

Dateline: New Americans

Needed: 'new approach' Found: seminar success

Several weeks ago, the School for Advanced Jewish Studies (SAJS) undertook, under the guidance of its executive director, Dr. Aharon Kessler, a series of Sunday morning seminars to teach a select group of New Americans concepts of Judaism.

To date, the program has been highly successful, with all of the participants expressing enthusiasm for the methods and understanding used by Dr. Kessler.

The approach is bi-lingual; a Russian translation of each Kessler lecture is supplied to the seminar participants. Galina Detenko, who participates in the seminars, served Dr. Kessler and the group as translator. At the beginning of each class, Galina summarizes the last lecture and discussion. "And then I lecture," Dr. Kessler told The Chronicle.



Dr. Kessler

Dr. Kessler felt that a special approach was necessary to reach the New Americans, because of their unique background, coming from atheistic Russia.

"Don't forget, when Soviet Jews come here, they face a double culture shock."

"First, there is the shock of coming into an open society. Suddenly, there is freedom which didn't exist in the Soviet Union. Here you can go to a store and buy whatever you want; in Russia you wait in long lines for the chance to buy something.

"As Galina pointed out to me, however, you develop a concept of hope waiting in a Soviet line; here, you develop a concept of reality."

"Next, they must face a Jewish culture shock, living in a society where there are Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, cranial and cardiac Jews. Don't forget, they lived in an intellectual concentration camp as far as Jewish things were concerned."

The SAJS New Americans are a highly educated group, with authors, university professors, and trained professionals in a variety of disciplines. "In the Soviet Union, they were denied opportunities to strike roots in any facet of Jewish culture. Nor have they participated in any form of active Jewish life. Now, they live in a society which is rich in Jewish religious educational and philanthropic institutions.

"Their need was acculturation into two new and distinct cultures and civilizations"—American and Jewish.

"Our first and most important objective is, therefore, to help them find their identity not only as Jews but as American Jews."

"Next, we structured a program of studies under the title: Focus on Our Heritage—The History, Culture, and Religion of the Jews' from an American, Jewish perspective. We discuss great Jewish ideas as they have contributed to civilization in general and to American Democracy in particular."

"We Russian Americans have a triple image to fulfill," Galina Detenko, former curator of the Hermitage Museum in Russia explained to The Chronicle. "We are Russian and need to read Russian literature and hear Russian music; we are now American and need to learn about our new lives; and we are also Jewish.

"For us, being Jewish was the hardest part" And that is where Dr. Aharon Kessler's New American seminars have played such a vital role for the participating Russian-Americans. "We felt we had the Jewish fate"—being singled out in the Soviet Union in one way or another—but "we had inner resistance to accept our faith. We needed another approach."



G. Detenko

Dr. Kessler provided that approach. "He gave us the main substance of Judaism—the real spirit of Judaism—by dealing with it on the highest philosophical level. Judaism is not dogma. By presenting Judaism through its intellectual outlook, he changed our minds and overcame our prejudices about religion."

Galina and her husband, a mechanical engineer at Westinghouse, visited Israel this month on their own. "I have dreamed about such a visit all my life and Dr. Kessler has inspired me greatly to go."

Praising Dr. Kessler's bilingual intellectual approach, Galina expressed hope that graduates of the seminars could continue the seminars for other New Americans.

"In Russia, we felt Jewish without knowing anything and without faith. We felt Jewish only by heart. We needed special purposes to identify as Jews. We became very proud after Dr. Kessler showed us our Jewish historical treasures. His personalty made it go."



CHILDREN dress up and act out the Purim story, as these youngsters in modern Iran are doing.

ПУРИМ — ОДИН ИЗ ВЕЛИКИХ ВЕВРЕЙСКИХ ПРАЗДНИКОВ ПРОВОДИТСЯ В ЭТОМ ГОДУ НА ПЯТНИЦУ, 20-Е МАРТА. ОН "ПРАЗДНУЕТ" В ЧЕСТЬ СВОБОДЫ ЛЕВЫЙ ВЕВРЕЙСКОГО НАРОДА ОТ УБИТОЧЬИВЫХ В ДРЕВНИЕ ПЕРСИИ / ИРАНА/. РАССКАЗЫВАЯ В ВЕВРЕЙСКОЙ "КНИГЕ О ВЕВТЕР", ПУРИМ — ИСТОРИЯ О ТОМ КАК ПЛАЧЛИВЫЕ СВИНЕННИКИ ПЕРСИЙСКОГО ЦАРЯ АМАН ПЫТАЛИ УБИТЬ ВСЕ ВЕВРЕЙСКОЕ НАСЯЩЕНИЕ, ТАК КАК ОДИН ВЕВРЕЙ МОЙХА ОТКАЗАЛСЯ ПОДЧИНЯТЬСЯ ЕМУ.

АМАН ОГНАВИ ЦАРЯ, РАСТАВИВ ПОДЛИМАТЬ СМЕРТЕЛЬНУЮ ПРИБОРОМ ВЕВРЕМ. ЗАТЕМ ОН УСТАНОВИЛ ДЕНЬ КАЗНИ ВЕВРЕЙСКОЮ, ЧТО ОЗНАЧАЕТ "ПУРИМ" НА ДРЕВНЕВЕВРЕЙСКОМ И ПЕРСИЙСКОМ ВЕВКАХ.

ВЕВТЕР, ПЕРСКАЯ ЖЕНА ЦАРЯ И ПЛАЧЛИВА МОЙХА, БЫЛА ПЕРВОНРЕЖИОНА О КОРАБОМ ПЛАНЕ АМАНА. МУЖЕСТВЕННО, ОНА ПОУЛА К ЦАРО И РАССКАЗАЛА О ТОМ, ЧТО РАДУМАНО ПРОТИВ ВЕВРЕВ. ЦАРЬ НЕ МОГ ОТМЕНИТЬ СВОЕГО СОБСТВЕННОГО ПРИКАЗА, НО ОН ДАРИТЕЛИ ВЕВРЕМ ЗАЩИТИТЬ СЕБЯ. И ОНИ, НАПРАВЯ СВОИ СИЛЫ ПРОТИВ АМАНА, ПОБЕДИЛИ.

С ТЕМ ПОС ПОЛОВИНИ ЭТОЙ ВЕЛИКОЮ ПОВЕЩЮ ОТМЕЧАЕТСЯ ВЕВРЕМЫ ВСЕГО МИРА КАК РАДОСТНОЕ ПРАЗДНЕСТВО.

ИСТОРИЯ О ПУРИМЕ ИМЕЛА МЕСТО В 5 ВЕКЕ ДО НАШЕГ. ЭРЧ, ПОЧТИ 2500 ЛЕТ ТОМУ НАЗАД.

КАК ПРАЗДНИК, ПУРИМ ОТМЕЧАЕТ ЧТЕНИЕ СПЕЦИАЛЬНОГО ПИСАНИЯ, ИМЕНУЕМОГО "МИКДАШ", КОТОРОЕ ПОСВЯЩАЕТ ИСТОРИЯ МУЖЕСТВЕННОЮ ВЕВРЕЙКУ ВЕВТЕР. КОГДА ИМН АМАНА УБИВАЮТСЯ В КНИГЕ, ОНО ЗАДУМАЕТСЯ ГРОХОТОМ ТРЕПОТОК ИЛИ ТАК НАЗЫВАЕМЫХ "ТРАГЕВЕР".

ВОСПРОИЗВЕЖЕНИЕ ИСТОРИИ О ПУРИМЕ И ОДНАВНЕ ОШЕИВАЮТСЯ КОС-ТЕМОВ ТРАДИЦИОННО ВО МНОГИХ МЕСТАХ, ОСОБЕННО В ИСРАИЛЕ.

ПУРИМ СЧИТАЕТСЯ ВЕВРЕМЫМ УДОРОЖИО ВЕВДЕЛИ И ДАЖЕ ПЬЯНОЧНО ГЛУК ДОБРОЕНО ЕВРОПЕЙСКИМИ ГАРБИНАМ НА ПУРИМ.

ДЕТИ ОДЕВАЮТСЯ В КОСТУМЫ И РАЗГРИВАЮТ ИСТОРИЮ О ПУРИМЕ ТАКЖЕ КАК ДЕЛАЕТ СОВРЕМЕННАЯ МОЛОДЕЖЬ В ИРАНЕ.

NAME-THE-PAGE

The page is looking for a name. If you are a new American and have lived in Greater Pittsburgh for less than five years, you are eligible to enter.

Send your idea to: Name-The-Page Contest
P.O. Box 7512
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213

- 1st Prize: One year Free Family Membership at the Jewish Community Center.
- 2nd Prize: One Summer Free Family membership at the Henry Kaufmann Family Recreation Park in Monroeville.
- 3rd Prize: Two tickets for the Y Music Society Series

Deadline: April 20, 1981
Don't delay.....send your entry in now.

What's that mean?

Ever wonder why you cannot understand Americans when they speak, even though you have learned English? Americans use many idiomatic expressions, sayings that mean something different than the actual words. Here's a list of some American expressions and what they mean in English.

IDIOM	MEANING
Hit the nail on the head.	You are correct.
What's up?	What is happening?
Put your shoulder to the wheel.	Work hard.
Your ears must be burning.	Someone's been talking about you.
Feeling down in the mouth.	Being sad.
Put your nose to the grindstone.	Work hard.
Right on!	I agreed with you.

Every other month these two pages will contain information, features, and news about and for the 750 New Americans who have come to our Greater Pittsburgh community during the past 5 years.

We hope and intend that the contents of these pages will

Apple Hill Russian festival



Apple Hill Chamber Players.

The Apple Hill Chamber Players of New Hampshire will be featured in "An Evening in Imperial Russia" at the Jewish Community Center, 315 S. Bellefield Ave., on Saturday, March 7 at 8 p.m.

They will play a Tschakowsky Trio Quartet by Borodin and Glinka's Divertimento Brillante on a Theme from Bellini's "La Sonnambula" for string quartet, piano and string bass.

Lending ethnic color to the festive atmosphere will be costumed students from Allderice High School's Russian Club who will dance and sing to the music of old Russia. Russian food and drink will also be served.

You have questions?

We have answers

Question: In class, my English is pretty good. But when I go to a job interview or even try to talk to Americans, I get nervous and confused. What can I do?

Answer: Don't forget that every American came from an immigrant family who had the same problems you do. There are no native Americans, except the Indians. So, concentrate and speak slowly, more slowly than you do in class. And watch the face of the American to whom you are speaking.

If he doesn't seem to understand, ask if he understands. Don't be afraid to repeat your talk. Most Americans are Patient.

Question: Everyone in America speaks so fast. I am unable to understand their English. Is it my fault?

Answer: No, it's not your fault. Just ask them to please repeat what they are saying, slowly.

Question: I overheard one of my co-workers say, "Don't they have deodorants in Russia?" What's wrong?

Americans are far more conscious of body smells than most Europeans and are offended by odors of sweat, particularly in social situations and in their offices. Knowing this, it is a simple matter to wash regularly, with soap particularly in areas where sweat accumulates, and to use as needed one of the many deodorants you can buy in the supermarket or drugstore. Combed and brushed hair is just as easy.

March Calendar

Club Shalom meets every week and is open to any and all New Americans and their guest for lectures, seminars, films, dances, and sports evenings.

March 8: At 10 a.m. Leo Rosensweig of the Internal Revenue Service and Tsiya Kelenzon, an economist from Russia, will help the New Americans with their tax returns. At 8 p.m. there will be a gala evening of dance and song to honor all of the women in the community. It will be held in the Alex Robinson All Purpose Room of the Squirrel Hill Irene Kaufmann Building.

March 15: Purim Carnival at the center for New Americans and the entire community from 4:30 to 6 p.m. The teen-age New American Rock Band will be playing Russian, Yiddish, Israeli and American folk music.

March 22: An evening of sports in the Oakland Health Center.

March 28: 8 p.m. An evening of literary readings by the editors of New Gazette, a new Russian language weekly.

help new-comers in their very difficult transition to a new and rewarding Jewish and American life. We also hope and intend that the contents will lead to better understanding the needs and concerns of the New Americans.

Dean J. Hirschfield, Chairman
New Americans Resettlement Committee



TO THANK those who have helped them to resettle in Pittsburgh, the New Americans sponsored a dance recently. It was so successful that a second dance was held.

Attention Employers:

Positions Wanted

Mr. O. General Office Work

Has experience as a general office clerk. Many years of experience as an expeditor in Russia. English good.

Mr. A. Electrician

Has 25 years of experience as an electrician with one and a half years working in the United States.

Ms. E. Bookkeeper

Has 25 years of bookkeeping experience.

Mrs. J. Electrical Draftsperson

15 years of experience as an electrical draftsperson.

Mrs. B. Computer Programmer

Experienced in COBOL. Heavy medical engineering background.

Mr. K. Assembler

10 years of experience assembling precision instruments.

Mrs. P. Mechanical Engineer

20 years of experience in material handling systems.

If you have information about a possible job for a New American, contact Inna Anin at VRC, 471-2600, Ex. 173, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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