



# ידיעות פֿון שיקאַגאָ ייִדן

## NEWS FROM CHICAGO YIVO

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**2006** was a super year for the Chicago YIVO Society, starting with our successful Spring screening of the classic Yiddish film, “The Dybbuk.” Our Summer Festival of Yiddish Culture included 15 programs—music, humor and history—at six city and north suburban public libraries. The audiences were our largest ever! We displayed the YIVO Institute’s exhibit “The Family Singer,” and presented Anita Norich in a talk on “Three Singers, Three Writers, Three Lives” to a capacity crowd in Skokie.

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**NOW READ, LISTEN, AND LEARN.** The first chapter of our long-awaited Melamdovitch Interactive CD-ROM—“The Yiddish Teacher/ Der yidish lerer”—is available **FREE** on our website: [www.chicagoyivo.org](http://www.chicagoyivo.org)

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### **2007 WINTER** Yiddish-English Lecture



#### **Jan Schwarz, Ph.D.**

Senior Lecturer in Yiddish,  
Department of Germanic Studies,  
The University of Chicago

### **2007 SPRING** Yiddish-English Lecture



Photograph by Igor Litvak

#### **Dov-Ber Kerler, Ph.D.**

Dr. Alice Field Cohn Chair in Yiddish Studies,  
The Robert A. and Sandra S. Borns Jewish  
Studies Program and Department of Germanic  
Studies, Indiana University, Bloomington

Details on pages 4 and 5.



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*Joan D. Levin*

**Dr. Khane-Faygl Turtletaub:  
A Chicago Yiddish Resource**

**Y**iddish teacher, writer, translator, lecturer, scholar—all of these describe Dr. Khane-Faygl Turtletaub, who has taught hundreds of Chicago area students over the past 30 years.

Dr. Turtletaub believes in meeting the needs of the individual student, whether in a classroom situation or in private tutoring. Her classes on various levels are held in a variety of city and suburban locations. Private classes are usually held in her home.

“My classes are usually ongoing, since language acquisition takes time—one class went on for 15 years! What was interesting about the class,” Turtletaub



continues, “is that, although I concentrated on the language: idioms, grammar, etc., we talked about everything that was going on in the world as well as my students’ lives.”

Turtletaub believes that translating Yiddish letters, diaries, books, Yizkor Books, and old documents offers her a ringside seat to Jewish history. She enjoys giving programs on a variety of topics related to Yiddish and Yiddishkayt. When talking about her classes or her current projects, Turtletaub crackles with infectious enthusiasm, insisting that “even a little Yiddish goes a long way!”

Khane-Faygl Turtletaub may be reached by phone at (847) 675-3335 or by e-mail at doctorkf@verizon.net. ●



**James Maisels**

**Yiddish Enriches My Study of the Hasidim**

*James (Moshe) Maisels received a Chicago YIVO Society Fellowship to attend the 2006 YIVO*

*Intensive Yiddish Summer Program at New York University. James sent us this report to us via email.*

**F**or years I had been reading Hasidic texts and would, every once in a while, come across a Yiddish phrase or sentence which I would, unfortunately, skip over. Or, when reading Nakhman of Bratslav’s tales in the Hebrew version there would be, below, an entirely other world of the text, the tales in Yiddish, a world I had no access to. When I decided to deepen my study of Hasidic texts, and pursue a Ph.D. at the University of Chicago, it was clear that this partial understanding would no longer do; a full appreciation of the Hasidic path could only be garnered through the language of the Hasidim—Yiddish. At the University of Chicago I had the privilege to study with Dr. Jan Schwarz as I began to build my knowledge of Yiddish. This summer, due to the generosity of the Chicago YIVO Society I was given the opportunity to profoundly deepen my knowledge by participating in the YIVO Institute’s Weinreich summer Yiddish program at NYU.

There I entered an intensive Yiddish environment. From nine in the morning till at least five at night, I was immersed in Yiddish, whether speaking in class, reading a Yiddish text, going to a lecture about Yiddish in Yiddish, watching a Yiddish movie, singing Yiddish songs, or even performing Yiddish theater. My language

skills expanded exponentially as we interacted with Yiddish language and culture in multiple dimensions. While before I had read Nakhman’s tales in Hebrew, over the course of a month, in addition to my class work, I was able to read over half the tales in Yiddish, a very different experience, in nuance and tone, from reading the Hebrew version. I also had the opportunity to start working with Yiddish manuscripts, attempting to penetrate the sometimes indecipherable handwriting of nineteenth and twentieth century Eastern European Jews. Currently, my Yiddish is giving me access to scholarship on Hasidism, such as Abraham Joshua Heschel’s monumental work on the Kotsker Rebbe.

Beyond the specific language skills, the summer program has also helped me to more fully enter the cultural world of Hasidism and modern Eastern European Jewish life. Through the lectures and various cultural events we were immersed not only in Yiddish language, but Yiddish life. This enhanced access to Yiddish language and culture, which I am continuing to cultivate and grow, has allowed me to enter more fully and deeply into the life and world of the Hasidim I want to understand. ●

**Chicago YIVO Leyenkrayz (Yiddish Reading Circle)**

**Next Meeting**

**Monday, January 8, 2007**

**1:00—3:30 p.m.**

**Meeting Room**

**Chicago Public Library**

**Northtown Branch**

**6435 North California Avenue**

*A reading from Yiddish literature, followed by a discussion of the reading, a Yiddish sing-along, and light refreshments. Free and open to the public.*

**2006** *continued from front page*

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**S**ummer Festival Chair Frieda Landau (our dynamic *forzitserin*) is already planning the 2007 season. She promises that there will be thrilling additions to the music programming and more lectures that explore our fascinating Yiddish language and culture.

Chicago YIVO thanks our generous program sponsors. We urge more of our friends to consider sponsoring a program in 2007. Sponsors' names will be printed in the Festival calendar and on the cover of the individual program handouts.

A word about the Festival's co-sponsoring host public libraries in Chicago and the northern suburbs: year after year, the libraries' directors and program managers graciously provide all the support services we request—and more.

Chicago YIVO thanks Mary Jo Godziela (Sulzer Regional Library); Neil Ney and Kate Todd (Evanston Public Library); Michelle Shapiro (Indian Trails Public Library District, Wheeling); Steve Gianni (Northbrook Public Library); Tracy Shields O'Reilly and Carolyn Fukuda (Skokie Public Library); and Bonnie Forkosh (Wilmette Public Library).

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**Chicago YIVO Winter 2007 Yiddish-English Lecture**

**Jan Schwarz, Ph.D.**

*will speak on*

**“Jewish Vilna—Then and Now”**

**Sunday, February 11**

**2:00 p.m.**

**Beth Emet The Free Synagogue**

**1224 Dempster Street, Evanston, Illinois**

**Kosher refreshments • Admission \$5.00**

**D**r. Jan Schwarz joined the Department of Germanic Studies at the University of Chicago as Senior Lecturer in Yiddish in 2006 following three years as lecturer in the Committee on Jewish Studies. As a native of Denmark, he earned his Cand. Mag. in Scandinavian Studies at University of Copenhagen. His Ph.D. is from Columbia University. His books include *Imagining Lives: Autobiographical Fiction of Yiddish Writers* (2005, University of Wisconsin Press) and *The Golden Chain: An Anthology of Yiddish Literature* (in Danish, Rhodos 1993). His Danish translation of poet Abraham Sutzkever's *Griner akvarium* (1953-1954) will be published in 2006 by Husets Forlag. In August 2006, Dr. Schwarz joined the faculty of the one-month intensive Yiddish summer program at the University of Vilnius.

As an experienced teacher of Yiddish, Jan Schwarz, with his wife, Rabbi Rebecca Lillian, recently completed *The Yiddish Teacher/ Der yidish lerer*, a dialogue sequence for beginners and intermediate students, published by the Chicago YIVO Society. This is the long-awaited product of the Society's Melamdovitch Yiddish CD-ROM Project.

**Chicago YIVO Spring 2007  
Yiddish-English Lecture**

**Dov-Ber Kerler, Ph.D.**

**Lecture Title, Date, and Venue  
to be Announced**

**T**his poem, entitled *Maystershaft*, is from Kerler's latest collection, *Elabrek: lider fun nayem yortoyznt*, written under the pen-name Boris Karloff, and published in Jerusalem by Farlag "Eygnis."

A native of Moscow, Dov-Ber Kerler graduated from the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, in 1983 (joint honors BA in Yiddish Literature and General and Indo-European Linguistics) and received his D. Phil. in Yiddish philology from the University of Oxford in 1989.

Dov-Ber Kerler's publications include *History of Yiddish Studies* (Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991) and *Politics of Yiddish: Studies in Language, Literature, and Society* (AltaMira Press, 1998).

He also co-edited, together with his father, the Yiddish poet and editor, Josef Kerler (1918-2000), four volumes of the Yiddish literary and cultural annual, *Yerushalaimer Almanakh* (Jerusalem, 1993-1998). Dov-Ber Kerler published a later collection of *Yerushalaimer Almanakh* periodicals (Jerusalem, 2003).

**מײסטערשאפט**

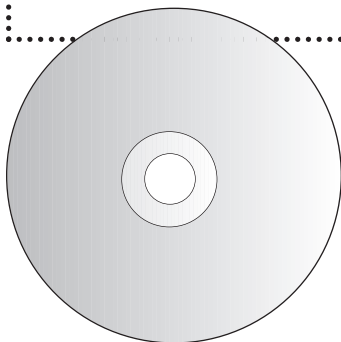
ווייסן ווייס איך אז דער עסק  
איז שוין אייגנטלעך פארביי  
נאָר דאָס מאַכן זיך ניט־וויסנדיק  
מיט אַ שמייכל זיך באַגריסנדיק  
איז אוודאי און אוודאי  
נאָך כדאיער פון כדאי

גרוער ווערט דער קלאַנג,  
מעטאלענער –  
נאָך די לעבנס  
די פאַרפאַלענע  
און דער הימל ז'פול מיט בליי

פאַרט וואָס טויג די וועלט  
נאָך אַלעמען  
אויב אין הייכן שוועבט די כלה ניט –  
דער בת־קול'ס אַ שמייכל שטראַלנדער  
אויף דער פריי?

הייב איך אויף דעם קאַפּ  
ניט איילנדיק  
און באַגריס איר שמייכל  
שטראַלנדיק:

ווייס איך וואָס?  
איצט ווייסן ווייס איך –  
ס'דופקט, דאַנקען גאָט, דער עסק  
און אלץ מילדער ווי פון עסיק  
זיך צעגייט  
דעם הימל'ס בליי



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## All Roads Lead to YIVO

*continued from back cover*

Both dailies were Zionist in outlook, although according to Miriam, *Haynt* was “further to the left.” *Der Moment* was a non-partisan daily, founded two years after *Haynt*, that grew increasingly revisionist in nature by the time of the outbreak of World War II. Ultimately, both papers met the same end during the early days of the *khurbn*.

Aside from her familial link to the noteworthy pre-war Yiddish daily, Miriam is quite remarkable in her own right. She is a genuine asset to YIVO. Having lived in several countries including Poland, Italy, Palestine/Israel, France, and the United States, she is well versed in a number of languages. Miriam’s fluency in Polish, in particular, has proven exceptionally useful in her recent work with the Papers of Artur Fisher, the late father of Kryisia Fisher, YIVO’s Photo and Film Archivist.

Miriam began volunteering at YIVO several months ago, sometime after I began working there. However, unbeknownst to many of us, she has quite a history with YIVO. She began working there in the late 1950s to the early 1960s. During that period, she worked alongside Dr. Jacob Robinson on the YIVO/Yad Vashem Holocaust project. A number of other memorable YIVO personalities including Max Weinreich, Zosa Szajkowski, Mendl Elkin, and Moses Kligberg were active at the same time.

**C**haim Finkelstein (1899-2001), a former editor of the aforementioned *Haynt* and a colleague of Miriam’s father, Mojzesz Indelman, also factors into this multi-layered picture. I recently met with Jadwiga Finkelstein, Chaim’s 93-year-old widow, at her home in Overland Park,



**Rivka Schiller and Jadwiga Finkelstein.**

*Photograph by Jadwiga’s son, Henry Temchin.*

Kansas, so as to shed light on the role that her husband had played during his life—not only at *Haynt*, but at YIVO, as well. It was during this recent interview that Jadwiga conveyed just how intertwined her late husband’s life had been with *Haynt*.

Chaim’s career with *Haynt* mirrored the daily’s own history. He began working there as a young man of 17, not long after the paper was first established in 1908 and continued on there until September 1939, at which time the newspaper was liquidated and Germany invaded Poland. Furthermore, as far as Israel and Zionism was concerned, Chaim’s political stance closely followed that of *Haynt*. Indeed, Jadwiga noted that “He was a Zionist from the very beginning to the very end.”

Chaim Finkelstein’s devotion to the Zionist cause was in fact so great that he found himself in Switzerland in September 1939 attending the Zionist Congress when World War II broke out. Although he had debated as to whether or not to go—seeing that the situation in Poland did not look optimistic—his then (first) wife encouraged him to attend. Sadly, Chaim was

never able to return to Poland during this period, and his wife and all but one daughter, Aviva, perished in the Holocaust.

According to Jadwiga, an amazing personality in her own right, Chaim managed to flee to the United States in the early 1940s and shortly thereafter, came—like Miriam Kreiter—to work for YIVO in New York. Through my interview with Jadwiga, I also learned that Chaim was one of those individuals who had been involved with the YIVO/Yad Vashem Holocaust project. As verified by Marek Web, one of YIVO's current archivists who has been with the institute since 1970, Chaim Finkelstein was employed by YIVO until the early 1970s.

It was, in fact, during his tenure at YIVO that Chaim conducted research, which ultimately resulted in the publication of *Haynt: a tsaytung ba Yidn, 1908-1939*, which is one of the few single histories that we have today concerning the once-prominent daily. While he was still alive, Chaim had plans to translate the book into English, but unfortunately, this project did not get well underway until after his death in 2001. It was due to the enduring efforts of Jadwiga, who, at age 93 is still very much a powerhouse, that this project was both overseen as well as carried out. This was due in part to a man named Bob Becker and the collaborative efforts of a team of highly devoted volunteer translators ranging from as nearby as New York to as far away as Australia.

The yet-to-be fully edited English translation of *Haynt: a tsaytung ba Yidn, 1908-1939*, may now be viewed at [www.haynt.org](http://www.haynt.org). Plans are already underway for the next phase of this translation project, which will involve translating the work into Polish. This task will be carried out in conjunction with ZIH (the Jewish

Historical Institute in Warsaw). Thus, Chaim Finkelstein's publication may become an invaluable resource to scholars of the pre-WWII Jewish society and culture in Poland. It will also serve as a resource to those of us who want to learn their forgotten heritage.

**R**eturning to the two central personalities that were introduced in the opening of this article: As closely intertwined as Miriam Kreiter and Jadwiga Finkelstein are in their connections to *Haynt* and YIVO, and by virtue of these connections, to one another, neither one has ever knowingly met the other. Indeed, when I first broached the subject of Jadwiga's existence to Miriam, she was totally unaware that Chaim Finkelstein even had a widow. Miriam's father and Chaim Finkelstein had remained in contact with one another until approximately 1977, at which time Mojzesz Indelman died. But since that time, Miriam has had little way of retaining a bond to the world of *Haynt* or to that of her father.

That is precisely where YIVO comes into the picture and where I begin to wonder about the deeper implications of the word *bashert*. For had it not been for the fact that I met Miriam through my position at YIVO, and in turn, learned of the existence of Jadwiga Finkelstein, I seriously question whether or not the two women would ever have learned of one another.

**I**t should come as no surprise that so many prominent and talented people—on roads running from various directions—should find a common intersection point at YIVO, an institute that serves not only as a testament to a former way of Jewish life, but also as a bridge between the past and future of Jewish scholarship. ●

**Rivka Schiller**

## All Roads Lead to YIVO

*Board member Rivka Schiller is living in New York City where she is working as a project archivist on the Gruss-Lipper Digital Archive on Jewish Life in Poland at the YIVO Archives.*

**H**aving now been an archivist at YIVO for the past year-and-a-half, I have come to realize just how far-reaching the institute's outstanding reputation and influence is—both in time and place. This was made all the more apparent to me quite recently, when I learned of the ties that bind two very unique women, Miriam Yinnon Kreiter and Jadwiga Finkelstein to one another, as well as to YIVO. Moreover, these are ties that date back to the Warsaw of pre-World War II and cross a number of American states—beginning in New York and ending in Kansas.

Miriam Kreiter, a native of Warsaw and a resident of New York since 1951, is a regular volunteer at YIVO. She is the daughter of the late Mojzesz Indelman (later Yinnon) (1895-1977), one of the last lead editors of *Haynt*, a premier Yiddish language, Zionist-leaning coop-



*Miriam Kreiter. Photograph by Rivka Schiller.*

erative newspaper published in Warsaw between the years 1908-1939. *Haynt* was a contemporary of another Warsaw-based Yiddish daily, *Der Moment*.

*Please turn to page 6.*



### Chicago YIVO Society

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