



December 2002

Vol. 12 No. 10

## Di Introspektsye—The Introspection

As *Der Bay* closes out its 12<sup>th</sup> year of continuous publication, your editor takes a moment to reflect not only on the changes in this tiny newsletter, but more important the changes in the world-wide Yiddish community.

First, what has transpired in these dozen years? Has it been a period of growth, a time of recession or a time of retrenchment? What has happened to the major Yiddish organizations, institutions, and publications and in the area of entertainment? In this short column there is only room enough to point out the highlights and point to future indications of what the next decade may bring.

There appears to be definite trends as we see the approaching end of the large number of native-born Yiddish speakers in the non-khasidik community. In its place has come a small but dedicated group of younger enthusiasts who are approaching Yiddish from a more linguistic approach. With the level of formal education increasing the grammatical knowledge of this group has increased and the formal grammar is not the challenge it once was. New textbooks are arriving and the centers are moving from the mitlshuln to the universities.

The major groups and publications of the 1980's have, with few exceptions, diminished and new ones have taken their place. They include; The National Yiddish Book Center, International Association of Yiddish Clubs, Ashkenaz, KlezKanada in North America along with great strides in Israel, France, Germany, Australia, and of course the former Soviet Union. Likewise there had been a burgeoning of klezmer groups. There are over 150 listed on *Der Bay's* web site only in the U.S. The majority did not exist in the 1980's. The trend seems to be continuing and it is predicted that in the next decade it will even accelerate.

As far as *Der Bay* is concerned it has been a growing publication about the world of Yiddish. It has served as a significant entryway for those newly interested in Yiddish while keeping the connoisseur abreast of what is going on in the larger Yiddish community. It is not a literary journal, but is a major source of information for clubs and teachers and klezmer groups. As 2003 approaches your editor asks you to look at the label to see when you last supported *Der Bay*. If it has been over a year already please help. If you did your share in 2002, let this be the opportunity for Fishl to thank you from the bottom of his heart and wish you a Healthy New Year. If it will be Healthy, it will be Happy.

## 8<sup>th</sup> IAYC Conference: in Baltimore: #2 Yiddish Teachers: Heroes Then & Now

From September 4-7, 2003 we shall salute our Yidishe Lerers—those hardy, talented individuals who gave so much as well as those today who are continuing this tradition. Today's Yiddish teacher must struggle in a wealthy but fragmented Jewish world, where Yiddish is undervalued or written off. We also invite those who attended the Yidishe shuln and summer camps to this simkhe of reunion. Our lerers would have kvelled! Look for the Conference registration form inside.

Our keynote speaker will be Gella Schweid Fishman who in 1994 established the Secular Yiddish Schools in America Collection at Stanford University (California). She will speak on: The Secular Yiddish Schools in North America: An Archival Collection as a Living Source of Jewish Creativity. Gella has been a student, parent, board member and teacher in a secular Yiddish school system (Sholom Aleichem Shuln) in NY. She taught Yiddish language and culture courses from kindergarten to university for more than 50 years in both secular and modern Orthodox educational settings.

Our plenary session will feature Henry Sapoznik on Yiddish Education and the KlezKamp Phenomenon. KlezKamp has become a nursery of Yiddish culture going far beyond the music alone. He was the co-producer with MacArthur Fellow David Isay of the 10-week radio series the *Yiddish Radio Project* on the history of Yiddish radio for National Public Radio's *All Things Considered*. He founded the Archives of Recorded Sound at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. Spearheading the renewal of interest in klezmer music with his pioneering group Kapelye, Sapoznik. His book *Klezmer! Jewish Music from Old World to Our World* (Schirmer Books), the first book on the history of klezmer music in English, was the winner of the 2000 ASCAP Deems Taylor Award for Excellence in Music Scholarship.

Our closing speaker will be David Weintraub, Exec. Dir. of the Dora Teitelboim Center for Yiddish Culture. The Center has launched Yiddish Online and works to bring Yiddish into the curriculum of Jewish Day Schools and other venues. Following a historic Yiddish for Youth Initiative on May 28th, 2002 at which were assembled representatives from South Florida's JCCs, temples & synagogues, Hebrew Day schools and other Jewish educators, work was begun on this impressive mission.

## Yiddish after the Holocaust

Joseph.Sherman@oriental-institute.ox.ac.uk

This is a call for papers for a conference on The State of Yiddish Culture in the Post-Holocaust World to be held under the auspices of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies at Yarnton Manor, Oxford, Aug. 28-31, 2003.

Published research on the development of Yiddish language, literature and culture in the post-Holocaust world has been small. The recognition that Yiddish suffered a mortal blow as a result of the Holocaust in Europe to some extent encouraged a renewed Yiddish cultural revival in the United States, in the countries of the British Commonwealth, and elsewhere. These developments need further examination, to explore the extent to which Yiddish and Yiddish studies have experienced a renaissance.

Topics that this conference hopes to address, and on which papers welcomed, are all post-1945 investigation into Yiddish literature and journalism, education & scholarship, theatre and the arts, politics, linguistics, sociolinguistics and dialectology, and Yiddish as a language of religious revival. In addition, topics will be welcome that investigate such related areas as translations from Yiddish, changing world attitudes to Yiddish, adaptations of Yiddish in print or on stage and screen, and representations of Yiddish in other cultural contexts. Papers can be presented in either English or Yiddish; both languages will be welcome.

The conference will be at Yarnton Manor, the home of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, which is situated in the countryside about 4 miles outside Oxford. Delegates will arrive by Monday afternoon, 28 August, in time for the opening dinner that evening. Conference sessions will take place from 9.00 a.m. on Tuesday 29 until midday on Thursday 31 August. The cost of the conference will be 300 British pounds sterling (US\$ 470), which will cover the registration fee and will include accommodation, the conference opening dinner, and breakfast, lunch and dinner for the full 3 nights and 2 days of the conference.

Proposals are invited for papers or complete panels to be presented. All proposals for individual papers or panels should include the following: (1) An abstract of prospective papers of between 200-250 words, and (2) in the case of complete panels, the names and addresses of all participants and the subject matter of their presentations.

Prospective participants should submit the abstracts by 30 November 2002. Abstracts should include your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, institution, the title of your presentation and a brief curriculum vitae. Send your abstracts and personal details to the Organising Committee at: joseph.sherman@oriental-institute.ox.ac.uk fax no: 0944-01865-375-079 or send to: Dr Joseph Sherman Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies Oriental Institute, Pusey Lane OXFORD OX1 2LE, United Kingdom

## Nayer numer Lebns-Fragn

by Hymie Luden luden@netvision.net.il

A fardrislekher grayz iz arayngefaln in dem nayem numer 602-603 (september-november 2002) fun dem zhurnal Lebns Fragn, vos iz norvos aroys fun druk: in der notits vegn der forshetelung "A Poshete Mayse" vos vret oygefirt durkh dem "Yiddishpil-teater" in Tel-Aviv iz al-pi toes (efsher a froydistishn) un makhmes a fardrislekhn farzen gevorn

onugebn I. Bashevis anshtot, vi es darf zayn: Shay Agnon. Di redaktsye fun dem zhurnal antshuldikt zikh (oyf ir eygener initsyativ) far di leyener un far dem yidishn teater. Der numer iz' vi alemol, raykh mit interessante artiklen un mit aktueller informatsye fun yidishn gezeshaftelekh lebn.

## Jiddish Foundation of The Netherlands

by Jack Wiegman jack\_wiegman@yahoo.com

Half a century ago, on August 12<sup>th</sup>, six Jiddish writers were executed by the Stalin regime as enemies of the Soviet state. Previously others had been deported to the Soviet penal colonies where they perished. The murder of these writers—Perets Markisj, Dovid Hofstejn, Itsik Fefer, Lejb Kwitko, Der Nister, Moisje Kulbak, Samuel Halkin and many others—effectively destroyed Jiddish culture in the Soviet Union.

To honor them, the Jiddish Foundation of The Netherlands organized a commemorative congress in the Uilenburger Synagogue, Nieuwe Uilenburgerstraat 91, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Mr. Job Cohen, mayor of the city of Amsterdam, opened the assembly. Subsequently Dr. Olga Tielkens, an associate of the Slavic Institute of the University of Amsterdam, lectured on the political and cultural climate at the time and the special position of these Jewish authors and poets within Russian literature.

Two renowned elocutionists presented excerpts in Jiddish and in Dutch translation, from the works of these writers—Mr. Jossif Levkovitsj from Russia and Mrs. Willie Brill from The Netherlands. The presentations were accompanied by music from the repertoire of the Jewish Music Society in St. Petersburg, interpreted by the Russian violoncellist Alexander Oratovski and his accompanist.

## A Letter from Dovid Kunigis of Montreal

In your issue you had an item, *A yid fun Bruklin fregt mikh*: by Hale Porter. That item reminded me of a similar one that we had in a Yiddish book for higher classes, prepared and edited by A. Bergman & Itche Goldberg. On page 36, there is an interesting item: Ot Azoy-Zse Redt...by Moud & Fentster.

Since *Der Bay* serves many purposes, it could also serve as a learning tool. I am sure that many readers would enjoy the subtle humour and at the same time learn properly and improve some of their kitchen Yiddish. I will send you a copy of the page and you will see for yourself.

Es griltzt mir in di oyern, ven ikh her di anglitsizmen, in der tsayt, ven mir hobn punkt gute oysdrukn in undzer raykher yidisher shprakh.

## Let YIVO Decide

by Chassie & Elly Margolis chassielly@earthlink.net

Freeman and Gildin's comments on transposing Yiddish into English deal with the problems of languages whose alphabets contain a letter or letters for which there is no equivalent with the same or similar phonetics in English.

Since there is no recognized authority over English spelling or phonetics, a recognized institution like the YIVO should define, for example, whether that troublesome Yiddish letter should be transposed as *hes*, *ches* or *khes*, so that once and for all there would be a single English spelling used for our festival of freedom holiday and Anglicized Yiddish words be spelled closer to the Yiddish phonetics than bagel for baygl.