to the “On the Air!” Zylbercweig radio program) at: www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/yw/zylbercweig/zz-main.htm

The main “On the Air” page with links to both the Zylbercweig and Jolson pages (which you can check every month for new additions) is: www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/yw/radio/zz/ota.htm Here you can read a bit of the history of the Zylbercweig “Radio Hour”, and then proceed to the list of links of current “On the Air!” selections.

I have just begun to create yet another volume to add to the current six-volume “Lexicon of the Yiddish Theatre”. This project is being done with Zalmen Zylbercweig’s stepdaughter’s permission. The last volume, the seventh, was never published, because of his passing in 1972. It exists solely in galley form in two archives, as well as on my website. The new volume, which I have numbered volume eight, will mostly exist solely as an online version and will be available only on the Museum of Family History website. It will contain biographies of individuals and now-defunct Yiddish theatrical troupes and organizations that were not featured in any of the original seven volumes, though perhaps previous biographies to which sufficient new information has been added will also be included.

If you know of anyone who has been involved professionally in the Yiddish theatre whose biography you feel should be included in this new volume, please contact me. They needn’t be, or have been, actors. They could be or have been directors, theatrical managers, stage managers, scenery designers, playwrights, or writers, e.g. journalists who have reviewed Yiddish theatre, translators of plays that were performed in Yiddish, et al. The key is that they must not have solely participated in “amateur” productions, but also were "professionals".

I also would need to be supplied with the biographical information, etc. One shouldn’t just suggest the name of an individual, but should be able to supply much of what is needed to construct a proper biography. Length of biographical text should not be an issue. Additional information, such as from theatre reviews, or oral or written testimony from others, may also be added.

If you are unsure whether someone has previously been biographed in Zylbercweig’s “Lexicon”, send me an e-mail, and I’ll respond with the information.

When the opportunity comes, I will include audio clips along with a number of biographies. I can be contacted at: steve@museumoffamilyhistory.com
Mame, vi redt men tsu a meydl?
by Philip “Fishl” Kutner

Mame, kh’ob dray brider un keyn shvesters, nisht keyn eynem.

Fishele, du redst tsu mir un ikh bin a meydl.

Neyn, mame, dos iz andersh. Du bist a mame, un kinder muzn redn tsu zeyere mames. Ikh shem zikh tsu redn tsu a meydl.

Fishele, mayn tayerer, di meydleh veln in a por yor arum khasene hobn un shpeter vern mames mit zeyere eygener kinder. Zey zenen di zelbn menshn.


Oy mame, zi iz take sheyn un zeyer klug. Zi iz kliger fun mir in english klas un in geshikhte klas, ober in matematik un visnhaft bin ikh beser. Mame, morgn afn bus vel ikh zitsn mit ir un redn vegn klas, un efsher betn az zi zil aroysgeyn mit mir.

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Der Bay

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• Please make checks for chai, payable to Der Bay. If you’ve been blessed, please do send a LITTLE extra. Label date is when you LAST contributed.

• Networking, Networking, Networking, is having others help you get what YOU want. Der Bay is a great networking tool.

• Contribute in memory of a dear one, or send someone a Der Bay subscription.

• Listings in Der Internatsionaler Kalendar in the hardcopy and the website are free.

• Send a notice of Yiddish club meetings, lectures, classes, a DVD release, or gigs.
Ben Giladi o"h

Of all the dear friends Fishl has made through Der Bay, Ben ranks among the top. We had exchanged articles from his The Voice of Piotrkow Survivors and had many conversations. Below are three excerpts of articles that appeared in Der Bay and the issues in which they appeared. This has been a great loss to the “Piotrkow Circle”, and the diminishing witnesses to the greatest tragedy we have had.

DB 18-10 - The Voice of Piotrkow Survivors
Ben Giladi publishes this Bi-monthly publication. His editorial board consists of first and second-generation members. Only three of the first generation are alive; Israel Krakowski, Ambassador Naphtali Ben Levi, and Dr. William Samelson.

Second generation members include: Iris Giladi, Dr. Joseph Geliebter, Abby Henig Esq., Dr. Henry Jablonski, Dr. Irving Gomolin, Howard Desau and David Jacobowitz. Ben has articles in English, Hebrew, Yiddish, and Polish.

DB 14-8 - Voice of the Piotrkow Survivors
In our Oct.-Nov. issue I have included your piece Chelm on Two Levels. The readers will like it. Some of our readers also receive your publication.

If any of your readers came from Piotrkow or are interested in the locale they may wish to subscribe to The Voice. Actually there are three Piotrkows in Poland. I write about Piotrkow Trybunalski, by far the largest and most important historically of the three. The current issue is #136 and they date back to 1967. The issues have letters photographs, and articles in English, Yiddish, Hebrew, and Polish.

DB 10-7 - A Tale of One City: Editor, Ben Giladi

This almost 500 page tome is special to Fishl because of the remarkable friend who edited the book and the labor of love that went into compiling it and his editing the remarkable The Voice of Piotrkow Survivors. Much work has been done documenting stories of Holocaust survivors by organizations, but no one has continued to publish the living history for a given area for so long a period of time.

Ben Giladi gives a Chronology of Events in the History of the Jews of Piotrkow starting in 1102 C.E. It covers the period from the arrival of Jews to the city, all through the Holocaust, and traces the activities of these immigrants to the United States and founding of societies like Workmen’s Circle Br. 368. This book is highly recommended.


Ben’s last message was sent 10-30-11:
This is Ben Giladi speaking:
My dear readers, whom I love, due to my illness regretfully, I will not be able to continue with “The Voice”. Please do not send any more contributions to the magazine. G-d Bless You All

On page two you will find the beautiful poem Ben wrote to his wife. When a copy was first sent to me, I found it very moving. It is even more moving today. Ben’s talents covered diverse areas and I miss him now and shall continue to miss our many wonderful telephone chats. To his wife, a special woman, and his devoted daughter, please keep in touch so that we can still share these beautiful memories of Ben.
A Letter to Aaron Lansky from Helen and Meyer Zaremba

We recently sent you our yasher koakh together with a modest contribution in support of your new translation initiative. What I write here was initiated by ideas put forth by Jay Spivack (Bintl Briv) and Lawrence Rosenwald (His Lecture), in the, "Pakn Treger."

In Bintl Briv. Jay Spivack referred to your listing “modern literature, music, film, etc. as ‘well-springs of Jewish peoplehood’, …that” he (Lansky) would like to see broader taught.” Spivak argued for “an even broader list that includes physics, chemistry, etc.”

We argue for "a seat at the table" for Yiddish Folksong, because it, too, belongs within this listing, as, "well-springs of Jewish peoplehood". It, too, is deserving of inclusion.

Rosenwald spoke of “hack work” in connection with his introduction of the “yay” word. He accepted the need for “hack work”/“yay” translation as a contributor to the preservation of the Yiddish cultural treasures that would be lost without the lamentable but necessary “hack/yay” work.

You will find on your shelves a copy of a book that we had written and sent you. The title is, "120 Yiddish Folksongs Sung/Rendered in English ".

What you want to do with literature is what we were trying to do with song. Yes, there are Yiddish songs in “translation” but we do not begin to scratch the surface of having even a fraction of them in singable renditions.

Rosenwald’s last paragraph referred to making "available in English a broader juster representation" of Jewish creativity. We believe that what we were trying to do with song falls within the parameters of what Rosenwald advocates.

Now, we don’t live in never-never land. We know that you will have your hands full with the mammoth translation project you have in mind. How can you undertake another? We think the answer to this lies in Rosenwald’s "Wikipedia Model" thinking.

How about a "mini Wikepedia approach" that would work thusly:

- Establish an objective for this initiative that begins with the recognition of its legitimacy, of its inclusion as a "wellspring of Jewish peoplehood".
- Devote 2 pages in your next Pakn Treger to an introduction to the project.
- After a brief introduction, take any 4 songs from our book and offer them as a "starter set" to play with. Possibilities might include:
  - "Dos Lid Fun Goldenem Land" p 51 - "Kum Leybke Tantsn" p42
  - "Shpil Gitar" p 83 - "Hulyet Hulyet Kinderlakh" p32
- Admit that these renditions may be the "hack work" or "yay" referred to by Rosenward and invite readers to submit (heir renditions which they feel might be more faithful to the original and more singable.
- Select those renditions that the "meyvinem" you select would consider the "best". See what happens and decide whether or not this might be a springboard to further movement in this direction.

We would appreciate receiving your reaction to the above. At any rate, Aaron. you are a "Jewish Peoplehood Treasure” and we wish you continued years of “gezint” as you continue your work of keeping the Yiddish Oytsres alive.

Helen & Meyer Zaremba - greenehcuzineh@aol.com - Delray Beach, FL
The White Lace Curtains: A Tale of a Reunion - Part II

By Howard Bergman

Forty-eight years have passed since my arrival in the United States. I did my best to adjust to a new life, and was motivated by a strong desire to give my mother some compensation for the loss of her son and husband. My mother tried very hard to help me by acting as if she, too, had accepted her fate and it was her duty to please me. We came to Chicago because my mother’s aunt who came to America in 1905 settled there. Prior to the outbreak of WW II this aunt brought over my mother’s brother. They guaranteed to the U.S. Government our stay in the country, until we became citizens.

Since I studied English during my years in Sweden, I soon found office work after my arrival, not high caliber positions, but I was able to earn enough to support the two of us and lead an independent life. I worked full time and in the evenings I attended school. I completed high school in two years and then started evening classes at a downtown university which catered strongly to adults who had to work during the daytime. I received my college diploma at the beginning of 1960.

In spite of my heavy schedule, I was still able to have a social life. I made friends, at work and at school, with people who were willing to consider me as an individual rather than as a member of some foreign group. Many people felt rather uncomfortable in dealing with survivors. How does one talk to survivors? Are they emotionally fragile and scarred? To this day this is a rather delicate situation. I was very fortunate in meeting a lovely young lady while I was attending college. I learned that Leny (Leome - Leah in Yiddish and Hebrew) was also a Holocaust survivor. She was hidden during the war in a convent in Brussels. Her parents were deported from Belgium to Auschwitz in 1944 where they perished. Leny was adopted by a Chicago couple. Leny’s younger sister was also a hidden child in Belgium and she was adopted by a couple in Brooklyn. My sister- and brother-in-law now live in Manhattan.

Leny and I were married in December, 1956. Our first child, Adelle—named after Leny’s mother—was born in January, 1961. In 1963 Leny gave birth to our son Jeffrey Phillip, named after both our fathers, Itzhak (Bergman) and Pinchas (Taffel). Our lives now revolved around our children and my wife and I gave our children the kind of devotion and love which were denied our own parents to give to us. Fate proved again how cruel it could be.

When Adelle was born, my mother was so thrilled with her beautiful grandchild, it was a joy to observe her pleasure. Of course, my mother was also hoping for a grandson and a namesake for her dear husband and/or son. How excited she was when we told her Leny was pregnant. Jeff came into the world at the end of June, on my birthday anniversary, but my mother’s heart gave out several months earlier. She passed away in February. Both our children are now married and have families of their own. We have three wonderful grandchildren. In these times of generational estrangement, we are happy to have close relationships with them. My life was full with work, education, bringing up our children and helping them with their educational pursuits. But I never gave up searching for relatives and friends who might have survived the Nazi atrocities.

My father had three brothers, two of whom lived in the Kazimierz (Lublin region) and one in Warsaw. Among them they had 18-20 children. As hard as I tried to find out what happened to them and my grandfather, if anyone possibly survived, I was unable to find anything positive. In 1952 or 1953 my mother and I received a visit from a Kazimierz friend of my father’s, Mr. Shneiderman. He was one of the prominent journalists and editors at the Jewish Daily Forward, the principal Yiddish language newspaper in the United States. Mr. Shneiderman expressed his sorrow over the loss of our husband and father and his friend, and the loss of all our Kazimierz relatives. He later wrote in the Kazimierz Memorial Book that of the 3000 Jews in town only 63 were known to have survived.

In 1967 my wife and I visited Paris where I remembered another friend of my father’s lived. This friend, Mr. Itzhak (or Itche) Gryn, had left Poland and settled in Paris. Like the Zygiebbojms, Mr. Gryn came to visit us in Dęblin in 1936 or 1937. I talked to an elderly Jewish lady in Paris who informed me that Mr. Gryn, who was well known in the Jewish community, passed away several weeks before. Other efforts to get information about Kazimierz survivors also proved fruitless.
As the years and decades passed, my thoughts about the Zygielbojm family became subordinate to all my immediate concerns of life. But my thoughts were always there. Since 1960 and until my retirement several years ago, I worked as a travel planner, specializing in independent foreign tours. From time to time I planned tours which included South Africa, but because of that government’s apartheid policy many travel industry people were reluctant to travel there themselves for fear of offending some of their customers.

I also began to think that perhaps the Zygielbojms would no longer know who I was. What if they had moved now and are no longer in Johannesburg? Moreover, even if I could locate them, how could I tell them that their friends are dead? Of course, the nature of my thoughts about the Zygielbojms kept changing with the passage of time, ranging from youthful excitement to the realization that perhaps "aunt" Fania and "uncle" Israel are no longer alive. Over sixty years have gone by, a full lifetime. But what about Luncia? Being my age, she would always remain that way. Will I ever see her again? Will she remember me?

In 1996 on a visit to New York City, I went to the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and there I looked up the Yizkor (Memorial) Book, written and published by survivors and other native people of Kazimierz, my father’s place of birth. I found articles about various social activities and organizations in town, and my father’s name appeared in those pages, including a photo of him with three other men, one of whom was his friend Itche Gryn. The book contained, of course, lists of Nazi victims and I found the names of my two uncles and their families. I do not know who placed all the names in the lists. To the best of my knowledge no Bergrnans of Kazimierz survived, but the book explained that most names were taken from a variety of records and sources. After reading the memorial book on my father’s hometown, I asked for and was given the Chelm Memorial Book.

Although I was never in Chelm, I wanted to read as much as possible about the town. I looked up the long list of Nazi victims and found a number of Zygielbojm names, obviously relatives of our friends in South Africa. Also in the Chelm Book were two articles about the life and death of Szmul (Artur) Zygielbojm. One of the articles was written by one of Szmul’s younger brothers, Rueven, who had also immigrated to Johannesburg. It was from those articles that I learned many of the circumstances of the tragic death of Szmul Zygielbojm.

I now have to concentrate on the most recent events. As members of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, D.C., we receive the Museum’s periodic magazine/newsletter, UPDATE. Toward the end of last year, while reading the September/October issue, I noticed the full page devoted to and entitled "Szmul Zygielbojm: Desperate Hero of the Holocaust". The article gives a brief account of his desperate efforts to get the Western World to intervene to stop the slaughter of the Jews in Poland. It also prints the letter Szmul Zygielbojm wrote to the Polish Government-in-Exile before he committed suicide. The page also shows two photos, one of Mr. Zygielbojm and the other showing the presentation of a medal from the present Polish Government to Arthur Zygielbaum, grandson of Szmul Zygielbojm. I became very excited. I wanted to contact Arthur who, I felt, would be able to give me some information about his aunt and uncle, and especially about Luncia.

I telephoned the Museum and talked to someone in the publicity department and explained why I was so anxious to get in touch with Arthur. In the past, I have received and sent some communications to different people through the Museum. Most of the time, the Museum will not give out addresses and phone numbers directly but will forward the messages and the person being sought decides if he/she wants to reply. Some time passed but toward the end of January of this year I received a phone call from the Communications Department of the Museum informing me that they could not give me Arthur Zygielbaum’s address or phone number, but they did give me the name, address, and phone number of Arthur’s aunt, Mrs. Carol Tellerman, in Florida.

When I called Mrs. Tellerman she was very gracious and patient with me and she tried to answer all my questions. First and foremost: "Aunt" Fania died in Johannesburg at a very young age, probably under fifty; "Uncle" Israel passed away in the State of Israel only a few years ago, at a ripe old age of about ninety-five. He had remarried and had a second family. WHERE IS LUNCIA? Luncia is.... (Next month’s in the third and final part you will learn about the white lace curtains, who, and where Luncia is.
The Pildes-Pilecki Tragedy
Professor Karl Maramorosch – karl maramorosch@yahoo.com

In the summer of 1940, after the Munich agreement between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, the Romanian areas of Bukovina and Bessarabia were incorporated into the USSR. A few Jewish refugees arrived at that time from Galicia, the former southeastern part of Poland. They came to the Polish refugee camp in Craiova. (This is Romania’s 6th largest city and is the capital of Dolj County. It is situated near the east bank of the Jiu River in the central province of Oltenia). Among the newcomers was a couple that registered under the name of Mr. and Mrs. Pilecki.

They trusted my wife and me and told us that their real name was Pildes. They had fled their shtetl with their six-month-old son and were heading for the town of Zaleszczyki on the Dniestr River, which until 1939 was the border between Poland and Romania. The Dniester River is between southwestern Ukraine and Moldova. It rises on the north side of the Carpathian Mountains and flows south and east for 840 miles to the Black Sea near Odessa. It is the second longest river in Ukraine and the main water artery of Moldova.

From Horodenka (now in the Ukraine, but then part of Poland and the Austrian province of Galicia), they arrived in Strzelce, (the capital of the county with the same name) to cross the Dniestr on a ferry, a few kilometers from Zaleszczyki.

Being very exhausted, they felt that their baby boy would not be able to withstand the harsh winter conditions and the hiding. They left their little son in the house of a Ukrainian peasant who had sheltered them for a few days, leaving him some money, and continued their escape across the border.

Their crossing into Romania coincided with the entry of the Soviet Army into Bukovina, and the Pilecki-Pildes couple decided to continue on their way from Czerniowce until they arrived in Craiova. They hoped to be able to depart soon for Palestine. They told us that they had a very important Zionist friend in Palestine who had come to Istanbul at that time to charter a ship and take more than 760 wealthy Romanian Zionists to Palestine. This friend promised to get the Pildes couple onto the same ship, called Struma. We envied the couple’s being able to leave Romania, and on the day of their departure we saw them off.

The Struma left Constanta harbor without difficulty on December 12, 1941. After it reached Istanbul, Turkey the passengers were not permitted to disembark when the engine failed. The ship was towed into the Mediterranean, and on February 24, 1942, it was torpedoed by a Soviet submarine, killing 768 people, including the Pildes couple. Only one 19 year-old man survived.

What happened to the baby left with the Ukrainian family in the village Strzylcze? Nobody knows. If the Jewish child survived, today that Holocaust survivor would be a 74-year-old circumcised Ukrainian peasant.

In 2010, I traveled in a large Volvo, belonging to the Warsaw Agricultural University and carrying 38 Polish scientists, to a conference in Odessa, and I passed through the village. Should I have stopped and inquired whether anyone knew about a baby left decades ago with someone who sheltered the baby’s parents? I thought it would be hopeless, and I did not stop.

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Dear Fishl:

I participated as the inaugural speaker at the International Cell Biology Congress in Yalta. The organizers assigned a lovely room to me, next door to the Livadia Palace. This was where the 1945 meeting between Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Josef Stalin took place.

A tour of the palace was very interesting, and fortunately I was permitted to videotape everything. Some 350 feet below was the water of the Black Sea that was very calm. The temperature was a comfortable 78° Fahrenheit, and I went swimming and sunning on the beach.

I had a working vacation in Los Angeles, where I was with my daughter until July 7.

Best wishes,
Karl
Proof of The Pythagorean Theorem
Morrie Feller and Avi Feller

When my grandson, Avi, age 26, got married last March 18, there was a prenuptial dinner. Knowing my interest in the Pythagorean theorem, they asked me to give a proof of the theorem in Yiddish. Using a Yiddish Geometry book, Avi diagramed the proof in Yiddish. Avi graduated from Yale, and became a Rhodes scholar at Oxford. He worked at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. He now is at Harvard working on a Ph.D. in statistics.

He is our only grandchild interested in Yiddish. At his Bar Mitzvah speech he included some Yiddish. I gave him a Yiddish keyboard, and he sent us an email in Yiddish. I still have it.

Editor’s Note: The Pythagorean theorem: The sum of the areas of the two squares on the legs (alef and beyz) equals the area of the square on the hypotenuse (hey).

\[ a^2 + b^2 = c^2 \]

\[ \text{שטח דער דריינק} = \text{אף} \text{ב} \]
\[ \text{שטח דריין קליינער קואָרדרָט} = \text{א}^2 + \text{ב}^2 \]
\[ \text{ש†ט דער גרוםער קואָרדרָט} = \text{ה}^2 \]
\[ \text{ש†ט דער זוייין} = \text{א} + \text{ב} \]
\[ \text{ש†ט דער זוייין קואָרדרָט} = \text{א}^2 + \text{ב}^2 \]

\[ \text{ש†ט דער דריינק קואָרדרָט} = \text{א}^2 + \text{ב}^2 \]

\[ \text{שמע דער זוייין דריינק קואָרדרָט} = \text{א}^2 + \text{ב}^2 \]

\[ \text{悯ע דער זוייין דריינק קואָרדרָט} = \text{א}^2 + \text{ב}^2 \]

\[ \text{悯ע דער זוייין דריינק קואָרדרָט} = \text{א}^2 + \text{ב}^2 \]
List of People

Kola Marmonick - Son of one of our Ukrainian neighbors
Yankl Weinstein - Rebbe (teacher) from Pinsk
Srulik - Son of Usher, the baker
Dora Burke - Daughter of Gedalye the grocery store owner
Szura Ponemarova - My First Love
Alexander - Szura's father
Maria Dombrovska - Teacher, nun
Horwitz - Owner of the rooming house on Lucka Street
Mend Zabronski - One of the Ukrainian high school students
Vove Verba - One of the Ukrainian high school students
Jan Postula - The Principal in the Polish public school
Ivan Kucheruk - Principal in the Ukrainian high school
Misha Lebedev - Political Advisor in the high school

The public school was located on the other side of the railway station. The railroad divided Maniewicze into two parts. One part used to be called "the part where Avrom, the tailor from Rozyszcze, lived with his family. The part of Maniewicze across from the railroad was called the "other side." It seemed that the other side was more important. All of the important institutions were located there. They included The City Hall, the main library (the Polish one), and our school, grades one through seven. Poland was and remains to this day predominantly a Catholic country.

Our school could be compared with a parochial Catholic school here in the United States. We attended school six days a week, Monday through Saturday. Some teachers, who were mainly Catholics, didn't write any new material on the board on Saturday—we didn't have to copy what a teacher wrote on the board on Saturday—we were responsible for it on Monday. We copied the material from a Catholic student. I would copy it from my Ukrainian friend, Kola Marmonick, who was our neighbor. I think it's important to mention that Kola became a policeman during the Nazi occupation in 1941 to 1945. He treated the Jews of Maniewicze in the ghetto worse than the Germans did.

It took me about twenty-five minutes to reach the school. We always walked to school. There was no public transportation and, of course, nobody had a car. When I was in the lower grades, I would pick a small rock and kick it all the way to school.

I skipped the first grade and was accepted to the second-grade because I knew more than the other kids. I had learned the Polish alphabet and how to read in the kheyder of the rebbe from Pinsk, Reb Yankl.

We had to cross the railway yard on the way to school. There was often a freight train standing on the rails, or the conductors were forming a new train. I was forced to go under the train car and had many very close calls—the train would start moving just as I cleared the car. In the wintertime, the railway yard used to get very slippery from the steam of the locomotives. The snow would melt and refreeze. We had sub-freezing temperatures from December through March. There was a narrow path to cross the railway yard. After a snowstorm, the path would be covered with snow and slippery.

There were always fights in the schoolyard. In the wintertime, we had snowball fights. In the summertime, we would use grass to make a whip and use it to fight. Most of the time, we fought one grade against another. Many times, and especially during the summer, the Catholic kids fought against the Jewish kids. This is why I liked to come to school with a group of other Jewish kids. I would come to school somewhat earlier when I needed money. I would shovel in the earth in the yard with my shoes. I would always find 5, 10, or 20 groszy. The biggest source was the area of the volleyball court.

Every grade exercised daily for about 15 to 20 minutes before the school day, weather permitting. We ran and exercised our legs and arms. I don't remember how the class picked the one in charge, the trainer. I remember our physical trainer when I was in the sixth grade. His name was Srulik Galperin, one of the sons of Usher the baker. He wasn't an excellent student. My marks were higher than his. But he had charisma. All the girls ran after him. He was nice-looking. I envied him when I saw him sitting close to one of our classmates, Dora Burke on her porch on the corner of Lucka Street.
and Vonska Streets. It was on the way to the kheyder of the Pinsker rebbe. They would giggle and talk.

I was shy and felt very uncomfortable when speaking to a girl. I was a late bloomer. It took me about three years to reach the stage when I enjoyed talking to the opposite sex. You may be interested to know how and under what circumstances it occurred. It happened when I was in the USSR in 1941 and worked on a collective farm in Ysm Buzuluk near Stalingrad.

One Sunday night, high-school student "volunteers" came to help us dry wheat. Among them was Szura Ponemarova. I still remember her. She was beautiful. She had blond hair with blue eyes and a very nice figure. It was instant love for me. We continued our conversation after the "volunteer" hours. She introduced me to her father, Alexander, when he came to pick her up, but I did not have an opportunity to meet Szura again.

The Germans were nearing Stalingrad and I had to run again, this time to Kurgan Tube, Uzbekistan. When we walked in to the classroom of our school, we faced Jesus Christ made of a light alloy on a lightly stained wooden cross hanging on the wall. It was about 8:30 a.m. We would hang up our coat in the wintertime before sitting down. We stood up when the teacher came in. It was time to start the morning Polish Catholic prayer.

The Jewish students didn't have to participate, but we had to remain standing. The Catholic students and the teacher would cross themselves and start, "Ojcze Nasz który oświeca serca i umysły nasze, dodaj nam ochoty i zdolności aby ta nauka była dla nas wieczna i wieczna przez Chrzestusa Pana Naszego, Amen", and would again cross themselves. I will try to translate it: "Our Father who controls our hearts and thoughts, give us the will and ability to learn. Let the knowledge we learn with the help of Jesus Christ last forever."

Then a patriotic song followed, in which all students participated. One of the songs was, Nie rzucim ziemi, skąd nasz ród, nie damy pogrześć mowy! Polski my naród, polski lud, królewski szczep Piastowy. Nie będzie Niemiec pił nam w twarz, ni dzieci nam germanili, aż się rozpadnie w proch i w pył krzyżacka zawierucha. "So help me God, we will never forsake our land where we were born in the kingdom which dates back to the Piast dynasty. The Germans will not spit in our face trying to force us to observe their rules. We will continue to fight till the crusaders turn into dust. So help me God, so help me God".

The teacher would ask the class to sit down. The male teachers wore black pants with a dark shirt and the women teachers wore a simple, center-buttoned, black dress with large white buttons. The teacher would open the dziennik, the daily registry book, and check attendance. They would call the parents of the absent students later in the day. After checking and discussing the homework, the new lesson of the day would follow. Each period would last 50 minutes, leaving 10 minutes to change classrooms. There were no discipline problems. We had a half hour to eat lunch, which the majority brought from home. Students of "poor" parents could apply for a free lunch. The school day ended about 2:30 p.m. The standard of learning was very high in Poland.

The majority of the teachers were women. Many of them were nuns. They wore a special ring, telling everybody that they were married to Jesus Christ. Maria Dombrovksa was one of them. I was in the 4th grade when she hit me in the head with her heavy ring for talking to my neighbor. I saw "mayn bobe fun yener velt". I saw stars. It really hurt. I did not dare complain to my parents. Their reaction would have been, "Ah ha! You didn't behave" and they would have smacked me again.

Sklep, in Polish, meant a store, and sklepik meant a small store. We had a sklepik in school. It was located near the kantselej, the teacher's office. I volunteered to work there during lunchtime. We sold notebooks, rulers, pencils, erasers, pens, and blotters including ink. Two students shared the desk, which contained a somewhat slanted table and two seats. In the center of the tabletop was a hole, which held an inkwell. The students used part of the ink dipping their pens in it to write. Some of the ink dried up or evaporated.

I volunteered to work in the sklepik because it was a source of revenue to me. Many students didn't care to work for the small change of a groszy or two. (One groszy was 1/100 of a zloty and the exchange was 6 zlotys to a dollar at that time). I saved the small change. I kept adding it to the change I used to find in the schoolyard. I saved for a good cause. I couldn't wait for the day when I would have enough money to buy a watch from Garfinkel, the only watchmaker in Maniewicz.
Roman Catholic one. We had two lessons of religion weekly. The Polish Ksiażdz came to teach the Catholic children religion. The Pinsker rebbe taught the Jewish children religion. The Ukrainian Btuszka, (priest), taught the Ukrainian children religion, and the German priest taught the German children religion. All of these religious instructors were paid by the Polish government.

Some parents sent their children to continue their education in a gymnasium (high school). I had to wait till 1939, when our territory became part of Ukraine. The Ukrainian government opened a high school in Maniewicze (8th, 9th, and 10th grades). They used the same buildings where I attended public school. It felt nice to say hello to my old classrooms.

The new Ukrainian City Hall moved to Horwitz’s rooming house on Lucka Street, with its forty rooms. Mr. Horwitz, who was Jewish and was branded as an exploiter of the workingman, ran for his life to the west side of the Bug River to escape being sent to Siberia. The Polish territory west of the Bug River was occupied by the Germans. I wonder if Mr. Horwitz survived the ghetto on the German side. The local Peoples Education Office, located in the new City Hall took over the school in Maniewicze.

The Peoples Education Office made many changes. All the school subjects were now taught in Ukrainian. Our language was Russian. So my three friends and I stayed up long hours into the night to learn the Ukrainian language, which somewhat similar to Polish. My friends and I were accepted to the ninth grade. I still remember the names of two of them; Mendl Zabronski and Vove Verba. We read the writings of the Ukrainian writers Taras, Szevczenko, Carpenki Caryj, Mana Vovczak, and Lesa Vlerainka.

They changed the classrooms. You could only see the image of the shape where the cross with Jesus Christ had hung on the wall. It had become somewhat lighter than the surrounding area. It was replaced with pictures of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, who thought they could bring equality in the world.

The school principals also changed. Ivan Kucheruk replaced Józef Postula. My sklepik didn’t exist anymore; it was capitalist. The Catholic students didn’t use whips anymore to hit the Jewish students. The school didn’t need any more Srulik Galperins to run the morning exercises—the political advisor took over his job. Not only was he in charge of the physical exercises but he changed them to military exercises.

We became members of the Young Red Army. Misha Lebedev divided us into two groups. He picked officers in each group. He replaced these leaders if they didn’t perform up to his standards. You could tell the officer’s rank by counting the stars on the collar of the shirt or jacket. Only the “capitalists” displayed the stars on their pockets. The schoolyard was divided into two territories. Each group tried to conquer the “enemy territory.” Misha observed each group’s actions, pointing out the mistakes.

Neither group could pray to the Almighty to help them in their time of need. Religious lessons were entirely abandoned. The priests, batuszkas, and rebbes lost their jobs. They were lucky not to be prosecuted and possibly sent to Siberia. The new rulers observed Lenin’s teaching that religion was “the opiate of the people.” We had the good fortune to attend school and learn in our old classrooms only for a year and a half. The same was true of our physical military exercises.

Hitler’s Germany attacked the Soviet Union on July 22, 1941. Again I had to leave the classroom of our school in Maniewicze, but this time it was for good. I wound up in Uzbekistan, one of the Soviet Socialist Republics, where I survived the war.

I would like to visit the classrooms of the school in Maniewicze and thank them for the education I received there. Unfortunately, I am not sure I will be able to achieve that during my lifetime.

**Editor’s note:** About the author.

Harry Kamel resides in New Rochelle, New York and spends the winter months in West Palm Beach, Florida where he actively attends the leyenkrayz. Harry can be contacted at: harrykamel@optimum.net or call 914-654-0357

*Der Bay* has been publishing the series of stories, and IAYC sent two of Harry’s stories to member clubs. *Der Bay’s* published articles include: The Farmer and the Collective Farm Our Trip to Russia - Spring of 1994 Sergei Ivanovich: The Feldsher Lyulke The Gravedigger DP Camp 538 My First Job in the United States Dr. Zdzisław Stokalski
In 1943 the war was in full swing. The Fascists held Europe as an occupied zone. Germany was everywhere, with a most oppressive hand. Italy occupied Greece, and a dictator ruled Spain. “Quisling” collaborators worked with the oppressors all the way from Norway to the border of Portugal.

My country, too, produced a great number of Fascists and German collaborators. In July 1943, I had to slow down my activities due to the state of my health. I also had to be very careful about the people with whom I associated. I had false papers and a fictitious name.

I consulted doctors about the possibility of a stomach ulcer and was directed to see Dr. Bridot; before that, I was to see a radiologist in Montluçon. The x-rays did not confirm or deny that I had ulcers, but the pain was unbearable—the worst in 18 years of pain. On August 2, I gathered the x-rays and the different opinions from all the technicians and went to see Dr. Bridot in Guéret.

This very busy and sympathetic doctor took a look at my films and the different recommendations and ordered that I be put in a private room in the hospital immediately. Soon the doctor arrived, looked at me, looked at the x-rays and said, "What do you want me to do? These films don't prove anything. The only way that we can find out is to open your abdomen and have a look.... If you have ulcers, I will operate and do my best, and if not, you will be left with a beautiful scar. Since you are not a belly dancer, you won't mind."

Without hesitation I replied, "Operate, operate—the pain is too much for me now!"

At that time they did not operate under complete anesthesia, just gave local injections intravenously. My head was uncovered, and five minutes after the surgeon opened my stomach, I saw almost everything in the reflector placed above the operation table. I didn't have much pain, but I talked a lot about the war, the resistance, and my family. The doctor tried to keep me quiet, knowing that I might give away some secrets.

It was a well-known secret that this fine physician, Dr. Bridot, was a leader in the resistance against the German invaders. Finally satisfied with his intervention, and after sewing me up and giving me more sedatives, Doctor Bridot explained that not only was I very courageous, but also very brave. Not only was this operation just in time but the ulcers easily could have been much more serious and develop into cancer if I had waited. He had had to cut out part of my stomach, and now it was half its original size. I would have to regulate my diet for the rest of my life.

Of course the pain came back. I was on morphine and rarely closed my eyes for several days. I suffered from thirst but was not permitted to drink anything for 24 hours. I survived. When my wife came to visit me in the hospital, she brought our new baby girl, Nicole, born December 4, 1942. We called her and Jean Claude "our war children."

On August 17, 1943, after I had been in the clinic for 12 days, my wife came to take me home to Larequille. The whole region around Guéret and the Souterraine had developed a strong resistance force. I too was active, in my own limited capacity.

We knew about each other and watched the French collaborators. We kept score and waited for a chance to deal with them. At night we heard many gunshots. I had to assure my wife that we were living in a non-occupied zone and that there were no Germans here. I told her the sounds were only from the backfiring of the trains.

While I was still recuperating in the hospital, Doctor Bridot often came to see me and I greeted him with, "Hello! Today is 1,498 days of the French people's resistance and liberation." And then the following day I would eagerly add another day: 1,499.

We counted the days since the 18th of June, 1940, when General De Gaulle’s call to the French Nation to actively resist and liberate came from London. Mr. Worms, the famous underground leader, was living in Lyon. I was directed to find him very cautiously, as he was a hunted man. I found him on November 21st—it was our final meeting, and soon...
after that, he was tortured and deported to the death camps in Poland to be killed.

There were great leaders in the resistance, and most paid the highest price—their life. The greatest organizer was the famous hero of Chartres, Jean Moulin. He was the founder of the national resistance, and was tortured and killed along with many others.

As Hitler's forces were losing on the Stalingrad front in the East and the Russians began to push the enemy back all the way to Berlin, the Gestapo and the French collaborators became very desperate and pursued the resistance with great force and vigor.

We in the resistance fought back. New tactics were invented, because blowing up the railroad cars and the railroad tracks had become impossible and very costly—the Germans inspected the tracks regularly. A new way was found to stop the trains, and I became a carrier to deliver some of the means to do so.

It was simple. The device was a small package of lead, containing small sharp pieces of steel. I provided the material to the railroad man in charge of cleaning the steam train's machines. He knew very well where he had to introduce these ingredients. They eventually ruined the gears, but that did not occur right away. It took a while, and by the time it did its work the train was well on its way out of town—perhaps 5 or 6 kilometers away. The Germans didn't know what had happened or who was responsible. "Sabotage! Sabotage!" they screamed.

At the end of the war, when the liberation came, we counted more than 20 trains that we had sabotaged. Those railroad men were honored for their exploits against the Nazis. Rene Clement produced a movie called "The Battle of the Rails." It became a source of pride for us.

As for the unpatriotic collaborators, a great number of them were caught and they were severely punished, but I am sorry to have to say that some of them were too high up on the political ladder and are still in the government. Nevertheless, the fight that the gallant members of the resistance put up gave France and us a new sense of pride at our daring acts of sabotage.

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**Tales of the Shtetl & Szebreszin**

**Editor's note:** This email is from Tomasz Panczyk to Monique Bibel, Philip Bibel's widow. The preceding article was by Philip, who translated articles by Monique’s father. Tomasz is Polish, lived in California, and returned to Poland.

From: Tomasz Panczyk  
Sent: Saturday, July 14, 2012 1:51 AM  
To: Monique Bibel  
Subject: Book

Dear Monique,

I have been keeping the secret for so long but now I have to tell you: I have finally published a translation of Philip’s "Tales of the Shtetl". It is called "Szebreszin", which is a Polish rendering of the Yiddish name "Shebreshin".

You should be getting the book any time now, as I gave a copy to my cousin from Santa Rosa, CA who was visiting Poland, and she mailed it to you a couple of days ago. It was a very, very long process and many people were involved, but I am so happy that it is finally out!

Two days ago there was a great ceremony—an evening with Philip Bibel. It took place as a part of an International Festival "Following Isaac Bashevis Singer's Traces 2012". [http://sladamisingera.teatrnn.pl/en/home](http://sladamisingera.teatrnn.pl/en/home)

At 6:30 pm people filled the hall of the ancient Shebreshin synagogue (now the town's cultural center) and the French klezmer group Mashke started playing music. The actress from Lublin read parts of the book. Later I was talking about Philip, our friendship, his writings, and so on. There were lots of people, and the director of the cultural center told me this was very unusual for Szczебрzeszyn. It was a really great evening, and I was so proud that symbolically, 90 years after his bar-mitzvah, Philip had come back to the very same prayer-hall of Szczębrzeszyn synagogue. I printed a large photo of Philip and he was there with us. Here are pictures from the first day of the Festival: [http://szczebrzeszyn.info/wiadomosci/?p=1766](http://szczebrzeszyn.info/wiadomosci/?p=1766)

I will keep you informed about future events connected with the book.
Mame, kh’vil a geburtstog simkhe
by Philip “Fishl” Kutner

Mame, ven kenen mir geyn tsum shoykhet?

Farvos fregstu—mir zenen gegangen nor a vokh tsurik.

Mame kh’vil hobn a geburtstog simkhe. Kh’ob es keynmol nisht gehat, un ale kinder in der shule hobn azelkhe simkhes.

Fishl, zey zenen ale goyim, un zey ladn dir nisht ayn tsu zeyere simkhes.

Mame, yo, ober kh’ken hobn mayne brider un dir, un der tate ken kumen. Kh’vil az du zolst makhn mayne balibste esn—heldzl. Un far dem darf men hobn a hun.


Ober Mame—du host dokh gezogt, “Der farm iz nisht in gantsn shlekht—di kinder vel hobn frishe luft.”
Exciting New Features Planned for IAYC Conference in Pittsburgh

Long before attendees start arriving in Pittsburgh, PA for the 15th International Association of Yiddish Clubs Conference, behind the scenes, there will have been a cadre of people shaking up the usual mix. Yes, there will be Yiddish entertainment, klezmer bands, theatrical performances, academic lectures, by keynote speakers and a full schedule of breakout sessions on Yiddish culture, literature, beginning and intermediate Yiddish classes.

We’re adding new workshops, special interest groups, films, and an optional tour of the historical and cultural Jewish sites in Pittsburgh. The Yiddish Magic Carpet will be on display, which was flown in from California. It features signatures and artwork by Holocaust survivors, where they have memorialized entire towns that have vanished, relatives, written in several languages. You will have a rare opportunity to add your signature and hand drawn artwork to the canvas. Others have traced their hands, and you may wish, to touch names from more than a century ago. You may also add your own artwork, and stitch on to it, whatever you bring.

Cooking demonstrations of Yiddish foods that will raise your eyebrows and your curiosity.... along with Yiddish fusion and tasty Yiddish metaphors in flavor that will complement historical literature and experiences. Be prepared to literally taste history like never before imagined. Yiddish art and music, vendors of rare publications, new books, CDs, tapes, including children’s books, judaica, art and Yiddish games and activities. Unique and experiential lesson plans will come to life that teachers can take with them.

First we’re laying the groundwork for IAYOT, the International Association of Yiddish Translators. Second, is a computer lab set up for one-on-one lessons in learning how to launch into the online world of Yiddish, to have a briv fraynd online. No experience needed. We’ll start at your level.

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Here at IAYC Pitt Central, the virtual control room for IAYC 15, we have been brainstorming on how to provide you with the most exciting experience yet. Our most novel idea is to go where no conference before has gone, we lamented that those whom we wanted to share this time with, have passed on. We know their names, what they looked like, the sound of their voices and accents. So, we are having their presence as an integral part of the conference.

Historical characters. From Yentl, to I.L. Peretz, Zlota the Goat, Sholom Aleichem, Yankl, Albert Einstein, your relative (grandparent, childhood teacher) etc.... each one that we receive will have the opportunity to have his/her presence on screen with historical information, along with the person’s image. The name will appear in calligraphy attached to the name badge of the sponsor. If you are unable to attend, sponsor’s name will appear on screen with the honoree. Have an idea? Let us know!

Learn about the key speakers, entertainers, and vendors at: www.derbay.org/pittsburgh/
My parents had seen each other for only fifteen minutes before their marriage.

They were both born in Piltz, a shtetl near Cracow in Poland in the Pale of Settlement. Shtetl is the Yiddish word for a small town in Eastern Europe with a sizeable Jewish population. Piltz was the town’s name in Yiddish; it was known as Plica in Polish. It was under Russian domination at the time, and about two-thirds of its 4,500 inhabitants were Jewish.

My mother, Hinda Leah Dombek, knew the month and day of her birth, March 15, but not the year. Her father didn’t bother going to the registry office with just one child but waited until he had several children and then registered them all at once. On a trip to Piltz, I learned that my mother had been born in 1892; my father, Zysia Pressman, was born on December 24, 1893.

Although they came from the same town, my parents never met until about a year before their wedding. Both of them had left Piltz when they were quite young. Hinda Leah's mother, Schandla, whose maiden name was Zjeschkowska, died when Hinda Leah was ten, and her father, Itzhak Moshe, remarried shortly thereafter "so Hinda Leah would have a mother." He married a spirited woman with a daughter of her own who had no use for her husband’s daughter from his first marriage.

Itzhak Moshe was a marshalik, a badkhn, a jester, someone who told jokes and stories at weddings and bar mitzvahs. This did not bring in much money.

Because two of her maternal uncles in Piltz were teachers, Hinda Leah had an opportunity to get some schooling. In the classes she attended, she developed a lifelong love of learning. She became a studious child who recited the khamish, the first five books of the Bible, out loud daily when she came home from kheyder, Jewish elementary school. This incessant intoning increasingly disturbed her stepmother. When Itzhak Moshe came home one day, his wife shouted at him and complained that Hinda Leah’s recitations were giving her a headache. Itzhak Moshe seized Hinda Leah by the hair and threw her across the room. She ran outside and sat on the stoop, crying. At that just moment, her “rich Uncle Hirschberg,” her late mother’s half-brother from Varshe (Warsaw), came by on one of his visits. When he saw her weeping, he said, "Lonishu, why are you crying?” When she told him, he was outraged and stormed into the house. After berating her father, he arranged with him and her more-than-willing stepmother to take Hinda Leah back with him to Warsaw.

And so it was that Hinda Leah grew up in the capital of Poland in the wealthy household of her uncle and aunt and their two children, their handsome son, Dalik, and their sickly daughter, Helche. Hinda Leah’s role in this household was somewhere between member of the family and household retainer. As the years went by, she and Dalik became close and fell in love, but Hinda Leah knew she had no future with him because of the difference in their backgrounds. When Dalik pleaded for sexual favors, she reluctantly turned him down. She reminded him that if they had sex and she became pregnant, she would have no choice but to throw herself out the window.

Zysia’s father, Ephraim Barukh Pressman, died when Zysia was a young boy. Ephraim Barukh was the last of the three husbands of Zysia’s mother, Udel Olmer. Udel was one tough lady. She not only survived three husbands but also owned and operated a bakery. Unlike Hinda Leah, Zysia never had the opportunity to attend school. From early childhood, he worked at his mother’s bakery. At the age of nine, since he was not interested in spending the day under his mother’s watchful eye, he took a job with a local tailor delivering clothes. After several years of this, he was ready to move on. But there were few opportunities in Piltz for a boy, especially one who was illiterate. So Zysia decided to go to Germany to seek his fortune. He did this by racing across the Polish-German grenets, the border, one dark night when he was fourteen.

The border guards who chased him did not stop him but managed to put a bullet through his cap. Someone later returned that cap with the bullet hole in it to his mother and told her that the border guards had killed her son. Udel had no reason to doubt this report. Thereafter, since Zysia was not able to write to her, she continued to believe he was dead.

Zysia found work in Germany in a shop that manufactured cloth for military uniforms in Neu Isenburg, a town just outside Frankfurt am Main. He moved up a notch some years later when he became a tailor’s apprentice. He did so well that by
the age of eighteen, he had become shop foreman. He was then financially able to return to Piltz for his first visit.

Upon arriving in his hometown, he headed straight for his mother’s house. When Udel opened the door to his knock and saw him, she flung her arms about and cried, “Spirit, return to your kever--grave.” It took Zysia a while to convince Udel that he was not a ghost but her son who was still very much alive.

At the same time, Hinda Leah also returned to Piltz. In spite of the treatment she had received in her father’s house after his remarriage, she nonetheless periodically returned to visit him. By this time, she had already had a romance with a blind violinist. He had escorted her all over Warsaw and knew every nook and cranny of that beautiful city. Hinda Leah had wanted very much to accept his offer of marriage, but her uncle had convinced her not to marry him. "When you have children," he had pointed out, "he won’t be able to see them and that will make you sad.” Hinda Leah had had another offer of marriage from a chicken farmer, which she had turned down. No other marriage prospect was in sight. She was twenty-one years old and already an "old maid" by the standards of Piltz.

One of Hinda Leah’s cousins, anxious to earn a shadkhn’s--matchmaker’s--fee, arranged for her to meet Zysia. When they met, Hinda Leah lowered her eyes. Zysia was so handsome she hardly dared permit herself to look at him. He asked her to join him in one of the few activities open to courting couples in Piltz, a walk to the River Piltz. They walked in silence, and, during the walk, Hinda Leah sneak ed glances at Zysia. When they reached the river, Zysia showed her his photograph. She admired the likeness, but when she offered to return it to him, he told her it was hers to keep. She knew then that this young man was interested in her. So she asked him how much money he earned. Not wanting to be loved for his money, he gave her a figure much lower than the actual amount. Hinda Leah nonetheless seemed satisfied and agreed to keep the photograph. Zysia told her that he had to return to Germany but promised to write.

Hinda Leah wondered if she would ever hear from this handsome young stranger from Germany, but he was true to his word. Short in stature himself, he admired this tall, slim, young woman with the long braids down her back. He knew she had managed her uncle’s household and would make him a good wife. Besides, he had long been looking for a young woman who could read and write. He planned to go into business for himself one day and such a wife would be useful. And, like frosting on the cake, there would be the nadn, the dowry she would receive from her rich uncle. Yes, it was definitely a good match for him.

And so, Hinda Leah began to receive beautiful postcards with photographs of lovers and romantic poems on one side and notes from Zysia on the other. Of course, she did not know that these notes were written for him by one of his friends. After she had received a number of these postcards, one arrived in which Zysia addressed her as "Darling."

Hinda Leah immediately wrote back, "Dear Mr. Pressman: Please do not address me in that manner, or I shall have to stop writing to you." It was then that Zysia told her it was all right for him to call her "darling" because he intended to marry her.

Word of the intended marriage spread from Hinda Leah in Warsaw to her family in Piltz, and the residents of the town began to make preparations for the wedding. It would be a momentous affair! An old maid, and a yesomne--female orphan--at that, was getting married to a handsome boker--a young man--from Germany. The shtetl had never had such an affair. Chickens and geese were slaughtered, jellies and wines were brought up from cellars, and cookies and cakes baked.

But Hinda Leah remained downcast throughout these festivities, for only she knew that she had no nadn. True, she had had one, supplied by her uncle in gratitude for her many years of service in his home. But over the objections of her uncle, she had yielded to the entreaties for funds from her cousin, "the gambler." And he had lost her nadn at cards. She had gone pleading to him for the return of her money, but what could he do? "When money is gone, it is gone, eh, Lonya?" he asked. She spoke to her uncle, but he reminded her that he had advised against the loan in the first place. He had not offered a second nadn, and she was indeed worried.

Zysia, ignorant of this history, made plans to leave Neu Isenberg for Piltz. When his employer learned of this contemplated second trip to Piltz, he refused to release the young man from work since it was the height of the season. Zysia, never one to brook refusals, announced haughtily that he could always get another job, but he couldn’t always find another wife--and he left. (to be continued)
I. Introduction and Background Literature

Eastern Yiddish is a language spoken in Israel by 215,000 people and across the world by a total population of 1,762,320 people. It originated east of the Oder River in Poland, extending into Belarus, the Russian Federation (to Smolensk), Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, Rumania, Ukraine, and pre-state British-Mandate Palestine (Jerusalem and Safed). Its linguistic classification is Indo-European, Germanic, West, High German, Yiddish, and its writing system is Hebrew script shmeykhl.

In Molly Diesing’s paper “Light verbs and the syntax of aspect in Yiddish” she explores the syntactic properties of the stem construction, which combines a light form of either the verb gebn ‘give’ or ton ‘do’ with an indefinite article and a verbal form to produce a semelfactive (diminutivized) aspectual meaning.

Relevant to the current analysis is Diesing’s investigation of nominal light verb constructions, in which a light verb takes an unincorporated nominal complement; this only occurs with verb stems that have homophonous nominal correlates and that fall into a restricted class of predicates which denotes actions that can be iterated (Diesing 145-149). Diesing argues that “the nominal is base generated as a complement to an abstract verb heading a VP complement of the light verb” (148-149). What follows is an application of Diesing’s analysis to a data set of declarative nominal light verb constructions and wh-reason question nominal light verb constructions. All data in the corpus is original and was elicited from my bubbeh ‘grandmother’ and zaydeh ‘grandfather,’ who are fluent speakers of Eastern Yiddish.

II. The Syntactic Puzzle

The canonical word order for a declarative Yiddish nominal light verb construction is provided below in (1). Example (2) demonstrates two declarative Yiddish nominal light verb constructions.

(1)

a. subject (modal) (neg) verb object

(2)

a. Er muz gebn a shmeykhl
‘He must give a smile’

b. Er muz nisht gebn a shmeykhl
‘He must not give a smile’

However, the word order for nominal light verb constructions in wh-reason questions is exactly the opposite, given in (3) with examples below in (4):

(3)

a. wh-phrase verb (neg) subject

(4)

a. Far- vos git Mikhoyl a shmeykhl?
‘Why does Michael give a smile?’

b. Far- vos git nisht Mikhoyl a shmeykhl?
‘Why does Michael not give a smile?’

How can this alternation between word orders in the declarative and the wh-reason question be explained? I argue here for a syntactic incorporation analysis similar to Diesing’s.

III. Analysis and Derivations

For the negated wh-reason question, the structure and movements are as follows: the V head is null, the light verb is merged at v, raises to spec negP (where it incorporates with the neg thus forming a complex verbal structure), and then raises through the T head to the C head. The subject is merged in spec vP and raises to spec TP to fulfill [EPP]. The DP object remains where it is merged as a daughter to VP, and as current scholarship argues, the wh-reason phrase is merged directly into spec CP (Diercks, pc). This syntactic incorporation analysis is ideal because it adequately explains both the declarative nominal light verb constructions and the wh-reason question nominal light verb constructions. What follows are the derivations of the negated constructions, in both declarative and wh-reason question form, demonstrating the incorporation analysis.
Derivation: er muz nisht gebn a shmeykh ‘he must not give a smile’

Derivation: Farvos git nisht Mikhoyl a shmeykh? ‘Why does Michael not give a smile?’

It is important to note that in the declarative nominal light verb phrase derivation in (5), the verb incorporates after the neg particle so that resulting the word order is nisht gebn. On the other hand, in the wh-reason question derivation in (6), the verb incorporates before the neg particle so that the resulting word order is git nisht. I here apply Diesing’s analysis of particle verbs to the neg particle. I argue that the underlying order for incorporation with neg is verb+neg, which we see at surface structure in the derivation of (6). The mirror-image order of neg+verb at the surface structure in the derivation of (5) is explained by verb-second; as Diesing explains, “when a modal or auxiliary is present, the particle precedes the verb. Moving the verb (to satisfy the verb-second requirement) strands the particle” (135).

IV. Conclusions and Areas for Further Research

Through an application of Diesing’s analysis of light verb nominal constructions and particle verbs to a wider set of data, specifically to negated declaratives and wh-reason questions, I conclude that Diesing’s syntactic incorporation strategy holds as an adequate syntactic explanation for these constructions in Yiddish.

Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, an exploration of how Diesing’s theories involving AspP as a complex head (much like the Rizzian fine left periphery) hold with regards to my data would be a definite next step in continuing this Yiddish research. Additionally, further research would investigate the implications (if any) that syntactic incorporation has for case theory and feature checking in Yiddish.

V. Acknowledgements

Many thanks to professor Diercks for his invaluable help with my research and with identifying both a puzzle to be solved and a strategy for solving it. Also my sincerest thanks and appreciation to my grandparents, without whom this would not have been possible.

Katherine Feller’s Bio: Katie Feller was born and raised in New York and is a senior linguistics major at Pomona College in Claremont, CA. After studying in Israel during her junior year of high school, Katie developed an interest in Yiddish grammar and syntax, incorporating it into her collegiate education with this research project.

She thanks Thelma and Morris Feller for participating in the study as informants, and to Professor Michael Diercks in the Pomona College Linguistics and Cognitive Science Dept. for his insight and guidance throughout her college career.

From “Zadie” Morrie: Katie says that she became interested in linguistics because of a conversation we had about language. She knows Spanish and Hebrew very well. She lived far away so that I could not help with Yiddish. I hope to do long distance learning of Yiddish as an on-line course. She should add Yiddish to her list of languages. I can provide her with texts for self-study.

“My granddaughter, Katie, visited us here in Phoenix. She is in her junior year at Pomona College in Claremont, CA. The information I’m sending came as a result of her interviewing my wife, Tybie, (while I was napping). She told us that this was needed for a course that she was taking in Syntax.

“I don’t know how many of your readers are familiar with syntax, but I thought it was interesting what she could do with a few simple Yiddish sentences. So I am attaching a copy of the paper she wrote.”

Editor’s note: We all rave about our brilliant children and grandchildren. We have not had the pleasure of publishing such an article. Perhaps this gives our readers the impetus to follow suit. This article was sent by Morrie Feller who was a Yiddish/Hebrew teacher and an IAYC board member. He still is consulted on conference matters and is an excellent Yiddish typist. Morrie and his wife Tybie who also has a great Yiddish background live in Phoenix, AZ.

Syntax is the study of sentence structure and thus an integral part of grammar. It studies how we combine words to form grammatically correct sentences.

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The White Lace Curtains: A Tale of a Reunion - Part III
By Howard Bergman

This is the final part of a remarkable reunion between two childhood friends from South Africa.

Luncia is Doctor Leah Davidson and she lives in New York and has been in the United States since the early 1960’s. She is a practicing psychoanalyst and maintains her own office in Manhattan. Mrs. Tellerman gave me Dr. Davidson’s phone number and also the telephone number of Mrs. Tellerman’s daughter in Chicago, Dr. Judy Tellerman, a psychologist.

I recall getting feelings: urgency, apprehension, hesitation, among many others. What if Dr. Davidson will not remember who I am? We are dealing with a time lapse of 63 years. If I imposed on her, I would feel awful and would embarrass her. After all, I myself could not recall much else except the faces of the Zygielbojms and the visit itself. My apprehension proved groundless. I called Dr. Davidson in the evening, left a message explaining who I was, giving her my original first name of Chil—Chilek to my friends and relatives—and how we met in our home in Deblin over sixty years ago. Our phone rang about 9 p.m. "Howard, Chilek, this is Leah Davidson or perhaps you remember me as Luncia", she said, or words to that effect. I remember trying to hold back the lumps in my throat and, slowly regaining my composure, I told her about my experiences, the losses, the adjustments to a new life, and the pleasures of having a wonderful family. Dr. Davidson, in turn, gave me a summary of the major events in her life. How she decided to study medicine and then psychoanalysis; the sad loss of her mother; the move to England in the late 1950’s to study; the move to New York. She has three children and five grandchildren. Dr. Davidson described to me the presentation of the medal to Arthur Zygielbaum, honoring her uncle Szmul. She was present at that emotional event. She also talked about the new museum which opened in 1997 in Manhattan’s Battery Park, The Museum of Jewish Heritage. I should not fail to see it when in New York and she would be very pleased to go there with me.

That Museum contains an exhibit devoted to her uncle’s life and heroic death. With regard to her visit to our home in Deblin in 1935, she remembered it as an event but I realized that Dr. Leah/Luncia Davidson could not recall specific details any better than I could. Around that time she also visited cousins in another town and the two visits to blended in her memory. We talked for over an hour and decided to send each other some things to help refresh memories of our childhood.

A few days after our telephone conversation, I sent Dr. Davidson a copy of a family photo taken in 1936, along with other papers. Shortly after that Dr. Davidson called. She said, "I recognize your brother". This was understandable, as my brother had spent more time with Luncia than I. They were closer in age and more active in a little group. I always tried to force myself into this "older" bunch. After the statement about my brother she added: "I also remember white lace curtains". This statement left me momentarily speechless. Yes, we had white lace curtains in our home. I cannot remember now the color or shape of our tables, chairs, or other items, but I clearly remember those curtains. Some time after the Zygielbojm visit, one of the curtains almost caught fire due to a strong gust of wind through an open window and a lit candle. This relatively insignificant revelation by Luncia 63 later made me feel warm and comfortable. I do not want to break links with my childhood. Memories that help strengthen those links are very welcome indeed.

Dr. Davidson sent an article that appeared in the May 20, 1998, issue of NEWSDAY. The journalist, Bob Keeler, wrote a very moving history of Szmul Zygielbojm under the title "A Hero’s Tale". The material for the article was supplied, in large part, by Dr. Davidson. The article also has photos, one of which, from 1934, shows a larger group of Zygielbojms with Luncia and her parents in the center. Another photo is a current one of Dr. Zygielbojm-Davidson with Mr. Jud Newborn, curator of the Museum of Jewish Heritage. The Zygielbojm family photo helped me in "seeing" again the "aunt" and "uncle" whom I had met for only a brief moment, and the pretty young girl.

The conversations and correspondence with Dr. Leah Davidson brought us together but there is no substitute for a personal visit. My wife and I decided to go to New York. We chose the last week in May, as during that time a memorial service for
After returning home, I decided to write about this tale of a reunion. Writing is often difficult for me. I am always concerned that what I write does not accurately match and express the thoughts and feelings which prompted the writing. However, in this case I feel assured that my thoughts and feelings and the written words merge very well. But I still ask myself the much larger question: Why did I persist throughout all these years and decades in searching for people so far removed from me? They were not blood relatives or longtime close friends of mine, but just people I met for only a few days over sixty years ago. I have adjusted quite well, perhaps better than most Shoah survivors, to a new life in a new world. Why think about the past, the war sufferings? Well-meaning people, friends and acquaintances would urge me to put my past "behind" me.

How do I answer my own questions? I believe there is more than one simple reason for my persistence. The greater comforts of modern life cannot substitute for the greater values of friendship, of a simpler but spiritually richer existence. When I observe how much more selfish life has become, the urge to recapture the past becomes even stronger. No matter how much I live in the present in all its aspects, the past life, the carefree childhood, also live in me. They do not interfere with my present life. I wonder, however, if nowadays a pair of white lace curtains could make an impression on a young person and imbed itself in her memory for so many years.

I can find other reasons for wanting to search for the Zygielbojns, but I want to mention only one more, perhaps the most important one. I remember the fondness with which my parents talked about their friends, although I cannot remember any details of the contents of those conversations. I learned from Dr. Davidson that her mother's family lived in Deblin. It is therefore possible that my parents, or at least my mother, knew Aunt Fania for a long time. It was not destined that these friends would see one another again.

As the years passed, I realized that I may not see them again either. I therefore felt that I should persist in trying to find Luncia. I am very happy that I succeeded. I also consider my reunion with Luncia Zygielbojm a symbolic reunion of my parents and her parents.

To their memories all of these recollections are dedicated.
Howard Jacobson’s *The Finkler Question*: Part I
Yiddish Humor and Jewish anti-Zionism
Prof. Yoshiji Hirose - Professor of Literature, Notre Dame Seishin University, Okayama, Japan

I Non-Jewish Perspective

As critics maintain, *The Finkler Question* is a hilarious novel filled as much with humor as with seriousness. Modern Jewish American writers deal with the grave and controversial themes of the Holocaust and political Zionism in Israel in both direct and figurative ways. In general, these themes are not suitable for humorous treatment. Rabbi Joseph Telushkin sharply points out the essence of Jewish humor in Israel:

> There is not a great deal of humor being created in Israel, and most of what exists is not very funny, at least not to non-Israelis. Because people in power are able to deal with their problems directly, they have no need to settle for the personal gratification of a sharp put-down or witticism. Israelis, for example, don’t joke much about their Arab opponents; they fight them. (Telushkin p173)

As Rabbi Telushkin suggests, Israelis have the means to deal with their problems as opposed to Jews in Eastern Europe whose humor reflected a resignation to their own helplessness in a hopeless situation. It is curious to examine how Howard Jacobson delineates Zionism through humor.

One of the most famous novels on the topic of Zionism is Philip Roth’s (1993), which delves into the controversial issues arising from the conflicts between Israelis and Palestinians. However, the tone of the story greatly differs from Jacobson’s humorous treatment in *The Finkler Question*. Jacobson’s interjection of humorous Yiddish expressions greatly contributes to the comicality of the novel. Quite a few reviews were written on this work, but none from Yiddish or Yiddish literature perspective, so far.

For readers familiar with Yiddish literature, it is easy to identify the protagonist Julian Treslove as a shlimazel-type figure.

> He was a man who saw things coming. Not shadowy premonitions before and after sleep, but real and present dangers in the daylit world. Lamp posts and trees reared up at him, splintering his shins. Speeding cars lost control and rode on to the footpath leaving him lying in a pile of torn tissues and mangled bones. Sharp objects dropped from scaffolding and pierced his skull. (3)

The story revolves around Julian Treslove, a melancholy, lackluster former BBC radio producer. After being mugged one night, he believes, with increasing certainty, that his attacker called him a Jew. Though his old friends, Sam Finkler and Libor Sevcik are Jewish, Treslove is not. However, as a result of this incident, he becomes increasingly obsessed with the question of Jewishness. Treslove doesn’t approach his journey into Judaism from a religious standpoint. He takes no steps to learn Hebrew or to convert to Judaism; instead, his obsession is cultural. He wishes to understand the mannerisms and customs of Jewish life as well as the hidden code of Jewish sarcasm through the Yiddish language.

While Treslove yearns to pass as a Jew, many of his Jewish contemporaries in the book do their best to pass as gentiles, including a pitiful character who is trying to reverse his circumcision, chronicling his efforts on a blog, photos and all. This plot reminds us of Sholom Aleichem’s story *The Bloody Hoax*, in which the author shows how hard it is for a young Russian male aristocrat to be a Jew in Tzarist Russia.

In Sholem Aleichem’s novel, the protagonist exchanges his identity with his Jewish friend without imagining the unexpected harsh fate that awaits him as a Jew. Thus, unimaginably brutal anti-Semitism is realistically and vividly revealed through the fresh eyes of a young Christian man. In a similar way, we learn about the Jewish customs and Yiddish expressions from Treslove’s view, an outsider’s viewpoint on the Jewish world.

II Jewish question

Old Libor Sevick is the former teacher of Treslove and Finkler, and he has lost his beloved wife and
misses her. Sam Finkler has also lost his wife Tyler, and he has become a widower like Libor. Both are Jewish and they relate to Israel differently.

Before Libor got married to Malkie Hofmannsthal, her parents had strongly opposed the marriage due to his “lack of intellectuality and breeding” (12). Despite her parents’ objection, Malkie falls in love with him and Libor also deeply loves her “whose neck was more graceful than svontz” (13). “Svontz” is a key word that impressed Malkie more than Libor expected:

A neck more graceful, he had told her, than a swan’s. Because of his accent, Malkie had thought he had said her neck was more graceful than a svontz, which had reminded her of a Yiddish word her father often used, meaning penis. (12)

It is clear that Yiddish is effectively interjected into the text and heightens the humorous atmosphere of the story, and mitigates the serious topic of anti-Semitism in Britain. At first glance, they seem to be mutually exclusive, but they are closely entangled with each other. The exact opposite images of swan and penis are merged through the Yiddish sound, which evokes comicality. Even in the British Jewish community, Yiddish retains a certain sense of familiarity. In fact, Jacobson is well aware that Yiddish is one of the richest languages in the world filled with expressions, idioms, and proverbs.

Sam Finkler is an old friend of Julian Treslove, a gentile, from their school days, although Sama is Jewish and Julian a gentile. In those days, Sam maintained that he was Samuel. Though his father was a fake pharmacist, Sam Finkler’s father was “a religious man who wore a black fedora” like other Orthodox Jews. Sam, however, for some reason turned his back on Judaism, and eventually came to hate his father. Sam’s complicated psychology is illustrated through his relationship with his father:

Finkler, who did not dream, had a dream.

He dreamed that he was punching his father in the stomach.

His mother screamed for him to stop. But his father only laughed and shouted, ‘Harder!’

‘Loz the boy aleyn,’ he told his wife. Which was cod Yiddish for ‘Leave the boy alone’.

In life, when his father spoke to him in cod Yiddish, Finkler turned his back on him. Why his father, English university-educated and normally softly spoken—a man of learning and unshakable religious conviction—had to make this spectacle of himself in his shop, throwing his hands around and yelling in a peasant tongue, Finkler couldn’t understand. Other people loved his father for these shows of Jewish excitability, but Finkler didn’t. He had to walk away. But in the dream he didn’t walk away. In the dream he summoned all his strength and threw punches into his father’s stomach.

What woke him was his father’s stomach opening. When Finkler saw the cancer swimming towards him in a sea of blood he could not go on dreaming. (40-41)

This dreadful and aggressive dream implies Sam’s future thought formation on the subject of Israel and Jews. It is clear that his life started quite differently from his father’s life, which was deeply colored by the poverty of Jewish immigrants. Sam has grown up as an Englishman of Jewish origin. On the other hand, his father’s mother-tongue is Yiddish, the colorful language of poor Jewish immigrants. For business purposes, his father makes use of the Yiddish expressions in order to make his fellow Jews feel comfortable. As an English boy, Sam cannot accept the Jewish jargon, Yiddish, and he despises it. Sam’s reaction to his father demonstrates his self-hatred to a great extent. His dream of punching his father’s stomach reveals Sam’s strong self-hatred in a figurative or distorted way. Thus this boyhood feelings develops into his anti-Zionism in later years.

The Finkler Question can be interpreted as “the Jewish question.” In the UN General Assembly, a 1975 resolution condemned “Zionism as racism”, though the “Zionism is racism” resolution was repealed in late 1991. The dual identity of British Jews is so complicated that there is no right answer to the question. The six million American Jews have a similar identity problem, but America is a multicultural society and is able to absorb a variety of races, religions, and ethnicities. However, in Britain, the Jewish population is a minority group of less than 300,000, and does not like to draw special attention from the main stream of society.

(to be continued)
Fishl

Going over my memory files, I picked two reminiscences, from the time when I was in Romania during World War II. I do not know whether they would be of interest to Der Bay readers? Years ago, when Dr. Teichman (Balicki) was spending Thanksgiving together with us at our friend’s house, he never told anyone about his days in the Todt Organization or about his heroic action in rescuing a group of Jewish refugees arrested by the Romanian police. I am probably the only one who remembers the events, how "Balicki" escaped the Nazis.

With warm greetings,

Karl

In 1944, when the Nazis occupied Budapest, a number of Polish Jews, who escaped from ghettos in Poland to Hungary, were able to cross from Hungary to Romania. Among them were Kamil and Irena Hammer, whom we met during an outing on Lake Baneasa one Sunday morning. We immediately liked the couple and it turned out that Irene Hammer's birthday was on the same day as my wife's, November 15.

At that time, another couple arrived in Bucharest - Wira and her husband Joseph Jarosz. She was from Cernauti, Bukovina, and he was from Lodz, Poland. They met when Joseph escaped from Poland to Cernauti, but he was soon caught and sent to Transnistria by the Gestapo. Wira, with the help of her parents, was able to bring Joseph back and they got married. Joseph's real name was Silberschatz, and after the war was over, Wira and her husband returned to their real names.

We were meeting almost daily with the two couples. One day Irene Hammer told us that before the outbreak of the war she helped her wealthy uncle in Lodz by typing confidential letters for him. She remembered that her uncle transferred money to a friend, Mr. Nadel, who immigrated to London before the war and who was keeping the money for her uncle. She wondered whether there was any way to find out whether Mr. Nadel was still alive, and if so, what his address was. I thought that if I could find a telephone book of London in Bucharest, perhaps this Mr. Nadel could be located.

One of my colleagues at Prof. Savulescu’s Plant Pathology Department at the ICAR (Institutul de Cercetari Agricole Romaniei) had a distant relative who was working in the main office of the Romanian telephone company. A search by this person came up with a telephone book of London, from 1936, but the book could not be removed from the building. I went there and was shown the large volume. In it, there was no Nadel listed in London, but there was someone by the name of Nardel.

We figured out that perhaps, after arrival in England, Mr. Nadel anglicized his name and that he might have become this Mr. Nardel. I composed a letter, in which I mentioned that a search is being made for a Mr. Nadel, originally from Lodz, Poland, because a large amount of money is due this person from some inheritance, and that I was wondering whether, by chance, Mr. Nardel might know something about the “missing” Mr. Nadel. It was like looking for a needle in a haystack, but I thought that the promise of a large inheritance, from some unknown source might do the trick. I gave my own name and address and did not mention anything about the uncle of Irene Hammer.

It worked! A few weeks later a letter arrived from the son of Mr. Nardel-Nadel, that his father, who emigrated from Poland, changed the family name by adding the letter R. The letter contained their address in London, and that the son and his father, still alive, wanted to know more about the inheritance.

Kamil Hammer decided to travel to London. This was not simple, because he had to pass borders illegally, without a passport and visas. It took him a couple of weeks to reach London, where he confronted Mr. Nadel, requesting the money left by the murdered uncle of Irene. Mr. Nadel first hesitated to admit how much money was involved and what he did with it, but Kamil was able to persuade him to disclose the truth. Mr. Nadel did this, because he himself was no longer able to get the money. Before 1939, he deposited US $5,000 in the Chase Bank in New York, but the money,
marked as property of a polish citizen, was blocked when the war in Europe broke out, and it was still blocked in 1946.

In February 1947, Irene and I arrived from Sweden in New York. Kamil and Irene Hammer were in Paris at that time, where Kamil worked very hard, sawing fur remnants into fur pieces large enough to make a fur coat. It was the business of Kamil's distant relative. The Hammers gave us all the information they had obtained from Mr. Nardel and they hoped that I would be able somehow to get the blocked dollars from the Chase bank and send them to them.

I took the subway to Wall Street and, armed with a notarized power of attorney, I went from office to office in the high-rise Chase Bank headquarters building, until I found the proper employee who agreed to check the list of blocked accounts. He found the Nardel account but was reluctant to release the $5000 at first. I tried, in broken English (I had been only three weeks in the States at that time) to explain that the war was long over and that there was no reason to continue the blockage. After half an hour, the employee went to his superior and returned with a check for the full amount of $5000, less fifty dollars for some procedural expense.

I grabbed the check and decided that this amount, larger than any I had ever seen, could not be carried by me in the subway. Downstairs in the bank I opened a savings account for Karl Maramorosch, jointly with Kamil Hammer, and they gave me a booklet and told me that the deposited amount will bring approximately one (one) percent/year in this savings account. Happily, I returned by subway, paying the 5 cents fare, and sure that I did what was in the best interest of my friends in Paris.

I wrote a letter to Kamil and Irene and described the affair in detail. Their reply arrived promptly. They did not want the security of the savings account and the 1% interest after one year and they needed the money right then, in France. Kamil asked me to take the money out from the bank and pay it, in twenty-dollar bills, to a Mr. Friedman in Queens. This man did not have a phone. I took the subway that I was told to take, but this took nearly two hours, because I was instructed to take the "Djemeika" line and no train with this direction arrived at the station. Finally I asked someone and when I wrote down "Jamaica" and the man pronounced it Dje-mei-ka" I realized that the proper train had passed me several times while I stood on the platform.

I came to the address given by Kamil and found a one-family small house. When I knocked at the door (no electric bell!) a middle-aged man, who looked like an orthodox rabbi, answered the door. I told him that I got his address from a friend in Paris and that I was to deliver $5000 to him. "OK. However, be sure you come with only $20 bills - nothing larger than $20". I returned to Manhattan's Chase bank, closed the savings account and asked for $4950 in $20 bills.

The large amount was awkward and I was scared to carry it in my leather bag by subway, but there was no other way. When I returned to Mr. Friedman, he counted the bills with a speed that amazed me. Then he simply thanked me and said goodbye. "Can you give me a receipt?" I asked. "No!" was all he said. I did not know what to do and told him that I need some sort of a receipt, but he replied that he would not give me anything in writing. "If you had my address and your friend told you to leave the money with me, your friend must have known what he wanted, and he trusted me. If you do not trust me, take the money "and he handed me the stack of bills. I had to make a fast decision - and I agreed to leave the $4950 with Mr. Friedman without any receipt from him.

For several days I worried and waited impatiently for a confirmation from France. It came in due time. Everything went well and the Hammers received the black market equivalent of the $4950. For the money Kamil purchased in Germany the black market equivalent of the $4950 in $20 bills.

For the money Kamil purchased in Germany the machinery for his factory that he built in Herzlija, Israel, where he was making rubber-like compounds for mattresses and other items. His factory thrived and he got large orders from the Israeli army in the following years. The "seed money" recovered from Nadel/Nardel was very well invested.

In later years, we visited the Hammers several times and they came and visited us in the States. Unfortunately, Irene Hammer passed away three years ago. As far as I know, Kamil, his son, and grandchildren are living in Tel Aviv and Herzliya.

Editor's note: Prof. Karl Maramorosch article, The Pildes-Pilecki Tragedy, appeared in the last issue.
Mame, Vos Vilstu Dertseyln Undzere Leyeners?

Fishele, zey kenen mikh nisiht hern do vu ikh bin. Ikh bin tsu yayt avek un mir hobn nisiht keyn telefon oder dem internet. Kenst efshe shraybn in der bay mayne verter vegn mayn libshaft far undzer yidisher shprakh?

Fun kindvayz on hob ikh lib gehat yidish mer vi ale andere shprakhn. Ikh hob gekent redn poylish, ukraynish, rusish, hebreish, un, tsum letstn, english, ober yidish iz alemol geven mayn libste shprakh.

Derfar dos vos du tust epes tsu ze az yidish zol lebn git mir a sakh fargenign. Du darfst haltn yidish azo y vi du halst bay yidish azo y vi du halst bay dayn yidishkayt. On yidish iz yidishkayt nisht di zelbe zakh far undz vos di bobes, elter bobes, u.a.v, hobn gebrakht fun mizrakh eyrope.

Mame, a dank, un kh’vel araynton dayne verter in der bay kedey ale leyeners zoln kenen zey araynnemen in zeyere gedanken un zeyere hertser. Ikh zog dir tsu az azo y lang vi ikh vel kenen shraybn afn kompyuter vel ikh helfn tsu ze az yidish zol lebn un az undzer yidishe geshikhte zol nicht kumen tsu a sof.