Milstein Family Provides $225,000 Grant

YIVO Spearheads Research into Archival Treasures of 20th-Century New York Jewish Heritage

YIVO has received a pioneering grant to permit it to survey the wealth of records generated by five Jewish social service agencies that operated in New York during the 20th century as a first step toward preserving them for sociologists, historians and future generations. Funded by a grant of $225,000 from the Milstein family and the Howard P. Milstein Foundation, the three-year project will work with the Educational Alliance, F.E.G.S. Health and Human Services System, the 92nd Street Y, Surprise Lake Camp and the New York Association for New Americans (NYANA). The five were chosen for their contributions to New York Jewish history and for the significance of their institutional archives.

“Our grandparents were among those who arrived in New York from Europe and, from humble beginnings, made great contributions to the life of this city. To honor those memories, my family is proud to do our part to preserve the communal memory of the Jewish people in our city,” reflected real estate developer and philanthropist Howard P. Milstein. “This gift to YIVO … is consistent with the Milstein family’s long-standing commitment to documenting and preserving history and genealogy through our city’s great public institutions.”

Terming the arrival in America “one of the 10 most important events in Jewish history,” YIVO Chairman Bruce Slovin noted, “Without the assistance of these UJA-Federation of Jewish Philanthropies -directed social service agencies, it would have been extremely difficult for those Jews to settle in New York and start a new life in a new country. As a result, over the past century, Jewish social service agencies have amassed a vast and extraordinarily rich archive of documents, photographs, films and other materials that document the entire history of the organized New York Jewish community.”

$186,000 Grant to Help Restore Hebrew Actors Union Papers

The Hebrew Actors Union (HAU) Archive, acquired by YIVO in the spring, is to be restored, and portions are to be put on exhibit at YIVO. The monumental task is being funded by a $186,000 grant from the Eli and Edythe L. Broad Foundation.

Eli Broad, a major Los Angeles business leader and philanthropist who grew up in the Bronx, recently told the New York Times that his Lithuanian-born parents often discussed Yiddish plays. “I thought it was an opportunity to do something in their memory and honor.”

The HAU, whose membership included all of the stars of the Yiddish theater during its golden age, played a critical role in improving working conditions.

A group of YIVO archivists and conservators have already unpacked, sorted, cleaned and...
YIVO News

Founded in 1925 in Vilna, Poland, as the Yiddish Scientific Institute and headquartered in New York since 1940, YIVO is devoted to the history, society and culture of Ashkenazic Jewry and to the influence of that culture as it developed in the Americas. Today, YIVO stands as the preeminent center for East European Jewish Studies; Yiddish language, literature and folklore; and the study of the American Jewish immigrant experience.

A founding partner of the Center for Jewish History, YIVO holds the following constituent memberships: • American Historical Association • American Association of Professors of Yiddish • Association for Jewish Studies • Association of Jewish Libraries • Council of Archives and Research Libraries in Jewish Studies • Museums Council of New York City • Society of American Archivists and • World Congress of Jewish Studies.

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Renewal and Relevance Today
YIVO Goes from Strength to Strength

As you read this issue of the YIVO News/Yedies, you will feel the vibrant renewal at YIVO: the many innovative projects we are working on — from restoring and cataloging the Hebrew Actors Union Archive, to surveying the records of five critical Jewish social service agencies that will make up the Millstein Jewish Communal Archive, to the ongoing work of bringing our rich resources to the public through the Gruss-Lipper Digital Archive on Jewish Life in Poland — YIVO is uniquely positioned to tie the history of prewar Jewish life in Eastern and Central Europe with that of the Jewish American experience.

YIVO is the link between the old and the new — and the future. In the last century more than 2.7 million Jews came to America seeking new opportunities and escaping poverty, anti-Semitism and persecution. Who were those immigrants, how did they survive and acculturate to American life?

Their lives and their great contributions to all aspects of society provide one of history’s most riveting human stories — one whose details were in danger of being lost forever. But thanks to a groundbreaking three-year project being launched by YIVO and funded by a major grant from the Howard P. Milstein Foundation, this history will be preserved! The Millstein Jewish Communal Archive Project at YIVO will research the wealth of records archived by five Jewish social service agencies in New York as a first step toward preserving them for scholars, historians and future generations.

Perhaps your grandparents, too, were among those who arrived in New York from Europe and, from humble beginnings, made great contributions to the life of this city. At YIVO, we honor their courage and struggles, daily striving to preserve the communal memory of the Jewish people in our city and world. We do this each day at YIVO.

But this is only one of many projects at YIVO. From saving and cataloguing the records of the Hebrew Actors Union in New York, which trace the history of Yiddish theater in America, to preparing a far-reaching exhibition on Baruch Spinoza, to publishing (with Yale University Press) the upcoming compendium, The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe, which chronicles 1000 years of Jewish history in the “Old World.”

I am so proud to have YIVO lead this project — we have the hands-on expertise and the commitment to keep our history alive! The remarkable strength and persistence shown by our grand- and great-grandparents is still alive and well here at YIVO.

YIVO’s vital work, every day, provides moving snapshots and in-depth studies of how Jewish life was and is. It tells the remarkable success story of new immigrants starting over on American soil.

I am proud of YIVO’s friends and supporters. Each book mended, each photograph preserved, each question answered, each emerging scholar encouraged by a YIVO fellowship, each high school student who begins to understand Jewish life in Eastern Europe — thank you for making this all possible!
From the Executive Director

The Cost of Academic Excellence

Following the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939, historians commented on the Republic’s defeat by noting that Stalin had provided the Republican government with just enough light weapons and supplies to fight the Fascists, but not enough fighter bombers and tanks to triumph.

In some ways, YIVO finds itself in an analogous position. Quite simply, thanks to our generous board members, our rank and file members, and our friends at discerning national foundations, we find ourselves with just enough resources to maintain our current operations ($4 million per year), but not enough money to achieve our full potential. Yet, unlike individual universities, YIVO is an international Jewish resource serving thousands of scholars, researchers, artists, graduate students and members of the public annually. YIVO’s mission transcends that of any one university library or archives.

For example, a recent survey of the 28 largest research libraries in Jewish studies reveals that YIVO holds the largest collection of Jewish serials (journals) in the United States with over 13,000 titles.1

YIVO’s core library collection now numbers 375,000 volumes, the third largest collection of its kind in the United States, following only the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, and the University of Pennsylvania. As the center of Yiddish linguistic scholarship, YIVO has collections in this area that are perhaps the strongest in the world.

Since 1999, YIVO has purchased more than 3,500 new book titles annually, including every new work published in Yiddish. We also have continued to acquire sizable private libraries. To maintain our current position as having the world’s greatest collection of works in what Zachary Baker of Stanford University has described as Yiddish belles-lettres,2 and to preserve our overall position as having the third largest collection of Judaica in the United States, we need to double our current acquisitions budget over the next two years. This will be no simple task. Books that we normally acquire from European booksellers have escalated in cost as the U.S. dollar has continued to decline against the Euro. U.S. and Canadian publishers, facing both increased production costs and rising inflation, have also increased their prices so that the average cost of a new book is now $50.

Similarly, YIVO’s famed Ulriel Weinreich Summer Yiddish Language Institute, now affiliated with New York University, faces fierce new international competition from less expensive foreign universities in Europe and Israel. This past summer it cost YIVO $7,500 to provide a full scholarship to one meritorious student from the former Soviet Union. As a result of the earlier vision of a select group of YIVO benefactors, we were able to provide seven full scholarships and 19 partial scholarships. At the same time, we had to turn away 15 deserving Russian and Polish Jewish students because of the absence of additional scholarships.

Another “island of excellence” deserving the increased support of our members and friends is the YIVO Archives. Over the past 81 years, YIVO has amassed what is undisputably the greatest archive in European Jewish history in North America. The YIVO Archives hold over 22 million letters, manuscripts, photographs, films, sound recordings, art works and three-dimensional artifacts. YIVO’s greatest strengths are in four areas: the Holocaust, American Jewish immigration history, Eastern European Jewish history and Yiddish language and literature. To strengthen YIVO’s holdings, we require new funds to acquire major new collections, to harness the new electronic technologies that have become available over the past five years (e.g., digitization), and to provide competitive salaries that will permit YIVO to continue to be able to compete with other more wealthy institutions. As we approach the beginning of Chanukah, I ask that each of you consider an additional gift to YIVO, a gift designed to ensure excellence in all of YIVO’s endeavors.

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research Donors

We acknowledge gifts of $5,000 and above from July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006. We also extend our gratitude to the thousands of donors who are not listed in this issue of *Yedies*.

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- Estate of Sidney D. Krum

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Together We Will Succeed

by Ella Levine, Director of Development and External Affairs

On Chanukah I often examine my relationship to tradition and how my daily actions help others. So many of us struggle through our work days without ever knowing if we make a difference. For nonprofit fundraisers, it’s pretty clear: if donors support your organization, it means they are happy and the organizational mission can be fulfilled. It means touching thousands of people, one at a time, by creating projects that resonate and are a testament to the importance of our organizational work.

Holidays also provide a time to reflect on the meaning of our traditions. To strengthen Jewishness in an increasingly secular world, we must renew our connection to Jewish roots and our understanding of why our identity and philanthropic involvement matter. Commitment must involve more than writing a check: it requires a personal commitment to Jewish traditions, values and principles that are integral to our history.

YIVO appeals to cultural pride. When we see Yidishkeyt as an inspiration in our lives, we are motivated to take personal philanthropic responsibility for the future of YIVO as an organization that enriches and preserves our heritage.

Today’s major donors want to see returns on their investments in philanthropy; they want to see results. We must develop projects and initiatives that will make donors proud of the organization they support.

A growing number of donors, lay leaders and charitable foundations are committed to our vision for a stronger Jewish life and Jewish future. These valued partners enable YIVO to continue educating and inspiring present and future generations about the history and culture of European Jewry. Our younger generation of donors is very involved in making a difference in the future of the Jewish community, continuing the tradition of donations by older generations.

We are proud to lead an organization that not only provides opportunities for Jewish enrichment, but also pushes itself to new heights. This demonstrates our achievements and points to greater accomplishments to come. By working with our donors, we are making YIVO stronger.

Fundraising is about people and building relationships that have a great impact on the future. Your contribution is a personal commitment to our multifaceted Jewish community and an investment in the future of our culture. As YIVO continues to strengthen, we never lose sight of the individuals who have helped bring us here. You have helped keep our legacy alive, and we need your continuing support. You have been the light that kept us strong in darker times and you continue to be the light, this time showing us the way to a bright and vibrant future. Thank you, a dank.

Join Us on the YIVO Heritage Mission
Latvia, Lithuania and Germany May 20 - June 1, 2007

Join us for an extraordinary tour of Latvia, Lithuania and Germany, a journey into the world where Jewish culture and education bloomed and then perished, where the Jewish past is evidenced by history both gone and reemerging. Experience the rebirth of new, vibrant Jewish communities, meet with representatives of government, local Jewish institutions and communities, scholars and educators, and with remaining Holocaust survivors.

- Depart JFK, May 20, 2007, for Berlin, home to Western Europe’s third largest Jewish community.
- Visit Frankfurt, where the Jewish museum in the Rothschild Palace reconstructs the past, Leipzig and Dresden
- Vilna — The Jerusalem of Lithuania — birthplace of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, Ponar
- Kovno — the famous Slobodka Yeshiva, Ninth Fort, former ghettos, synagogues.
- Visit historic and architectural sites, museums, palaces.
- Stay at deluxe hotels.
- Breakfasts and dinners included.
- All transfers and internal transportation included.

For more information, call Ella Levine at: (212) 294-6128, or email: elevine@yivo.cjh.org

Reservations must be submitted, with a $500 deposit per person, no later than February 15, 2007.

Explore the old and new
See the past
Look into the future
 Benefit Dinner

Dr. Richard Axel, 2004 Nobel Laureate for his pioneering studies on the relationship between the human brain and stimuli from the sensual world, is the 2006 recipient of YIVO’s Lifetime Achievement Award. The award was presented at YIVO’s 81st Annual Benefit Dinner at the Center for Jewish History on May 8. YIVO’s most important annual fundraiser, the dinner attracted more than 200 guests and garnered nearly $1.1 million to support daily YIVO operations and programs.

A University Professor and Investigator at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University, Axel revolutionized the scientific community’s understanding of the relationship between our olfactory senses and the intricacies of the brain. His work has led to, among other things, the isolation and functional analysis of the cellular receptor for the HIV virus. A native of New York City, and a Columbia University graduate, he returned to his alma mater as a professor in 1978.

Addressing the audience in the Center’s Forchheimer Auditorium, YIVO Chairman Bruce Slovin joked, “We haven’t had so much brain power in one room since 1933, when Einstein and Freud were on YIVO’s board, and it was still flourishing in Vilna.”

Lee C. Bollinger, President of Columbia University, introduced Axel as someone “at the cutting edge of the pioneering research we do at Columbia...an original thinker, and a great mind.” He outlined the planned creation of the Jerome L. Greene Science Center, which will house the University’s Mind, Brain, and Behavior program, where Richard Axel works.

Dr. Eric Kandel, Director of the Kavli Institute for Brain Sciences at Columbia, and a 2000 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine (honored by YIVO in 2001), presented Axel with his award, quipping that Axel was being crowned “Jew of the Year.” Kandel then led the audience in a rousing rendition of “Richard, Richard, Melech Yisroel.”

Axel revealed his recipe for success: “You grow up in a Jewish home in Brooklyn, with immigrant parents from Poland, whose education was disrupted by the Nazi invasion.” He added, “They instilled in me a deep respect for intellectual striving.” Axel concluded his remarks with an acknowledgement of YIVO’s venerable history as a home of Jewish intellectuals and academics. “It is an honor and a pleasure as a Jewish scientist to stand with you and YIVO. Tonight I celebrate you. L’chaim!”

Motl Zelmanowicz, YIVO National Board member, concluded the ceremonies with an impassioned speech in Yiddish on the importance of preserving yidishtayt for current and future generations. The guests then entered the Center’s Great Hall, where they were entertained during dinner by internationally acclaimed folklorist and musician Maria Krupoves. Among the Yiddish songs she performed was the beloved “Vilne,” with words by A. L. Wolfson and music by Alexander Olshanetsky.
YIVO’s 5th Annual Heritage Luncheon raised more than $140,000 to support YIVO’s Educational Program on Yiddish Culture (EPYC) and other programs. The sold-out May 10 event at the Center for Jewish History honored longtime YIVO supporters Sima and Nathan (z”l) Katz, author Fanya Gottesfeld Heller, the Hanover family and publisher and engineer William Begell — all survivors of the Holocaust.

“I am one of you,” declared Cindy Stone, emcee and chair of YIVO’s Leadership Forum, “a child of survivors from Kovno, a representative of my generation, the first American born. And I’ve made a promise to work hard at preserving our history.”

The Me’Dor Le’Dor (Generation to Generation) Award was presented to the Katz family by YIVO Chairman Bruce Slovin. Sima, her late husband Nathan, whom she met and wed in the Shavl Ghetto in 1943, and their two daughters, Miriam and Rita, created the Shavl Room, a memorial to those who perished in the Shavl Ghetto.

Accepting the award, Miriam Katz addressed the “double-edged sword” of assimilation, which provides refuge, yet challenges subsequent generations to remember and preserve Yiddish culture.

Guest speaker Fanya Gottesfeld Heller, YIVO National Board Member, author and philanthropist who chairs the YIVO International Women’s Division, received a Special Achievement Award. Heller emphasized the importance of teaching young people not only “how we perished, but how we lived... In the worst moments we had universities, schools, and orchestras... YIVO is our yidishe neshome — our consciousness!” she declared, to resounding applause.

The Lifetime Achievement Award went to Paula Hanover and family. Paula and her late husband Henry (z”l), both survivors, met and married in Europe after the war, then came to the United States. They helped create centers for children and the elderly in Israel and America.

“Parents are always proud of their children’s accomplishments,” said their daughter, Mimi Ford, standing alongside her brother, Alain, “Today, I am thrilled to reciprocate.”

The Vilna Award was presented to publisher and engineer William Begell by Mira Jedwabnik Van Doren, his friend from childhood in prewar Vilna. An accomplished artist and filmmaker, Van Doren’s new documentary film about Vilna, “The World Was Ours,” includes Begell, who escaped the Vilna labor camp after a warning from German Major Karl Plagge. For this veiled warning, and his earlier protection of Jews as “essential workers,” Plagge was honored last year at Jerusalem’s Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial as one of the “Righteous among Nations.”

Begell admitted, with a smile, “I am not a full-blooded Litvak; I am half Galitzianer,” revealing another twist of fate that may have saved his life.

“What I really am is a child of the Vilna Ghetto. [I survived] because my Polish was accent free. I did not speak Yiddish.”

Ella Levine, Director of Development, presented Luncheon Chair Eta Wrobel with a surprise award and heartfelt thanks. Wrobel, a partisan in Poland during World War II, is “a symbol of the great strength and courage displayed by so many,” Levine said.
Thirty five educators, including many classroom teachers, participated in YIVO’s recent seminar on its Education Program on Yiddish Culture (EPYC). Held June 27–29, at the Center for Jewish History, the seminar attracted educators from all streams of Judaism and several non-Jews involved in Yiddish studies. Their countries of origin included the United States, Canada, Mexico, Israel and Lithuania.

“What brought all these energetic educators together at YIVO was the opportunity to learn about the vibrant East European Jewish cultural heritage through the EPYC curriculum and the wealth of documentary resources at YIVO,” explained seminar chair Professor Robert Moses Shapiro, a specialist in East European Jewish Studies in the Judaic Studies Department at Brooklyn College.

The three-day seminar included lectures and discussions by prominent scholars, musicians and performers, interspersed with workshops on the wealth of materials available through EPYC and other YIVO online archival material. Among the issues with which the participants grappled was “Yiddish Today and Tomorrow,” on ways of promoting the study of the culture of East European Jewry in the 21st century. As the group toured YIVO’s Library and Archives, one participant received a printed copy of the May 1921 manifest of the ship that brought her parents to the United States.

Developed by Dr. Adina Cimet-Singer, EPYC is a wide-ranging teaching system on East European Jewry, from essays for teachers to classroom lesson plans, supported by photos and documents.

The current seminar was sponsored by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, Inc. - The Rabbi Israel Miller Fund for Shoah Research, Education and Documentation; the United States Department of Education; and YIVO supporters of the Food as Roots Program. Co-chairs of the event were Cynthia Peterman, chair of Jewish History at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School in Rockville, MD; and Leah Strigler, doctoral candidate in education and Jewish Studies at New York University.

Zalmen Mlotek, executive director of the Folksbiene Yiddish Theater, presented an evening concert, “A Musical Tour of the East European Jewish World,” a melodic lecture on this musical heritage. Mlotek accompanied Yiddish theater stars Joanne Borts and Moshe Bear, who brilliantly took the EPYC Seminar’s participants, as well as students from the Uriel Weinreich Program in Yiddish Language, Literature and Culture, on a musical tour of Jewish Eastern Europe.

By September 1, more than 22 participants had submitted curriculum plans to YIVO, demonstrating that they planned to incorporate EPYC and other YIVO resources into their academic coursework.

**EPYC Teaching Staff**

- **Prof. Michael Stanislawski:** Columbia University
- **Prof. Samuel Kassow:** Trinity College
- **Prof. Allan Nadler:** Drew University
- **Prof. Zelda Kahan Newman:** Lehman College
- **Prof. Cecile Kuznitz:** Bard College
- **Prof. Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett:** New York University
- **Zalmen Mlotek:** Executive Director of the Folksbiene Yiddish Theater
Dynasty of Poets, Historians

Two New YIVO Books on the Reisen Family

Two new YIVO books, *The Reisens of Koydanovo* by Marek Web and Krysia Fisher, and *11 Poems of Abraham Reisen*, with translations by Chana Mlotek, were recently issued through the generosity of Russell Galbut and Bruce Menin, both descendants of the Reisen family. The first is a short history of the dynasty of Kalman Reisen of Koydanovo, Belarus. It includes the families of his five children — Rebecca, Abraham, Sarah, Hirsh and Zalmen. Abraham and Sarah were preeminent poets, and Zalmen was a linguist and literary historian.

Abraham Reisen was a celebrated Yiddish poet and prose writer. Zalmen Reisen was a noted lexicographer and grammarian of the Yiddish language, and a founder of YIVO in Vilna in 1925. Sarah Reisen was in the forefront of the liberated Yiddish women poets. *The Reisens of Koydanovo* encompasses the genealogy, the lives and times, the influences and the contributions made by this gifted family.

Compiled by Marek Web, YIVO Senior Research Associate, the story is enhanced by photos and illustrations provided by Krysia Fisher, Curator of Photographic Collections at YIVO. The second publication illustrates 11 children’s poems by Abraham Reisen, with translations and transliterations by Chana Mlotek, Archivist of Music Collections. It also is designed by Krysia Fisher.

Both publications were issued in a limited edition and can be purchased from the Center for Jewish History Bookstore, (917) 606-8220.

HAU Archive [continued from page 1]

reboxed thousands of files, ledgers, manuscripts, photographs, banners, costume trunks and framed paintings. They sorted through the fragments of operettas and examined union membership dues ledgers and the card file holding addresses of union members. They also browsed more than 2,000 files of the Hebrew Actors Union’s presidents from the 1920s through the late 1960s. Thanks to their hard work, a preliminary survey has been successfully completed, confirming that the HAU Archive is a substantial collection, which promises to be a treasure trove for scholarship on the Yiddish theater.

After the processing is completed, the archive preserved, and the full scope and contents of the collection cataloged, YIVO will organize an exhibition on the HAU and its role in the history of Yiddish theater in America. It will be mounted in a gallery named in honor of the Broad family, accessible to the public and researchers.

The Hebrew Actors Union was founded by Jewish labor leader Joseph Barondess in 1899 to improve working conditions for Yiddish actors. Boris Thomashefsky, the first major actor to recognize the union, recalled in his memoirs that before the founding of HAU, “rank-and-file actors were similar to nonunionized factory workers.”

Among the stars of the Yiddish stage who were HAU members were Celia Adler, Freydele Oysher, Stella Adler, Luther Adler, Jacob Ben Ami, Bella Bellarina, Fishl Bimko, Ben Bonus, Max Bozyk, Joseph Buloff, Pesakhke Burststein, Fayvush Finkel, Leo Fuchs, David Kessler, Sheftel Zak, Herman Yablokoff, Aaron Lebedeff, Shifra Lerer, David Medov, Sigmund Mogulesco, Molly Picon and Maurice Schwartz.

Next Steps

After more than 60 years in the old union building at 31 East 7th Street, the collection is out of order and lacks indexes or catalogs, and many items are in poor, dusty and fragile condition. But the transformation of this important archive into a rich, valuable and well-organized resource, available to the public and the scholarly community, has begun by cleaning and neutralizing mold.

Titles already discovered include *Der bal-tshuve, Khayim in Amerike, Di Bobe Sore*, *Eydiele Hertser*, *Di Grine*, *Avremele Menagen*, *Dos Yidishe Kind*, *Katya’s Wedding* and *Der Yidisher Shtern*. Many theatrical songs remained in the repertory of famous cantors and actors after the plays were forgotten, like *Eyli Eyli*, *Got un zayn mishpet is gerekht*, *Dos pintele yid* and others. These songs born in the United States spread to Europe and became part of the repertory there as well.

“We are proud to have the support of Eli Broad and his foundation,” said Carl J. Rheins, YIVO Executive Director. “Once everything is sorted, cleaned and catalogued, we will share the material both in online and stand-alone exhibitions.”
Dr. Joachim Russek Awarded 2006 Jan Karski & Pola Nirenska Prize

Dr. Joachim S. Russek, the Director of the Judaica Foundation in Cracow, Poland, is the 2006 recipient of the Jan Karski and Pola Nirenska Prize at YIVO. Endowed by Professor Jan Karski in 1992, the $5,000 prize goes to authors and editors of published works documenting Polish-Jewish relations and Jewish contributions to Polish culture. The award ceremony was held on November 29, 2006, at the Center for Jewish Culture in Cracow.

The award recognizes Russek’s outstanding work as an educator and editor in Polish-Jewish studies. It also expresses appreciation for his role in creating institutions of learning and for popularizing Jewish culture in Poland.

Born in 1950 in Zabrze, Upper Silesia, Russek holds a Ph.D. in law from the Jagiellonian University in Cracow. Additionally, he studied at the University of Chicago, The Hague Academy of International Law, the Hebrew University and YIVO. Through YIVO’s Max Weinreich Center for Advanced Jewish Studies, he was introduced to Jewish history and culture in Poland.

Russek has been associated with the Jagiellonian University since 1974. In 1986 he joined Professor Jozef A. Gierowski, former Rector of the Jagiellonian University, in establishing the Interdepartmental Program in Jewish History and Culture there. In 1988, Polish and Jewish intellectuals including Jozef Gierowski, Jacek Wozniakowski, Jan Blonski, Khone Shmeruk and Rafael F. Scharf proposed creating a Center for Jewish Culture in Cracow’s prewar Jewish district of Kazimierz, then a neglected quarter of the postwar city, abandoned by the remnants of the Jewish community who had survived the Nazi annihilation of Cracow’s Jewish population. As director of the project, Russek oversaw the reconstruction of the ruined former prayer house on Rabbi Meisels Street. In 1993, it became the home of the Center.

In 1991 he was named head of the Judaica Foundation, which runs the Center for Jewish Culture. Under his leadership, the Judaica Foundation – Center for Jewish Culture hosts a year-round flow of lectures, discussion panels, film and art presentations, music events, conferences and much more.

The Center offers summer programs in Jewish history, another of Russek’s initiatives originally at the Jagiellonian University’s summer school in 1984, and later moved to the center. Since 1999 the center has hosted an annual memorial lecture named after the Polish-Jewish writer Alexander Hertz and his wife, the pianist Alicia Hertz.

Reflecting on the role of the Judaica Foundation and the Center for Jewish Culture, Russek says: “We try to protect what can be protected, since so much has been lost from the Jewish cultural heritage. It is an element of the Polish cultural landscape. If the Jewish heritage were to disappear from the scene totally, it would be as much a loss for Poles as for Jews. We try to protect the memory of the Jewish presence on Polish soil through the centuries, because this is also an element that allows us to define our identity.”

The 2006 award committee consisted of Professor Jozef Gierowski of Jagiellonian University, Cracow; Prof. Jerzy Tomaszewski of Warsaw University; Professor Feliks Tych of the Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw; and Marek Web, Senior Research Scholar, representing the YIVO Institute ex-officio. Sadly, Professor Jozef Gierowski, a member of the committee since its inception, passed away on February 19, 2006.

The late Professor Jan Karski, the founder of the prize, was the envoy of the Polish government-in-exile during World War II who brought to the West firsthand testimony about the conditions in the Warsaw Ghetto and in German death camps. The prize is also named in memory of Professor Karski’s late wife, choreographer Pola Nirenska.
IWO Argentina Eyewitness Report

In the Midst of Another Move, Recovery Continues

Visiting the new IWO Argentina offices in Buenos Aires, in the Casa Simon Dubnow, a nondescript, three-story building on narrow Ayacucho street in the working-class Jewish neighborhood of Once, is a harsh lesson in the realities of Jewish life in Argentina. It is a five-minute walk, yet a world away, from its former home in the AMIA (Argentine-Israelite Mutual Association or Jewish Community Center) building, which was destroyed by suspected Iran-backed Hezbollah terrorists in a bombing in 1994. The attack killed 85 people and wounded more than 300. AMIA was rebuilt in 1999, this time as a veritable concrete fortress, and IWO moved back in.

In December 2001, the Argentinean peso was devalued by two-thirds, and the country suffered the largest debt default in history, drying up government and private funding. In 2003, a nightclub fire that killed 200 and injured nearly 700 ushered in a chain of young men and women linked arm in arm to rescue an object just out of the frame of the picture.

Despite the magnitude of the disaster, Hansman credits the success of the recovery process to Esther Schwarz, IWO’s Academic Director, who supervised a group of courageous student volunteers. They risked injury to sort through and rescue the objects that remained; sometimes their efforts were in defiance of the police who were charged with blocking off the site. “They didn’t know whether to expect a second attack,” Hansman explained, “and as the building was on a very narrow street, they transported what could be found, in their individual cars, to donated warehouse space.” They worked around the clock, “and when the authorities took what remained to a field at the riverside, the students were prohibited from entering, and parts of the collections among the debris were left to rot in the rain. Only a few months later, after IWO applied media pressure, our volunteers were allowed to continue the rescue.”

Hansman estimates that 60 percent of the library was recovered, but only half of what remains has yet been cataloged. More than 80 percent of the archives was recovered, and the process of arranging and describing what remained was immediately begun. A few years ago a guide to the archives was discovered, which greatly aids in the process.

“Esther Schwarz has a word for the objects that survived both the Second World War, and the AMIA bombing,” Hansman said, “Twice saved.”

Despite the challenges that IWO faces, it continues to present an impressive roster of programming and exhibitions. Last December, IWO signed an agreement of aid and cooperation with the National Library of the Congress of Argentina, focusing on the preservation of documentary material.

Despite the many challenges, IWO continues to present impressive cultural programming, including hosting a Warsaw Yiddish Theater production of excerpts from classic Yiddish plays, and organizing a July exhibition on Maury Minkowski (1881 - 1930), the Warsaw-born painter who came to Buenos Aires only three months before his death. In October, IWO offered a series of lectures as part of the “Buenos Aires Yiddish” festival. That month newly appointed federal prosecutors to the AMIA case publicly declared that the 1993 bombing was undertaken “by the highest authorities of the then-government of Iran” and Judge Rodolfo Canicoba-Corral issued warrants for the arrest of Iran’s leaders at the time, including former president Ali Rafsanjani.

— David Ben-Arie

Student volunteers working together to save IWO collections (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1994).
In memory of the Jews of Vilna and the surrounding region, YIVO, in conjunction with the Nusakh Vilne organization, has hosted a second annual commemorative ceremony.

Khayele Palevsky, a native of Swieciany, a town near Vilna, a World War II partisan and the former vice president of Nusakh Vilne, said the organization decided two years ago to turn over all of its documents and reports to YIVO. Nusakh Vilne, which has existed for more than 50 years, no longer has enough members to oversee the annual commemorative ceremony. When the organization was still active, it cosponsored a multitude of yearly events and activities with Beit Vilna and Beit Lohamei Hagetaot, both in Israel.

Palevsky laments that there are only a few remaining members of Nusakh Vilne; since last year’s commemorative ceremony, 13 members have died. When one considers that 95 percent of Lithuanian Jewry perished in the "khurbn," one can comprehend how great a loss each member’s life is.

Speakers included YIVO Executive Director Dr. Carl Rheins; Dr. Rakhmiel Peltz, Director of the Judaic Studies Program and Professor of Jewish Studies at Philadelphia’s Drexel University; and Moyshe Palevsky, Khayele Palevsky’s son. Candles were lit in memory of the murdered Jews of Vilna. Natasha Hirschhorn, cantor of Congregation Ansche Chesed, a Conservative synagogue in Manhattan, sang and performed a series of mostly Yiddish songs on the piano. The program concluded with the recitation of the names of recently deceased Nusakh Vilne members.

Vilna personalities were remembered by the speakers. One person mentioned by multiple speakers was Mira Bernshteyn, a woman whose dedication and devotion to her people was best illustrated by writer Abraham Sutzkever in his poem “Di lererin Mire” (Teacher Mira). Moyshe Palevsky elaborated on this work’s allusions both to I. L. Peretz’s “Dray matones” (Three Gifts) — in which a female dies while sanctifying the name of God — and to the apocryphal figure of Hannah who, likewise, dies — with her seven sons — in the name of God.

The keynote speaker, Dr. Rakhmiel Peltz, spoke about his research on Holocaust survivor families and the tradition of telling stories from one generation to the next. Peltz maintains that remembering is closely tied to the act of storytelling. His research findings indicate that children who grow up in families that tell stories about previous generations, in turn, have a tendency to, and a talent for, relating those stories to future generations.

Peltz concluded his speech with the well-known song “Vilne,” by A. L. Wolfson and A. Olshanetsky. His final remarks included a message of hope: thanks to the fact that the stories of pre-World War II Vilna continue to be told from one generation to the next, the “Jerusalem of Lithuania” will always remain etched in the hearts and memories of our people.
The Uriel Weinreich Program in Yiddish Language, Literature and Culture, cosponsored by YIVO and New York University, celebrated its 39th year with formal classes and cultural enrichment programs. Students chose from five levels of intensive Yiddish-language instruction on grammar and literature offered in the morning. The afternoon curriculum offered workshops, conversation classes, film screenings and lectures. The lectures were designed for students of Jewish history and for cultural and community activists who come in large numbers to the Zumer-program each year. Students gathered for shabes, toured New York City, and shared living space in NYU’s Yidish-hoyz. Their conversational instruction helped them to speak Yiddish among themselves and with guests.

Among the lecturers were professors at NYU, YIVO academics, artists, journalists and communal activists. They taught on topics ranging from “Yiddish Language and Jewish Life” and “The Yiddish Cookbook” to “Two Crises in the American Communist Movement.” Half of the classes were in English and the rest in Yiddish. Three East European-born Yiddish speakers conversed with the students about their younger years and the role of Yiddish in their lives.

Field trips included a tour of the Lower East Side, the cradle of Yiddish-speaking America, and a visit to the Workmen’s Circle plot at Mount Carmel Cemetery in Queens.

“On these excursions,” notes Isabelle Rozenbaumas, “we got a sense of how rich and diverse Yiddish life was in America, in literature, in theater, in politics, parallel to centuries of Yiddish culture in Europe. These trips brought home to me how important it was to be in New York City for Yiddish studies.”

At the siem-hazman (graduation ceremony), Dean of the YIVO Library Brad Sabin Hill, who had given the students an introductory talk on YIVO collections at the beginning of the program, discussed their future in the field of Yiddish studies. Keynote speaker Boris Sandler, editor-in-chief of the Yiddish Forward, talked about the importance of Yiddish and the Yiddish press. Meena-Lifeshe Viswanath delivered the valedictory address. She was one of four college-age native Yiddish speakers taking the advanced class. After the speeches, several students sang songs, the Theater Workshop presented a sketch, and advanced student Gershon Weiss read his poetry.

Or Rogovin, a Ph.D. candidate in Comparative Literature at the University of Washington, commented on his YIVO Zumer-program experience: “I found Yiddish to be a true gateway to Jewish culture... The study of Yiddish changed the sense of ‘linguistic solitude’ that is typical for Israelis... Yiddish creates a sense of temporal and spatial continuity between my Israeli identity and Jewish tradition.”

### Zumer in New York, Summer 2007!

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Spinoza: “From Heretic to Hero”

More than three hundred people attended YIVO’s national symposium, “From Heretic to Hero,” commemorating the 350th anniversary of the excommunication of philosopher Baruch Spinoza from Amsterdam’s Jewish community.

Addressing the October 29 event, YIVO Executive Director, Dr. Carl Rheins outlined the history of the kheyrem, or ban, in Judaism. Symposium organizer Prof. Allan Nadler of Drew University observed that there have been numerous commemorations of Spinoza’s birth and death over the past century. However, this was the first time that a Jewish organization specifically commemorated Spinoza’s banishment from his people.

Nadler explained this choice as resulting not from a macabre interest in a tragic event, but because had Spinoza not been excommunicated, he might never have been free to develop and publish his radical philosophical ideas.

The first speaker, Professor Steven Nadler, of the University of Wisconsin, read the actual text of the kheyrem. Through an explication of the theologically radical teachings of Spinoza’s philosophy, he explained why the rabbis and communal leaders of Amsterdam might have had good reason for expelling him from their young and still insecure community. He noted that most Amsterdam Jews were former Marranos who had fled the Inquisition to find religious freedom in the liberal Dutch Republic. These Portuguese Jews were still, at least subconsciously, under the influence of Catholic theology, with its deep concern with the immortality of the soul, which conflicted with principles espoused by Spinoza.

Professor Steven Smith of Yale University recounted the complicated reception of Spinoza in modern German Jewish thought. He focused on the criticisms of Spinoza by the great Jewish rational philosopher Hermann Cohen, and the defense of Spinoza by Leo Strauss. For Cohen, Spinoza betrayed the Jews and was considered a hostile defector. Strauss, while no admirer of Spinoza, saw in his naturalistic interpretation of Jewish history, the seeds for the later development of political Zionism. Thus, while he was certainly not an exemplary Jew, Spinoza should be seen as a forerunner of modern, secular Jewish political thought. As Smith pointed out, many later Zionists shared in that sentiment about Spinoza.

Professor Allan Nadler spoke about a variety of both serious and satirical imaginings of Baruch Spinoza awakened from the dead. For many secular Yiddish writers, who also broke with traditional Judaism 300 years after Spinoza, he was a role model and an inspiration — the first veltekher yid or secular Jew.

Nadler read in Yiddish and paraphrased fantasies about encountering Spinoza in the land of the living by such diverse writers as satirist Yosef Tunkel (aka Der Tunkeler), poets Halpern Leyvik and Melech Ravitch, and writer Chaim Grade.

Daniel Schwartz of Colgate University presented a paper on the image of Spinoza as the first modern Jew in Central European Jewish literature and thought. He focused on Salomon Rubin, who translated many of Spinoza’s works into Hebrew for the first time and saw the great thinker as the new Maimonides and as an inspiration to modern, secular Jews.

The Spinoza Symposium was funded by the New York Council for the Humanities, a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Pamela and Adam Emmerich, and Francesca and Bruce Slovin.

In conjunction with the conference, the YIVO Library mounted an exhibition entitled ‘Spinoza in the Yiddish Mind’, highlighting the engagement of Yiddish-speaking Jewry with the philosopher from Amsterdam. The exhibit presented a panorama of Yiddish books and journals devoted to Spinoza’s life and his thought, as well as the first Yiddish article on Spinoza published in Zederbaum’s Yudishes folksblat in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1886. Also on display were unique printed and manuscript documents, including the original typescript of H. Sloves’ drama Borukh fun Amsterdam, and artistic representations of Spinoza by the Polish-Jewish painter and Yiddish writer Isaac Lichtenstein.
**Peretz Markish’s Autograph Among Inscriptions**

Rare Books from Zeitlin Private Library Donated to YIVO

The YIVO Library has received a book collection from the private library of Jewish composer and musician Leo Zeitlin (1884–1930). Zeitlin’s daughter, Ruth Zeitlin Roes, made the donation through Paula Eisenstein-Baker, a researcher into Zeitlin’s life and music.

The small, well-preserved collection contains rare, beautifully illustrated books by Yiddish writers and poets who were good friends of the Zeitlin family. The authors include Peretz Markish, Uri Zvi Greenberg, Shifre Weiss, Moyshe Broderson and others. Published in Warsaw, Yekaterinoslav and New York in the 1920s, the books are autographed and bear the authors’ personal inscriptions to either both Zeitlins or to Leo Zeitlin’s wife, Erna.

Born in Pinsk (now in southern Belarus), Zeitlin studied violin and viola at the Music School of the Odessa Branch of the Imperial Russian Music Society. He continued his studies at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, where he became involved in the renowned Society for Jewish Folk Music and began writing music on Jewish themes. His best-known composition, “Eli Zion,” for cello and piano, was published by the Society in 1914. Zeitlin moved to Yekaterinoslav in 1917, where he married Esther-Rivke (Erna Davidovna) Sititskaya. The Zeitlins lived in Vilna from 1922–1923, after which they departed for the United States and settled in New York. Leo Zeitlin worked there as a violinist and arranger in the Capitol Theatre Orchestra. He died in New York in 1930.

The books reflect the Zeitlins’ social contacts in the 1920s. While living in Vilna and New York, the Zeitlins were at the center of Jewish cultural life and were in contact with many Jewish intellectuals.

Among the books presented to the library are three charming editions of Broderson’s plays (with his own illustrations and inscriptions in Russian): “Shneytants” (“Snow Dance”), “Tsungenlungen” and “Di malkeh Shvo” (“The Queen of Sheba”), published in 1921 by Yung-Yiddish in Lodz.

Three books of the Polish-Yiddish literary group Khalyastre (The Gang), based in Warsaw, are also in Zeitlin’s library. These are Peretz Markish’s Radio (Ambassador, 1922) and Di kupe (The Heap, Kultur-lige, 1921), and Uri Zvi Greenberg’s Mefisto (Farlag Literatur-fond, 1922), all autographed by the authors. The striking avant-garde style book cover titles are the designs of Henrik Berlew, a Polish-Jewish graphic artist.

Two more books by Peretz Markish were published in Yekaterinoslav: the poem Nokhn telerl fun himl (Farlag “Natur un mentsh,” [192-]) and a collection of poems entitled Stam (Farlag “Visnshaft,” 1921). The latter book is particularly valuable because it possesses Markish’s elegant inscription and autograph, dated May 29, 1921, expressing the poet’s harmonious and generous nature. In addition, it is not listed either in the YIVO catalogs or in the online American RLIN21 catalog.

**Gruss-Lipper** (continued from page 10)

Bemporad recently completed her doctoral dissertation, “Red Star on the Jewish Street: The Reshaping of Jewish Life in Soviet Minsk, 1917–1939,” in the History Department of Stanford University. A native of Florence, she was also a 2005 Center for Jewish History Fellow.

Rivka Schiller joined YIVO and the Gruss-Lipper Digitization Project in January 2005. She has been arranging and describing the Lionel Reiss Collection. Reiss, a European-born artist, spent most of his life in New York. This collection consists of 111 of Reiss’s sketches in watercolor, pastel, ink and pencil. There are also white woodcut drawings that depict Jewish life, primarily in the 1920s and 1930s, in Europe, Palestine and the United States, with special focus on Poland.

**The YIVO Library: By the Numbers**

- Volumes in the YIVO Library (approximate as of September 1, 2006): 375,000
- Number of serials (journals): 13,000
- Volumes added in fiscal year 2005: 3,925
- Visitors who used the YIVO Library in the 2005 fiscal year: 2,007
- Number of study seats: 32
It is commonly believed that libraries preserve printed books and periodicals, whereas archives hold manuscripts, letters, and other hand-written or unpublished ephemera. In reality this is not the case. Manuscripts, typescripts as well as books with marginal annotations are found in libraries, and printed materials of all sorts abound in archives. In fact, some archival collections are comprised entirely of printed documents; several collections at YIVO are in this category. Among the least known is YIVO’s Gaster collection, made up of a specific genre of printed ephemera.

The Yiddish scholar Moses Gaster (1856-1939), whose 150th anniversary has passed largely unnoticed this year, was a larger-than-life figure in his day. Rumanian-born and German-educated, Gaster was a polymath whose expertise ranged across widely diverse fields, in particular Rumanian language and literature, Samaritan studies, medieval Hebrew texts, and Jewish folklore. A pioneer in the study of early Yiddish literature, he edited and translated the *Mayse-bukh*, and his legacy in this field is still felt today. (He also wrote about Judezmo, or Judeo-Spanish, literature.) After his emigration to Britain in 1885, Gaster held a lectureship in Slavonic and Byzantine literature at Oxford. Despite his Ashkenazic roots, he was appointed Hakham, or chief rabbi, of the Sephardic Jews of England. He also acted as principal of the Jewish college established by Moses Montefiore at Ramsgate on the English coast. Gaster was a member of the honorary presidium of YIVO in its early years, and his name appears together with those of Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, the historian Simon Dubnow, the linguist Edward Sapir and the theoretician of Yiddishism Chaim Zhitlowsky as one of the signatories of an appeal for the recently founded YIVO sent out by the Institute’s American Friends in 1930. (A framed facsimile of this appeal is on permanent display in the YIVO offices.) That Moses Gaster figured in this pantheon is a mark of the esteem in which this rabbi, scholar and Zionist leader was held in his time.

One of Gaster’s most enduring achievements was the building of a monumental library of books and manuscripts in the areas of his interest and specialization, namely, Samaritan, Hebrew, Rumanian and Yiddish literatures. He was said to possess a collection of 400 *tkhines*, or women’s prayers, aside from numerous Yiddish chapbooks and manuscripts. (His Yiddish manuscripts, acquired by the British Museum, were described in the *British Library Journal* in 1995.) His library and archives were divided up, or otherwise scattered, over the course of the 20th century, and its most important components are now held at the British Library, University College and the School of Slavonic Studies in London, the John Rylands Library in Manchester, the Rumanian Academy in Bucharest, and (via an antiquarian dealer) at the University of California in Los Angeles.

In contrast with these large collections, YIVO’s collection of “Gaster papers” consists of only a single archival box, but it contains an unusual corpus of several hundred items of ephemera from a specific place and time. These include printed broadsheets and circular letters or letters of appeal (some lithographed or hectographed from handwriting), multicolored wall calendars, postcards and related printed ephemera, all sent to Gaster on behalf of yeshivas, orphanages, hospitals and other religious and charitable institutions in Palestine – mostly Jerusalem, Safed and Tiberias. They date from 1900 to the early 1920s, i.e. from the late Ottoman period up to the beginning of the British Mandate. The languages of the materials are Hebrew, Yiddish, Judeo-Arabic, French, English and German, the Hebrew-character material predominating.

This unique collection of ephemera is a testament to Gaster’s archival sense: it is obvious that he never threw away anything which could later be of value as a documentary relic of an historical
moment. The materials in the collection are of more than simply archival or historical interest. As a bibliophile, Gaster appreciated the history of printing and the art of typography. Some of the printed documents are very colorful, many of them are of interest as typographic ephemera (such as printed envelopes from Palestine in various languages, a few in Russian), and a number of them display contemporary seals and stamps. A few of the multi-colored Rosh Hashanah sheets and wall calendars include full-color lithographic images of the Temple Mount (or Dome of the Rock!), a genre of illustration which is today the subject of research and exhibits. Some appeals are printed as large-format broadsides, e.g. several in Hebrew and Yiddish on behalf of Yeshivah Torat Hayim in Jerusalem. Others from the same yeshivah are printed on bright pastel green or pink paper. One trilingual brochure in Yiddish, Hebrew and English from the Israelitische Mädchen-Waisenhaus in Jerusalem (the Jewish orphanage and boarding school for girls) is printed on pink paper.

Many Jerusalem institutions are represented among the printed appeals: yeshivas, schools, and other philanthropic institutes. Aside from Ashkenazic and Sephardic institutions, various oriental and other ethnic Jewish communities (e.g. Moroccan, Yemenite, Persian) are represented among the documents. Most of the items in the collection were printed in Palestine, but there are also a few from elsewhere, such as appeals on behalf of Jerusalem charities printed in 1912 in Pinsk (then Russia) for local distribution in Eastern Europe.

YIVO’s “Moses Gaster Papers” were received from the London YIVO Committee in 1957 (cf. News of the YIVO no. 66, pp. 7 and 8*). The London committee was one of the most active of YIVO branches, and its *spiritus movens*, Russian-born Dr David Mowshowitch, who died in the same year, was instrumental in sending to YIVO much valuable material on Central and East European Jewish history and culture. This small Gaster collection is not only valuable in its own right as an assemblage of printed ephemera, much in Yiddish, from Jewish institutions in early 20th century Palestine. It is also a reminder of the dedication of YIVO correspondents in Britain who made significant contributions to the preservation of Jewish archival material and cultural artifacts from Britain, Eastern Europe and Palestine.

— Brad Sabin Hill
Stirring the Conscience of a Nation

Grant to Make YIVO Holocaust Material Accessible in France

By Harriet Jackson

YIVO is one of the very few repositories in North America holding significant blocs of original documentation on the Holocaust, and on the Holocaust in France. Like the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine (CDJC) in Paris, YIVO was a pioneer in the field of Holocaust documentation.

“The archive at YIVO includes documents, images and artifacts of great evidentiary value, recognized by scholars worldwide and used in courts of law, museums, universities, books, films and exhibitions,” says Chief Archivist Fruma Mohrer.

YIVO’s rich documentation on the Holocaust in France comprises more than 30 archival collections. Thanks to a $220,000 grant by the French Shoah Foundation (Fondation pour la Mémorial de la Shoah) and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, on the one hand, and a partnership between YIVO and the CDJC, on the other, a portion of the Holocaust Archive at YIVO in New York will be preserved, cataloged, microfilmed and made accessible in France. The documentation that exists in these collections is important to preserve, especially when someone as influential as Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of France’s far-right party, continues to minimize or deny the Holocaust.

Several scholars have used the materials in these collections to inform their scholarship on Vichy France and this scholarship has exerted a significant impact on the French conscience.

Ever since the film by Marcel Ophuls, The Sorrow and the Pity, was released in 1971 (but not aired on French television until 1981) and the book by Columbia University Professor Emeritus Robert O. Paxton, Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940 - 44, was first published in 1972, an explosion of exciting scholarship on Vichy France has caught the imagination of a nation and overturned some national myths about France’s role in the Holocaust. Until the Paxton book came out, it was widely believed that the German occupying authorities obligated a small group of mostly misguided Vichy officials to collaborate with Germany. It was also widely believed that Germany forced Vichy to promulgate the anti-Jewish statutes, arrest and finally deport the Jews in France to death camps. Paxton’s book “demonstrated the willingness of Vichy to collaborate and the purely domestic origin of much of Vichy’s most hideous legislation (especially against the Jews).”

Roughly 10 years later, another book by Paxton (written with University of Toronto historian Michael Marrus), Vichy France and the Jews (1981), documented the role of the French government in deporting more than 76,000 Jews, of whom only three percent survived. The Marrus/Paxton book, more than any other, destroyed the myth that the Vichy government tried to protect French Jews at the expense of foreign Jews. After 1942, in an effort to please the Germans and exert jurisdiction over all of France, Vichy was eager to oversee and implement persecution and deportation of Jews until the very last days of the war. The contribution of the YIVO Archives is not insignificant on this question, as Paxton stated: “We found YIVO's rich holdings on France under the Nazi occupation indispensable for our work on Vichy France and the Jews.”

A small but important collection at YIVO is that of the “Jews in France During the Holocaust,” comprising two linear feet (five boxes). It is part of the vast and well-known Territorial Collection, that includes materials on Jewish life on several continents. Renée Poznanski’s study, Jews in France During World War II (first edition 1994), was enriched by its use of this collection.

The strength of the collection lies in the diversity of its documents and the personal nature of some of them. From the

Identity card that belonged to Marcelle Wiener, a Jewish woman born in Paris in 1924.
handwritten notes and personal letters, one can almost hear the voices of the Jews who bore witness to terrible crimes, stood up to the Gestapo or simply tried to survive. A hand-written account, dated March 1941, describes how leaders in the French Jewish community in Paris tried to stall the formation of a Judenrat (UGIF) ordered by SS-Hauptsturmführer Theodor Dannecker. The notes illuminate the controversial origins of the UGIF and how a Machiavellian ruse to thwart the Gestapo was executed with dignity but failed.

The deprivation and anxiety of the men and women interned in French concentration camps — whose correspondence the censors tried to muffle — still echo from the postcards they sent asking for food parcels. One internee, for example, Marcelle Wiener, was a young woman born in Paris in 1924 to Polish Jews living in France. On November 19, 1941, one week after her 17th birthday, the Paris Police (not the Gestapo) arrested Marcelle, apparently for not carrying proper proof of French nationality. Almost one year later, Marcelle and her mother were interned in La Lande, one of several concentration camps in France. Marcelle’s father, Samuel, sent a letter to his wife and daughter on November 9, 1942, in which he reassured them that they would shortly receive bona fide copies of their ID cards, including Marcelle’s affidavit of French nationality. Only five days after he sent this letter (it’s uncertain if Marcelle and Malka ever received it), Marcelle and her mother were sent to Auschwitz.³ Marcelle’s proof of French citizenship did not save her.

No one knows if they left any farewell letters for Samuel. The collection contains a few farewell letters — sent by imprisoned Resistance fighters to their loved ones — written moments before their execution by German firing squads. The letters convey how strongly the Resistance fighters (called “terrorists” by the French and German authorities) believed in their inevitable victory over the Germans (in 1942 when the German war machine was still going strong).

Resistance took different forms — words as well as armed combat. The collection includes copies of protest letters from Jewish (Chief Rabbi Isaïe Schwartz), Catholic (Archbishop Saliège of Toulouse) and Protestant (Pastor Marc Boegner) religious leaders to Marshall Pétain, the French head of state, and to Pierre Laval, the head of government. Each religious leader unequivocally protested anti-Jewish measures as inhumane, un-christian and un-French, and each had their sermons read to their respective followers.

The “Jews in France During the Holocaust” collection documents atrocities and crimes committed against Jews. But it is also a testimony about acts of human dignity and bravery displayed by Jews and non-Jews alike. This and other YIVO collections on French Jewry have helped shape the historiography on Vichy France and the Jews — a historiography that has stirred the uneasy conscience of the French nation and caused a national obsession, inspiring French people to come to terms with their country’s past as the Germans have done.

Harriet Jackson (M.Phil. in History and French Studies, New York University) is an historian and archivist on the YIVO Holocaust Archives Project

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1 Stanley Hoffmann’s foreword, Henry Rousso, The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France Since 1944 (Harvard University Press, 1994), page ix.

2 Email correspondence with author, July 20, 2006.

3 That they were sent on convoy # 32 from Drancy to Auschwitz is confirmed by the database at the Web site of the Mémorial de la Shoah; see www.memorialdelashoah.org

Harriet Jackson (M.Phil. in History and French Studies, New York University) is an historian and archivist on the YIVO Holocaust Archives Project
Among the Yiddish songs of immigration to America are those revealing the agony of wives left behind and deserted in the Old Country. Called agunes, deserted women became a recurrent phenomenon in American Jewish immigrant life. Wives who were left behind with the children ascribed their bitter fortune to America, whose temptations, they felt, led to betrayal. Since Jewish law forbids wives to remarry if their husbands do not provide divorce papers, the request for a divorce recurs in songs. Many of those songs are preserved in the YIVO Music Archive.

Oy, ongeshpart on elnboygn,
Zitst zikh a frog, shpet bay nakht,
Taykhn trern rinen fun ire oygn,
Zi zitst dokh keseyder un trakht.

Mayn man iz geforn glikn zukhn
In kolombuses land,
Halvay volt er mir khotsh a get geven shikhn,
Ikh zol nit zayn in aza bitern shtand.

Leaning on her elbow,
A woman sits late at night,
Tears flow from her eyes
As she sits and reflects.

(My husband has gone to seek his fortune
In Columbus’s land,
Oh, if he would only send me a divorce,
I should not be in such a miserable situation.

The request for a divorce recurs in a song with recriminations by the wife:

Perhaps you have there
Another in my stead,
I shan’t begrudge you those American joys; Do not suppose I will weep for you,
But a divorce you must send me. May you perish in the golden land,
God will give me a second
And I will be rid of such an affliction.

Another agune sings that her husband left her as a beggar at the door:

Your father went to America
And there drinks the best beer.
Me he left with two small children
Like a beggar at a door.
Your father went to America
And there dances at balls
Me he left at Rokhele Shapiro’s
To wash her dishes for her.

In this country, songs written about desertion reveal that the husband in America was in fact leading a merry life. In “Motkie fin Slobotkie,” a song in the YIVO Music Archives, the husband, Motke, thought he could get away with committing bigamy, trying to marry a new wife while his former wife languished in the Old Country. The wife from Slobodka arrives at the moment that the unfortunate Motke is about to take new marriage vows:

Di muzik shpilt shoyn in der hol,
S’iz lebedik un freylekh,
Der khosn-bokher oybn on,
Er kukt oys vi a meylekh;
Plutsem nor, oy, hert a vunder,
Es efit zikh di tirn,
Zayn vayb, di grine, mit di kinder,
Brengt men im tsu firn!

The music is already playing in the hall,
It’s lively and gay.
The bridegroom sits at the head of the table,
He looks like a king,
Suddenly an amazing thing occurs,
The doors open,
His wife, the greenhorn, with the children
They bring to him.

Motkie is beaten and must leave the hall, disgruntled, with his old wife and children.

This practice of abandoning wife and family was common, judging from the popular feature in the Jewish Forward, “The Gallery of Missing Husbands,” which printed photographs of the sought spouses, and the formation of the National Desertion Bureau, which helped families reunite.

These songs reflect the unhappy feelings about America fostered by the disintegration of families during the period of immigration.
New Accessions to the YIVO Archives

**Yiddish Writer and Biographer**

Pearl Weissenberg Akselrod Donates Her Personal Papers

Pearl Weissenberg Akselrod, an accomplished Montreal-based Yiddish writer, has donated her personal papers to YIVO. Born in 1914 in Zelechów, Poland, she is the daughter of Itche Meyer Weissenberg, one of the most important Yiddish writers of his time (1881-1934), and the widow of the martyred Yiddish poet Zelig Akselrod (1904-1941).

Making her literary debut in the Warsaw Yiddish press in 1938, she regularly publishes stories and poems. A Yiddish biography of her father, I. M. Vaysenberg: zayn lebn un shafn (His Life and Works), published in 1986 in Montreal, is her magnum opus. Background materials for that biography make up the core of her donated papers. However, there are also documents and photographs relating to Zelig Akselrod and to Pearl Weissenberg Akselrod herself, including a 1944 photograph of her with a group of other Polish refugees in Uzbekistan.

In 1939, Zelig Akselrod, already a prominent Soviet Yiddish editor and poet, met and married his wife in Bialystok in Soviet-occupied Poland. Zelig Akselrod, who was not a member of the Soviet Communist Party, was arrested in 1941 for “Jewish nationalism.” He was executed in a Minsk prison by the Soviet secret police along with other prisoners, as Nazi troops advanced on the city. After the war Pearl Weissenberg Akselrod lived in Poland, Germany, Sweden and, for six years, in Israel, before emigrating to Canada in 1954.

Her father, Itche Meyer Weissenberg, became a central figure on the Yiddish literary scene following the death of Y. L. Peretz in 1915. He was an adherent of the naturalist school. Among his prominent protégés were Shimen Horontshik (1889-1939), Yekhiel Lerer (1910-1943) and Oyzer Warszawski (1898-1944).

We wish to thank Jacob Davidson for facilitating this donation.

**HISTORY**

- Professor Dovid Fishman donated the Russian-language memoirs of Max Shatz-Anin (1895-1975), a Yiddishist and leader of the Socialist Zionist (Territorialist) Party in Latvia, who became a Communist in 1919.
- Anita Lovrecich donated (via Chana Pollack) Dan Kaplan’s articles for the Forward written in 1908. Kaplan (1879-1952) was a Socialist activist and editor in Eastern Europe and the United States.
- Rose Stenzler gave copies of Israel Brill’s articles for the Forward, written in 1916. Brill, an activist in the Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party, was killed in Russia in 1917.
- Rhoda L. Berkowitz donated her recollections of her father, David E. Lakritz, of the 1919 pogrom in Krivoje Ozero, Ukraine.
- Nora Schwarz added documents to the papers of her stepfather, Ilya Trotsky (1879-1970), a Russian and Yiddish Zionist journalist active in Europe and the United States.
- Hadassah Goldberg donated the letters of her father, Emanuel Goldberg, to Abraham Ain. These mostly concern the Jewish community of Swisloch, Poland.
- Kurt Landsberger donated documents from the Betar (Zionist Revisionist) group in the United States, most dating from the 1930s and 1940s.
- Joseph Kalish and Eleonor Grosser gave the 1927 English-language memoirs written by Sidney Grosser, who left Slavuta, Lithuania, in 1915, as well as materials on the Odessa Young Men’s Sick and Benevolent Association.
- Claudia Massimo Burns, assistant to Governor George Pataki, gave documents of the Rumanian-trained physician Herman West (Waszkoutzer).
- Leonard Farbman donated a lengthy interview of his parents, Morris and Masha, on their experiences as members of the Jewish Socialist agricultural colony in Clarion, Utah, at the beginning of the 20th century.

[continued on page 22]
• Carole Colby donated the lengthy autobiography of Philip Sugarman, 1953.

• Biographic materials were also donated by the American Jewish Committee (on the American Jewish communal official Ralph I. Goldman), Fern Kant (about James Glaser, the American Communist editor) and Myra Treitel Waisbord (about her late father, the Labor Zionist and Yiddish activist Jacob Waisbord).

• Lawrence Jackson Rosen and Chaya Lustig donated a portion of the records of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs; David Cepler gave a large batch of records from the Greater New York Council on Soviet Jewry; Brenda Gevertz donated part of the records of the Jewish Communal Service Association of North America; and Gloria Gross gave letters, dated 1949-1951, addressed to the Pioneer Women organization.

• The following individuals gave Workmen’s Circle materials: Dan Drench (Branch 696 in Coney Island), Linda Lapin, Pessl Beckler-Semel-Stern and Abraham Harchik (via Annette Harchik, Branch 692-28-699-679 in Miami Beach).

• Sid Resnick donated the minutes of the People’s Center in New Haven, Connecticut, a left-leaning Jewish cultural organization.

• Our devoted zamlers, Herbert A. Bernhard, Eiran Harris and Jerry Silverman collected much and varied material of Jewish historical interest.

• Jewish historical documents were also donated by Judy Hochman, Zalman Ioffe, Professor Jack Jacobs, Dr. Joanna Lipper, David Novack, Bob Rosen, Dr. Joseph Stremlin, Irwin Wall and Hilda Weitman.

Landsmanshaftn and Family Histories

• Family documents and family histories were donated by Emily Birnbaum, David Cyrluk, Ron Cutler, Miriam Dolin, David Gardner, Frances Khey, Milton Leitenberg, Istakor Odinayev, Fanny Portnoy, Simcha Raphael, Lucille Salitan, Arlene Sulkes, Eleanor Surkus, Regina Thomas, Yitz Twersky, Nathan Wasser, Dena Wechter, Elizabeth R. Woodman and Dr. Aurora Zinder.

• Cheryl Banks donated records of the Beth El Synagogue in Highland Park, Illinois; the American Sokoler Lodge (Lodge 401, Independent Order of Odd Fellows); and the Mogen David Delicatessen Corporation (a New York Jewish fraternal group).

• Landsmanshaft documents and materials were also donated by Helene Berk (First Kishinever Society), Dr. Michael Feldberg (papers of Hyman Kruglack, Boyarker Society), Ellen Gottfried (First Zbarazer Relief Society), George Gould (Chebra B’nai Leslie [Leslau, Inowroclaw]), Larry Lobel (First Sadagore Society), Isaac Norich (via Sam Norich, United Lodzer Relief Committee and Labor Zionist materials), Maria Ocasio (via Dvora Wolf Rabino, 1930 constitution of the Independent Bnei Abraham Benevolent Association of New York), Chuck Prentiss

Andye Ossofsky with her children Rushke, Tillie and Yankev-Dovid (Dobrzyn, Poland, c. 1920). Donor: Milton Leitenberg.

• Jewish historical documents were also donated by Judy Hochman, Zalman Ioffe, Professor Jack Jacobs, Dr. Joanna Lipper, David Novack, Bob Rosen, Dr. Joseph Stremlin, Irwin Wall and Hilda Weitman.

Holocaust

• Judith Helfand donated (via Menachem Daum) 30 tapes of interviews of survivors of the ghetto in Kolbuszowa, Poland.

• Gilbert Manuel donated letters written in the Drancy internment camp by Andre Baut, the vice president of the Union Generale des Israelites de France for the Northern Zone. He perished in Auschwitz.

• Testimonies were donated by Isak Arbus (Flossenburd concentration camp), Bonnie Harris (Cantor Joseph Cysner’s experiences in Zbaszyn, Poland and in Manila, Philippines), Miriam Lifszyc Klein (via Majus Nowogrodzki, about Russia and Shanghai), Sheila Weinstein (on her father’s survival in Siberia) and Eta Wrobel (her experiences as a partisan in the Lukow forest, Poland).

• Professor Dov Levin provided additional materials to his collection on the fate of the Jewish communities in the Baltic countries.

• Dr. Aaron Lichtenstein and the Ecological Association of Zieliniec, Poland, also made separate donations of Holocaust-related materials.
The Archives received an anonymous donation of rabbinic manuscripts, including commentaries on tractates of the Talmud, written in the 18th and early 19th centuries in North Africa and in Brody, Ukraine.

Pearl Weissenberg Akselrod (via Jacob Davidson) donated her personal papers, as well as her collections of materials about her father, Itche Meyer Weissenberg and her husband, Zelig Akselrod (see article on page 21).

Rabbi Dr. Mark Kiel donated the papers of his father, Chonon Kiel, the late Yiddish poet and teacher born in 1910 in Czestochowa, Poland.

Professor Mordkhe Schaechter, one of the world’s leading authorities on the Yiddish language, donated (via Gitl Schaechter Viswanath, Binyumen Schaechter and Dr. Paul Glasser), a large supplement to his papers.

Itche Goldberg (via Dr. Dovid Goldberg) donated his vast papers, which cover his eight-decade career as a Yiddish literary critic, editor and educator.

Professor Dovid Fishman donated a set of tapes, made by the Israel Broadcast Authority in the 1980s, containing interviews with dozens of Yiddish literati.

Louis Keller gave his collection of Yiddish aphorisms; Dr. Steven K. Baum donated his unpublished study on anti-Semitic fairy tales; Leah Nelson donated Yiddish poetry by her father, Motl Sternfeld; Regina Elbirt donated a letter from the writer Andre Malraux; and Bess Soifer donated the program from Sholem Asch’s 1903 lecture in New York City.

Ruth Ellin, president, was instrumental in the donation of the records of the Hebrew Actors’ Union (see article on page 1).

Terri Levin and Mindy Sanders donated the papers of their great grandmother, the comedian Yetta Zwerling, who made 10 Yiddish films. Her papers include at least 200 theatrical and film photographs.


Elaine Watkins, both of whose parents were performers, donated dozens of large stage photographs of New York Yiddish performances from the first two decades of the 20th century, including images of stars such Aaron Lebedeff and Molly Picon as well as of her performer parents.

Lawrence Rothbaum donated photographs relating to work of the Yiddish and Polish theater director, Jakob Rotbaum.

Noemi Aleh Leaf Halpern gave the first installment of her papers, which reflect her long career as a Jewish choreographer and dancer on three continents, including tours of interwar Poland.

Harry Aizenstat provided compositions of Jacob Freedman.

Miriam Golub Haaran donated additional compositions of her father, the Yiddish composer and lyricist Solomon Golub.

Mel and Rickie Greenblatt donated (via Madeline Simon) a complete set of yearbooks of the New Jersey-based Jewish Farmers’ Chorus.

The American Jewish Historical Society has donated letters of Giacomo Meyerbeer, Ludovic and Jacques Halevy and Sir George Henschel and of the husband of Giuditta Pasta — the last relating to the 1835 London premiere of Bellini’s “I Puritani.”

Katherine King donated the piano of Herman Yablokoff, the Yiddish composer and lyricist.

Hannah Abrahamson donated a CD of musical settings to Yiddish and Hebrew poems composed by her father, Arie Ben Erez Abrahamson. These were mostly created in Nazi-occupied France.

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New Accessions (continued from page 23)

- Judith Levitt Kennedy gave copies of her interviews of members of the San Francisco (Jewish) People’s Chorus.

- Music materials were also donated by Professor Mark Slobin, Paula Catell (addendum to the papers of the cellist Albert Catell) and Isabel Belarsky (addendum to the papers of the basso Sidor Belarsky).

- The Jazz Record Center of New York donated unpublished recordings of Gertrude Berg and Red Buttons.

- Donna J. Stoller donated recordings of her Jewish dramatic recitations broadcast on a Baltimore radio station in the 1960s.

- Recordings of Jewish music were also donated by David Abramowitz, Mikh Baran (including tapes of the Forward Hour), Ed Colker, Gerry Cupit, S. Furman, Jean Goldstein, Martin H. Levinson, Annette Lipson, Dr. Paul Manoukian, Carole Scharf, Sam Teicher and Ilse Wagner.

ART AND ARTIFACTS

- Daniel Levinson, with the help of Rabbi Michael Strassfeld, donated a large collection of artifacts of Jewish life on the Lower East Side of Manhattan.

- Beth Levine donated a large signed lithograph of Jerusalem by New York artist Philip Pearlstein.

- Joan Braman donated an etching by Eli Ross.

- Professor Martin Davis donated Holocaust-themed paintings by his father, Harry Davis.

- Natasha Brenner presented a set of biblical woodcuts by Nikos Stavroulakis.

- Original artworks were also donated by Sidney J. Gluck and Ruth Benzel.

- Posters were donated by Linda Forgosh and the Fundacion San Milan de la Cogolla.

- Antique Jewish postcards and greeting cards were donated by Gunnar Berg, Francine Burgeaman (via Isabelle Rosenbaumas), Sheilla A. Galland, Wendy Cornell Levin (via the American Jewish Historical Society) and Madeleine Okladak.

- Frida, Julius, Liza, Pepi and Herman Grunwerg pose together on May 18, 1918 (Kolomyya, now Ukraine). Donor: Simcha Raphael.

- Doris Berkowitz, Majus Nowogrodzki, Dr. Carl Rheins and Nava Schreiber donated artifacts and Jewish art reference materials.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND FILMS

- Igor Desner donated (via Boni Dara Michaels, Yeshiva University Museum) several hundred of his own professional photographs of Jewish buildings and cemeteries in the Kamyanets-Podilsky region of Ukraine.

- Gabriel de Guzman of the Jewish Museum in New York donated additional photographs of Jewish life in the former Soviet Union, primarily the Republic of Georgia, taken by Nodar Djindjishvili.

- Piotr Piluk gave additional photographs he took of Jewish buildings and cemeteries in Poland.

- Mary Lutheran donated a set of photographic portraits of Holocaust survivors living in Arizona.

- Darilyn Rowan donated her unpublished essays on Roman Vishniac.

- Jewish historical photographs were donated by Brian Biler, Ronald Gross (Zionist Congress of 1923), Hinda Jacobs (Gurevich Gimnazye, Vilnius, 1933), Renee Miller (Prague), Dr. Susan Pentlin (postwar Poland), Beatrice Strauss Reiss (Workmen’s Circle School 3, Bronx) and the State Archives of Lodz, Poland.

- Films (DVD format) were donated by Allison Kochen of Public Interests, Inc., (“Holocaust Street Interviews”), Mark D. Wender of Lunar Productions (“Transported Lives”) and David Weintraub of the Dora Teitelbaum Center for Yiddish Culture (1993 events of the Friends of YIVO in Miami).
**Multifaceted Undertaking**

The Milstein Jewish Communal Archive Project will launch with a survey of the five agencies’ archives, as well as Jewish agency records currently deposited in the YIVO Archives, to identify the historically valuable portions. An Academic Advisory Committee is being formed to reinforce the scholarly underpinnings of the project. The committee will be comprised of university historians, professionals from the five participating agencies and communal activists. When completed, the project is expected to serve as a model for the preservation of archives of Jewish agencies nationwide.

**Archives Tell Broad History**

The archival records that the Milstein Project will research, describe a broad scope of services offered to Jewish people from a host of countries:

NYANA’s records span from 1949 to today, documenting the resettlement of hundreds of thousands of people, including Jews who left Cuba during the Castro revolution, nearly half a million Jews who fled the former Soviet Union, several thousand Syrian Jews who escaped to the United States from Syria in 1994, and many others.

Noted Jose Valencia, president and CEO of NYANA, “When I became president two years ago, my number one concern was the preservation of the agency’s archives. So we feel honored to be chosen to participate in the Milstein Project.”

F.E.G.S. Health and Human Services System (formerly Federation Employment and Guidance Service) was established to find employment for thousands of Jewish men and women during the Great Depression, when anti-Semitism and discrimination compounded the difficulties of a worldwide economic crisis. Since then, the agency has provided employment and career services to immigrants and minority groups in New York.

“The Jewish people and New York are almost synonymous, so the history of the Jewish community should be of interest to every Jewish person, and especially young people,” said Alfred Miller, F.E.G.S.’s chief executive officer.

Records held by the Educational Alliance date to the agency’s founding in 1889. One of its founders was Isidor Straus, co-owner of the Macy’s department store, who died on the Titanic. The archives include minutes of the agency’s first board meeting after the tragedy, discussing his demise.

The records to be surveyed include information on many people who were or became well known. For example, the 92nd Street Y, which was founded in 1874 by prominent Jews interested in helping immigrants assimilate, became renowned for its cultural, arts education and speaker programs. Its archives include talks by world leaders such as Abba Eban, Golda Meir and Yitzhak Rabin as well as performance and interview tapes of artists such as Beverly Sills, Isaac Bashevis Singer and Zero Mostel.

Surprise Lake Camp, the country’s oldest Jewish-sponsored summer camp that still serves its original population at its original site, counts among its alumni such luminaries as Eddie Cantor, Neil Diamond, Larry King, Neil Simon, Jerry Stiller, Walter Matthau, Gene Simmons and Joseph Heller. Noted Jordan Dale, executive director, “Surprise Lake Camp’s archives cover nearly the entire history since the camp’s founding in 1902, and include photographs, camp newspapers, printed materials and an array of other documentation.”

“The Milstein Project was developed in response to a growing concern for the survival of the Jewish communal archive,” explained YIVO Executive Director Dr. Carl J. Rheins. “We are grateful to the Milstein family and the Howard P. Milstein Foundation for this exceptional opportunity to organize and begin the process of preserving these priceless records.”

**Access to Materials**

Within the next three years, the public will gain access to the Milstein materials in a number of ways:

- A Web site, to be named the Milstein Jewish Communal Archive Web site, which will incorporate the results of the archival survey as well as a gallery of digitized documents from each of the archives. The Web site will include historical and current information about each organization and access information for potential users of the archives.

- A publication, the *Milstein Guide to Historic Resources in New York Jewish Agency Archives*, which will summarize survey results and include an index of research topics discovered during the course of the survey.

- Milstein Conference and Symposia on Jewish Social, Cultural and Political History, with topics drawn from the archival resources discovered by the project. Curriculum and study guides on those subjects will be produced.

- Howard P. Milstein Research Fellowships, which will be awarded to conference presenters.
A YIVO Classic

Warren Grover: Historian, Author, Philanthropist and YIVO Enthusiast

Warren Grover began using YIVO’s archives for research more than a quarter-century ago. He appreciated the use of YIVO’s library and papers and began exploring its courses. Grover credits his “cultivation” by historian Lucjan Dobroszycki with turning his interest in YIVO into a deeper commitment. After 20 years on the National Board of Directors, during which he chaired YIVO’s Budget and Administration Committee, Warren now sits on YIVO’s Development Committee and recently agreed to head the planned giving campaign.

Warren comes from a family of leaders. His maternal grandfather, Rabbi Simon Glazer, was Chief Rabbi of Canada, overseeing many Orthodox pulpits and authoring more than 20 books. His father was the youngest Assemblyman elected to the New Jersey state legislature and took courageous stands against capital punishment and for civil rights. Among Warren’s father’s achievements was the hiring of the first female African-American to pass the New Jersey state bar examination.

Grover’s uncle Bernard Cantor worked tirelessly and heroically for the Joint Distribution Committee, ultimately losing his life in Ukraine.

Warren takes pride that his success in business has enabled him, in retirement, to travel to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, among other places, and to write books, including Nazis in Newark, which was partially researched at YIVO.

WarrenGrover(R) with his brother Stuart on a trip to Tartu, Estonia.

As he was walking into YIVO at 86th Street and sitting at the board table with people who were as committed to YIVO as myself.”

Warren and his wife, Andrea, have supported YIVO with significant gifts over the years. His vision for YIVO is that it “continue to collect, process and preserve manuscripts and collections to be used by scholars for articles, books and (when applicable) to deliver papers.”

To help make this happen, Warren has made a planned gift, a $100,000 bequest, added to his will through a codicil.

“We all have to face the fact of our own mortality. . . . By establishing this bequest, at least some of my support . . . will continue.”

By making the provision, Warren joins YIVO’s Gaon Society. Its members understand the importance of YIVO’s work and are securing the organization’s future through their estate plans or with gifts that pay income for life.

Planned Giving

Your Bequest to YIVO

Please discuss the following bequest language with your attorney as a way of leaving a legacy to YIVO:

“I give and bequeath to the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, located at 15 West 16th Street, New York, NY 10011, ($______ or _____% of my estate) to be used for its general charitable purposes.
The Gaon Society

The Gaon Society was established to recognize and thank YIVO supporters who have created a legacy for YIVO in their wills or estate plans or through a planned gift such as a charitable gift annuity or charitable trust. Like the 18th-century Rabbi Elijah Ben Solomon Zalman — the Vilna Gaon — for which the Society is named, these friends understand and appreciate the role YIVO plays in preserving and perpetuating our heritage for future generations. We at YIVO thank you.

Gaon Society Members

Ms. Rosina Abramson  Mrs. Louisa Johnston  
Ms. Leonle Adelson  Mr. Isaac Levine*  
Ms. Sylvia Antonier-Scher  Mrs. Liora Levine*  
Ms. Marilyn Apelson  Mrs. Ruth Levine*  
Mr. Harold Baron  Mr. David Levine*  
Dr. Sylvia Brody  Ms. Ella Lidsky  
Axelrad  Prof. Milton Öhring*  
Ms. Eliane Bukantz  Mr. Louis Ososky  
Mr. Hyman Cohen  Ms. Bathsheba Phillips  
Mrs. Rita Cohen  Ms. Ethel Roberts  
Dr. Ethel Cutler  Mr. Abraham Sherman  
Mr. Sol Eldman  Mr. Samuel Silverstein  
Mrs. Betty Eldman  Mr. Bruce Slovin  
Mr. Stanley Engelstein  Dr. Robert Tartell  
Mr. Gene Forrell  Mrs. Lottie Tartell  
Mrs. Mildred Forrell  Prof. Franklin Toker  
Mrs. Shulamis Friedman  Mr. Milton Weiner  
Ms. Vicki Gold  Ms. Edith Weiss  
Mr. Nathan Goldstein  Dr. Chava Weissler*  
Mr. Warren Grover*  Ms. Joan Wertheim  
Dr. Laura Hapke  Anonymous (8)  
Mr. George Hecht  
Ms. Felice Itzkoff  

*newest members

YIVO Individual Charitable Gift Annuity Chart for $10,000 Gift

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*Sample single-life rates. Rates for two lives and deferred rates are also available. Deferred gift annuity rates are even more attractive. All rates are subject to change.

For further information about planned giving to YIVO, please contact: Lorri M. Greif, CFRE Planned Giving Officer 212-505-6171 or at lgreif@yivo.cjh.org

We hope to see you at next year’s cooking classes! The author of several New York Times cookbooks, also delighted guests. Included a Hazelnut Chocolate Torte, and a new spin was put on the traditional chef, Samantha, from Simply Divine caterers. She skillfully prepared desserts experienced a new breed of Passover desserts at the hands of Judy Marlow’s pastry class this year. At the home of Francesca and Ivan Berkowitz, guests experienced how to prepare several delicious vegetarian dishes, including Lemon Berley, former executive chef of Angelica Kitchen and current award-winning head chef of Fred’s at Barneys New York, took place at the home of Katja Lentil Soup with Spinach, and Wild Mushroom Fricassee over Farro. The second class with chef Mark Strausman, former chef at Coco Pazzo and featured a wide range of Italian Jewish Goldman and Michael Sonnenfeldt and featured a wide range of Italian Jewish...
Letters to YIVO

Anti-Semitica Compilation

I have a 30,000-word compilation of anti-Semitic folklore from various nations. Is this something YIVO might be interested in?

Thank you,
Steven Baum, Ph.D.
Birmingham, Michigan

Thank you for the kind offer of your compilation. We will gladly add your work to our holdings. YIVO has several collections of anti-Semitica as well as of folklore, so your donation will be of a complementary character. It will be separately cataloged, and copyright restrictions will, of course, be observed.

* * *

Thank You With Feeling

This is an enthusiastic thank you for the gracious welcome I received on my recent visit to YIVO to research Elving’s Metropolitan Theater. This was my first visit to the building, and I was overwhelmed by the space, design, various exhibitions and offerings available.

I examined all 61 boxes in your Elving collection. As you know, this collection was divided: YIVO got the scripts, sheet music and orchestra arrangements, and the Jewish Historical Society of MetroWest got the photographs and stage memorabilia. After several months’ promotion in the New Jersey Jewish News, I have been able to collect oral histories from area residents who recalled Elving’s in its heyday in the city of Newark during the 1930s and early 1940s. I also have other historical sources that have come my way, and I will make copies for your archives.

I am assembling a traveling exhibition entitled “One More Night at Elving’s Metropolitan Theater.” It opens this coming November 12. In addition, and as a complement to the exhibition, we offer an anecdotal and humorous slide program entitled “Think Yiddish, Not British: Everything You Need to Know about Great Yiddish Theater from the Jersey Side of the Hudson River.”

Linda Forgosh
Curator and Outreach Director
Jewish Historical Society MetroWest, New Jersey

* * *

My Grandfather’s Writings

I am writing to thank YIVO for mailing me the obituary and article on my grandfather Yeshaye Yerushalimski (1899 - 1955, born in Uman, Ukraine), a writer of books, poems, short stories and commentary in Yiddish. While I am not even remotely fluent in Yiddish (the language my parents used when they wanted to speak privately in front of the children), I will be able to rely on a few sources to translate both. [NB: His writings included: Di etishe lere fun di tanoim pirke oves, Fentster in himl (Poems and Parables) and Yidish lid.]

I take great comfort in this opportunity to keep my grandfather’s legacy alive, first, because he was my grandfather and the people who knew him have for the most part left this world, and second, because he represented a generation that also is fading in memory. I have vivid memories of that generation of my family — mostly cousins (contemporaries of my grandparents) who had migrated from Russia and later became active in the Farband and the Jenepo Credit Union. I regret that I knew them only as a child. You’ve given me another window into that family history.

Marty Levine
via e-mail

* * *

How Interesting Yedies Is/ New Library Book!

I’ve just been reading the new YIVO News (#201) and find all sorts of wonderful “stuff” in it. In fact, reading this issue of the News makes me think that perhaps we should make a regular point of calling attention to new acquisitions/happenings at YIVO. One item really caught my eye. It’s the mention of a new library acquisition, the five-volume Directory of Jewish Families in Bohemia from the year 1793. I’ve never heard of this work and think that it’s something that we should write about in AVOTAYNU.

Sallyann Amdur Sack, Editor
AVOTAYNU, the International Review of Jewish Genealogy
Letters to YIVO

Songs and Other Compositions by Abe Ellstein

I would like to know how to get voice-piano scores from lyrical songs by Abraham Ellstein. I am a mezzo and would like to introduce this beautiful repertoire of Yiddish operetta to Europe. I asked the Milken Archive, and they told me to look at the credits of the CD booklet of “Great Songs of Yiddish Stage.” These indicate Music Sales Corporation, but I could not manage to get any information about it. I hope very much that you will be able to help me.

Nicole Schnitzer-Toulouse
Paris, France

Reply: The Music Archive of this institute carries the sheet music of songs and other compositions by Abe Ellstein. We do not know where his personal archive of manuscripts is located.

The sheet music that YIVO has includes popular songs like Farges mikh nit, Ikh vel vartn oyf dir, Vos iz gevorn fun maytn shtetele? as well as his biggest hit songs — Yidl mitn fidl, Abi gezunt, Oy mame bin ikh farlibt, Mazl and others.

You will need permission to copy and perform Ellstein’s repertoire. The holder of rights to his music is the Music Sales Corporation, 257 Park Avenue, New York City 10010, tel. (212) 254-2100.

Singer’s Short Stories

I am currently searching for the following Yiddish newspaper or periodical, which was published in Poland, Varshever shriftn (1926–1927, fourth sequence, p. 12–18), in which one of Singer’s short stories, “A dorfs-kabren,” appeared. I have been searching for this as I wish both to translate it into Polish and use it as material for my doctoral thesis. Unfortunately, there is no extant copy of the publication available in Poland.

I have been corresponding with Ms. Roberta Saltzman of the Dorot Jewish Division of the New York Public Library, and although unable to help me with the above publication, she has suggested that I contact YIVO. I am therefore turning to you for assistance, hoping that you may be able to send me a copy of the above-mentioned story in whatsoever format you are able (electronic, photocopy, microfilm, etc.).

Mariusz Lubyk
Kalisz, Poland

Reply: “A dorfs-kabren” is one of two Singer stories that appeared in the Varshever shriftn, along with “Eyniklekh.” We will mail you a copy of “A dorfs-kabren,” the short story you have been seeking. Good luck with your translation and your thesis.

Happy Birthday?

Can someone at YIVO tell me the correct way to say “Happy Birthday” in Yiddish? Is it
A: “A freilekhn geborts-tog!”
B: “A freylekhn geboyrn-tog”?

Marjorie Wolfe
via email

Reply: As with many words and expressions in Yiddish — and other languages, for that matter — there is usually more than one way of expressing something. One family, for example, which was comprised of Polish-born Yiddish speakers, used the expression, “A freylekhn gebortstog.” However, some native (and non native Yiddish speakers) use the expression, “A freylekhn gebovyrn-tog.”

Uriel Weinreich’s Modern English-Yiddish Yiddish-English Dictionary and Alexander Harkavy’s Yiddish-English-Hebrew Dictionary mention both forms. So, bottom line, you should feel free to choose whichever form of the expression best pleases you.

Image Before My Eyes”

Thank you for the wonderful present of “Image before My Eyes.” My wife and I have been watching it and rewatching it. What a gorgeous, sad, deeply moving and extraordinary civilization it chronicles. You can’t help thinking of the end as you look into the bright faces of the children and the eyes of the elderly, and ask yourself: where is that nation now? It’s almost too much for words.

Jonathan Brent
Yale University Press
New Haven, Connecticut

This DVD is available at the Center for Jewish History Bookstore (917) 606-8220.
כותרת: עַיִּּיֵּ יְבֵרַ-אֲבָה

בעד השפעת מעבר יד לרפואת העצמים. מה שposium השתייך שפעשתר
הכינו של יד יְבֵרַ-אֲבָה. בה שפעשתר יד יְבֵרַ-אֲבָה
 pudding ויד יְבֵרַ-אֲבָה.

לפי הראית ויד יְבֵרַ-אֲבָה, בה שפעשתר יד יְבֵרַ-אֲבָה, בה שפעשתר יד יְבֵרַ-אֲבָה.

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ך' ד. מדריך תשכטראס, שמחקור ליישום ידיעתיעבר
שכטראס - איציק קפמינ, יאנקל

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בת-

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