



# YIVO INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH RESEARCH



**NEWSLETTER**

FALL 2024

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Today, the past seems to have overtaken us, and education about the Jewish history of Eastern Europe and Russia has never been more important. Whether in the guise of left-wing antisemitism, right-wing White Supremacism, the war in Ukraine, or the questioning of Israel's right to exist (which often masks the question of whether the Jews have a right to exist), Jews are now more conscious of themselves as Jews than at any time since the 1920s. Outright lies, distorted history, contempt toward Jewish history and accomplishments are ubiquitous in national media and in public as well as private institutions, on many college and university campuses today, from the most elite to the least. The enormous tragedy of Jews turning against Jews in an environment of fear and ignorance can be witnessed across America.

Our children must have the intellectual and psychological tools with which to defend themselves and to understand the difference between truth and lies. Slogans are not enough. Wrapping oneself in a flag is not enough. YIVO's lectures, classes, seminars, conferences, online exhibitions, and more offer essential knowledge. The recently created Learning and Media Center featuring state-of-the-art, interactive multi-media equipment in modern premises will debut this coming spring, and we are now in the final stages of creating the first Masters degree-granting program in Yiddish Language and Civilization.

Throughout Jewish history, in the 1920s and '30s, in the Shoah and the founding of the State of Israel, great examples of courage, leadership, and inner strength, from the smallest acts of defiance to the greatest acts of valor, linked the Jewish people around the world. Transmitting that inner strength and confidence to our children is the challenge YIVO faces in its present work and, as we approach our centennial, in our vision for the future. With your partnership, YIVO can sustain and strengthen these vital programs and activities and amplify their impact around the world. Become a part of YIVO's effort to build a future of knowledge and strength.



JONATHAN BRENT  
*Executive Director & CEO*

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## SUPPORT YIVO TODAY!

Endless stories can be found among YIVO's 24 million artifacts and documents. From pious rabbis to scoundrels, from poets and dreamers to revolutionary leaders, from ordinary men and women to industrial magnates, these stories tell the whole story of the Jewish people in all their diversity.

Your support will fuel new initiatives, keeping these stories alive through our public programs, language and history classes, exhibitions, archival and library preservation, and new collections.

**From all of us at YIVO, thank you for being part of our global community!**

► Donate online at [yivo.convio.net/RH2024](https://yivo.convio.net/RH2024).

COVER:  
Practical instruction during a television course run by ORT.  
Bramson ORT Training Center, Queens, NY, ca. 1940s-1950s. YIVO Archives.

# PROGRAMS Fall Season

For event registration, more information, and program updates: [yivo.org/Calendar](https://yivo.org/Calendar)

**WED  
SEP  
04**  
7:00PM ET

**THE BASHEVIS SINGERS**  
CONCERT | *IN PERSON & ON ZOOM*

Proudly sponsored by The Kronhill Pletka Foundation, with additional generous support from YiddishSongsOnline.com

Enjoy the first US performance by The Bashevis Singers, an Australian band whose songs have set mystical Yiddish poetry to music and brought classic Yiddish folksongs to life.

**TUE  
SEP  
10**  
7:00PM ET

**MY LIFE AS A JEW**  
BOOK TALK | *ON ZOOM*

Michael Gawenda reflects on his autobiography, *My Life as a Jew*, in a discussion led by editor at large of the *New York Jewish Week* Andrew Silow-Carroll.

**SUN  
SEP  
15  
&  
MON  
SEP  
16**

**AFTER ORTHODOXY: CULTURAL CREATIVITY AND THE BREAK WITH TRADITION**  
CONFERENCE | *IN PERSON & ON ZOOM*

Co-sponsored by the University of Toronto, the Jewish Studies Center at Hunter College, Footsteps, and Hillel (Israel)

September 15 (Day 1) | 9:00am-10:00pm ET  
September 16 (Day 2) | 10:00am-1:30pm ET

Join YIVO for the first conference and festival organized by and featuring formerly Orthodox Jewish scholars, activists, performers, and artists, as we explore the cultural achievements that have emerged from this break with tradition.

**THU  
SEP  
19**  
7:30PM ET

**YIDDISH ON THE MOVE: YIDDISH WRITING AND PUBLISHING AFTER THE HOLOCAUST**  
PANEL DISCUSSION | *IN PERSON & ON ZOOM*

Co-sponsored by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council

Rachelle Grossman, Matt Johnson, Harriet Murav, and Christin Zühlke, in a panel discussion moderated by Erin McGlothlin, analyze the elaborate dynamics of Yiddish writing and publishing across transnational literary networks after the Holocaust. This discussion grows out of a working group that is developing *The Cambridge History of Holocaust Literature*.

**SUN  
SEP  
22**  
12:00PM ET

**REMEMBERING FISHL KUTNER**  
TRIBUTE PROGRAM | *ON ZOOM*

Co-sponsored by the International Association of Yiddish Clubs

Commemorate the life and achievements of Yiddish culture advocate Philip (Fishl) Kutner through a virtual tribute program complete with lectures, theater performances, Yiddish conversation, and resources for learning Yiddish.

**SUN  
SEP  
22**  
3:00PM ET

**A BOUQUET OF JEWISH CHORAL MUSIC**  
CONCERT | *IN PERSON*

Produced by the American Society for Jewish Music, co-sponsored by the Leo Baeck Institute and YIVO

Join us for a concert of Jewish choral music performed by The New York Virtuoso Singers, under the direction of its award-winning conductor Harold Rosenbaum. The concert includes music by Pulitzer Prize-winning composers, as well as new and exciting Jewish composers.

**THU  
SEP  
26**  
1:00PM ET

**NEW PERSPECTIVES ON EUROPEAN JEWISH HISTORY**  
PANEL DISCUSSION | *ON ZOOM*

Nancy Sinkoff, Jonathan Karp, James Loeffler, and Howard Lupovitch delve into their new volume, *A Jew in the Street: New Perspectives on European Jewish History*, about how early modern and modern Jews navigated schisms between Jewish community and European society.

**SUN  
SEP  
29**  
1:00PM ET

**NUSAKH VILNE MEMORIAL**  
LECTURE & CONCERT | *IN PERSON & ON ZOOM*

For 2024's commemoration of the Jewish community of Vilna, Bret Werb discusses Shmerke Kaczerginski's work collecting songs of the Holocaust. The lecture will be followed by musical settings of Kaczerginski's poetry performed by Temma Schaechter and Binyumen Schaechter.

**WED  
OCT  
30**  
7:00PM ET

**TWO REVOLUTIONARY JEWS: LEON TROTSKY AND CHAIM ZHITLOWSKY**  
LECTURE | *IN PERSON & ON ZOOM*

Tony Michels analyzes left-wing Jewish politics since the 19th century, focusing on the seminal Jewish Russian revolutionaries Leon Trotsky and Chaim Zhitlowsky and their radically different answers to the predicament of modern Jewry.

**WED  
NOV  
06**  
7:30PM ET

**IN SEARCH OF GREENER FIELDS: RURALITY, NOSTALGIA, AND IDEOLOGY IN YIDDISH-AMERICAN FOLKSONG**  
LECTURE | *ON ZOOM*

Produced by the American Society for Jewish Music's Jewish Music Forum

Zeke Levine considers themes of rurality in 20th century Yiddish-American folksong amongst Eastern European antecedents and the emerging American folk revival.

**THU  
NOV  
07**  
7:00PM ET

**THE YIDDISH SUPERNATURAL ON SCREEN**  
BOOK TALK | *ON ZOOM*

Rebecca Margolis, in conversation with Olga Gershenson, investigates how translated and subtitled Yiddish dialogue in film and television reimagines Jewish lore and tells new stories, where the supernatural looms over the narrative.

**MON  
NOV  
11**  
1:00PM ET

**JEWISH FOLK MEDICINE IN EASTERN EUROPE**  
BOOK TALK | *ON ZOOM*

Marek Tuszewicki examines folk healing practices performed by Eastern European Jews and their intersection with modern medical knowledge, in a discussion led by cultural critic and playwright Rokhl Kafrissen.

**WED  
NOV  
13**  
7:00PM ET

**JOSEPH BRODSKY: EPITAPH FOR A CENTAUR, SIX YEARS LATER**  
FILM SCREENING & DISCUSSION | *IN PERSON*

Co-sponsored by Poetry in America and COJECO

Join YIVO for a screening of a short film exploring poet Joseph Brodsky's Jewish identity, his legacy, and the political undertones of his writing. The screening will be followed by a discussion with scholars featured in the film.

Unable to attend our programs? Watch past events at:  
[yivo.org/Video](https://yivo.org/Video)

**MON  
NOV  
18**  
1:00PM ET

**JEWISH SONGS AND DANCES FOR PIANO:  
JOEL ENGEL'S A KRANTS YIDISHE  
FOLKSNIGUNIM (1924)**  
SIDNEY KRUM YOUNG ARTISTS CONCERT SERIES  
PREMIERING ON YOUTUBE

Ryan MacEvoy McCullough and Sahun Sam Hong perform Joel Engel's *A krants yidische folksnigunim* (1924): a collection of Jewish folksongs, dances, Hasidic *nigunim*, and religious melodies in arrangements for piano and four hand piano.

**WED  
NOV  
20**  
1:00PM ET

**REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ISRAELI  
EXPERIENCE IN YIDDISH PROSE, 1948–1967**  
BOOK TALK | ON ZOOM

Gali Drucker Bar-Am, in a conversation led by Barbara Mann, describes how Yiddish-Israeli writers played a vital role in shaping Israel's cultural identity in its early years.

**MON  
DEC  
02**  
1:00PM ET

**YIDDISH LANGUAGE AFTER THE HOLOCAUST**  
BOOK TALK | ON ZOOM

Through the lenses of cultural history, philology, and literary interpretation, Hannah Pollin-Galay investigates how the Holocaust radically altered the way many Eastern European Jews spoke Yiddish, in a discussion led by Samuel Kassow.

**THU  
DEC  
05**  
7:00PM ET

**PROOF OF IDENTITY**  
FILM SCREENING | IN PERSON

Co-sponsored by POLIN: Museum of the History of Polish Jews

This US premiere of the POLIN Museum's new documentary by Mikolaj Grynberg offers viewers a glimpse into what it means to be a Polish Jew today. Through interviews with the generation that has had no direct contact with the Holocaust survivors in their families, Grynberg's film reflects on how Holocaust memory has evolved in Poland.

**TUE  
DEC  
10**  
7:00PM ET

**BURNING OFF THE PAGE**  
FILM SCREENING & DISCUSSION | IN PERSON

Co-sponsored by the Carole Zabar Center for Film at the Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan

Join YIVO for the New York premiere of a documentary about Yiddish poet and fiction writer Celia Dropkin, followed by a discussion with filmmaker Eli Gorn and poet Edward Hirsch.

**THU  
DEC  
19**  
7:00PM ET

**A VERY JEWISH CHRISTMAS:  
JEWISH SITCOM CHARACTERS  
NAVIGATE DECEMBER**  
LECTURE | IN PERSON & ON ZOOM

Jennifer Caplan explores several examples of Jewish television characters attempting to survive the holiday season. A kosher Chinese food dinner will follow the presentation.

**SUN  
DEC  
29**  
3:00PM ET

**HANUKKAH CONCERT**  
CONCERT | IN PERSON

Produced by the American Society for Jewish Music

This annual Hanukkah concert showcases songs and stories that charm and delight audiences in celebration of this joyous holiday. This year's concert will feature a performance by The Andy Statman Trio.



PHOTO: STEVEN PISANO

## Spring 2024 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### CARNEGIE HALL'S FALL OF THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC: DANCING ON THE PRECIPICE FESTIVAL

(FEBRUARY 21, MARCH 27, AND MAY 7) YIVO hosted three events as part of Carnegie Hall's *Fall of the Weimar Republic: Dancing on the Precipice* festival. The festival explored one of the most complex and consequential chapters in modern history: Germany's Weimar Republic of 1919-1933. In the first event, *The Reality of Myth for Yiddish Writers in Weimar Germany*, Marc Caplan examined the historical significance and legendary allure of Weimar culture by considering three of its most significant Yiddish writers: Moyshe Kulbak, Dovid Bergelson, and Pinkhes Kahanovitsh (known as Der Nister, the hidden one). For the second event, *Yiddish and Hebrew Little Magazines in the Weimar Republic*, Barbara Mann explored the publishing history of the distinctly portable and collaborative Yiddish and Hebrew "little magazines" that blended poetry, manifestos, and visual arts to create a unique form of cultural expression. The final event, *Yiddish and Hebrew Song in the Weimar Republic*, was a concert exploring Yiddish and Hebrew songs of the Weimar Republic, showcasing the rich musical activity of the Weimar Republic that bridged Jewish composers in the East and West.

### DREW FRIEDMAN: VERMEER OF THE BORSCHT BELT

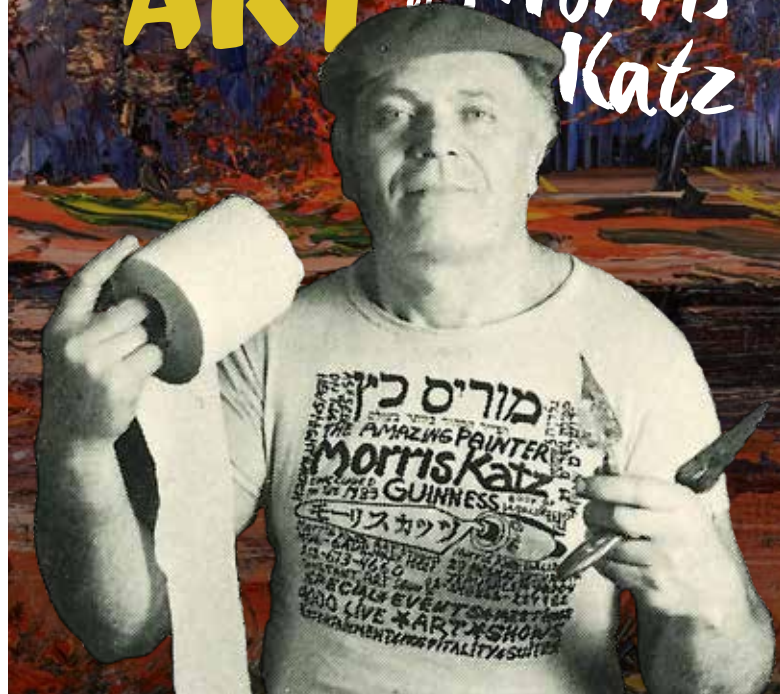
(APRIL 1) YIVO presented a sold-out screening of a new documentary, *Drew Friedman: Vermeer of the Borscht Belt*, that traces artist Drew Friedman's evolution from underground comics to the cover of *The New Yorker*. The film, directed by Kevin Dougherty, features interviews with Friedman's friends and colleagues, including Gilbert Gottfried, Patton Oswalt, Richard Kind, Mike Judge, Merrill Markoe and many others. Following the film, YIVO Senior Academic Advisor & Director of Exhibitions Eddy Portnoy led a panel discussion with Friedman, Dougherty, actors Craig Bierko and Richard Kind, comedy writer Tom Leopold, and co-host of *Gilbert Gottfried's Amazing Colossal Podcast* Frank Santopadre.

### HOMES OF THE PAST

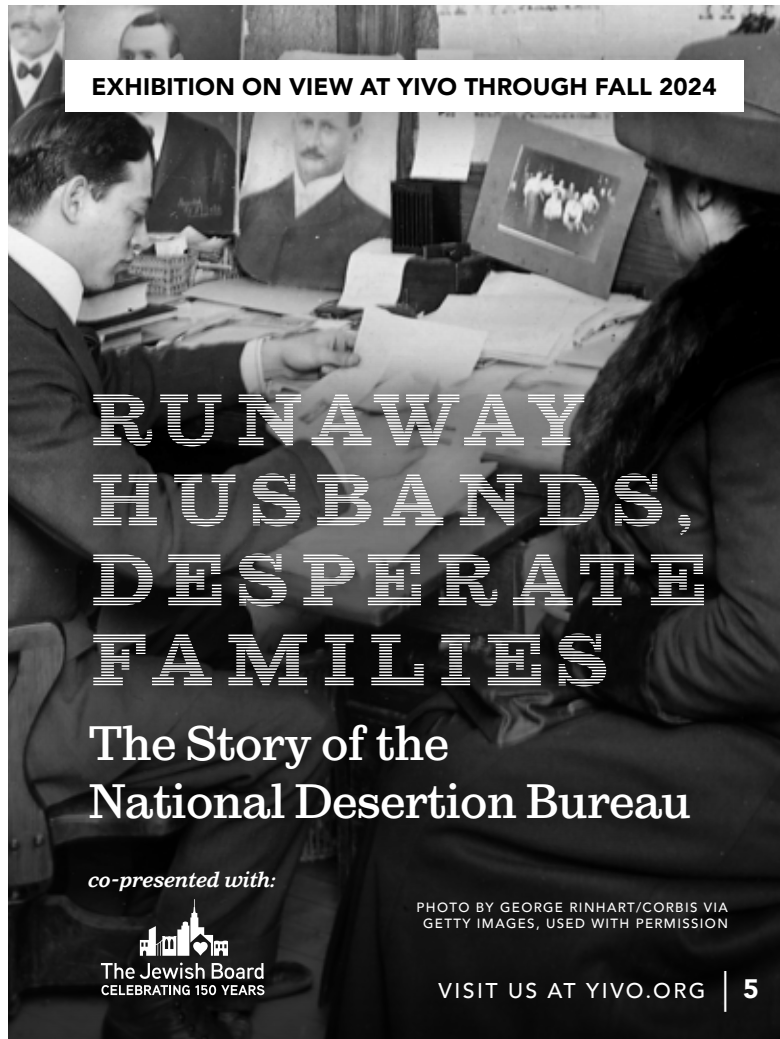
(JUNE 24) Among the Jews who arrived in the United States in the early 1940s were a small number of Polish scholars who had devoted their professional lives to the study of Europe's Yiddish-speaking Jews at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. Faced with the devastating knowledge that returning to their former homes and resuming their scholarly work there was no longer viable, they sought to document the European Jewish lives, places, and ways of living that were being destroyed. YIVO scholars determinedly pursued this undertaking for several years, publicizing the initiative and collecting materials to exhibit. However, the Museum of the Homes of the Past was abandoned shortly after the war ended. Author Jeffrey Shandler and professor Deborah Dash Moore discussed Shandler's new book, *Homes of the Past: A Lost Jewish Museum*, which explores this abandoned project.

EXHIBITION ON VIEW AT YIVO THROUGH FALL 2024

# The INSTANT ART of Morris Katz



EXHIBITION ON VIEW AT YIVO THROUGH FALL 2024



## RUNAWAY HUSBANDS, DESPERATE FAMILIES

### The Story of the National Desertion Bureau

co-presented with:



PHOTO BY GEORGE RINHART/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES, USED WITH PERMISSION

VISIT US AT [YIVO.ORG](http://YIVO.ORG) | 5



## WATCH YIVO PROGRAMMING ONLINE!

Did you know that YIVO's YouTube channel has over 800 videos? YIVO hosts ~75-80 concerts, lectures, book talks, conferences, and more each year, and you can watch most of them on YouTube. Delve into topics such as language, literature, culture, the Holocaust, politics, and antisemitism. View featured videos from our free Shine Online courses and watch tutorials on how to do research in the YIVO Archives.

Explore at:

[youtube.com/yivoinstitute](https://youtube.com/yivoinstitute)

**50K+**  
subscribers

**2 million**  
views

**250K+**  
hours of content  
watched

Spring 2024



**44** public programs

**19.6K+** registrations

**52** countries  
registered



*Bombs burst all over the city. The street was full of smoke. It is war... The peaceful blue sky has turned into a volcano that pelts the stunned city with bombs. It became clear to everyone: the Nazis have attacked our land, they have forced a war upon us. Well, we will fight back and fight on until we have beaten the attacker on his own soil...*

JUNE 21, 1941



*The first ghetto day dawns. I run straight out into the street. The streets are still filled with a restless mass of people. It is hard to push your way through. I feel like I am in a chest. There is no air to breathe. Wherever you go you run into a gate that cuts us off from Strashun Street. That is part of the ghetto too.*

SEPTEMBER 7, 1941

YIVO LAUNCHES THE SECOND INTERACTIVE EXHIBITION OF THE YIVO ONLINE MUSEUM:

# YITSKHOK RUDASHEVSKI: A TEENAGER'S ACCOUNT OF LIFE AND DEATH IN THE VILNA GHETTO

In July, YIVO launched *Yitskhok Rudashevski: A Teenager's Account of Life and Death in the Vilna Ghetto*, the second exhibition of the digitally native YIVO Bruce and Francesca Cernia Slovin Online Museum. It is now available free of charge to the global public at [museum.yivo.org](http://museum.yivo.org).

A broad-ranging educational initiative, the YIVO Cernia Slovin Online Museum seeks to teach Jewish history through primary source material presented virtually. The new exhibition explores Jewish life in the Vilna Ghetto (1941-43) through the contemporaneous diary of a teenage boy that was miraculously discovered after World War II and has been preserved in the YIVO Archives in New York City.

Before the mass murder of the Jews of Europe, each victim was a real person with hopes, dreams, and a vibrant life. One such person was Yitskhok Rudashevski, a teenager in Vilna with a talent for writing and a passion for politics and Jewish cultural life. Yitskhok, tragically murdered in the killing pits of Ponar in 1943, left behind a diary that chronicles his own and his community's experiences in the Ghetto.

The exhibition, developed by YIVO in consultation with eminent scholars, delivers an exciting leap forward for digital museums and Jewish and Holocaust education. It includes

animation, graphic novels, video dramatizations, and a host of other interactive features. Karolina Ziulkoski, the museum's Chief Curator and a Webby Award-winning interactive designer, has combined innovative technology with engaging storytelling to bring Yitskhok's tragic journey to life.

Through the exhibition, we gain insights into cultural resistance, moral dilemmas, and the fierce passions of this young boy in the face of dire adversity.

The exhibition includes virtual reproductions of rare artifacts translated into English, including Rudashevski's original diary entries and documents Rudashevski himself looked at and made use of in his life. "The artifacts in the exhibition offer a visceral connection to the past," said Ziulkoski.

The exhibition includes a range of teacher resources and is targeted for high school and early college students, teachers and professors, historians, and anyone interested in the Holocaust and Jewish history.

The YIVO Bruce and Francesca Cernia Slovin Online Museum was established in 2018 with a generous \$3 million gift from Bruce Slovin in memory of his late wife Francesca Cernia Slovin. The Online Museum's purpose is to tell the story of Jewish life in Eastern Europe and Russia through YIVO's world-renowned archival and library collections.

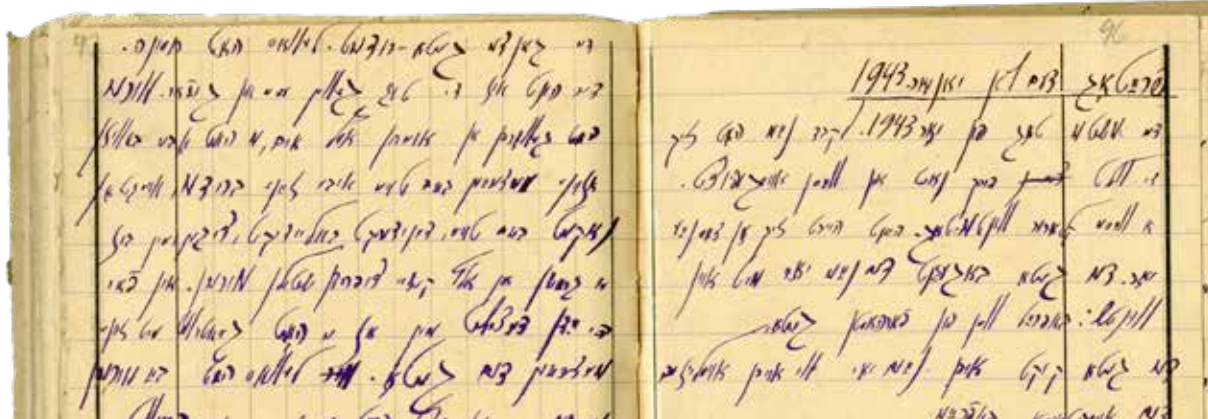


*I run down the cold, sad ghetto street and run home and straight into bed, to fall asleep faster, because when you sleep, you dream and your hopes are sweeter than when you are awake.*

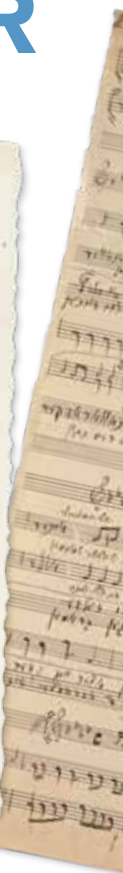
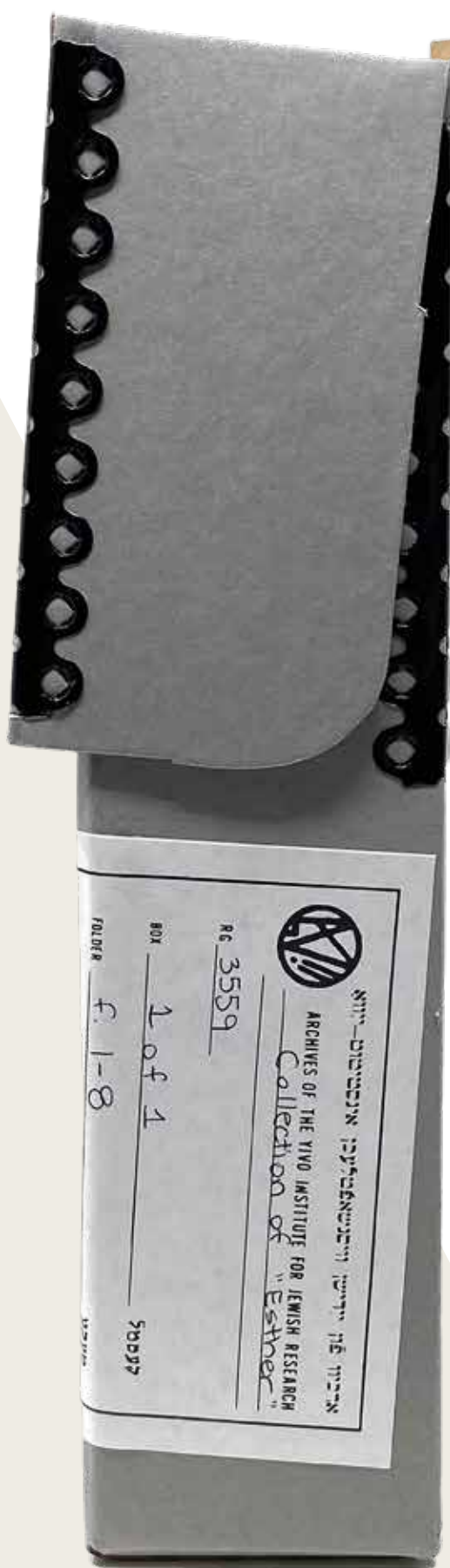
NOVEMBER 10, 1942

Yitskhok Rudashevski in the 1930s. Courtesy of Ghetto Fighters' House Museum, Israel/Photo Archive.

Pages from Rudashevski's diary. YIVO Archives.



# LEARNING AND MEDIA CENTER



## WHAT'S IN AN ARCHIVAL BOX?

In the Archives, an archival box holds folders with collections materials. The YIVO Learning and Media Center (YLMC)—our new project to host visiting class groups—features activities using curated archival boxes containing high quality reproductions of actual YIVO archival materials. Some documents include accompanying translations; some are left untranslated. One such box is titled “Esther.”

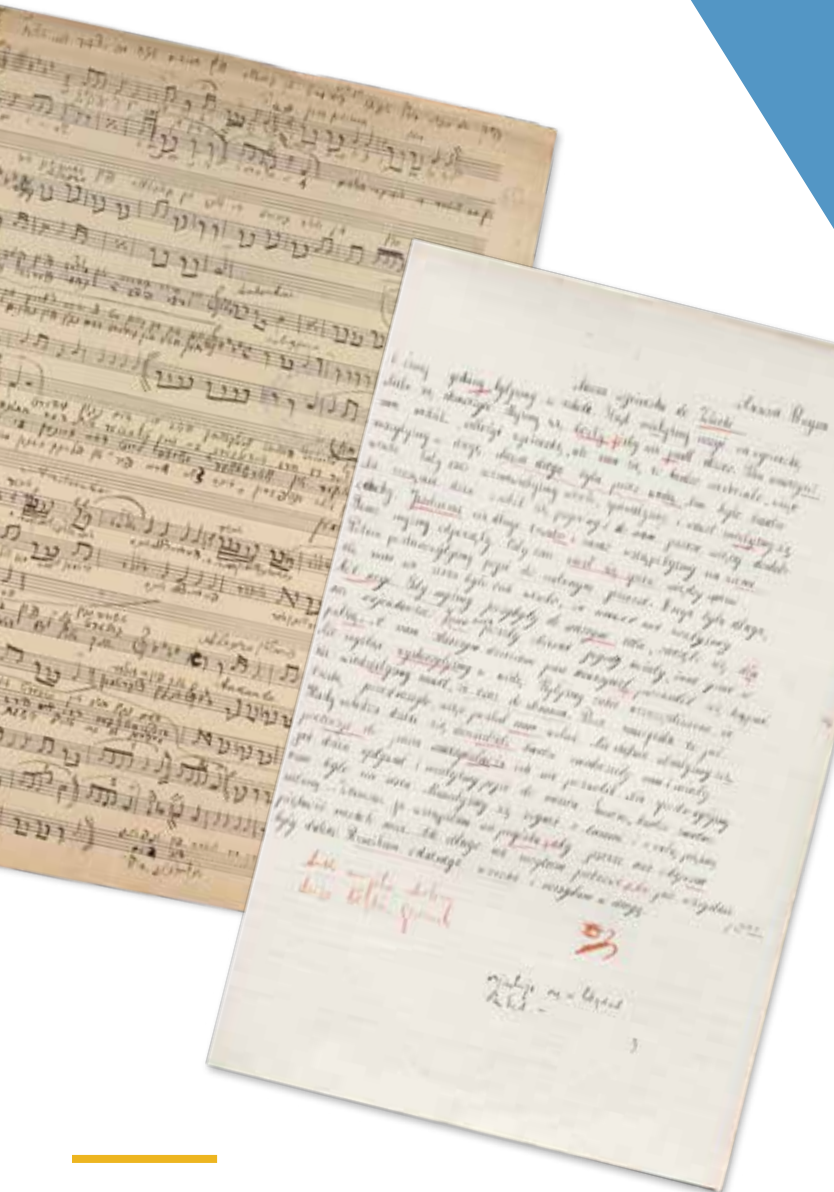
“Esther” was the pseudonym chosen by an 18-year-old woman when she submitted her autobiography to YIVO’s third Youth Autobiography Contest. She was from a Gerer Hasidic family, had attended Beys Yaakov and Polish schools as a child, and at 17 was tasked with leaving her family and hometown of Grójec, Poland to start a Beys Yaakov school somewhere along the Vistula River.

“Esther” was one of hundreds of anonymous autobiography writers who sent their work to YIVO in the 1930s. While many were destroyed during the war, roughly a third survived and are housed in our collection today where they are still used by scholars of interwar Eastern European Jewish life.

Four of the autobiographies were selected for the YLMC’s first archival box lesson. While we plan to expand our repertoire in the future, the writings of these Jewish youth were selected because they not only provide a rich view of the diversity of Jewish life in interwar Eastern Europe, but also because their collection in itself exemplifies the early ethos of and commitment to Jewish life and history that drove the establishment of YIVO.

Each of the four autobiographies we use has a box with curated materials that relate to what the young writers describe in their work. This material ranges from Yiddish newspapers describing antisemitic incidents in Poland to children’s schoolwork from TSYSHO to photos of Bundist and Zionist youth groups. These four are the first group in a series of planned archival box lessons that will draw from YIVO’s archives.





LEFT TO RIGHT:

Archival box containing an Autobiography Lesson from the YIVO Learning and Media Center.

Beys Yaakov Hanukkah program.

Students and a staff member exchanging books in a children's library. Lutsk, Poland.

Sheet music with a *nign* from *Ger Hasidim*.

Polish school assignment.



## TESTIMONIAL FROM THE FRISCH SCHOOL

“It was wonderful to return to YIVO with my high school senior history class. The YIVO staff that guided us are such excellent educators. They brought Jewish history to life at every step of the way, with just the right amount of background and scaffolding. Our visit included an introductory presentation, exploration of archival boxes, a look at the stacks, and a tour of the YIVO exhibit on Palestinian Yiddish in the early 20th century. Toward the end, my students even made themselves at home on the CJH genealogical database to look up their family history! The visit to YIVO really brought the Jewish past to life, and my students were visibly fascinated as well as moved. On a personal note, I've spent significant time at YIVO in the past, yet I was in awe of the things we got to see and learn about on our visit. I am so grateful my students had the opportunity to experience Jewish history at YIVO, and I can't wait to return with another class!”

— DR. YAELE FROHLICH  
Teacher, *The Frisch School*

PICTURED: Frisch students visit the YLMC, May 2024.

## Spring 2024

**395** participants  
**12** visits

### VISITS FROM:

Stuyvesant High School; The Frisch School; The Riverdale Country School; Sarah Lawrence College; Columbia University; Temple Emanu-El of Sarasota, Florida; Congregation Rodeph Shalom of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; The Academy for Jewish Religion; Association of Holocaust Organizations; Kennesaw State University; The Breman Museum; Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History

The YLMC is looking forward to more visits from schools, synagogues, and other organizations interested in learning about the richness and diversity of Jewish life. If you are interested in a group visit, please contact YLMC Educator Susannah Trubman at [strubman@yivo.org](mailto:strubman@yivo.org).

## JONATHAN BRENT ATTENDS MEETING OF AFRICAN AMERICAN AND JEWISH COMMUNITY LEADERS

In April, New York Mayor Eric Adams invited YIVO Executive Director & CEO Jonathan Brent to participate in an African American and Jewish community leaders meeting. The meeting was held at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem. During the session, Brent presented

artifacts from YIVO's archive on the civil rights movement that represented the connection between the Jewish and African American communities. Amongst the materials presented was a booklet containing Yiddish translations of the poetry of Langston Hughes. Unbeknownst to Brent at the time of selecting materials to share, Hughes's ashes are buried under the floorboards of the Schomburg Center, so it was indeed a very fitting artifact to show.

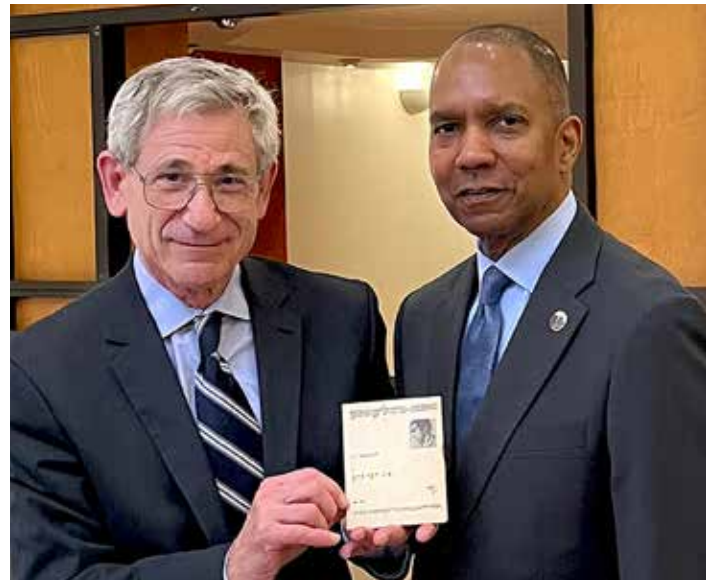
This event is another example of the vast breadth of the YIVO Archives and the ability to use them to work with other communities to create shared understanding and connection.



## COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER VISITS THE YIVO ARCHIVES

We were pleased to welcome New York City Council Member Erik Bottcher to YIVO on March 20. Touring the YIVO Archives, Council Member Bottcher marveled at the fact that the world's

largest collection of materials related to East European Jewry was located in his district. The Director of the YIVO Archives, Stefanie Halpern, showed him several artifacts from the collections. The Council Member was particularly moved by the "Entry and Exit" Book from Auschwitz Block 8 and the album signed by school children in the Łódź Ghetto. Following the tour, he also met with Alex Weiser, Director of Public Programs and the YIVO Learning and Media Center, to discuss our current and upcoming programming and the YLMC's launch plans.



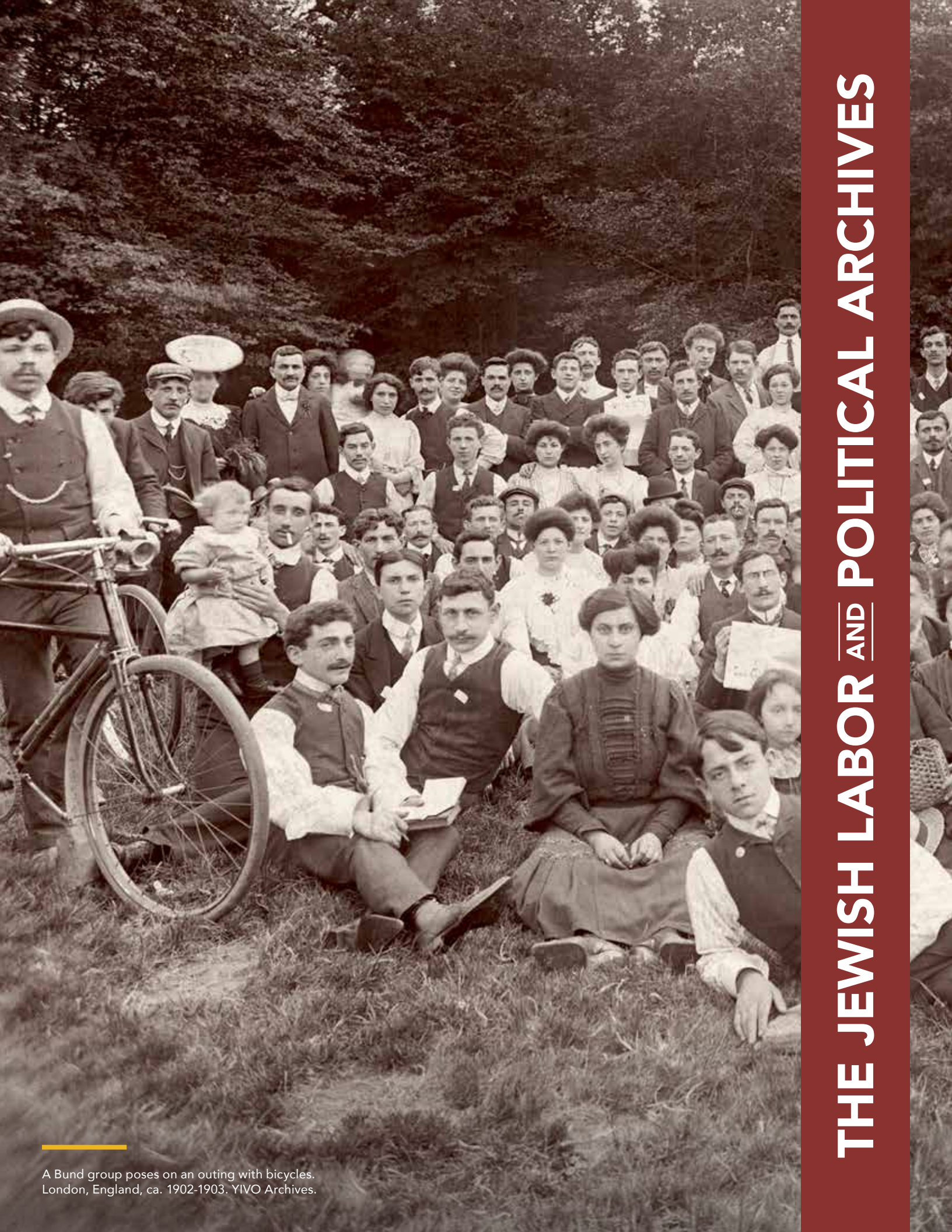
### TOP TO BOTTOM:

Jonathan Brent speaking at the meeting of African American and Jewish community leaders. Credit: Mayoral Photography Office.

Jonathan Brent and K.C. Matthews, Deputy Director of Operations & External Engagement at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, with the Yiddish translation of Langston Hughes's poetry.

Stefanie Halpern showing local New York City Council Member Erik Bottcher materials in the YIVO Archives.





# THE JEWISH LABOR AND POLITICAL ARCHIVES

A Bund group poses on an outing with bicycles. London, England, ca. 1902-1903. YIVO Archives.

## Featured Artifact

### A LETTER FROM THE SPECIAL COUNSEL TO PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON TO THE UNITED HEBREW TRADES

One of the major collections in the Jewish Labor and Political Archives is the collection of the United Hebrew Trades, a federation of Jewish labor unions organized in New York in 1888 under the leadership of Yiddish journalist Jacob Magidoff; founder and leader of the Socialist Party of America Morris Hillquit; and founder and long-time editor of the *Jewish Daily Forward* Abraham Cahan.

Established during a time when other smaller Jewish trade unions were struggling to survive, the United Hebrew Trades adopted an early set of principles that promoted mutual support between all unions; helped establish unions in trades that had not yet organized; and spread Socialist ideology among Jewish workers. The UHT became instrumental in helping organize unions and teaching workers how to hold meetings, arrange contracts with owners, keep proper financial records, and organize and lead strikes.

Found in the collection is a letter to William Wolpert, Secretary of the United Hebrew Trades, from Lee C. White, the Special Counsel to President Lyndon B. Johnson. White was an influential figure behind the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which aimed to grant equal voting rights to racial minorities.

In his letter, White acknowledges the importance of the work being done by the United Hebrew Trades as a member of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. This letter demonstrates that the scope of the UHT's work was far-reaching and extended beyond the Jewish labor movement.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

May 25, 1965

Dear Mr. Wolpert:

We are, of course, aware of the excellent work being done by the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights in securing support for the voting rights legislation now pending in the Congress. Your efforts and those of your organization have added to the strong prospects for early and favorable action and we wanted you to know of our appreciation.

It occurred to me that you might wish to have a printed copy of the President's message on voting rights delivered to the Joint Session of Congress on March 15 and I am therefore enclosing one.

Sincerely,

Lee C. White

Special Counsel to the President

Mr. William Wolpert  
United Hebrew Trades  
175 Broadway  
New York, New York

Enclosure



#### CONSERVATION:

**65% complete**

Approximately 2.275 million pages conserved



#### PROCESSING:

**25% complete**

Approximately 875,000 pages processed



#### DIGITIZATION:

**Digitization has officially begun**

(PROGRESS AS OF JULY 2024)



**YIVO RECEIVES  
A \$270,000+  
GRANT FOR THE  
JEWISH LABOR  
AND POLITICAL  
ARCHIVES  
DIGITIZATION  
PROJECT**

The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research is delighted to announce that it has been awarded a grant of over \$270,000 from The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference), German Federal Ministry of Finance (BMF), and the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (EVZ).

This grant will enable YIVO to process and digitize approximately 196,000 pages of the Holocaust-related items from YIVO's Jewish Labor and Political Archives (JLPA).

Much of the material was collected by members of the Jewish Labor Bund during World War II, at great risk to their lives, and documents various aspects of the Holocaust and its aftermath, including Nazi atrocities in the extermination camps and ghettos, armed and intellectual acts of Jewish resistance, and the renewal of Jewish life in the immediate post-war period. Materials in the collections include correspondence, manuscripts, newsletters, ephemera, and photographs.

The grant will allow for enhanced description of the Holocaust related materials in the JLPA and their digitization, which will increase their accessibility worldwide. This greater accessibility will, in turn, lead to new avenues for research, documentation, and scholarship; the development of new Holocaust education resources based on previously unavailable primary documents; and greater awareness of the Bund's role in anti-Nazi activities and its covert operations during the Holocaust.

**ABOUT THE PROJECT**

Consisting of nearly 200 collections encompassing 3.5 million pages of archival documents that were collected by the Bund Archives, the Jewish Labor and Political Archives (JLPA) forms the world's most comprehensive body of material pertaining to Jewish social and political activism in Europe and the United States. Spanning the years 1870 to 1992, the JLPA tells the story of Jews' involvement in the European political and revolutionary movements of the 20th century and resistance to the Holocaust, as well as their impact on the American labor movement and the fight for fair wages and workers' rights. YIVO is now in the midst of an 8-year project to digitize these unparalleled materials and make them available for free access online.

As of July 1, 2024, the JLPA project has raised over \$5.7 million toward its \$8.5 million goal. We welcome your support as we make this historic archival resource available to a global audience. Thanks to a matching challenge grant from an anonymous foundation, your support will now have an even greater impact!

We are profoundly indebted to Irene Pletka for her generous lead support of this extraordinary collection.

For more information and naming opportunities, please contact Melissa S. Cohen at **212.294.6156** or via email at **mcohen@yivo.org**.

ABOVE: The Bund Archives collected materials documenting Nazi atrocities. These photographs show Nazis forcibly cutting the peyes and beards of religious Jews in the Łódź Ghetto. Poland, ca. 1940. YIVO Archives.

JLPA PROJECT SUPPORTERS



**\$1,000,000+ BUILDER**

Anonymous  
Ruth and David Levine  
Irene Pletka

**\$500,000+ PARTNER**

**\$100,000+ BENEFACTOR**

Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany  
Institute of Museum and Library Services:  
Save America's Treasures (IMLS)  
National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)  
National Historical Publications and  
Records Commission (NHPRC)

**\$50,000+ PATRON**

Anonymous

**\$25,000+ SPONSOR**

The Slomo and Cindy Silvian Foundation, Inc.

**\$10,000+ SUPPORTER**

Atran Foundation  
Harri Hoffmann Family Foundation  
Deborah K. Holmes Family Foundation

**\$5,000+ CONTRIBUTOR**

The Hittman Family Foundation  
Julius C. Spiegel

**\$1,000+ FRIEND**

Ellen Odoner and Edward Kerson

AS OF JULY 1, 2024



Funded by:



on the basis of a decision  
of the Bundestag

With Assistance from the Conference on Jewish  
Material Claims Against Germany  
Supported by the German Federal Ministry of  
Finance and the Foundation Remembrance,  
Responsibility and Future



The National Endowment for the Humanities:  
Democracy demands wisdom.

# FROM THE YIVO COLLECTIONS



## Recent Accession

### THE COLLECTION OF CHARLES ELSON

YIVO recently acquired the collection of Charles Elson (Record Group #2375). Elson was a set and costume designer who designed various Broadway and London plays and musicals, as well as opera performances at the Metropolitan Opera. He also was a college professor, teaching theater at several universities, including Yale University, the University of Oklahoma, and the City University of New York. The collection contains many photographs, richly detailed costume and set drawings, framed paintings of sets, and assorted personal material, including a 1942 University of Oklahoma commencement program and an LP of background music for the play *Family Portrait*. The Elson collection will be of enormous value to researchers working on theater history, especially in New York City and throughout the Midwest.



## Intern Spotlight



by CLARA GOLDBERG, *Photo Archives Intern*

Early this fall, I had the opportunity to visit YIVO for the first time on a trip with my American Jewish History class from the Jewish Theological Seminary. During this visit, I walked through the archives, read original letters, and saw artifacts relating to all aspects of Yiddish culture. I immediately knew

I wanted to be a part of this place.

I started interning at YIVO in spring 2024 as a Photo Archives Intern. I helped with the process of digitizing the Territorial Collection, which allowed me to see thousands of photos of pre-war Jewish life in Eastern Europe, particularly Poland. I continued with this project during the summer, when I researched town names and their geocoordinates. This information will be used to create a map for the YIVO Learning and Media Center that connects these expansive photos to the town where they were taken.

Interning at YIVO was a remarkable experience. It not only offered me the chance to express my love of history and see incredible materials, but it also allowed me to be a part of something bigger. YIVO dedicates itself to preserving the rich history of Eastern European Jewry through the archival process and I couldn't be more proud to have been a part of this mission.

TOP TO BOTTOM:

Collection of Charles Elson: Photograph of a 1958 production of *Tiger at the Gates* at Hunter College Playhouse in New York City.

Undated photograph of Charles Elson.

From YIVO's Territorial Collection: Worshippers leaving the Altshott (Old City) synagogue on Wolborska Street, Łódź, Poland, 1937. Photograph by Moshe Raviv.



## REINTRODUCING MYSELF TO YIDDISH FROM A PLACE OF JOY

by LILIANA FARBER, *Summer Program '24*

Participating in the YIVO-Bard Uriel Weinreich Summer Program in Yiddish Language, Literature, and Culture was an intensive and transformative experience for me. My initial motivation to learn Yiddish was a professional one. As a visual artist, I have spent the past two years reimagining current technologies through the lens of Yiddish culture rather than the prevailing Western culture. To continue my research and artworks in Yiddish, I needed to gain proficiency in the language.

Over the course of these intensive six weeks, I achieved that goal. Yet, what I did not anticipate was the profound personal transformation that would accompany my studies. The program's emphasis on literature and culture helped piece together fragmented parts of my identity that I hadn't fully realized were broken. Growing up in a family of Holocaust survivors, Yiddish was always present in the background of my home, shrouded in code, secrets, and trauma. It was a language that wasn't passed down to me and my siblings, existing instead as a distant echo of a painful past.

Reintroducing myself to Yiddish from a place of joy and appreciation was incredibly healing. I began to reconstruct and understand memories, uncovering a buried heritage that reshaped my sense of belonging. The program helped me fall in love with the language and, more importantly, made me realize that my journey into Yiddish language and culture is just beginning.

► Read more student testimonials at [summerprogram.yivo.org/Testimonials](https://summerprogram.yivo.org/Testimonials).



## SUNRISE

by XUYUE SONG, *Summer Program '24*

It's not often that I stay up until sunrise, but that's what happened throughout July. I remember once singing a Yiddish song with a lark standing on the window lattice at dawn. She and I "basked in the first warm glow" of sunshine, just as Nathan Birnbaum dreamed at the opening of the Czernowitz Conference. Each sunrise symbolized a step forward in my Yiddish journey.

Learning Yiddish at the YIVO-Bard Summer Program virtually from China has been a memorable experience. The time difference changed my daily routine, but I have no regrets. I appreciated Vera Szabó's openness in Literature, Nina Warnke's patience in Grammar, and Tal Hever-Chybowski's humor in *Shmues* (conversation), alongside their skillful pedagogy and thorough preparation. Szabó taught us about the poets and singers, which helped me better understand their works. Warnke explained grammar by creating interesting sentences about the students in class. Hever-Chybowski paid attention to every detail in pronunciation and sentence structure. They are teachers of keen intellect who point out mistakes in an encouraging way.

In addition to the excellent faculty, I appreciated the effort and kindness of my classmates. Together, we created a vigorous atmosphere that allowed us to study efficiently and praise each other's progress. Beyond the Yiddish language, the Program also encourages students to engage in Yiddish-related research and activities. I wrote my first Yiddish poem *Mayn heym* (My home) and presented my project *From Czernowitz to Beijing: The Influence of Yiddish on the Development of Bai'hua*. I won't forget Ben Kaplan's care throughout the program and Dovid Braun's advice for my future career. I hope to experience the same happiness, gratitude, and achievement again next summer.

The lark didn't stop by my window again, but the melody of the Yiddish song lingers. Perhaps she will bring this beautiful language to every home at sunrise.



# AM IN YIDDISH LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND CULTURE



Students, faculty, and staff attend the סיום (siem [graduation]) for the 2024 Uriel Weinreich Summer Program in Yiddish Language, Literature, and Culture, in person at YIVO and on Zoom. Photography by Melanie Einzig.



**78** students  
**12** countries  
**24** US states

## מזל טוב!

*Congratulations to the class of 2024!*



## YIVO LAUNCHES FREE, SELF-PACED ONLINE COURSE ON JEWS AND COMEDY IN AMERICA

*12 Comedians and Comedy Writers, 5 Filmmakers and Producers, 20 Scholars and Academics*

In March, YIVO launched the fifth course in the Shine Online Educational Series, *Is Anything Okay? The History of Jews and Comedy in America*. From the earliest jokes told on the Lower East Side to the comedy routines honed in the Catskills, Ashkenazi Jews developed radically new forms of comedic output in the 20th century. On film and television, pioneering Jewish comics—Joan Rivers, Lenny Bruce, and many more—broke norms and challenged taboos of American culture.

Hosted by YidLife Crisis co-stars Eli Batalion and Jamie Elman, *Is Anything Okay?* delves into the history of Jewish comedy and its explosive development in the United States. Enjoy interviews and discussions with leading personalities from the world of comedy, including W. Kamau Bell, Lewis Black, Jena Friedman, Judy Gold, Marc Maron, Paul Reiser, Modi Rosenfeld, Billy West, and Alan Zweibel. The course features hundreds of unique archival objects, including vintage jokebooks, early comedy records, film, television, and radio clips, photographs, and posters.

Register for the course at [yivo.org/Comedy](https://yivo.org/Comedy).

*This online course is sponsored by Edward Blank and Family, Ruth and David Levine, and The Shine Trust.*

To celebrate the launch of *Is Anything Okay?*, YIVO hosted a panel discussion with lead scholar Eddy Portnoy and special guests Judy Gold and Alan Zweibel. Gold and Zweibel discussed the diverse world of Jewish comedy past, present, and future and reflected on their respective careers. Over 2,100 people registered to join the program.

# FALL CLASSES

## BEGINNER YIDDISH

*12 weeks  
12 total sessions  
1.5 hours each*

### BEGINNER I YIDDISH

**(Sunday AM)** Sep. 15 – Dec. 1 | 10:30am-12:00pm ET  
Instructor: Tal Hever Chybowski

**(Sunday PM)** Sep. 15 – Dec. 1 | 12:00pm-1:30pm ET  
Instructor: Philip Schwartz

### **(Tuesday | In-person NYC)**

Sep. 17 – Dec. 3 | 6:00pm-7:30pm ET  
Instructor: Nachum Lerner

### BEGINNER II YIDDISH

**(Sunday)** Sep. 8 – Nov. 24 | 10:00am-11:30am ET  
Instructor: Sharon Bar-Kochva

**(Monday)** Sep. 9 – Nov. 25 | 6:00pm-7:30pm ET  
Instructor: Lucas Fiszman

### **(Monday | In-person NYC)**

Sep. 9 – Nov. 25 | 6:30pm-8:00pm ET  
Instructor: Moishele Alfonso

### BEGINNER III YIDDISH

**(Sunday)** Sep. 8 – Nov. 24 | 12:00pm-1:30pm ET  
Instructor: Nina Warnke

**(Monday)** Sep. 16 – Dec. 2 | 6:00pm-7:30pm ET  
Instructor: Malena Chinski

**(Tuesday)** Sep. 10 – Nov. 26 | 6:00pm-7:30pm ET  
Instructor: Nina Warnke

### BEGINNER IV YIDDISH

**(Tuesday)** Sep. 17 – Dec. 3 | 11:00am-12:30pm ET  
Instructor: Malena Chinski

### **(Tuesday | In-person NYC)**

Sep. 17 – Dec. 3 | 6:30pm-8:00pm ET  
Instructor: Andryusha Kuznetsov

## INTERMEDIATE YIDDISH

*12 weeks  
12 total sessions  
1.5 hours each*

### INTERMEDIATE I YIDDISH

**(Sunday)** Sep. 15 – Dec. 1 | 10:00am-11:30am ET  
Instructor: Sonia Dratwa-Pinkusowitz

### INTERMEDIATE II YIDDISH

**(Sunday)** Sep. 8 – Nov. 24 | 4:00pm-5:30pm ET  
Instructor: Karolina Szymaniak

**(Monday)** Sep. 9 – Nov. 25 | 4:30pm-6:00pm ET  
Instructor: Nina Warnke

**(Tuesday)** Sep. 10 – Nov. 26 | 3:00pm-4:30pm ET  
Instructor: Perl Teitelbaum

### INTERMEDIATE III YIDDISH

**(Monday AM)** Sep. 9 – Dec. 16 | 11:00am-12:30pm ET  
Instructor: Vera Szabó

**(Monday PM)** Sep. 9 – Nov. 25 | 3:00pm-4:30pm ET  
Instructor: Lucas Fiszman

### INTERMEDIATE IV YIDDISH

**(Monday)** Sep. 9 – Nov. 25 | 11:00am-12:30pm ET  
Instructor: Karolina Szymaniak

This fall we are offering 30 courses, all held remotely on Zoom unless otherwise noted. Join us and students from around the world! Space is limited and classes fill up quickly, so be sure to register today.

To learn more and register, visit [yivo.org/Classes](https://yivo.org/Classes).

Questions? Visit [yivo.org/Class-FAQ](https://yivo.org/Class-FAQ) to help determine which class is right for you!

## ADVANCED YIDDISH

12 weeks  
12 total sessions  
1.5 hours each

\* unless otherwise noted

### ADVANCED I YIDDISH

(Sunday Aft.) Sep. 8 – Nov. 24 | 2:00pm-3:30pm ET  
Instructor: Sonia Dratwa-Pinkusowitz

(Sunday Eve.) Sep. 15 – Dec. 1 | 6:00pm-7:30pm ET  
Instructor: Perl Teitelbaum

### ADVANCED II YIDDISH

(Monday) Sep. 9 – Nov. 25 | 6:30pm-8:00pm ET  
Instructor: Perl Teitelbaum

### ADVANCED TOPICS IN YIDDISH LITERATURE & GRAMMAR

#### WHAT IS MODERN ABOUT THE YIDDISH CLASSICS?

(Sunday) Sep. 8 – Nov. 24 | 12:00pm-1:30pm ET  
Instructor: Sonia Dratwa-Pinkusowitz

#### AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING IN YIDDISH

(Tue./Thu.) Sep. 5 – Dec. 12 | 6:00pm-7:30pm ET  
Instructor: Sheva Zucker

\* 12 weeks, 24 total sessions

## CONVERSATIONAL YIDDISH

10 weeks  
10 total sessions  
1.5 hours each

### BEGINNER CONVERSATIONAL YIDDISH FOR HERITAGE LEARNERS

(Sunday) Sep. 22 – Nov. 24 | 4:00pm-5:30pm ET  
Instructor: Malena Chinski

### CONTINUING CONVERSATIONAL YIDDISH FOR HERITAGE LEARNERS

(Sunday) Sep. 22 – Nov. 24 | 6:00pm-7:30pm ET  
Instructor: Nachum Lerner

## READING YIDDISH

14 weeks  
14 total sessions  
1.8 hours each

### BEGINNER READING YIDDISH

(Tuesday) Sep. 10 – Dec. 10 | 1:00pm-2:50pm ET  
Instructor: Josh Price

## SEMINARS & ELECTIVES (IN ENGLISH)

10 weeks  
10 total sessions  
1.5 hours each

### MOTHERS, REVOLUTIONARIES, AND WORKERS: WOMEN DURING THE GREAT TRANSFORMATION OF EASTERN EUROPEAN JEWISH SOCIETY

(Sunday) Sep. 15 – Nov. 17 | 12:30pm-2:00pm ET  
Instructor: Aleksandra Jakubczak

## SEMINARS & ELECTIVES (IN YIDDISH)

10 weeks  
10 total sessions  
1.5 hours each

### READINGS IN YIDDISH PROSE

(Wednesday) Sep. 11 – Dec. 18 | 9:30am-11:00am ET  
Instructor: Vera Szabó

### GETTING FROM OY TO VEY: YIDDISH AS AN EXPRESSION OF TRADITIONAL JEWISH LIFE AND LEARNING

(Tuesday) Sep. 17 – Nov. 26 | 6:30pm-8:00pm ET  
Instructor: Michael Wex

## MINI-COURSE

In partnership with POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews

4 weeks | 4 total sessions | 1 hour each

FREE

### THE SHTETL: JEWISH COMMUNITY IN TRANSITION

(Sunday) Sep. 8 – Sep. 29 | 11:00am-12:00pm ET

Instructors: Marcin Wodziński, Michał Trębacz, Aleksandra Jakubczak, Karolina Szymaniak



29 classes  
299 students  
15 countries

### ANTANAS ULPIS HUMANITARIAN AWARD COMMITTEE APPOINTED

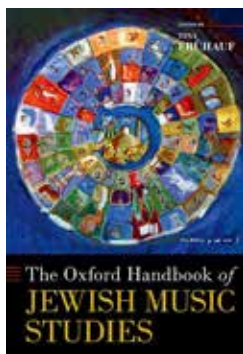
The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, together with the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania (MMNL), is pleased to announce the appointment of the Committee for the Antanas Ulpis Humanitarian Award. The award will be given annually for contributions to furthering Lithuanian-Jewish relations and understanding. Award recipients will receive a financial honorarium of \$5,000, a certificate of appreciation, and a public ceremony held in Vilnius. The committee consists of Jonathan Brent, Aušrinė Žilinskienė (Director General of the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania), Lara Lempert (Head of the Judaica Section of the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania), Arunas Gelunas (Director General at The Lithuanian National Museum of Art), and Alexander Rimas Domanskis (Attorney). The award is named in honor and memory of Antanas Ulpis, the Director of the Lithuanian National Book Chamber in Vilnius, from 1946-1980. In 1948, Ulpis saved thousands of Jewish books and documents from imminent destruction at the hands of the Soviets. The inaugural award is anticipated in 2025.

### YIVO CO- HOSTS THE ASSOCIATION OF HOLOCAUST ORGANIZATIONS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

YIVO was honored to co-host this year's Association of Holocaust Organizations (AHO) Annual Conference, together with the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust. YIVO presented several panels over the course of the four-day conference, including an introduction to YIVO's history and current activities by Jonathan Brent; a presentation on the exhibition and utilization of materials in the YIVO Archives both electronically and in person by Stefanie Halpern; a preview of the newest online exhibition in the YIVO Bruce and Francesca Cernia Slovin Online Museum, *Yitskhok Rudashevski: A Teenager's Account of Life and Death in the Vilna Ghetto*, by Karolina Ziulkoski and Alexandra Zapruder (Exhibition Co-Curator); and a presentation on the YIVO Learning and Media Center and the use of curated archival reproductions in lessons for visiting students by Alex Weiser and Susannah Trubman.



### YIVO SOUND ARCHIVIST ELÉONORE BIEZUNSKI PUBLISHES CHAPTER IN THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF JEWISH MUSIC STUDIES



YIVO sound archivist Eléonore Biezunski recently published a chapter in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Music Studies* edited by Tina Frühauf. The chapter, “The YIVO Sound Archive as a Living Space: Archiving and Revitalizing Klezmer,” traces the history of the Max and Frieda Weinstein Archive of YIVO Sound Recordings in relation to the revitalization of klezmer music since the mid-1970s. Biezunski tells the story of the establishment of the YIVO Sound Archive in the early 1980s through the impetus of young folk musicians seeking to reclaim the music of their ancestors, particularly the instrumental genre known as klezmer music, in a general context of the “roots movement.” As a sound archivist and Yiddish musician, she presents the Archive as more

than simply a repository of documents and possible sources. It is a living space – a historical phenomenon in its own right and a dynamic spatialized territory generated by individuals with their own creativity, caught in a web of social and cultural, intellectual and scientific, institutional and artistic contexts.



### ONLINE EXHIBITION SHARED WITH LITHUANIAN SCHOOLS ACROSS THE US

The Consulate General of the Republic of Lithuania in New York created and distributed bookmarks (PICTURED ABOVE) to Lithuanian schools across the US to draw attention to the inaugural exhibition of the YIVO Bruce and Francesca Cernia Slovin Online Museum: *Beba Epstein: The Extraordinary Life of an Ordinary Girl*. The exhibition was recently translated into Lithuanian with the help of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for use in their school system.

View the Lithuanian translation: [museum.yivo.org/?lang=lt](https://museum.yivo.org/?lang=lt)

LEFT: Jonathan Brent, Stefanie Halpern, Karolina Ziulkoski, Alexandra Zapruder, Susannah Trubman, and Alex Weiser speaking at the AHO Annual Conference.



## “MEMORIES OF ABSENCE”

**YIVO Study Tour of Lithuania & Poland,  
June 17-30, 2024**

by DAVID ALTSCHUL

In June of this year, my wife Margaret and I participated in the YIVO educational tour to Lithuania and Poland. Both of us are Ashkenazi Jews of Central or Eastern European origin whose grandparents or great-grandparents had immigrated to the United States between 1870-1910. Neither of us were the children of Holocaust survivors. We were simply curious to learn about the life and culture of the world from which our ancestors had come as well as pay homage to the millions of our fellow Jews who had been murdered in the Holocaust.

We joined a group of perhaps 20 or so fellow travelers, most of whom were the children of Holocaust survivors, including some who had been born in Europe after the war and were returning to the world of their birth. We had so much to learn from them. Accompanying us were Irene Pletka, the Vice Chair of the YIVO Board, YIVO Executive Director & CEO Jonathan Brent, and historian Samuel Kassow, all of whom contributed so much to our understanding of what we were seeing and experiencing.

Our journey took us from Vilnius to Kaunas, Warsaw to Łódź, Lublin to Kraków and, more somberly, from the Ninth Fort to Ponary, Treblinka to Auschwitz-Birkenau. We walked through the haunted streets where our fellow Jews had thrived and then been confined into ghettos by the Nazis before their final transport to death camps. We also visited a number of libraries and archives as well as museums, most notably the POLIN Museum in Warsaw which presented a comprehensive set of exhibits covering the almost 1,000 year history of Jews in Poland.

The trip was somber, emotional, and, at the same time, empowering: how can we possibly understand our present and future place in the world without understanding the history and culture of our grandparents and their predecessors? How can we help to prevent a second Shoah unless we understand the history and unfolding of the Holocaust?

Finally, I am a photographer who has been inspired to create a collection of images from this trip under the title “Memories of Absence.” I had no choice but to render the images in black and white – the subject matter demanded that choice. Here are a small sample of images from that collection.

COUNTERCLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT:

Exhibit in the Ninth Fort, Kaunas, Lithuania / A street in Kraków-Kazimierz, Poland / Ohel Jaakov Choral Synagogue in Kaunas, Lithuania / Okopowa Cemetery, Warsaw, Poland / Choral Synagogue of Vilnius, Lithuania / Radegast Station, Łódź, Poland.

Photography by David Altschul.



**YIVO STORE**  
**טוֹיִבּוֹ שְׂעָפֵט**

**Bring a piece of YIVO home!**  
 Shop items inspired by our collections, online classes, and more.

[yivo-institute.myshopify.com](http://yivo-institute.myshopify.com)

# IN THE MEDIA

Here are some of YIVO's media highlights from spring 2024:

- The Jerusalem Post** (JULY 20, 2024)  
 Vilna Ghetto teenager's diary during the Holocaust to be focus in new online exhibit by YIVO
- Jewish News** (JULY 19, 2024)  
 The new Anne Frank? Diary of teenager in Vilna Ghetto made available to read online
- The Forward** (JULY 15, 2024)  
 In a young boy's diary, a record of how Jews lived to the fullest, even in the face of death
- JNS** (JULY 15, 2024)  
 YIVO exhibit of Holocaust diary shows how teen retained 'understanding of himself as a Jew'
- The New York Times** (JULY 2, 2024)  
 A Jewish Teen's Diary Recounts Pain and Resilience in a Nazi Ghetto
- The Jewish Independent** (JULY 2, 2024)  
 Discovering Yiddish treasures in a glorious Italian library
- The Forward** (JUNE 26, 2024)  
 Harry Schimmelman, we know your wife didn't die of influenza; she's looking for you
- New York Jewish Week / JTA** (JUNE 23, 2024)  
 In the 1940s, Jewish scholars planned a museum about the world they were losing
- Ynet** (JUNE 21, 2024)  
 הארגון היהודי שרדף אחרי גברים שנששו את משפחותיהם, לפני 100 שנה

- Haaretz** (JUNE 19, 2024)  
 'Zeidie Bailing on Bubbie': New NYC Exhibit Shatters Myth of the 'Nice Jewish Husband'
- The Forward** (JUNE 12, 2024)  
 Why a museum on prewar Jewish life in Europe was envisioned for New York, but never built
- New York Jewish Week / JTA** (MAY 16, 2024)  
 Beloved Borscht Belt entertainer Morris Katz remembered in new NYC exhibit
- The Forward** (MAY 13, 2024)  
 The Bob Ross of the Borscht Belt is finally getting a New York City show
- The Jewish Chronicle** (APRIL 4, 2024)  
 Race to save historic record of Jewish life threatened by Ukraine-Russia war
- New York Jewish Week / JTA** (MARCH 28, 2024)  
 A grandmother's Coney Island memories inspire a new album by her composer grandson
- The New York Post** (MARCH 16, 2024)  
 How Jewish comedians are helping keep hope alive post-October 7
- The Forward** (MARCH 14, 2024)  
 An online comedy course asks Marc Maron, Lewis Black and more — why did Jews get into the funny business?
- St. Louis Jewish Light** (MARCH 13, 2024)  
 From bagels, borscht, and belly laughs, how to understand Jewish Humor and its history
- The Times of Israel** (FEBRUARY 25, 2024)  
 A New York Yiddish center finds Nazis lurking deep within Hamas's ideology

## CREATING A LEGACY AND ENRICHING THE FUTURE

Longevity. Individuals who established endowments or included the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in their estate plans or through life income gifts long ago still sustain our work today. We invite you to become a member of YIVO's **1925 Legacy Society** and create a planned gift that will endow your personal vision for the future, inspiring future generations to continue your generous example. Establishing a will is your way to protect your loved ones, ensure your wishes are honored, and create a legacy for the missions you care about. By choosing to include a gift to YIVO in your will, you'll ensure that we can continue to conserve, preserve, and share the rich history and culture of East European Jewry for years to come.

Participation includes:

- ▶ Invitations to special events
- ▶ Recognition in YIVO's spring newsletter and on our website

If you have already included YIVO in your will, trust, or estate plans, please let us know so we can add you to the 1925 Legacy Society.

### Bequests

Making a bequest—a gift made in your will or living trust—to YIVO will have a deep impact on YIVO for years to come. Bequests can be a specific amount, percentage, or remainder of assets.

Sample language might be stated as follows: *I give and bequeath to the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research \_\_\_\_\_ % of my total estate.* Or, you can state a specific dollar amount.

We always suggest seeking legal consultation.

### Charitable Gift Annuities

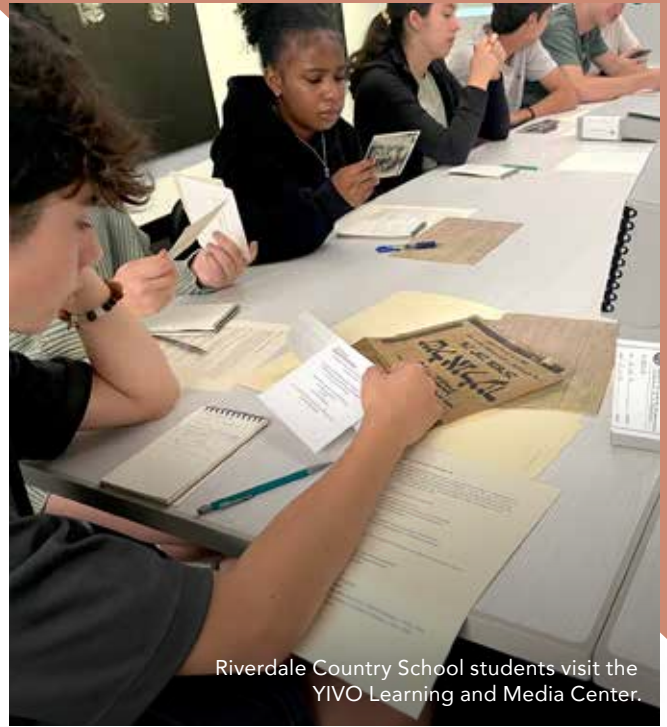
A charitable gift annuity—usually cash or stocks—allows you to support the YIVO's mission while receiving a tax deduction and a fixed flow of income for the rest of your life. Payments depend on age at the time of the donation.

### Beneficiary Designations

A beneficiary designation allows you to make a substantial gift, often larger than what you could afford during your lifetime. Designate YIVO as the primary or contingent beneficiary for your:

- ▶ IRA Account\*    ▶ Life Insurance
- ▶ 401(k)/403(b)    ▶ Payable on death (POD) account

\*Since YIVO is a tax-exempt organization, there's an added benefit of saving valuable tax dollars.



Riverdale Country School students visit the YIVO Learning and Media Center.

## SUPPORTING YIVO TODAY

### IRA Charitable Rollover

If you meet the age (70 ½) for a required minimum distribution, you can give up to \$100,000 from your IRA directly to YIVO without paying income taxes on the money.

### Cash

By making a cash gift, you'll see your generous gift in action, and when you itemize, you'll receive a federal income tax charitable deduction. Cash gifts can also be given in tribute of a loved one.

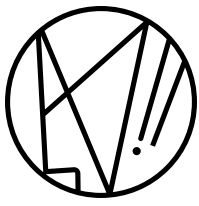
### Stock Gifts

Transferring appreciated shares of stock or mutual funds directly to YIVO may entitle you to a charitable income tax deduction for their full current market value without paying the capital gains tax on appreciation. Contact your financial advisor to kick-start your legacy.

### Donor-Advised Funds

You can recommend how much and how often funds are granted to YIVO.

We are here to assist you and your advisors.  
Please contact Melissa S. Cohen at  
**212.294.6156** or **mcohen@yivo.org**.



YIVO Institute for Jewish Research  
 15 West 16th Street  
 New York, NY 10011-6301  
 LOCATED IN THE CENTER FOR JEWISH HISTORY

# NEWSLETTER

FALL 2024

## ABOUT YIVO

The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research is dedicated to the preservation and study of the history and culture of East European Jewry worldwide. For nearly a century, YIVO has pioneered new forms of Jewish scholarship, research, education, and cultural expression. Our public programs and exhibitions, as well as online and on-site courses, extend our global outreach and enable us to share our vast resources. The YIVO Archives contains more than 24 million original items and YIVO's Library has over 400,000 volumes—the single largest resource for such study in the world.



Follow us  
 @YIVOInstitute

## CONTACT

212.246.6080 | [yivo.org](http://yivo.org)

### General Inquiries

[INFO@YIVO.ORG](mailto:INFO@YIVO.ORG)

### Archival Inquiries

[REFERENCE@YIVO.ORG](mailto:REFERENCE@YIVO.ORG)

Photo/Film Archives | [PHOTOFILM@YIVO.ORG](mailto:PHOTOFILM@YIVO.ORG)

Sound Archives | [SOUNDARCHIVES@YIVO.ORG](mailto:SOUNDARCHIVES@YIVO.ORG)

### Library Inquiries

[REFERENCE@YIVO.ORG](mailto:REFERENCE@YIVO.ORG)

## TRAVEL DIRECTIONS

The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research is located in the Center for Jewish History at 15 West 16th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, New York, NY 10011.

### by subway

14 St / Union Sq. **L N Q R W 4 5 6**

14 St + 6 Ave **F L M PATH** 18 St + 7 Ave **1**

14 St + 7 Ave **1 2 3** 14 St + 8 Ave **A C E L**

by bus **M1 M2 M3 M7 M14 M55**

## HOURS [closed on major federal and Jewish holidays]

### Gallery Hours

Sun 11:00am-5:00pm

Mon–Wed 9:30am-4:30pm

Thu 9:30am-8:00pm

Fri 10:00am-3:00pm

Sat CLOSED

### Administrative Hours

Mon–Thu 9:00am-5:00pm

Fri 9:00am-4:00pm

### Reading Room Hours

Mon–Thu 9:30am-4:30pm