# Language Planning for the "Other Jewish Languages" in Israel: An Agenda for the Beginning of the 21st Century

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Although small budgets have recently been allocated to governmentally controlled "Authorities" for Yiddish and Ladino, both of these languages (as well as Judeo-Arabic and Judeo-Persian) suffer from a serious lack of well-prioritized efforts in accord with their specific language-planning needs. The ultra-orthodox Yiddish-speaking community is the only one among all of the "Jewish languages other than Hebrew" which has both a continually growing number of young speakers as well as demographically concentrated residential areas with neighborhood institutions (schools, synagogues) utilizing their own vernacular. The secular Yiddish sector is much richer in modern language-related institutional infrastructure and intelligentsia but is almost in total disarray insofar as demographic concentration of young speakers, schools with adequate instructional time and young institutional leadership are concerned. Ladino is even worse off, with respect to speakers and infrastructure, but has recently moved ahead noticeably due to prominent younger leaders with a rich agenda of important goals and projects. Judeo-Arabic and Judeo-Persian both suffer from a dire lack of language-focused intellectuals as well as the absence of a dominant spoken or written variety and are still regarded by their own speakers as dialects lacking in autonomy. None of the latter three languages/varieties has either a periodical press or book-production and the last two lack even courses, teachers or pedagogic materials appropriate for young students. The current insufficiency of funds and less-than-informed efforts on behalf of governmental authorities may lead to the early demise of most "other Jewish languages than Hebrew" in Israel, with the distinct exception of Yiddish in ultra-Orthodox circles.

**As the 21st century opens, Israel, where the long-devernacularized Hebrew** language was miraculously and safely "revived" during the 20th, is now awash with other languages as well. Most of them are spoken mainly by Jews and may even support vibrant Jewish cultures (e.g., English, French, German, Russian, etc.), but only a few of them are "Jewish languages", i.e., languages initially developed in pre-modern times from within distinctively Jewish cultures and nurtured since then for distinctively Jewish practices and identities. The latter languages have had a checkered past in Israel. Some, like Yiddish, have been alternately feared, hounded and mocked; most have simply been roundly ignored, deprived of public symbolic value and kept off the public agenda. Recently, however, small budgets have been allocated to two of them (Yiddish and Ladino[1]), in support of governmentally dominated "Authorities" that have been established by acts of Knesset, in order to be of

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some assistance to them in their struggles for survival and public recognition. However, now that the concept of "one people, many cultures" has finally been openly broached in Israel (as it has in many other post-60s' centers of immigration impacted by Western concepts of multiculturalism), it is high time to recognize also that there are "even still other" Jewish languages in Israel as well (Judeo-Arabic[2] and Judeo-Persian,[3] to which this paper will devote some attention, being only the numerically most significant among them), and that these are at different stages developmentally and, therefore, in need of different types of language-planning assistance during the 21st century, if they are to have any prospects of societal (rather than narrowly academic) survival.

## Yiddish

Most of the 19th- and early-20th-century revivers of Hebrew and founders of the early Zionist settlements in Israel ("the new Yishuv ") were Central and Eastern European mother-tongue speakers of Yiddish, a language then undergoing intensive modernization and ideological (often anti-Zionist ideological) functional expansion that sometimes rejected and competed with the revival of Hebrew and the establishment of a new Jewish state. The relationships between the advocates of the two languages were often antagonistic, and the period 1900–1920 is often referred to as "the war of the languages". The older secular advocates of Yiddish (frequently lumped together as "Yiddishists", even though there were — and are today — substantial differences among them vis-à-vis Hebrew, religion, brand of socialism and even brand of Zionism) living in Israel today still tell horror stories about the persecution of their writers, newspapers, theaters and non-print media, some of which is still ongoing.[4] Religious (mostly ultra-Orthodox) partisans of Yiddish, however, tell no such tales but complain about drastic governmental undercounts of enrollments in their Yiddish-medium neighborhoods and educational institutions for children and adults.[5] These differences as to the foci of complaint reflect different agendas of repair as well and, overall, they mirror the "two-in-one" nature of Yiddish today as it enters its own eleventh century as a language of Ashkenazi[6] Jewish cultures. The secular and the ultra-Orthodox worlds of Yiddish are frequently in overt complementary distribution, and what helps the one generally does not even get to the basic facts of existence for the other.

The number of "speakers" of Yiddish in Israel has been variously estimated recently,[7] each estimator (very definitely including the Israeli Census) being suspect of harboring a bias that results in a corresponding undercount or overcount. Accordingly, estimates today vary from a low of 200,000 to a high of 400,000. Some of this range is attributable to the difficulty of estimating (and disagreement about the advisability of estimating) those who clearly understand Yiddish (some even regularly listen to Yiddish radio and attend Yiddish theatre and musical performances) but who do not speak it (although some could while others could not do so). Regardless of the exact numbers (which must also take into account the number of ultra-Orthodox speakers who avoid coming into contact with the census or with any other governmentally related personnel), Yiddish is in a very special position relative to all "other Jewish languages" (or "JLOTH", Jewish languages other than Hebrew) in Israel on several counts: It is taught at every university offering graduate studies in the humanities (the others are either taught only at some or at none); it is associated with a young, dynamic and growing demographic sector (while the others project the typical sociolinguistic profile of post-immigrational intergenerational decline); it alone among "other Jewish languages" in Israel maintains a cultural infrastructure of its own, both in its secular and in its ultra-Orthodox "wings" (however much both clienteles might be interested in governmental support only for their respective cultural institutions and aspirations); and it alone boasts a substantial number of out-of-home, out-of-residential-community and even out-of-school or -synagogue functions, both via print and in non-print media. Nevertheless, its history of being abused, denied and abandoned during and after the "war of the languages", its major losses during the Holocaust and the impending disappearance of its European-born secularist native speakers all leave Yiddish advocates with a sense of urgency and frustration with mere pomp and pretense-cures (such as is suspected with respect to the agenda of the governmental Yiddish Authority[8]).

Somewhat over two decades ago (1978), when David E. Fishman and I first reviewed the circumstances of Yiddish in Israel,[9] we concluded that it could render itself less controversial by stressing its most widely accepted "entertainment" functions in radio and theater. The minimalistic budgetary "concessions" obtained by following such a tactic (e.g., some subsidies for selected Yiddish theater performances, publications and choruses and more time — also a subsidy! — on Israeli radio than the current half hour per day) would satisfy very few secular "Yiddishists" today. Given the new

Yiddish Authority (still unfunded but finally organized after a three year "windup" squabble which delighted rather than upset the budgeting ministry), there are now even some who hope for more than simply a greater number of elective Yiddish classes in the country's secondary and elementary schools (there are around 50 such today).

The secularists, in particular, urgently need assistance in re-planting the language at home among the offspring of the few dozen young couples that they still count among their aging numbers.[10] Additionally, they need help with the preparation and employment of at least a small cadre of salaried language-intellectuals: not only teachers, writers, journalists, editors, singers and actors, but also librarians, bibliographers, archivists, and cultural (organizational) functionaries. Without such assistance — including the institution of a high-school requirement that one "additional Jewish language" be studied for at least a few years by all students (accompanied by the preparation of teachers to meet the expected demand for trained Yiddish teachers that such a requirement would engender) — the entire infrastructure of their secular Yiddish cultural space (including a dozen Yiddish periodicals, several dozen Yiddish books per year [Israel is the world-center for Yiddish book publication but only books by resident Israeli writers are included in the "several dozen" mentioned above], several dozen local "cultural groups" meeting at least monthly, several choruses, an independent writers group with its own cultural center, a single independent library and museum/archive, a single independent supplementary school and one young-people's group) will soon collapse (after spending many more than the proverbial forty years of exhausting "wandering in the desert").

The disappearance of this secularist "old enemy" could be a pyrrhic victory indeed for Hebrew, since it would leave the ultra-Orthodox champions and users of the language as undisputed masters of this turf. They seem to demand nothing for Yiddish per se, yet every assistance program that the State offers (from housing for young couples, to direct and indirect support for kindergartens, to direct and indirect support for elementary and secondary schools and teacher-training seminaries, to scholarships for young married males to spend the day in Talmudic study, etc. etc.) is community-building, and the almost totally separate ultra-Orthodox community as such is the functional field and the base of real strength for Yiddish in these social circles. They also need assistance in the preparation of language intellectuals, since in recent years they have come to recognize the existence of standard Yiddish spelling, lexicon and grammar and to slowly incorporate it into their

schools and into their print as well as non-print media. Lack of support will tend to encourage rather than discourage contact and communication with the mainstream authorities, institutions and media of Israeli life. Their demographic rate of growth is roughly triple that of the rest of the population, and their impact is likely to grow rather than to shrink during the years ahead. Ultra-Orthodox Yiddish clearly enters the 21st century with relatively good prospects for major growth. Such growth, the only one among the "other Jewish languages", also needs careful language planning under joint intra-communal and extra-communal auspices.

## Ladino

The modernization and ideologization of Ladino occurred later and reached proportionately fewer of its speakers than was the case with Yiddish. It too was devastated by the Holocaust (in the Balkans), but it had no ultra-Orthodox demographic base of its own to fall back on and no anti-Zionist radical wing, whether secular or religious, with which to offend public sensibilities. Accordingly, Ladino has not been seen as a threat to the establishment and, indeed, has often been used as a "straw man" to fend off the claims and appeals of secular Yiddishists for support. "If we support Yiddish we will have to support Ladino too," the refrain went, "and after that, who knows where the game might end?" Finally, the straw man demanded his price, and when a government-funded Authority was approved for Yiddish (in response to extensive and long-term pressure[11]), another had to be approved for Ladino so that even-handedness would be deemed to obtain.

The estimated number of Ladino speakers in Israel varies greatly, as was the case for Yiddish and for similar definitional reasons vis-à-vis the term "speakers". Estimates for Ladino are further complicated, on the one hand, by the preference of some justifiable claimants to self-select Spanish instead and, on the other hand, by the meager degree of language consciousness among most of its speakers (resulting in a very depressed degree of activism for Ladino, even in its own speech community). All in all, some number between 80,000 and 150,000 speakers (the minimum and maximum claims today in Israel) would probably not be far off the mark and clearly place the language substantially below Yiddish in this respect. The institutional presence of Ladino is also slight. Three universities teach at least one course on a rather regular basis (Hebrew University, Bar Ilan and Ben Gurion), as does one pre-tertiary school. There is also an "on-line" course,

a web site or two, an on-line language course and a solitary quarterly journal with a press run of 1000. The daily fifteen-minute radio program in Ladino has been found to have between 50,000 and 80,000 listeners.

The major out-of-home functions of the language all revolve around Ladino folklore. The governmental Authority established for the language in 1997 (initially headed and immediately set into motion by the former President of Israel [and prior Minister of Education] Yitkhak Navon, a member of a distinguished Sefardi family that traces its immediate origins back to Turkey) has primarily stressed folkloric song and dance recitals ("Bustan Sefardi") that can appeal to Ladino speakers, former speakers, partial speakers and even non-speakers from various Balkan, Latin American and North African countries of origin. Ladino advocates and activists are now looking forward to the Ladino Authority's undertaking additional efforts, such as augmenting the number of periodic publications, founding and funding local cultural/folkloric circles and organizing amateur dramatic groups.

Further along into the future, their "wish list" includes the supported-publication of new books and the republication of "oldies but goodies", in both cases in Latin letters rather than in the original Rashi script[12] traditionally employed for Ladino but now not as accessible to readers who are not otherwise exposed to that script. A museum of Ladino culture and several travelling exhibitions on specific topics (or folkloric genres) are also being given attention as is the urgent need to collect, photocopy and preserve documents, tapes and photographs pertaining to Ladino culture. Also considered to be sorely needed are two-way bilingual dictionaries (e.g., Ladino/Hebrew, but also Ladino/English, Ladino/French and Ladino/Spanish). All of the latter would substantially assist the establishment of Ladino courses (both in the public and private sectors) at various levels of advancement, almost none of which are currently underway outside the very few already mentioned above. Such courses are deemed to be very important, but neither teachers nor materials for them are currently available and are doubtlessly much needed. Also, academic research on Ladino is sorely needed to accompany the above more-widespread public endeavors, the academic and the public ultimately being hopefully able to reinforce one another (as they already frequently do in the case of secularist Yiddish).[13]

Notably absent from the above list of language-planning goals are any that deal with primary community: home, family, neighborhood and venues of informal, intimate, face-to-face interaction. Also absent are any serious aspirations in the direction of secular literature. Finally, the entire arena of

religious behavior (devotional, inspirational or instructional) is very weakly represented, if at all. These lacks need to be reviewed with the Ladino activist and lay communities so that they too can come to fully realize what such lacks imply for the language's sociofunctional future. To leave language planning as it is currently focused or directed is to make peace with an entirely non-vernacular level of intergenerational transmission, based entirely on repeated second language acquisition of folkloric and other written, recorded or sung ("performance") texts. This is a difficult row to hoe on an intergenerational basis, but, as the 2000-year-old case of Diaspora Hebrew itself amply reveals, not an impossible one where exceptionally dedicated support plus exclusion from surrounding co-territorial societies and cultures are present.

## Judeo-Arabic

Turning our attention to Judeo-Arabic, we take another functional step downward to Jewish Languages in Israel for which neither a current written standard nor a spoken standard is available. The lack of overarching standards is reflected in the various names for the spoken varieties: those of the Maghreb are currently widely referred to as Mugrabi(t), whereas those of the eastern Mediterranean are sometimes referred to as Yahudic.[14] I will focus my remarks only on the former of the two branches mentioned above, the Maghrebian Judeo-Arabic, primarily because it is the one that is better documented and better supported at both the intellectual and at the grassroots level.[15]

As is the case with respect to Yiddish and Ladino, there is a prevalent Israeli view (and expectation) that Judeo-Arabic is dead or dying, although that biased view may be subject to some degree of modification in the light of possible future Jewish immigration from various Arabic-speaking countries of origin. The number of speakers of varieties of Judeo-Arabic is estimated as being between 150,000 and a quarter million, precise estimates being handicapped by the lack of language consciousness, the contradictory tendencies both to claim Arabic *per se* (instead of Judeo-Arabic), on the one hand, and to suppress claims of anything related to Arabic, on the other hand, and, finally, the tendencies to overclaim Western prestige languages of the Maghreb such as French and Spanish.

As is true in much of the Arabic-speaking world more generally, there is no unifying spoken standard that can be used for oral communication

between Judeo-Arabic speakers derived from the entire Maghrebian area (Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Libya). Furthermore, the general public policies in effect for the re-settlement of immigrants from the Maghreb purposely scattered speakers of the same dialects over the length and breadth of Israel, so that none of them ever became a substantial part of the population in any one place. Finally, and quite differently from the cases of either Yiddish or Ladino, no single supra-regional written standard ever arose, not even in medieval Judeo-Arabic (even though the language did develop a substantial traditional, quasi-liturgical and translation literature in various regions during that time). The latter difficulty (lack of a modern, written supraregional variety), on top of the former lack (the lack of a supraregional spoken variety) places Judeo-Arabic in a different and more problematic situation than either Yiddish or Ladino, as discussed earlier. Although the written gap is not an irreparable one in the light of similar problems and language-planning experiences elsewhere (even today in the Arabic and Chinese [Mandarin] spheres and formerly in Germany, Italy and other areas of major ongoing "dialectal" divergence[16]), it is a substantial corpus-planning challenge requiring the participation of community elites, community intellectuals and community language activists, in addition to whatever additional assistance Israeli authorities themselves might be persuaded to provide from outside the Judeo-Arabic communities per se, along more multiculturally appreciative lines.

Today, given the recent crumbs of recognition finally granted to Yiddish and Ladino, a few Judeo-Arabic adherents have also begun to think of the possibility of an Authority for their language as well. The initial regional focus of the Ladino Authority on the Ladino culture of Turkish provenience (leaving in abeyance, at least for the time being, the Ladino traditions and texts stemming from the Balkans and North Africa), has encouraged some to envisage an initial Judeo-Arabic Authority focusing on the Maghrebian experience and subject to a future expansion of focus as opportunities and experience permit. Because Syrian/Lebanese Jewish, Iraqi Jewish and Yemeni Jewish identities still continue to be vibrant, the acceptance of a superordinate Pan-Judeo-Arabic identity is still weak, problematic and far off. Nevertheless, with all of the difficulties that have been mentioned, a judicious consideration of priorities would probably dictate immediate attention to the collection of linguistic and folkloristic materials across all of the aforementioned communities, and the scheduled performance of traditional dramatic and musical religio-cultural materials[17] in order to foster their

inter-communal appreciation and acceptance (indeed, even going beyond the so called "Oriental" sector, as has already occurred to some degree via Israeli radio and TV). The furtherance of the Israeli/Arabic peace process will be a major factor influencing the extent and the rapidity of such developments vis-à-vis the Judeo-Arabic scene.

University-based teaching of Judeo-Arabic language and culture courses has largely been limited to Haifa University and the Hebrew University (Jerusalem). Nevertheless, a huge amount of experience and a very enviable amount of Judeo-Arabic instructional, performance and archival material has been collected by faculty members and students over the past 20 years, with special attention at the Hebrew University being directed to the traditional and religious calques-translation materials in the language, and at Haifa University: to traditional song and poetry (including women's poetry) and holiday performance materials. The funding and the stable continuity of these efforts has always been precarious, however, would merit immediate attention and should not be delayed until the establishment of an Authority in the Judeo-Arabic fold. Of possibly equal immediate and long-range importance is the training of teachers, the preparation of teaching materials and the introduction of Judeo-Arabic courses in local elementary and secondary schools in areas where an interest in such courses is sufficient. The latter emphases cannot but foster the development of a modern written convention, at least along Maghrebian lines, and, ultimately, possibly the perfection of a supra-dialectal convention along the lines of recent Romansh and Rusyn experience.[18]

## Judeo-Persian

The European 18th- and 19th-century "love affair" with languages as symbols of ethnocultural identity, an affair that massively and simultaneously impacted Hebrew and Yiddish as well and also reached into the sphere of Ladino, has been almost entirely absent in the case of Judeo-Arabic, and even more so in the case of Judeo-Persian. Max Weinreich refers to this language as Parsic, but its own speakers use no such designation and generally only recognize separate urban varieties rather than any current overarching language. Most scholars who have devoted themselves to the language[19] recognize only its unified *medieval* written variety as constituting "Judeo-Persian" and do not apply that designation to any of its currently extant spoken urban varieties, neither separately nor when taken together.

This is an academic point of view which need not always correspond to the "facts on the ground". It is also completely contrary to the common view, both popular and academic, that "Chinese" is the language of China, even though several mutually non-comprehensible spoken languages are subsumed under that label for the common writing system.

The problems and limitations of Judeo-Persian are exactly parallel to those of Judeo-Arabic. The number of speakers is smaller than for the foregoing, but claiming it for census purposes is even more difficult, since no official Israeli agency recognizes its existence and any such claims would be reclassified as "Persian" (claimed to be spoken in Israel by about 200,000 in recent years, including Jews from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Daghestan). The speakers of the four major Jewish urban varieties in Iran have never had any pre-immigrational opportunity for inter-communal oral communication, let alone written communication, in their respective and disparate Jewish varieties. Although a rich medieval literature has been partially "unearthed" from various university and research-institute archival collections[20] and although equally rich folkloric materials are still collectible from elderly rank-and-file community members, very little effort along any but scholarly lines has been directed toward Judeo-Persian and even that has had either no or very tenuous community roots. The still-growing Judeo-Arabic custom of folkloric concerts and performances by small groups of community-plus-academic "enthusiasts" is also present in Judeo-Persian circles, but very weakly so and without any institutional support. Courses in any spoken variety of Urban Judeo-Persian[21] are non-existent in Israel.

## Communalities and Conclusions

Mainstream Israeli opposition, rejection and marginalization have, for half a century (or more, in the case of Yiddish) sapped the community roots of the "other Jewish languages" here under review. Were space available, it would also be desirable to include Judeo-Kurdish (modern Judeo-Aramaic) in our purview, but to do so would provide no perspectives not already included in the four cases that have already been sketched above. Only ultra-Orthodox Yiddish escapes from the general demographic pattern of now-aged immigrant speakers, second-generation semi-speakers and third-generation appreciators (at best), all of the latter being characterized by more or less ambivalence or guilt at having neglected or even abandoned their ethnolinguistic traditions, on the one hand, and interpreting such abandonment as

a necessary ransom for their incorporation into and acceptance by the Israeli mainstream, on the other hand. The ethnic revival and the multicultural ethic have lately begun to convince more of them, as well as Israeli mainstreamers, that the Jewish "tribal traditions" are not at loggerheads with either general Israeli or general Jewish identity and loyalty. The worldwide complexities of human identificational abilities are nowhere near being reached, let alone being taxed in Israel, by the multicultural-multilingual nature of continuing and totally voluntary sidestream identities that also involve "other Jewish Languages than Hebrew". Only ultra-Orthodox Yiddish has, to some degree, held itself aloof from the mainstream Israeli state-building effort and is even more, rather than less, likely to continue doing so if it receives no significant assistance and acceptance from mainstream authorities.

In terms of functional perspectives, only Secular Yiddish aspires to serious modern literature (both fiction and non-fiction) and needs to institute corpus planning (as well as close contacts with Yiddish language planning in New York, in conjunction with the YIVO and the League for Yiddish) along those lines. To a smaller extent that is true also of Ladino, particularly if the ongoing crisis in Ladino publication of journals and books is to be overcome with its own Authority's assistance and a secular periodical press and book-production again come into being. The traditional sectors of all four languages (and in the latter two cases the traditional realm, whether traditional religious or traditional folkloric, subsumes their entire functional repertoires) require less lexical elaboration than policy decisions with respect to moving toward standardization or remaining with multi-dialectalism, both in the written and spoken realms. Their main language-planning tasks, therefore, are status-planning ones in a manner that will involve community input as to the priorities to be instituted in connection with school instruction (and at what levels curricula, materials and staff-preparation should be focused initially), folkloric presentations, collection and archivization, and media development along print and non-print lines.

At the beginning of the 20th century there was no Jewish State and at least half a dozen quite lively Jewish languages.[22] In the 21st century it may well be up to the Jewish State to make it possible for those "Jewish languages other than Hebrew", which Zionism and the State themselves long undercut, to obtain the State support that they need if they are to have at least a chance to play the intra-communal roles to which members (from some to many) of their communities aspire, particularly if vital aspects of

communal Jewish identification and creativity are not to be lost or alienated, on the one hand, at the same time that conscious and pre-conscious resentments against state authorities are harbored, on the other hand.

There are some straws in the wind that are indicative of a growing recognition in Israel of the need to avoid the former policies of rejection of side-stream co-identities. Some of the projects of the New Israel Fund have supported minority Jewish ethnolinguistic efforts. Prime Minister Ehud Barak's victory speech on election eve specifically mentioned "Sephardim and Ashkenazim, Ethiopian and Russian immigrants, Arabs, Druze, Circassians and the Bedouin. All are part of the Israeli people." Interestingly enough, he named four Jewish and four non-Jewish groups. Wouldn't it be a wry twist of fate if the latter received more and earlier ethnolinguistic recognition in the Jewish State than did the former, only because the former were Jewish? If positive recognition and support by State authorities will finally be forthcoming for them too, that will be a form of language planning that, having been long denied, is now long overdue.

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## שפּראַך־פּלאַנירונג פֿאַר „די אַנדערע יידישע לשונות" אין ישׂראל: אַ סדר־היום פֿאַרן אָנהייב 21סטן י"ה

שיקל פֿישמאַן
ישיבה־אוניווערסיטעט (בראַנקס, נ"י) און סטאַנפֿאָרד־אוניווערסיטעט (סטאַנפֿאָרד, קאַ׳)

כאָטש ס׳זענען לעצטנס באַשטימט געוואָרן קליינע בודזשעטן און רעגירונג־קאָנטראָלירטע „רשותן" לטובֿת יידיש און לאַדינאָ, לייַדן ביידע (און יידיש־אַראַביש און יידיש־פּערסיש נאָך מער) פֿון אַ שאַרפֿן דוחק פֿון ערנצטע און גוט־פֿראָפֿעסיאָנעל־טיזירטע מעשׂים בהסכם מיט זייערע באַזונדערע שפּראַך־פּלאַנירערישע הצטרכותן. די חרדישע יידיש־סבֿיבֿה איז די איינציקע צווישן די אַלע „אַנדערע יידישע לשונות" אין ישׂראל וואָס פֿאַרמאָגט אי אַ בסדר וואָקסנדיקע צאָל יונגע רעדערס אי אייגענע קאָנצענטרירטע וווינגעגנטן מיט געגנט־מוסדות (שולן, שילן) וואָס באַנוצן זיך מיטן אייגענעם לשון. דער וועלטלעכער יידיש־סעקטאָר איז אפֿשר אַ סך רייַכער וואָס שייך ריין שפּראַכיקע אינסטיטוציעס און מאַדערנע אינטעליגענץ (שרייַבערס, זשורנאַליסטן, רעדאַקטאָרן, אַקטיאָרן) נאָר ער האַלט שוין בּמעט בּיים פֿונדערפֿאַל וואָס שייך קאָנצענטרירטקייט, יונגע רעדערס, קינדערשולן און אינסטיטוציאָנעלער פֿירערשאַפֿט. לאַדינאָ איז אי קלענער אי שוואַכער וואָס שייך רעדערס און אינסטאַנצן, נאָר האָט זיך לעצטנס זייער געגעבן אַ רוק פֿאָרויס לגבי פּראָיעקטן און פּלענער. יידיש־אַראַביש און יידיש־פּערסיש לייַדן ביידע פֿון אַ שאַרפֿן דוחק פֿון שפּראַכישע אינטעלעקטואַלן, אַן אייגהייַטלעכער רעדשפּראַך און שרייַבשפּראַך און וועלן נאָך פֿון די אייגענע רעדערס ס׳רובֿ באַטראַכט ווי דיאַלעקטן אַנשטאָט ווי אויטאָנאָמע לשונות. די לעצטע דרייַ לשונות פֿאַרמאָגן ניט קיין פּרעסע אָדער ביכער־פּראָדוקציע, און די לעצטע צוויי: אַפֿילו ניט קיין קורסן, לערערס אָדער פּעדאַגאָגישע מכשירים. מיט די איצטיקע נעבעכדיקע מיטלען און ניט ערנצטן צוגאַנג מצד דער רעגירונג וועלן ס׳רובֿ „אַנדערע יידישע לשונות" פֿון ישׂראל קיין אמתן אַריכת־ימים אינעם 21סטן י"ה ניט קענען דערגרייכן און די יידישע מדינה קען נאָך חלילה באַווייַזן אַפּצומעקן אַלע „אַנדערע יידישע לשונות" אויסער דעם חרדישן יידיש.

## RESUMO

*Lingvoplanado por la “aliaj judaj lingvoj” en Israelo: Tagordo komence de la 21-a jarcento*

Kvankam oni lastatempe asignis malgrandajn subvenciojn al la registare gvidataj “instancoj” por la jida kaj la ladina, ambaŭ tiuj lingvoj, kiel ankaŭ

la judaraba kaj la judpersa, suferas pro grava manko de prioritataj klopodoj kongruaj al iliaj lingvoplanaj bezonoj. La striktortodoksa jidparolanta komunumo estas la sola el inter tiuj de la “judaj lingvoj aliaj ol la hebrea”, kiu ĝuas daŭre kreskantan nombron de junaj parolantoj kaj ankaŭ demografie koncentritajn loĝkvartalojn kun lokaj institucioj (lernejoj, sinagogoj), kiuj uzas la denaskan lingvon. La nereligia jidlingva sektoro estas multe pli riĉa je instituciaj substrukturoj kaj intelektularo ligitaj al modernaj lingvoj, sed troviĝas en stato tute disfala se temas pri demografia koncentriĝo de junaj parolantoj, lernejoj kun adekvata instrutempo, kaj juna institucia gvidkapablo. La ladina fartas eĉ pli malbone, rilate al parolantoj kaj substrukturoj, sed lastatempe notinde progresas dank’ al konataj junaj gvidantoj kun riĉa tagordo de gravaj celoj kaj projektoj. La judaraba kaj judpersa ambaŭ suferas pro grava manko de lingve fokusitaj intelektuloj kaj ankaŭ pro neekzisto de domina parola aŭ skriba varianto, kaj iliaj propraj parolantoj ankoraŭ konsideras ilin dialektoj sen aŭtonomio. Neniu el la tri ĉi-lastaj lingvoj/variantoj posedas gazetaron aŭ libroeldonadon, kaj la du lastaj eĉ ne havas kursojn, instruistojn aŭ pedagogiajn materialojn taŭgajn por junaj lernantoj. La aktuala nesufiĉo de financaj rimedoj kaj la malpli ol informitaj klopodoj nome de registaraj instancoj eventuale kondukos al frua malapero de la plejparto de “judaj lingvoj aliaj ol la hebrea” en Israelo, kun la klara escepto de la jida en striktortodoksaj medioj.

## NOTES

1. The designation “Ladino” will be utilized in this discussion, in light of its use by the “Authority” on behalf of this language recently established by the Israeli government (see below). Other names currently in use are Judezmo (Weinreich [1973 (1980)], Bunis [1981]), Judeo-Espanol (Sephiha 1985) and Spanyolit (encountered only orally). Lack of consensus as to a language’s name is a common occurrence not only in the Jewish-languages field (where it is often a reflection of the deferential regard accorded to Hebrew, regardless of how small the number of those who speak or even understand it in various parts of the Diaspora), but wherever a language has not yet become either the object or the means of intellectual and rank-and-file ethnic consciousness and mobilization.
2. Max Weinreich (1980 [1973]) prefers Yahudic as a cover term for all Judeo-Arabic varieties, from Morocco and Spain through to Iraq and Yemen, throughout their entire history. In Israel the designation Mugrabit is utilized by the Broadcasting Authority. Chetrit, below, prefers the designation Moroccan (Algerian, Tunisian, etc.) Judeo-Arabic.
3. Weinreich utilizes the designation Parsic for this language during its entire history, from gaonic times through to today. Netser (1987 and below) objects to using even “Judeo-Persian” for any period after the medieval, claiming that only different urban dialects

exist today, rather than any supra-dialectal koine or standard. Kloss (1950) refers to such varieties as "roofless dialects". Naming languages (and, of course, their designation as "languages" vs. "dialects") always derives from ideological as well as intellectual considerations.

4. For documentation of early Zionist persecution of Yiddish, see Kendzherski 1937 and Pilovski 1980. For the more recent period of anti-Yiddish discrimination, see Fishman and Fishman 1978. For ongoing discrimination updates, see any issue of *Lebns-fragn* (Tel Aviv). I am much indebted to Yitskhok Luden, the editor of *Lebns-fragn*, for his valuable assistance in connection with obtaining information concerning Yiddish in secular circles in Israel today.
5. For documentation of the undercounts re Yiddish-speakers that typify the Israel census, see Isaacs 1998; for "official" undercounting of Yiddish radio listening, see Fishman and Fishman 1978. Until this very year (1999), regular Yiddish television programs have been prohibited (although irregular programs, roughly once a year, have attracted huge audiences.
6. For details concerning the very similar societal bifurcation between Secular and Ultra-Orthodox Yiddish in the USA, see my "Yiddish in New York City: A Two-in-One Language" (2000).
7. For the various Israeli census (under) estimates, see Fishman 1991. The most recent (under)estimates are reviewed in Isaacs and Glinert 1999.
8. At this writing (December1999) the "Yiddish Authority" is again without a chairperson (and, therefore, its activity has been put on hold), for the second time in its brief operative history. Although both internal and external difficulties are responsible for this state of affairs, the governmental "powers that be" are not exactly dismayed by the development. [In May 2000 a new chair was finally appointed and his longevity in office — not to mention his energy or initiative — remain to be seen.]
9. Two hundred mimeographed copies of our 1978 report were distributed before the report was sent to press. No university, governmental or other mainline intellectuals offered corrections or criticisms (other than one, incorporated into the report, claiming that no more copies of a requested public document were available for our perusal). Sholem Rosenfeld, then an editor of *Maariv*, a major Hebrew daily, commented that he was "satisfied that the facts presented in the report" constituted "an accurate presentation of the situation."
10. The average age of Secular Yiddish intellectuals and activists in Israel today is in the 70's. The average age of all Yiddish speakers, per official census reports, is also reported to be in the 70's. The average age of ultra-Orthodox speakers is considerably younger and quite normal in distribution. The average age of the latter remains unestimated due to studied undercounts of the ultra-Orthodox by the Israeli census and other governmental enumerations.
11. Protests about the long-delayed approval of the Yiddish "Authority" appeared both in the Israeli and in the American Yiddish press. The general Israeli (Hebrew) press steadfastly refused to print anything on the topic.
12. This cursive script dates back to (and is named after) a famous medieval scholar and commentator on the Bible and the Talmud (Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac, 1040–1105). The Ladino quarterly *Aki Yerushelayim* (Moshe Shaul, ed.) has introduced a possible new

standard transcription for Ladino in Latin script, which studiously attempts ausbau from Spanish orthographic conventions. A French-based transcription and a Spanish-based transcription are also still used by infrequent publications in Francophone and Hispanophone circles. The journal has also very recently introduced a few pages in the traditional Rashi script.

13. Folkloric and linguistic research often rapidly feeds into song recitals, musical concerts, dance presentations, poetry readings, and holiday and historical celebrations. I am much indebted to Moshe Shaul for his valuable assistance in connection with my obtaining data on various aspects of Ladino in Israel, not least of all re the goals and priorities of its advocates.
14. I have no evidence that the designation "Yahudic" is used by any of the speakers of Judeo-Arabic in Israel or elsewhere. Weinreich brings an early Arabic citation in which the language is called "the language of the Jews [=Yahudic]". Even the designation "Mugrabit" may be rather rarely used, although I have encountered it (in Hebrew) even in print in a Passover Hagode.
15. I am much indebted to Joseph Chetrit (University of Haifa) for his valuable assistance in connection with my obtaining data on Mugrabit in Israel today.
16. Speech is the least standardizable aspect of any language. As a result, languages without an accepted written form (and without a tradition of intergenerational oral literature) also tend to lack a spoken standard. Note, however, that a written standard is not a sufficient precursor for the development of a single spoken standard (see, e.g., the cases of English, Swedish, Arabic, etc.).
17. The program in Judeo-Arabic folk-cultures at Haifa University has done yeoman's work along these lines and could become the nucleus of a future "Authority" for Judeo-Arabic (at least for that of Maghrebian origin) in Israel.
18. See Magosci (1993) for reports on the recent standardization progress of Rusyn and Romansh, both of which consisted entirely of "roofless dialects" in Kloss's terms.
19. I am grateful to Amnon Netzer (Hebrew University, Jerusalem) for his valuable assistance in making it possible for me to obtain information on "Judeo-Persian" in Israel today.
20. The Yad ben Zvi collection in Jerusalem is possibly the foremost one today, insofar as Judeo-Persian materials are concerned. It has been utilized by the few scholars (e.g., in addition to Netzer, also Paper 1972) who have turned their attention to the language. Nevertheless, most of its Judeo-Persian holdings still await specialized study.
21. Weinreich and Netzer refer to varieties pertaining to Teheran, Isfahan, Hamadan, Kashan, etc. Weinreich also mentions Jewish languages in the Caucasus such as Judeo-Tat ("Dzhuhuic"), Boharic and Dzhidi as Parsic-derived, with a common link to (Judeo-) Persian.
22. In addition to the four "other Jewish languages of Israel" mentioned in this report, there still were, at the beginning of the 20th century, Judeo-Italian ("Italkik") and Judeo-Greek ("Yavanic") and there still is today (and in Israel, at that) a relatively vibrant Judeo-Aramaic/Kurdish ("Targumic") speech community and a Judeo-Amharic one as well. I have not (yet) been able to establish contacts either with speakers of any of the latter or with the scholars specializing in them. My impression is that the latter two Jewish vernaculars are roughly in the same "roofless dialect" and unwritten contemporary status as are Yahudic and Parsic.

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