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Yiddish Glory

The Lost Songs of World War II

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1 hour, 20 minutes, 42 seconds

Speakers: Anna Shternshis and Psoy Korolenko

Transcribed by: Rachel E Lieu

[Holocaust Living History Workshop](#)

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Time	Transcription
00:00	[uctv / University of California Television / www.uctv.tv]
00:12	[Read Write Think Dream / The Library UC San Diego Channel / www.uctv.tv/library-channel]
00:15	Susanne Hillman: It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to today's Holocaust Living History Workshop. Thank you, everyone, for joining us today for this very special and marvelous event. I'm, I'm very confident that it will be marvelous. I already heard a little snippet of the wonderful musical here the other day. Thank you also to the UCTV video team for all their work recording this event. Now I'd like to ask Dr. Mitchell, Erik, to the podium as it were. Erik.
00:49	Dr. Erik Mitchell: Thank you Susanne and uh, good evening everybody, and thanks so much for joining us tonight. It is uh, my pleasure to acknowledge that tonight's event is sponsored by the Lou Dunst Memorial Lecture Endowment. As many of you know, Lou was a Holocaust survivor from Czechoslovakia and one of San Diego's best-known and beloved survivors. From the establishment of the Holocaust Living History Workshop in 2008, he was an integral part of the program and repeatedly shared his experiences with students, staff, and our community. After his passing in 2015, Lou's widow Estelle continued her support for the workshop. Committed to keeping Lou's memory alive, Estelle established the Lou Dunst Memorial Lecture, and she was present at the naming of the Lou Dunst classroom in Geisel Library. Sadly Estelle herself passed away a few years after her husband. Today it is with gratitude and affection that we remember and pay tribute to both Lou and Estelle. Lou, who grew up speaking Yiddish, would undoubtedly have enjoyed today's program. Now let me turn the mic and the stage over to my colleague, Amelia Glaser, who is going to introduce tonight's performers. Amelia.
02:04	Amelia Glaser: Thanks so much for having me and I'm really uh, honored to be able to introduce and welcome uh, Professor Anna Shternshis and Psoy Korolenko to UC San Diego, both are exceptionally creative minds and talented scholars. And I first met both of them about 20 years ago, give or take. The project that they are going to present, Yiddish Glory uh the Lost Songs of World War II, is a project that centers on music that was written during World War II. And, in the midst of this incredibly dark period in history, an ethnomusicologist by the name of Moisei Beregovsky together with his team of scholars discovered songs that had been written by Jewish Red Army soldiers, by refugees, by victims and survivors of ghettos. Uh, Yiddish Glory, the project that resulted, was nominated for a Grammy. It was probably the first Yiddish academic project nominated for a Grammy. It's been widely recognized and appreciated with numerous accolades. It also received the Moscow-based Fiddler on the Roof award. Um, but just a couple of words about uh both Professor Shternshis and Psoy Korolenko.

- 03:16 Amelia Glaser: I first met Professor Shternshis, I think, in Vilna in 19 - Vilnius now, Lithuania - in 1998 when we were both students of the Vilna summer program um, got to know her better when we were both graduate students at Oxford - where she ended up earning her DPhil [Doctor of Philosophy] in Modern Languages and Literatures in 2001. Anna was doing this fantastic research into how Soviet Jews coded Jewishness. She would later go on to write a book called *Soviet and Kosher, Jewish popular culture in the Soviet Union 1923 to 1939*, which came out in 2006. I make my graduate students read this habitually. My favorite example from this book is one of her subjects who discusses a recipe for how to make kosher pork; you know, you just have to add a little sugar. Um, she's also the author of *When Sonia Met Boris: An Oral History of Jewish Life under Stalin*, as well as numerous other really, really fantastic articles and work. Uh, Professor Shternshis holds the AI and Malka Green Professorship in Yiddish studies and directs the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto. She's just completed a term as the co-editor-in-chief of *East European Jewish Affairs*, together with the late David Shneer. It's really been a pleasure to work with her on some projects around this journal. Anna is currently um, a Guggenheim Fellow and we're really happy that she can join us amidst her research. Her other awards include a number of things, but I'll just mention a couple, the President's Impact Award at the University of Toronto, as well as the Israel Bonds Women's Division Award. It's really a pleasure to have you here Anna. I've wanted to bring you to San Diego for a long time.
- 05:04 Amelia Glaser: Psoy Korolenko, who sometimes goes by his original name or Pavel Lion, or Pasha, I've also known for many years. In fact, I don't know whether you remember this or not Pasha, but I remember a conversation in the middle of the night aboard a boat on the Neva River in St Petersburg, during one of the summer klezmer festivals. I think it must have been around 2007 because I just started working at UC San Diego and I, you know, hypothetically proposed that we ought to bring him to San Diego and didn't actually manage to make good on this proposal until a couple of years ago when we first brought him to give a concert on revolutionary music, which completely packed the uh, The Loft. We had to turn students away. Um, Psoy wrote a dissertation um, about the Russian writer Vladimir Galaktionovich Korolenko. This is how, this is where the uh, the musical nom de plume comes from um, but he has he has performed on stage since 2000. He's published one book of uh, of selected essays and song lyrics, *The Hit of the Century*, as well as 14 CDs. Some of these are in collaboration with other musicians, uh, *Opa!* is one of them with Daniel Khan and Igor Krutogolov. Psoy is a member of the organizing committee for a Russian-American music festival called JetLag, which is held annually. Psoy is also known for his uh, his explorative vision of the art of translation, and he shared some of this with us at his last concert at UCSD. Tradaptation is, is the concept of the art of translation musically and also what he calls spell-art and that is you know playing with foreign texts, emphasizing linguistic distances, and multi-lingual songs. He sings in a number of

languages Russian, Yiddish, English, French, Spanish among other things. So without further ado, it's such a pleasure to have you here and I'm really looking forward to your presentation tonight.

- 07:15 Anna Shternshis: Um, thank you Amelia, and uh, honestly like every time I start thinking when we met, like how many years ago it was, I wish like, we should add 10 years to that. You know, we'll still look impressive and yet will make us feel more relevant, more contemporary. I'm really excited to be here and present this program with you.
- 07:33 [Yiddish Glory: The Lost Songs of World War II / Anna Shternshis (University of Toronto) / Psoy Korolenko (Moscow - New York)]
- 07:38 Anna Shternshis: Twenty-six years ago librarians of the Ukrainian National Library in Kyiv led by Lyudmila Sholokhova discovered 15 unnamed boxes filled with handwritten Yiddish documents, that looked something like this, in a dark, dark corner of their basement which was located in a church actually. It turned out that these papers were long presumed lost archive left behind by Soviet Jewish ethnomusicologist named Moisei Beregovsky, who Emily just mentioned, and his colleague uh, linguist Ruvim Lerner. Sadly, the only picture I have of the Ruvim Lerner is this mugshot when he was arrested by Stalin's government in 1950 for conducting this project that I'm going to talk, we're going to talk about today. Beregovsky, Lerner, and a number of other people, uh spent World War II preserving Yiddish music, stories, and jokes from Jews living and dying in the Soviet Union in ghettos, working in the home front, or serving in the Red Army. Most of the songs in this collection were created by women, many by children. Psoy Korolenko and I are the first team of an artist and a historian to work with these documents, and these documents are first - and sometimes the only - Jewish eyewitness accounts of the Holocaust in Ukraine, simply because in many places there were no survivors, or survivors did not live long enough to tell the stories, only songs remained. Of 6 million Jews killed during the Holocaust, about one and a half million were killed within the Soviet borders, and of them about 900,000 in Ukraine. None of the songs that was found in that archive have been known before. They have no parallel texts in famous collections of the Holocaust music from Warsaw, Łódź, Vilna, and other places where Jews lived and died in Europe.
- 09:46 Anna Shternshis: Some of the documents that we found in Beregovsky's collection are earth-shattering and heartbreaking at the same time. For example, there is a note written by a little kid who was interned in a very short-lived Berdichev Ghetto. Uh, this is the monastery of Berdichev. A ghetto there existed only for a week or ten days, and this is a town of a large Jewish community uh, where, as soon as Germans invaded Berdichev, they rounded up all the Jews put them in that monastery, and killed them within a few days. So the note is dated within that time frame and uh, you know, the another person who, one of the people who was

killed in that ghetto, was a mother of Soviet writer Vasily Grossman, known for his very long novel uh, *Life and Fate*. So one of the this note in Beregovsky's archive is very short and it only says two things: don't forget that we existed and how we died. And then it repeats in Yiddish three times - fargest aundz nit - fargest aundz nit - fargest aundz nit. Do not forget us. There are also notes from places like Ghetto of Kamenets-Podolsk uh, where 26,000 Jews from Hungary, and near, nearby parts of Ukraine, were also shot in August 1941. Uh, there are no survivors of um, of a short-lived ghetto that was established in Kamenets-Podolsk right before that massacre. They had a ghetto later, but that's a different story. And uh, we have a note written on the onset of that massacre. I'll show you that actual note. You see that it's written in Russian with um, children's handwriting because it was a child that wrote it in a very bad Russian - full of mistakes. It's a remake of a famous Russian song that says, why was I so unfortunate to be born. But it describes in detail, as many as possible, what was going on in Kamenets-Podolsk Ghetto. That's the only document we have from that place uh, from that time.

11:56 Anna Shternshis: Beregovsky and Lerner planned to publish these materials in a volume uh, called *Jewish Creativity in the Soviet Union during the Great Patriotic War*. You see this beautiful, sexy cover of that volume on your screen. You see like, it was all typed out. It even went through one round of censorship in Stalin's Soviet Union but it was never published. So today we will share some of the songs that were included in this volume and some that were not and tell you extraordinary stories behind them. Now because we're presenting this program in the midst of the pandemics, we thought we would pay more attention to how people made sense of epidemics and diseases during the war. To be honest, we didn't have to look too hard to find examples; epidemics of cholera, dysentery, tuberculosis, outbreaks of measles, and especially typhus, transmitted via fleas and human lice, literally plagued Jews imprisoned in ghettos all over Poland, Ukraine, and Transnistria. Transnistria alone - this is the area of contemporary Ukraine and Moldova, between rivers Bug and Dniester - many of 200,000 Jews who died there during the war, died from starvation and diseases, as well as cold weather. Many stories and songs that you will hear today tell us how people made sense of their lives during those scary months between summer of 1941 and the end of 1943; especially during the winter of 1941, the coldest one in recorded history of European winters of the 20th century, when pandemics became major killers.

13:41 Anna Shternshis: So our first song is called *Transnistria Lullaby*. It was recorded in 1945 by uh, Beregovsky from um, six different kids, but you have two examples here uh, on the screen for you. One of those children was named Rut Upleger. She was a student of the fifth grade of school number 18 in a town of Chernovitz and another one was from a child, I don't know the gender, L. Vinakur. They both said to Beregovsky that they heard that song in winter of 1942. Uh if you look in the screen closely, you will see that these songs are written in Yiddish with,

handwritten. These are these children who wrote it in those notebooks that they used in schools, and that's because after they sang their words to Beregovsky he always asked them to write down the words to make sure he didn't miss any. So these are the documents that uh, the original handwriting of those children who survived the Holocaust in Transnistria and wrote down those long songs with this beautiful handwriting right after the war in 1945. I will explain later why kids were such an important part of uh, sources for Beregovsky, but for now please welcome Psoy Korolenko with the *Transnistria Lullaby*.

15:05 Psoy Korolenko: [*Singing in Yiddish and playing the piano* - Transnistria Lullaby, Translation: Hindy Abelson / The engine's humming, rushing / The Train whistles and chugs / With us, the hunted, taken to the River Bug / From afar the Dniester glimmers / As if it's sending me good cheer / from my sister and mother / Who are already here / But we arrive and all we see/is famine and despair / Now in the picturesque Ukraine / its death that greets us there / Typhoid, loneliness and cold / No one here is spared / Rarely can even the largest battle / bring so much death / Here no tombstones, markers, graves / identify who died / Instead in poisoned pits we're tossed/piled high from side to side / The storm can't last forever though / This bitter war must end / Then we'll be bathed in sunshine and / make victory our friend / And then the freed among us / our homes will live to see / The dead will keep each other warm / but we'll once more be free]

19:19 Anna Shternshis: I will clap for Psoy for all of you; I know you want to. Um, in addition to typhus, this dark lullaby talks about the deportation of Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina into the northern parts of Transnistria. During winter 1941-[19]42, Romanian soldiers kicked out 150,000 Jews from their homes and forced them to walk to Dniester shore. Tens of thousands of people died on the way from starvation and cold; many of them ended up in ghetto in Bershad, located in Vinnytsia region of Ukraine. People lived there under the constant threat of death from hunger, infectious diseases, and harassment from the Romanian police. Frida Muchnik, one of the survivors of that ghetto, mentioned in her interview, done in the early 2000s for the Centropa project, that girls were in especially biggest danger in that ghetto because as she said, they were abused in beastly manner. She survived because her mom was hiding her from the very beginning, and no one knew she was there in the basement of their house.

20:39 Anna Shternshis: The mom, who is pictured here as well, the mom kept bribing the members of the Jewish Council of that ghetto, as well as Romanian police, so that they look the other way and don't look in the basement. Sometimes it didn't honor the bribes and went to the basement, but she bribed them anyway. Bribery was part of everyday life of that ghetto. And our next song uh, was recorded from a woman who also serve - also a young woman - who survived that ghetto. Uh, her name is Genya Soyfer and she was 18 in 1945. I don't have a photograph of Genya Soyfer to show you, only this handwritten paper that she, where she wrote

the words of the songs that you're about to hear. Now, we don't have her photograph, but we have something else. Frida Muchnik could not remember a single member of the Jewish Council or Romanian police who her mom bribed, but Genya Soyfer's song written as or recorded in 1945, spared no details of who exactly took the bribes and why. And also what she wished on them for that. So welcome back Psoy with a song *In the Cold Days* by Genya Soyfer.

22:03 Psoy Korolenko: [Singing in Yiddish and playing the piano - In the Cold Days, 1945, Genya Soyfer 18 years old]



In the Cold Days
English Translation: Eli Jany
Russian Translation: Psoy Korolenko

In the cold days I was taken to Balta [city in Ukraine]. I made my escape from there, and was found back at home.	Дни морозные пошли, Меня в Балту загребли. Я от них бежал домой, Они пришли опять за мной.
As soon as I get here, the <i>plutoner</i> [chief gendarme– Romanian] catches me. I spin around this way and that, and a gendarme catches me.	А как я сюда попал, Так жандарм меня поймал. Я туда-сюда ходил, Он опять меня ловил.

In the Cold Days / English Translation: Eli Jany / Russian Translation; Psoy Korolenko

In the cold days / I was taken to Balta [city in Ukraine]. / I made my escape from there / and was found back home. / As soon as I get here, / the *plutoner* [chief gendarme - Romanian] catches me. / I spin around this way and that, / and a gendarme catches me.

22:59

My tools were taken away and I was sent to the Savran [Jewish town near Bershad] forest. I escaped from there anyway, and was found back at home.	Инструменты все забрали И в Савран меня послали. Убежал опять домой, Но пришли опять за мной.
I hear knocking at my door, there are four police. I sneak out of my bed in secret, filled with fright.	Забираюсь под кровать, Вижу, мне несдобровать.

My tools were taken away / and I was sent to the Savran [Jewish town near Bershad] forest / I escaped from there anyway, / and was found back home. / I hear knocking at my door, / there are four police. / I sneak out of my bed in secret, / filled with fright.

23:43

Secretary Perlmutter [secretary of the Bershad Jewish community] screams: "People, bribe me!" Vilnits [a foreign currency speculator from Bukovina] is proud of himself, He is doing business with the pretor [chief of economy and population]	Перельмутер-секретарь Говорит: "Давай хабар!" Вильниц тоже будь здоров, Нарубил в претуре дров. Перельмутер, нос-курнос, Кто кому чего занёс? Вы на лапу где-то брали, Вот теперь сюда попали.
Snub-nosed Perlmutter, Carry a bucket of water in Balta. You took bribes so you've come to Balta [as a punishment].	

Secretary Perimuter [secretary of the Bershad Jewish community] / screams: "People, bribe me!" / Vilnets [a foreign currency speculator from Bukovina] is proud of himself, / He is doing business with the pretor [chief of economy and population] / Snub-nosed Perimuter, / Carry a bucket of water in Balta, / You took bribes / so you come to Balta [as a punishment].

24:29

In the Cold Days
English Translation: Eli Jany
Russian Translation: Psoy Korolenko

In the cold days I was taken to Balta [city in Ukraine]. I made my escape from there, and was found back at home.	Дни морозные пошли, Меня в Балту загребли. Я от них бежал домой, Они пришли опять за мной.
As soon as I get here, the <i>plutoner</i> [chief gendarme– Romanian] catches me. I spin around this way and that, and a gendarme catches me.	А как я сюда попал, Так жандарм меня поймал. Я туда-сюда ходил, Он опять меня ловил.

In the Cold Days / English Translation: Eli Jany / Russian Translation: Psoy Korolenko

In the cold days / I was taken to Balta [city in Ukraine]. / I made my escape from there / and was found back home. / As soon as I get here, / the *plutoner* [chief gendarme - Romanian] catches me. / I spin around this way and that, / and a gendarme catches me.

24:53

Anna Shternshis: I thank you, oh sorry. Thank you, Pasha. And um, I do want to say that the Perimuter, who's mentioned in that song was a businessman from Bukovina who himself was deported to Bershada in the fall of 1941, and he was in charge of food distribution there so he got a lot of hate his way, obviously. Gradually Bershada Ghetto became one of the largest ones in Transnistria. By the fall of 1941, there were 25,000 people there. By August of 1942, only 10,000 people remained, with 150 to 200 dying daily during that awful time. Many of them died from typhus. Every day a man with a horse buggy picked up bodies and dumped them in the cemetery, the photograph of which you see here. They were only buried in the spring of 1942 when they could dig a little and put them underground, the bodies. The problem of typhus was not just an internal ghetto problem; Nazi authorities, both Romanian and Germans, did not want disease to spread over the occupied territories. Jews were the easiest to get rid of to control the epidemics. Not once and not twice, Romanian authorities came to the leaders of ghettos and said, if the typhus was not under control all residents of ghetto would be killed right away. And they actually uh, acted on this - 50,000 of Jews of Bogdanovka, for example, were killed in 1941 to prevent pandemic. In order to save ghettos, a residents of ghetto, Jewish council authorities, Jewish leadership, as well as medical specialists, had to think fast on how to deal with this. Uh, it was not an easy task. They didn't have medical supplies, no abilities to isolate sick

people, not enough wood or coal to heat people's houses, and a very strict timeline with their thousands of other people lives at stake.

- 26:53 Anna Shternshis: Sometimes they succeeded, for example, in Shargorod um, a small town also in Vinnytsia region of Ukraine uh, in 1941 2,000 local Jews and 5,000 deportees from Bessarabia were put in ghetto. This is the some of the remnants of it. Uh and um uh, according to historian Jean Ancel typhus killed 4,000 people in Shargorod. The Romanian authorities threatened to kill everyone else unless things are under control within three weeks. So ghetto authorities set up a hospital, then another one, then public toilets, showers, and bathhouses. It helped a little bit but not uh, to the extent that they needed. So finally somebody had an idea to build a soap factory and sell this so both to ghetto residents and to outside villagers and that saved the ghetto. The result, the pandemic died down and epidemiologists today - who specialize in mathematical modeling - words that are the sadly too familiar to us now, calculated the doctors and soap makers working uh, in Shargorod saved thousands of lives. Twelve out of 27 doctors who were in that ghetto died themselves during while treating typhus victims.
- 28:15 Anna Shternshis: So our next song is about this enemy called typhus louse. It often happens that the worst tragedies are preserved, not through tragic songs or stories, but rather through humor - humor that helps people to live through the worst possible situations. In fact, about a quarter of songs that Beregovsky preserved from those ghettos were humorous, and this one is an example of such humor. As you can see, it condemns lice and also praises the real heroes of that ghetto, the doctors. Now this song for our program is pre-recorded uh, in today's COVID situation both, by Psoy Korolenko - and you will see it's him who is singing because you just heard him sing live - uh, but in this song, he performs it together with Toronto-based group called Payadora Tango. So this is the um, uh, original document of this song. Now I'll show you Payadora Tango. Um, the tune for this song was originally written by David Beigelman, Polish composer, who himself died in Auschwitz in 1945, and Toronto-based musicians Drew Jurecka had um and his colleagues performed it for us. And Drew also arranged it uh, for this performance. So you will hear see on the screen Drew Jurecka himself, violinist Rebekah Wolkstein, pianist Robert Horvath and double bassists Joseph Phillips, and of course Psoy uh, recording uh, performing the song. And they all pretended to be lice so that's the decoration. So -
- 29:53 [Yiddish Glory / I am a Typhus Louse / A long lost Yiddish song written in 1942 / in a ghetto in Transnistria about the typhus epidemic / Me, I am a typhus louse / And I go from house to house / As soon as I show up there, you have to go into quarantine / As soon as I show up there, you have to go into quarantine / After three years of visiting you, I'm feeling old and weak / But to tell you the truth, I'm afraid of the doctor / But to tell you the truth, I'm afraid of the doctor / But to tell you the truth, I'm afraid of the Germans / Oy, the Germans. Oy, the murderers and the

Cossacks / Oy, the murderers and the Cossacks / Suddenly, word comes that you're being sent home / Well, safe travels in your journey I'll turn my attention to the enemies / Well, safe travels in your journey I'll turn my attention to the enemies]

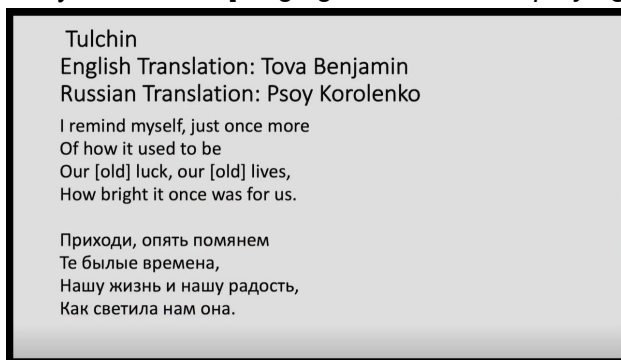
32:18 Anna Shternshis: So I hope you smiled a little when you watched this, and we're back to horror stories. Um, one of the scariest places in Transnistria was a camp named Pechora, located in the town with the same name in Vinnytsia region. And Romanians occupied this beautiful town, which was also known as Switzerland of Ukraine, at the end of July 1941. And in September 1941, Romanian authorities converted the summer estate of the aristocrat Potocki family in Pechora, which you can see a little bit of it on your slides, and also a former sanatorium for the Red Army soldiers into a death camp for Jews. It was fenced, it was hard to get out, hard to get in, and above all, no food was delivered there. The goal was death from starvation; 4,000 people died there between 1941 and 1943, and others were on their way there. Prisoners called the place dead loop, referring to the closed fences and to the fact that it was on the high uh, steep shore of the River Bug. There are no photos of Pechora from that time, but there are many of the present. The one that you see, looking at now uh, are actually, I took them from Tripadvisor. It's the place functions again as a sanatorium. It advertises massages, and baths, and actually unique microclimate because apparently, those fumes from those rivers are very good for you

33:51 Anna Shternshis: And in order not to upset vacationers too much uh, there is, on the very side door of the entrance to the uh, Pechora there is this plaque - which you see with the white thing on black - is the plaque that says, that uh, people were uh, murdered there. Uh and um, it commemorates uh, of what happened here 70 years ago when thousands of Jews from nearby Tulchyn, Bratslav, and other places of Ukraine, were deported there only to die from typhus, starvation, and other diseases. Songs created in Pechora and the ones that survived in Beregovsky's archive call it the place from where no one comes back alive. In fact, survivors of Pechora say that when people started dying from typhus there they were first buried in the nearby Jewish cemetery, but then it got really full so again like in Bershod, they buried them all together later in spring. And what you see on the right of this slide is a sign that says mass grave, or brother's grave, that commemorates that place where people died from typhus. They were also afraid to bury them in nearby villages because locals were afraid of the pandemics. Many Pechora prisoners were children. Uh, they were lifelines for others because they were small enough to smuggle outside of the camp and beg in nearby villages. They could also go down the river and get a little bit of water, and some of them also survived to tell the story and Beregovsky got them and recorded those songs from them.

35:26 Anna Shternshis: One of those kids' names was Yosef Broverman who came to Pechora from a town in Ukraine named Tulchin. I put a photograph of some sites of Tulchin for you uh because I don't know if how you imagine Ukraine. I definitely don't imagine it with such a classic, classicist-style palace as it is, but this is Tulchin. And uh, before the war, about the 3,000 Jews lived in Tulchin, only 20 of them lived to see 1944. And that person Yosef Broverman was one of those uh, survivors. Uh, he didn't come back to Tulchin after the war, and in Pechora, he lost his parents, both of whom died from typhus. And he wrote the song to commemorate their death and um you know he also wanted to talk about the town of Tulchin, which he missed a lot. And he spoke about uh, you will see, you will hear in a second, about the road that Tulchin residents had to take to Pechora. They had to walk um, about 15 to 20 kilometers there. And uh, you know, by a coincidence one of my classmates - with whom I studied in Moscow many years ago in high school, Nikolai Gotsa - actually comes from Tulchin. And uh, he's not Jewish. He was born in 1974 like I was and, you know, we were just talking about Tulchin and about Yiddish history that was there. And he uh, said to me, well I knew it was a Jewish community, but I didn't know anything about this.

37:02 Anna Shternshis: So anyway, we read some of the memoirs of survivors from Tulchin together. And he said, wait a second, they were walking on Komissarov Street from Tulchin to Pechora. This is the street on which I grew up. Nothing changed there since the war, so this is the photograph he took for me. And I want to show you the snowy road uh, of Tulchin up on which people walked to Pechora. And next to it is a photograph of the vegetable processing plant that was built right before the war. So this was this um chimney was probably the last thing that Tulchin Jewish residents saw uh before they left Tulchin for good. And now please, welcome back Psoy with a song called *Tulchin*.

37:47 Psoy Korolenko: [*Singing in Yiddish and playing the piano*]



Tuchin / English Translation: Tova Benjamin / Russian Translation: Psoy Korolenko

I remind myself, just once more / of how it used to be / Our [old] luck, our [old] lives, / How bright is once was for us.

38:18

Our suffering [and] our crying
Have no relief, no end in sight
Oh, oh, my youthful years
The Germans have stolen away

Наши муки, наши слёзы,
Им конца и края нет.
Ой вы годы молодые,
Немец их отнял навек.

Our suffering [and] our crying / Have no relief, no end in sight / Oh, oh, my youthful years / The Germans have stolen away

38:35

But even now all around the budding trees
Everything is blossoming, blooming,
growing green.
As our lives used to flourish,
Back then, in Tulchin.

Только юные деревья
Зеленеют по весне.
Так и мы цвели когда-то
В нашем славном Тульчине.

But even now all around the budding trees / Everything is blossoming, blooming, growing green / As our lives used to flourish, / Back then, in Tulchin.

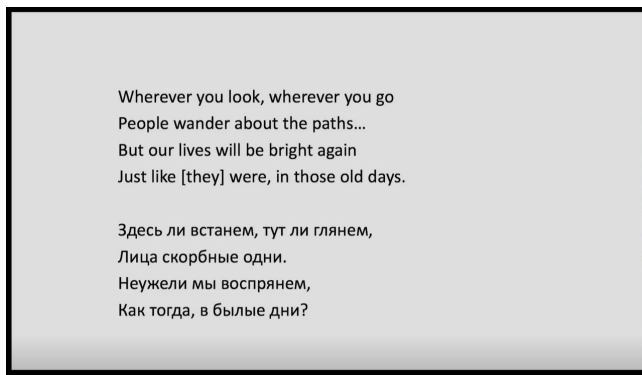
38:52

The time comes when the trees
Shed all the beautiful blossoms,
Just like this fickle, fleeting life of ours
[Which] is now losing its bloom.

Но однажды и с деревьев
Вдруг слетит цветенье прочь.
Так и в яркой этой жизни
Каждый день сменяет ночь.

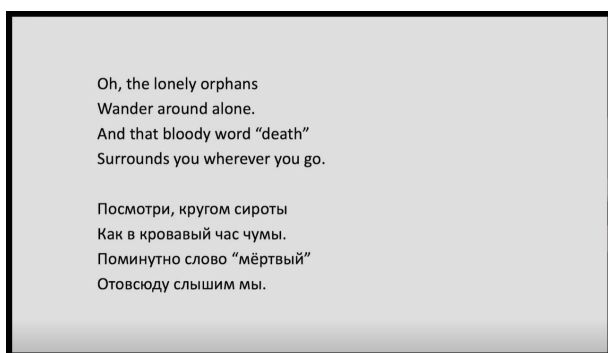
The time comes when the trees / Shed all the beautiful blossoms, / Just like this fickle, fleeting life of ours / [Which] is now losing its bloom.

39:10



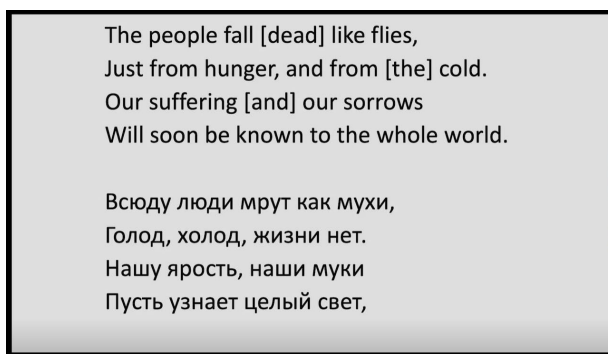
Wherever you look, / wherever you go / People wander about the paths... / But our lives will be bright again / Just like [they] were, in

39:30



Oh, the lonely orphans / Wander around alone. / And that bloody word "death" / Surrounds you wherever you go.

39:48



The people fall [dead] like flies / Just from hunger, and from [the] cold. / Our suffering [and] our sorrows / will soon be known to the whole world.

40:07

Such loss will never happen again
[This waste of] innocent Jewish blood
[The blood] that's now spilling
In Europe, at the [hands] of the bandits.

Чтоб напрасно не пропала
Кровь невинная людей,
Та, которой всю Европу
Окропил палач-злодей.

Such loss will never happen again / [This waste of] innocent Jewish blood / [The blood] that's now spilling / in Europe, at the [hands] of the bandits.

40:25

It is because of [them] that people
wander
On the paths to Pechora
Let us shine our light-filled lives
From the previous days.

Все идем долиной смертной,
Всех в Печоре ждёт беда.
Но не гаснет в нашем сердце
Свет надежды никогда.

[It is because of [them] that people wander / On the paths to Pechora / Let us shine out light-filled lives / From the previous days.

40:42

Let us respond to the murders:
Brothers, [we will] resist with an uprising,
We will take charge, brothers,
With rifles in our hands.

Так давайте же скорее
На убийц нагоним страх!
Потревожим их, евреи,
С трёхлинейками в руках.

Let us respond to the murders: / Brothers, [we will] resist with an uprising, / We will take charge, brothers, / With rifles in our hands.

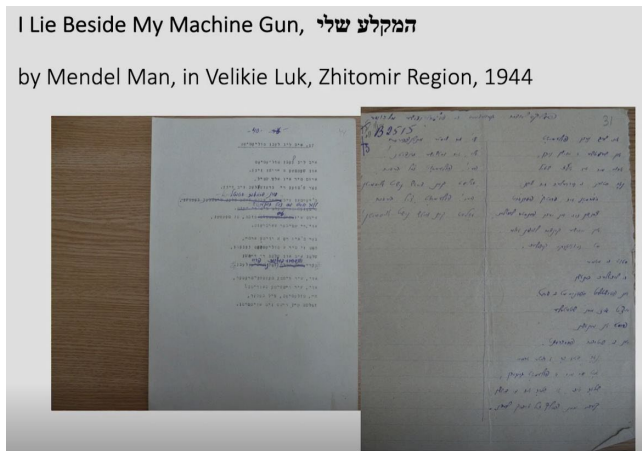
40:58

Anna Shternshis: Thank you, Pasha. Uh, this is one of the few songs that you hear today that didn't come, we performed with a different tune, of course, some of you recognized the tune by written by Fred Schnittke already after the war. But there is a reason for that uh, which I can address in Q and A if people are interested. But I wanted, meanwhile, I want to talk about *vintovka* which is a Yiddish word for rifles because next, I want to talk about another chapter of Soviet-Jewish history that is reflected in those songs, and that is 500,000 Jews who served in the Red Army. What we learned from this archive, and this is something we did not know from

thousands of oral histories of Soviet-Jewish war veterans, and that is that during the war they sang in Yiddish about their experiences. Many of them sang about revenge. In fact, a lot of the songs were very angry and they called on soldiers to abandon their human side and see enemy as an animal that has to be killed, as opposed to a human. A person who came up with the slogan by the way was a Soviet journalist, also Jewish origin named Ilya Ehrenburg who was by far the most famous Soviet journalist of his time, who published an article in 1941 called *Kill the German*.

42:18 Anna Shternshis: Uh you know, *New York Times* when it republished it uh, it um, made it a little bit more politically correct and actually called it *To Kill the German*, in Russian, it's called simply *Kill!* And uh, you know, this article just uh um, called on soldiers to uh, kill without mercy. A lot of songs written in the Soviet Union during this time essentially took lines from this article and sang them, because it became so popular and resonated with so many people, including songs that were created in Yiddish. Also, those Yiddish songs really praised weapons - rifles, pistols, rockets - because they helped them to fight against the army that targeted their people. Above all, Jewish soldiers sang loudly and clearly that Jewish men do not avoid fighting in the war. And they were fighting themselves against an antisemitic myth that spread during the time, and that is that Jews are sitting out the war in Tashkent [Uzbekistan], and not fighting. So the songs are saying, no we're fighting, and we're fighting. We're using all these weapons. So praise of weapons is very prominent in the songs. And our next song that you will hear is actually called *I Lie Beside My Machine Gun*.

43:36 I Lie Beside My Machine Gun, **המקלע שלי**
by Mendel Man, in Velikie Luk, Zhitomir Region, 1944



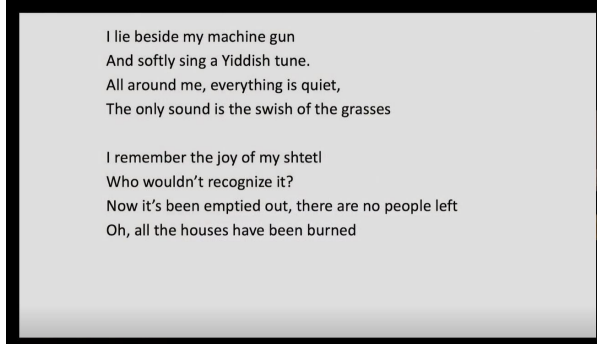
I Lie Beside My Machine Gun / by Mendel Man, in Velikie Luk, Zhitomir [Zhytomyr] Region, 1944

43:36 Its original title was *I Love My Machine Gun* but we changed it a little bit for contemporary sensibilities. It was collected by a man named Mendel Man. Uh later after the war, he became quite a known Yiddish writer, also an artist, a friend of Marc Chagall. But during the war, he was a Polish refugee from Łódź, who served in the Red Army. And, as we learned from this archive, spent some time collecting

songs from his fellow Red Army soldiers who were singing in Yiddish. So please, welcome back to Psoy with the song called *I Lie Beside My Machine Gun*.

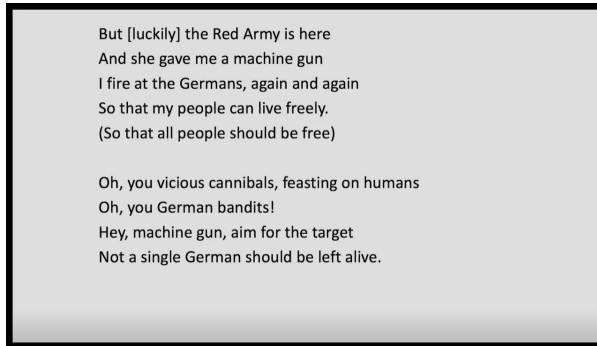
44:13 Psoy Korolenko: [*Singing in Yiddish and playing the piano*]

44:19



I lie beside my machine gun / And softly sing a Yiddish tune. / All around me, everything is quiet, / The only sound is the swish of the grasses / I remember the joy of my shtetl. Who wouldn't recognize it? Now it's been emptied out, there are no people left / Oh, all the houses have been burned.

44:53



But [luckily] the Red Army is here / And she gave me a machine gun / I fire at the Germans, again and again, / So that my people can live freely. / (So that all people should be free) / Oh, you vicious cannibals, feasting on humans / Oh, you German bandits! / Hey, machine gun, aim for the target / Not a single German should be left alive.

45:45 Anna Shternshis: As you notice - thank you Pasha - as you noticed, maybe there is a line that um, it gets repeated twice in that song, one says *I fight the Germans so that my people live free* and then *so that all people should live free*. So, there is a story here. So I'm showing you here the document with uh, you know, typed up first and then with some corrections. So those corrections are result of censorship. Now Beregovsky and his colleagues did not work, of course, in the atmosphere of academic freedom. It's not that they could record everything that they heard, or publish everything that they heard, to say nothing of people who had to make decisions whether or not they sing songs to them. But in this particular song, Beregovsky was worried that it conveys too much of a nationalist feeling. It was all about uh, defending Jews. It was all about missing Jewish life and to Beregovsky,

even this song written in 1944, in Yiddish uh, by a Jewish soldier, seemed a little too Jewish, a little too nationalist. So he didn't want to be accused in spreading Zionist ideas that could be read that way, or Jewish nationalist ideas. So uh, *my people* were replaced with *all people*, and the song was not published anyway.

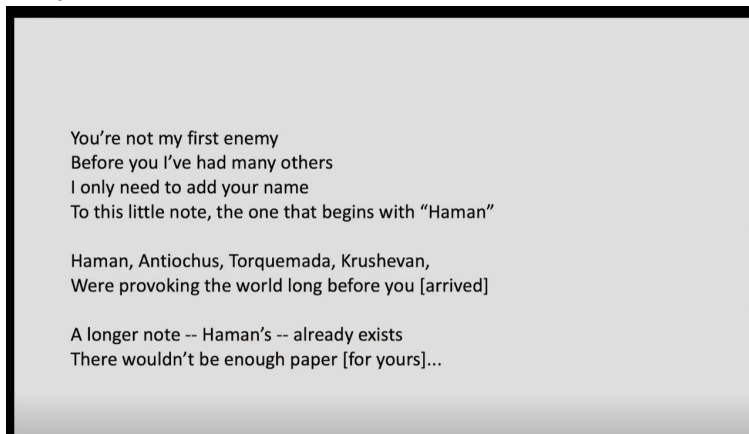
47:05 Anna Shternshis: And uh um you know, so it didn't help, but it's an interesting uh, note from the time. Another thing that I want to say about this song is that uh, this is Mendel Man together with Marc Chagall and um, you know, his son Tzvi Man, lives in Israel and uh, I spoke to him not so long ago and uh we talked about his father's uh, uh, literary works and Mendel Man was extremely prolific. He wrote thousands of pages of novels and poems, most of them about his experience in the Soviet Union. Uh you know, there are a lot of details about a lot of things, about how he ran away from Łódź, how he got married in Rovno [Rivne, Ukraine], how he ended up in Mordovia, how he got drafted in the Red Army. There's a lot of things. One thing that he doesn't mention is that he was collecting songs about uh, from Red Army soldiers. So when I first mentioned it to Tzvi Man he says, well maybe it was a different Mendel Man. And then we looked at the documents together. You know, when we looked at the documents together - you see here, on the right side, you have it handwritten - Tzvi Man recognized his dad's handwriting. So, of course, it's the same in Mendel Man, and of course, that tells us one more time, that in this particular case, in the case of this archive, history, and memory are simply telling very different stories of the past.

48:28 Anna Shternshis: Now we're going to move on and talk about another experience of Soviet Jews, and also some Polish-Jews, and that is survival in Soviet rule. About 1.4 million of Soviet-Jewish citizens and 250,000 Polish Jews survived the war in Central Asia, Siberia, Ural Mountains, and other parts of Russia, away from the front. There's a long story of how they ended up there, Polish-Jews, sometimes Romanian-Jews, but not uh, to the less extent often became, came under the Soviet rule between 1939 and 1940. Many of the business and religious leaders and political leaders of the Jewish community were arrested by Stalin's uh, Soviet government, and deported to jails. They were arrested because uh, there were concerns about them being anti-Soviet. So those jails happened to be located in the faraway places of the Soviet Union, away from the war. So if 300,000 Polish-Jews have survived the war, 250,000 did so in the Soviet rule. Many of them in places like Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. There were also Soviet Jews who were evacuated by the Soviet government in those places, because they worked at strategically important industries, such as weapon making, or food processing, or either in the cloth-making industries - industries that were necessary for the Soviet war effort. Some Jews who ended up in Kazakhstan during this time were arrested by Stalin long before the war began. They were not Polish Jews at all as well, but they were arrested for religious activities or, you know, for any other alleged crimes.

50:10 Anna Shternshis: One of those people was a man named Yakov Merzon, I wish I could show you his photo, but I don't have it. Um, he was a teacher and then a former rabbi from Krivoy Rog [Kryvyi Rih], in Ukraine. He was arrested in 1937 and ended up in jail in Kazakhstan, from where he was released in 1944. And by that time, he was very sick. He lost all his teeth and he had no money. So he was begging on the streets of Almaty. Kids, refugee kids, were making fun of him. They were throwing rocks at him, and dirt at him, and at some point, he yelled at them and cursed them in the Hebrew. One of those kids went back home, told their parents about a strange, scary beggar with no teeth, who swears at kids in Hebrew. Parents went to investigate what's up, and they found out who he was, and hired Yakov Merzon to teach their kids a little bit of alphabet, to teach them a little bit of Jewish alphabet, and writing. As Yakov Merzon was doing that, he was recording songs that he heard from those children.

51:22 Anna Shternshis: Because most of them were Polish refugees, some of them were Romanian refugees, and because he was, he really didn't trust the Soviet regime, he didn't really trust the Soviet system - he was scared for himself and for those children - as he recorded their songs, he did not write a single name of a single child. So all of them are written down in that notebook as anonymous. At the end of 1945, he mailed that notebook to Moisei Beregovsky because he heard he was collecting this music. And in 1946 he died, not knowing whatever happened to this material. And what happened to that material is, because of Yakov Merzon, we now have living voices of Jewish refugees who were in Kazakhstan during the war. So the song that you will hear next comes from that notebook. I will show you a little bit of that later. Uh, it's called *Purim Gifts for Hitler* and it is written by an anonymous child. I know Purim is a little bit far away, but the message of the song I hope will resonate with you.

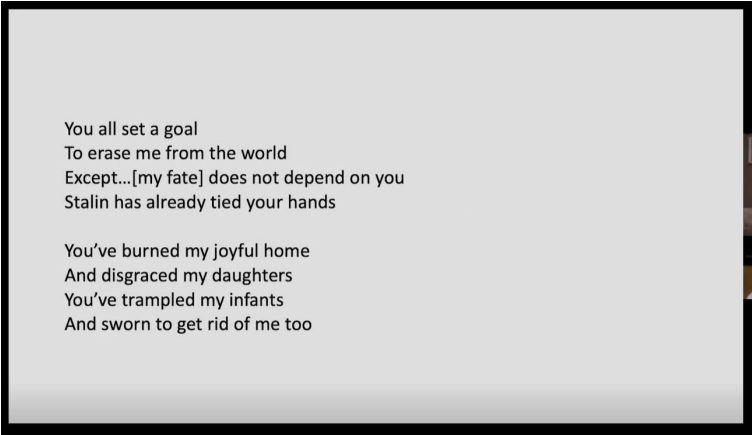
52:26 Psoy Korolenko: [*Singing in Yiddish and playing the piano*]



You're not my first enemy / Before you I've had many others / I only need to add your name / To this little note, the one that begins with "Haman" / Haman, Antiochus, Torquemada, Krushevan / Were provoking the world long before you

[arrived] / A longer note -- Haman's -- already exists / There wouldn't be enough paper [for yours]...

53:20 Psoy Korolenko: [*Singing in Yiddish and playing the piano*]

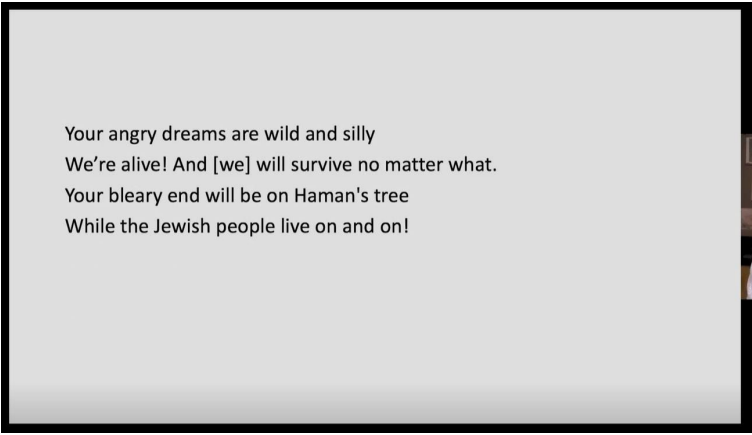


You all set a goal
To erase me from the world
Except...[my fate] does not depend on you
Stalin has already tied your hands

You've burned my joyful home
And disgraced my daughters
You've trampled my infants
And sworn to get rid of me too

You all set a goal / To erase from the world / Except...[my fate] does not depend on you / Stalin has already tied your hands / You've burned my joyful home / And disgraced my daughters / You've trampled my infants / And sworn to get rid of me too

54:16 Psoy Korolenko: [*Singing in Yiddish and playing the piano*]



Your angry dreams are wild and silly
We're alive! And [we] will survive no matter what.
Your bleary end will be on Haman's tree
While the Jewish people live on and on!

Your angry dreams are wild and sill / We're alive! And [we] will survive no matter what. / your bleary end will be on Haman's tree / while the Jewish people live on and on!

54:45 Anna Shternshis: Oh thank you, Pasha. Um so before we move on to the next song, let's just quickly tell you about this *am Yisroel khay*, which I'm sure you loved hearing. But you see like, when we worked with this song, to start with the song just ended up with Haman dying on the tree, and there was nothing about am Yisroel khay. And it turns out that uh, the original version, the handwritten you see from the notebook of Merzon, actually had it. And this uh, is how once again we see Beregovsky going through censorship and changing the message of this song in order to fit the culture, and where he had to publish those materials. In summer

1944 all workers of the Cabinet for Studies of Jewish Culture where Beregovsky worked returned to war-torn Kyiv. Ukraine lost almost 900,000 Jews to Holocaust. In some areas, less than one percent of Jews survived, and during those three years that followed from 1944 to 1947, Moisei Beregovsky, Ruvim Lerner, [unclear], and some others went to conduct fieldwork in Ukraine and even went to a DP [displaced persons] camp in Berlin. The goal of this trip was to collect stories and, and songs from survivors.

- 56:07 Anna Shternshis: One of the things that Beregovsky noted in his notebooks is what he saw was not just devastation, but the sense of emptiness - and we heard it also Mendel Man's song about machine gun. They felt like the places that they visited were empty. Now, of course, they were full with people. There were many people living in Shargorod, Tulchyn, and Bratslav, and Chernivtsi. It's just that they were empty of Jews, and it was very hard for them to also find people to uh, interview and find songs from because survivors were really afraid to talk about those experiences. According to Soviet legislation, those people who survived the war, under the Nazi occupation, had to prove that they were not collaborating with the German occupiers, especially if they were Jews. Because the idea was, that if a Jew survived the they must have done so, something so horrible against the Soviet regime that Germans left them alive. So most survivors could not prove that they did not collaborate. Most of them survived by a miracle, and instead, they would just hiding what happened to them.
- 57:13 Anna Shternshis: Except for one group, and that one group are the group of people who are notoriously horrible at keeping secrets. I, if we were in person, I would have asked you what you think, who this group is. But I will just answer my own rhetorical question myself, of course, these were children. And Beregovsky went to schools and started asking them. Hannela, where were you during the war? She would say I was in Tashkent like parents would tell her. Hannela, do you know any songs? Sure I do, and Hannela would go on and sing all these songs about Pechora, and ghetto, and all this. Beregovsky would ask, where did you hear that? She says, what do you mean where I heard that? I spent three years in that ghetto. And that's how he collected the bulk of the material that ended up in this archive. But emptiness was still bothering him. And, what also he was looking for, it was very hard to find from kids. And that is the sound of music. So far everything you heard was recorded on paper with, sometimes with notations but Beregovsky was also desperately looking for people who could play some instruments. And uh, and the, you know he was a trained ethnomusicologist, actually, the first person in the world to have a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology - written on the material of klezmer music - which was awarded to him in Moscow in 1943.
- 58:36 Anna Shternshis: By the way, the next person in the world who got the Ph.D. in ethnomusicology, based on klezmer music, was Hankus Netsky which happened in Boston uh, uh in the 1970s. And Beregovsky was very interested in finding

those tunes. Whenever he could find them, the ones that survived the war, he would write them down. One of such tunes, the instrumental tune with no words, was called *Parom*, a boat, ship. He recorded it from a musician in 1945; although originally the tune uh, was recorded in 1907. So it's a very old um, it's in a very old piece. So today we decided uh, to present it for you for the first time since 1945 in the form of an instrumental performance uh, performed exactly as recorded by Beregovsky, uh from by Toronto-based cellist Beth Silver who uh, got this piece of paper. You will see like, this is how it looks like uh from Beregovsky, and then made a performance out of it. So today is the world premiere of this piece, which gives us a chance to hear exactly what Beregovsky heard in 1945 in some unknown performer in Chernivtsi.

59:58 [Dar Parom Ferryboat (1907), recorded in 1947. Cello: Beth Silver (Toronto, 2021)]

1:01:15 Anna Shternshis: World Premiere. Um, our next song uh, is more optimistic. It was recorded in 1947 from a survivor of an unknown ghetto in Transnistria but, from a person named Urintsev. He performed the song at a concert that, you know, was a spontaneous concert that was organized to celebrate victory in World War II. Uh and, uh um it uh, was said, we don't know exactly what tune it was set to so, Psoy is using his imagination, but we do know that this song uh, speaks of words that truly resonate with us today. It celebrates victory and hopes for the world with no fascism. So please welcome Psoy back, hold on a second, with a song called *The Victory Song*.

1:02:10 Psoy Korolenko: [*Singing in Yiddish and playing the piano*]

The Victory Song	
English Translation: Tova Benjamin	
Russian Translation: Psoy Korolenko	
The end will soon arrive,	Страданиям и горю
[The end] of suffering and of pain.	Конец наступит скоро.
You [Germans] will beat [your chests,	Враг будет трепетать,
saying] "I have sinned,"	Зубами скрежетать,
And you will gnash your teeth	За те дела свои, каких не
When you see what evil was done to us.	сосчитать.

1:02:28 Psoy Korolenko: [*Singing in Yiddish and playing the piano*]

Now clink glass after shot glass	А мы тогда с рюмашкой
And grab your young wife Rayzel.	И с нашей милой Машкой
Go, join the dance floor,	Как чокнемся, так сразу и
and have a little twirl,	плясать!
Because you will have your fill of	Пусть гулко сердце бьётся,
drinking,	И много водки льётся,
The liquor will keep flowing	Еврейский булгар будем
And we're going [to dance]	танцевать!
a Jewish bulgar.	

1:02:49 Psoy Korolenko: [*Singing in Yiddish and playing the piano*]

Now come and be joyful	Будем веселиться,
And have another drink --	Будем выпивать
Because those German murderers	За то, что подлым фрицам
Will be out of our lives forever.	У нас больше не бывать.
This Soviet land	Советская страна
With its Stalinist hand	По-сталински, сполна
Will show what it can.	Покажет им, на что она годна!

1:03:11 Psoy Korolenko: [*Singing in Yiddish and playing the piano*]

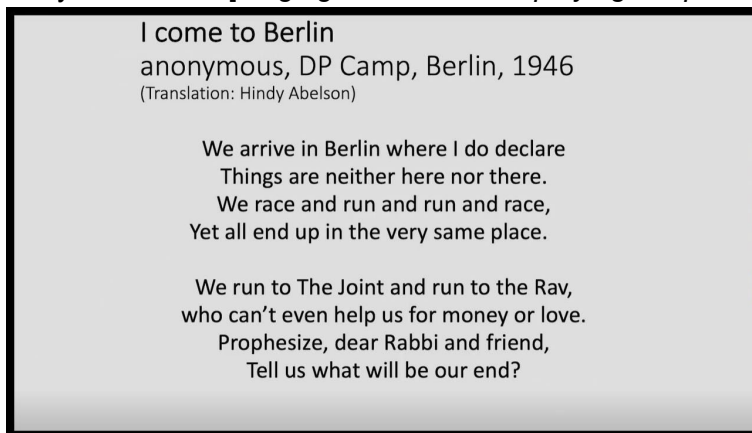
Drink yet another l'chaim	Так выпьем же, лехаим
For the Red Army	За армию, до дна,
And give a toast to them all	Здоровья ей желаем,
That they should be healthy and	И да здравствует она!
well,	И Вам, товарищ Сталин,
And toast the comrade Stalin,	Мы желаем долгих лет,
May he have many years before him,	Ведь мы же твёрдо знаем,
Because in the whole wide world	Вам на свете равных нет!
There is no other like him!	

1:03:41 Anna Shternshis: Uh okay, now I finally saw the messages on my Zoom saying that we're way over time. So we're going to just wrap up. I'll say uh, one last thought and then open it for Q&A, if you still have energy for that. Um, the book that Beregovsky and Lerner and his colleagues prepared with all the songs the stories was never published. Hitler was gone but Stalin, who the songs praised uh as you heard just now, changed his attitude to Jews and government began to

persecute them. In 1949, the Cabinet for Studies of Jewish Culture was closed. In 1950 Moisei Beregovsky was arrested and only released from jail in 1956. Ruvim Lerner was arrested in 1951 and also released in 1956. Both of them - this is Beregovsky in 1950, right after he lost his job. This is when he came out from jail. Uh, Beregovsky died thinking that his work during World War II has been lost forever. Like biblical Moses who never got to see the promised land, he never got his to see his songs being performed anywhere, let alone across the globe from his native Ukraine - let alone on Zoom. So today we wanted to thank him and praise his heroic efforts that preserve the voices of people singing for the darkest chapter of modern Jewish history.

1:05:05 Yes, it's, yes it's 70 years after the archive was closed but the songs did see the light of day, and they made it to San Diego via technology. And we want to thank Amelia Glaser uh, of the University of [California] San Diego, Erik Mitchell, Susanne Hillman, Yekta Mohammady, Marci Bretts, Lynn Burnstan, and everyone in San Diego for making that happen. I also want to thank Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the University of Toronto that supported this research for the past six years. Above all, we're grateful to you, for your attention tonight. And we are finishing up with a song that celebrates the return to normalcy when Jews finally stop laughing at Hitler and start laughing at themselves. This is a song that Beregovsky and his colleagues recorded in a German DP [displaced persons] camp, and the humor is at the Jewish relief organizations that helped survivors there. Thank you and after Psoy is finished with the song, I will start a stop-sharing screen, and that you're welcome to ask questions.

1:06:14 Psoy Korolenko: [*Singing in Yiddish and playing the piano*]



1:06:44 Psoy Korolenko: [*Singing in Yiddish and playing the piano*]

"Have faith my brother" is all he can say.
"In a few more weeks you'll be on your way,
You'll come ashore on that other side,
where I promise all will be alright."

And at The Joint, the new office boss,
who speaks no Yiddish appears at a loss.
When we say "s'iz azokh un vey!"
He thinks we're saying "it's OK."

1:07:08 Psoy Korolenko: *[Singing in Yiddish and playing the piano]*

But have no worries, all is well
The fellow from Sochnut is swell.
He hands us a "certificate".
After a storm, the sun appears
We've learned that truth throughout the years
We now won't lose our courage,
Our foes are all kaput, it seems.

1:07: Psoy Korolenko: *[Singing in Yiddish and playing the piano]*

Berlin is now in one big clutter,
Their scum is floating in the gutter.
While I, people of Israel, proceed to dance and sing
a hora, "Am Israel, Hail!"

This song could still go on for long,
But I feel tired, not too strong.
"Whatever will be will be" I sigh.
Hitraas, adieu, good bye!

1:08:13 Anna Shternshis: Thank you very much.

1:08:15 Susanne Hillman: Yes thank you both, very much. Uh, that was a truly wonderful and moving program. And uh, I hope Anna and Pasha, you will be able to read the comments. Uh, there are some very uh, nice and appreciative comments uh, there. So we have a couple of questions, probably more. I see the number

increasing. So the first question is from Deborah uh, for you Anna. Um, what did you mean when you said that history and memory tell different stories? Could you elaborate on that?

1:08:49 Anna Shternshis: Sure. So uh, what I mean by that is this, we have a lot of sources on the Soviet-Jewish war experience that uh, you know, that come from uh, people - oral histories uh, for example. Shoah Foundation uh recorded thousands of interviews with Soviet survivors of the Holocaust. Blavatnik Project recorded over a thousand interviews with Soviet-Jewish war veterans. There are projects like Fortunoff Archive at Yale [University] uh, that again interviewed the survivors on different topics. And a lot of them talk about what happened to them during the war and uh, not a single person - well I mean, I didn't read all thousands but I read a lot - not a single person mentions a single one of these songs. None of these songs survived in popular memory. And, you know, we're taught to think about, music goes last. You know, people would remember music because that's how our brain is wired, our stories are told from music, but that is not what happened there. Uh, people were asked about music and they just did not remember it. And so, that's one thing.

1:09:58 Anna Shternshis: Another thing is, there are a lot of things that, in the documents of the time, mattered. For example, who exactly was taking bribes in those camps? Who was a hero? Who was a villain? These people are named with their first and their last names in these songs. In later day oral history interviews, very rarely people from uh, you know, talk about those names. If they talk about Jewish villains, you know, people who - maybe a Romanian Jews who ended up in those ghettos or Bessarabia and Bucovina - and that, you know, there was a lot of tension between the groups and people will not be named because that doesn't seem appropriate to talk about this kind of hostility in today's world. So another, but the songs, they don't know yet what will be appropriate, so they talk about that. Another thing we see in this music that we don't see in today's, in a later kind of testimonies, is the story of revenge. These songs are very angry. They're very graphic in description of violence. They don't have an idea what it means, never again. Like today, when we talk about Holocaust, we talk about never again. Uh, you know, a concept that means we have to learn what happens, what happened, we have to know uh, our history, and then we have to move on. Well, the sentiment in that time is we have to know what happened and we have to kill everyone who's killing us. So today that kind of stuff, sensitivity, does not come across uh, well, and doesn't show up as often in oral histories. But it's very prominent in songs like this. So um, history and memory - in my view - are telling these different versions of that history. So I hope it answers your question Deborah, but if not then I can follow.

1:11:39 Susanne Hillman: Thank you. We have another a very interesting question from Greg, and this is a question for both of you I think, or maybe um, primarily for

Pasha. I'm not sure. If you only had the lyrics, how did you reconstruct the accompaniment? How did you reconstruct the melodies for these songs?

- 1:11:59 Psoy Korolenko: Uh, there were several different directions which depended on some details. For example, some songs actually did really point at some known, popular Yiddish, or Soviet, uh, or Jewish-Russian-Soviet song by some lines, which were obviously quotations. But some other songs we had to reconstruct uh, re-imagine. The, the basic idea was that a simple amateur uh, author would create the song using popular tunes, Soviet tunes, their Soviet education, and very much, too much extent uh, songs from films. Many films were popular among soldiers. Some films were about war. Some films were featuring characters which were actually, they, they latently performed the Jewish identity. For example, Mark Bernes' character in the in the film two battlers uh, *Two Warriors* actually features a central character who is obviously Jewish, though it's never been mentioned in the movie. He's from Odessa; his name is Arkady, which is some kind of a Russian name but popular among Jews at the time, and so on. And he would sing songs, and these songs were popular um, part of uh, part of popular culture in the Soviet Union, which was influenced by the Jews and which influenced the Jews. So it has a significant Yiddish song influence in it. Not necessarily because of the Jewish background of the authors, it was just one of the very important world trends at that time. It was connected with popular songs, with the light variety song, with theater song, theater character songs, and cinematographic character songs.
- 1:14:04 Psoy Korolenko: So we paid a lot of attention. To me, it was big inspiration uh, songs like those that come from Mark Bernes' repertoire, and similar. Also, of course, there was a bunch of popular Yiddish songs, popular songs which are part of their heritage. We also considered such. Like in the song about *My Machine Gun*, we use some sort of Jewish, or Romanian-Jewish, doyna for a melody. It's very intuitive, improv style. Uh, and also we have we have heard some anachronisms in this program, such as Alfred Schnittke melody, which was written for a Soviet TV show decades later, after the war. But this is in the spirit, it's the character sings actually it's, it's, it, it's based on [Alexander] Pushkin's uh, Pushkin's uh, play which uh, which features a certain character whose little town was destroyed by plague, by, by black plague in Middle Ages. But in this case, we speak about what was called the brown plague, and it, this kind of devastation [foreign words] as it were, It's very, it fits well and it's in the spirit of the song. So that's why we used that one. So sometimes we were in the dialogue, not also with [19]40s, but also with later or com, or contemporary um, voices and it was some kind of reimagining the world of the implied amateur author, by using their and our outlook, as it were, both. So it was some kind of uh, chemistry and uh, this is what Daniel Rosenberg who produced the actual album *Yiddish Glories* is uh, uh, calling um, very to the point musical archaeology.

- 1:16:14 Susanne Hillman: Okay, yeah. This is fascinating. I'm so glad that Greg asked this question. Your answer was most uh, illuminating. We have a question from Julie. Julie tells us that her parents are from the region of Bessarabia, Khotyn, and Chernivtsi and she's wondering if you uh, Anna, know anybody from there?
- 1:16:38 Anna Shternshis: So um here's the story of Chernivtsi, Chernivtsi uh, it was it was uh, it's a kind of uh, I don't know if you've been there uh, Julie, or you know uh, but it looks more or less like Venice. Uh sorry, more or less like Vienna uh, but smaller and much cheaper. Uh you know, so it's, it's a European city which had a large Jewish population before the war that was a, very uh, assimilated, kind of sophisticated Jewish population. Almost nobody survived the war from the old Chernivtsi Jews. People settled in Chernivtsi after the war, but a lot of survivors from Transnistria - places that I was talking about Shargorod, and Bershad and Pechora and um you know Tulchin, like uh, places, places that had - [unclear] - they ended up in Chernivtsi after the war. So I need to know more about the story of your family in order to know what happened. If they come from Bessarabia it is if they survived the war, most likely people were deported from Bessarabia to one of those ghettos, and then some of those ghettos, uh you know, if they were lucky, a little healthier and younger, they survived and after the war went to live in Chernivtsi. So that's trajectory is possible. I have to look up what happened in Khotyn but um, most Jews who ended up in Chernivtsi after the war uh, were not from there originally. Very few survivors.
- 1:18:10 Susanne Hillman: Thank you. Uh, we have one question - I think it was already answered uh, unless I misunderstood this, uh, misunderstood it - uh, from Arthur. Where are you, Anna? I understood you're in Toronto, right? I don't know if this is a friend. You have to check out the Q&A afterwards.
- 1:18:30 Anna Shternshis: Okay uh, yes. I'm in Toronto. I'm at the University of Toronto and that's where I'm speaking from. Um yeah, but I do have a funny a remark here from Allen Weinberg who says, that we're boycotting Amazon [unclear] to the city uh, close to my heart. So um, I think you can buy it anywhere. I don't know if you're boycotting iTunes but it's there uh, as well. It's also an iCloud and also, I guess it's not a super-smart way for me to say that you don't have to pay to listen to that music. It's available for free on the website called Yiddishglory.com where you can uh, click uh, you know, on the music and all the sounds will be there. And they're also English and Russian and the Yiddish - English, Russian translations - and Yiddish originals both in Yiddish and Latin transcriptions on that website. So um, please, and also all of these songs are on YouTube. So if you put Yiddish Glory on YouTube, you will find them. Also, many of them are in form of a video which are subtitled, which in my opinion is the best way to enjoy them.
- 1:19:34 Susanne Hillman: Thank you, Anna. So uh, all that remains is to thank you both uh, from the heart. Anna and Pasha, that was truly wonderful and I do wish we could have hosted you in person, but I thank you for being willing uh, to be here in

spirit, at least in the musical spirit, and other spirit. Thank you very much. Thank you again uh, Anna and Pasha. Thank you, Amelia, Erik, and the UCSD TV team. And thank you our audience for being here with us, and spending your time with us. I wish you all a good night. Goodbye.

- 1:20:07 Anna Shternshis: Thank you so much - a sheinem dank - and thanks, Susanne.
- 1:20:10 Susanne Hillman: You're very welcome bye.
- 1:20:15 [Read Write Think Dream / The Library UC San Diego Channel / www.uctv.tv/library-channel]
- 1:20:23 [Yiddish Glory: Lost Songs of World War II / Featuring Anna Shternshis, AI and Malka Green professor of Yiddish and Diaspora Studies at the University of Toronto / Psoy Korolenko, Songwriter and Singer / January 21, 2021]
- 1:20:27 [Presented by / The Holocaust Living History Workshop / Deborah Hertz, Director, The Jewish Studies Program, UC San Diego / Susanne Hillman, Program Coordinator, The Holocaust Living History Workshop / UC San Diego Library / The Audrey Geisel University Librarian, Erik Mitchell / Director of Communications and Outreach, Nikki Kolupailo]
- 1:20:30 [UCTV / Producer, Lynn Burnstan / Production, Marci Bretts, John Menier / Editor, Marci Bretts]
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