

9th September 1974

David Kessler, Esq.,
Vallentine, Mitchell & Co., Publishers,
25 Funnival Street, E.C.4.

Dear David,

As you heard from my brother-in-law Alf Katz I am alive and well, in spite of the tomb-like silence which has engulfed me in recent years, and have in fact completed the typescript of a book:

MUMME LOCHSHEN: AN ANATOMY OF YIDDISH

of which I think you ought to have the first refusal.

The book runs to about 80,000 words. Enclosed are the "prelims." These should give you an idea of the nature of the book. Should you be interested, I will send you the remainder of the typescript. This would not, of course, commit you in any way.

Perhaps I should say that the TS is "rough" in a number of places, in the sense that there are plentiful deletions, additions, alterations, inserted extra pages, etc., but I cannot see any publisher's reader experiencing any difficulty. I intend having the TS professionally re-typed, in any case, but would obviously prefer to ~~XXXX~~ do this if and when my own typescript is accepted by a publisher, so that house-style and editorial suggestions could be taken into account as soon as possible. Moreover, after trying abortively for six months to get the B.M. to obtain Weinreich's 4-vol. History of the ^{Yiddish} British Language (see p. 10n., of enclosed typescript), I am now ordering it myself, and will almost certainly want to incorporate it to some degree in my final TS.

With all good wishes for the New Year,

yours sincerely



P.S. Do you remember one Harrison of PWB? He teaches economics at Hasmonian. He remembered me when I walked into the staff room for the first time some eight years ago.

JEWISH CHRONICLE

(JEWISH CHRONICLE LTD)

25 FURNIVAL STREET

LONDON

E.C.4

THE ORGAN OF
BRITISH JEWRY
ESTABLISHED 1841

TELEPHONE
01-405 9252
TELEGRAMS
JAECHRON-LONDON-TELEX

September 19 1974

Joseph Witriol, Esq.,
63 Mayfield Avenue,
North Finchley, N.12.

Dear Johnny,

It was nice to hear from you again after all this long time and, of course, I was delighted when I heard that your brother-in-law had joined us.

I am afraid that I am shockingly ignorant of Yiddish but that is not the reason why I must reluctantly decline your invitation to publish your book.

The fact is that Vallentine, Mitchell have joined forces with Frank Cass & Co. Ltd. at 67 Great Russell Street, W.C.1. and it is now for Mr. Cass himself to decide what books he wishes to publish under the Vallentine, Mitchell imprint.

I return the prelims which you sent me in case you feel either that you wish to send them to Cass or to another publisher.

It is a long time since you have written for the J.C. and I hope that you will come into our columns again.

Is it possible that the Harrison of PWB to whom you refer is Arnold of that ilk? If so, I remember him very well. It would be nice to see him again and perhaps we could organise a re-union à trois.

I warmly reciprocate your kind wishes for the New Year.

Yours sincerely,

David

David Kessler

P.S. On second thought it cannot be Arnold Harrison as I think I heard that he had died.

Owen

VALLENTINE, MITCHELL & CO LTD

67 GREAT RUSSELL STREET · LONDON WC1B 3BT



Publishers

Telephone 01-405 9405

Telegrams VALMICO, LONDON

September 27, 1974.

Mr. Joseph Witriol,
63 Mayfield Avenue,
London N12 9JG.

Dear Mr. Witriol,

Thank you for your letter of September 21st. I should like to have a look at your ANATOMY OF YIDDISH, so do let me see the typescript.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Murray Mindlin'. The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Murray Mindlin
Editorial Director

30th October 1974

Murray Mindlin, Esq.,
Editorial Director,
Valentine, Mitchell & Co. Ltd.,
67 Great Russell Street, WCLB 3BT

Dear Mr Mindlin,

ANATOMY OF YIDDISH

With reference to our telephone conversation regarding the above (your title, incidentally, is, I think - though I am not absolutely sure - better than my original one), may I thank you for the careful consideration you gave to my MS and the kind things you said about it.

Obviously I am disappointed, but I appreciate the difficulties you mentioned. As I said over the phone, although I had hoped the book would have been commercially viable, it was written primarily as an act of filial and fraternal piety, and for this reason I would be prepared to sink, if necessarily irrecoverably, £1000.00 into making it available - I might even entertain the idea of multigraphing it in say 200-300 copies and distributing it at about £2.50 a copy myself. However, I will try one or two other publishers first (after getting the MS professionally typed, do you think - this might be £200.00 down the drain - or would it do as it stands?).

I shall be in town on Thursday next, and will collect the MS between 4.30 - 5.30 p.m. if this is convenient to you.

Once again thanking you for the trouble you have taken,

Yours sincerely

Joseph Witricl

P.S. As I understand there is a 7-8 day postal delay at your end, I shall be here after 5p.m. on Monday 4th, and after 5.30 p.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday, 5th and 6th November, in case you wish to phone.

George Weidenfeld and Nicolson Limited

Weidenfeld & Nicolson

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JC/SG

13 November 1974

Joseph Witriol Esq.,
63 Mayfield Avenue,
North Finchley,
London N 12.

Dear Mr Witriol,

Thank you for your letter of 9 November and for the very interesting material contained with it about your book *MUMME LOOSHEN: AN ANATOMY OF YIDDISH*. It was fascinating to read what you say both in your letter and in the preface. However, I am afraid that I do not feel that there would be a sufficiently large market for this book which is rather precariously poised between being a general book and an academic book. Also of course the book would have to make itself felt in the shadow of Leo Rosten's book which is now available in Penguin.

I am sorry therefore that it's not a book that we can take on at the moment. However, it's obviously a very interesting and worthwhile work and I hope that you can find a publisher.

Yours sincerely,



John Curtis

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15 July 1975

Mr Joseph Witriol
63 Mayfield Avenue
North Finchley
LONDON N12 9JG

Dear Mr Witriol

MUMME LOOHSHEH - AN ANATOMY OF YIDDISH

I have deferred replying to your letter of 9 July pending the outcome of our discussions here.

I have been taking soundings about the UK market, and our conclusion unfortunately is that there just does not seem to be any prospect of a large enough readership here to give a sound economic basis for what can be expected to be a most expensive book to produce. I realise of course that by far the greater part of the market lies in America and I feel that perhaps it might be the wisest course for you to approach an American publisher direct.

We could have approached American publishers ourselves with prices, but the whole enterprise would have been fraught with economic difficulty in extremely difficult times. Fixed price contracts these days can be extremely dangerous with inflation as it now is.

I am sorry to come up with this negative answer, as it seems to me that your MS does have real quality. If only more people in this country were interested in the subject! I am keeping your MS here in case you want to collect it. If not, please ring me and I will post it back to you.

Yours sincerely

Antony Wood
Senior Editor

AW/ca

*Leon Kunitz,
Publisher,*

*31 W. 46 St.,
NY 10036*

Directors Paul Elek Elizabeth Elek H S Freeman Moira Johnston, B.Sc. Prof D A Bullough F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.
Mary Butler Trevor Tummon Scientific Books Alan Rogers

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KTAV PUBLISHING HOUSE, INC.

120 EAST BROADWAY, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10002

November 5, 1975

Mr. J. Witriol
63, Mayfield Avenue
North Finchley, London, N12 9JG
ENGLAND

Dear Mr. Witriol:

My good friend, Norman Blaustein of Amiel Publishers has been kind enough to give me your letter and outline for your proposed volume, AN ANATOMY OF YIDDISH. I have the feeling that you may be familiar with our firm from the many reviews we have received for our publications in the London Jewish Chronicle.

Your volume interests me, and I would be grateful if you would send me the complete manuscript as quickly as possible so that I may send it along to some of our scholarly advisors in the field of Yiddish for their reaction. Should it be favorable, we will be prepared to send you a contract.

I would be grateful for your curriculum vitae.

Sincerely,


Bernard Scharfstein

BS/mn

cc: Norman Blaustein

11/11/75
... of course ...
... familiar with ...
... recall any ...
at the moment ...
... impression that ...
... impression ...

16th January 1976

Dear Sylvia,

Many thanks for your letter - I hope you ~~don't~~ don't mind my typing, by the way. It'll probably make it easier for you to read.

Strange about Croom Helm and New Viewpoints, but no doubt I'll hear from my own library in due course about the book by Renee Weingarten which I ordered and which, the librarian told me, was published by Croom Helm.

I'm giving you an awful lot of trouble, I can only hope something will come at the end of it all. I'm a bit annoyed with Ktav's abrupt rejection - I find it hard to believe it's as bad as all that. If they'd said something like: "We are advised that the ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ subject has not been treated sufficiently in depth, and the market for a "popular" work on Yiddish has been exhausted by Leo Rosten's book," I would have accepted it.

~~xxxxxxxx~~

Anyway, if Quadrangle Press (10 E 53 St) has not asked to see the manuscript by the time you get this, by all means send ~~him~~ it to Samuel Gross of Sepher-Hermon Press, or it might be easier if Paul could drop it by car, I know it's a nuisance for you either way. I don't think I'll send Sepher-Hermon Press any prelims, or write to him at all. Photocopying the prelims is a bit time-consuming, apart from the expense - 4-5 dollars - of sending them by airmail. If you have received back from Quadrangle Press the prelims I sent them, by all means send Samuel Gross the prelims only.

Are you sure extremely orthodox Jews are rare critters in the U.S.? I used to think they were rare in England, until I started teaching at Hasmonean, and I now know that although "extremely orthodox" Jews are a minority here, they are quite a sizeable minority. For instance, of about 400 boys over 13 at our school, I'm sure there are at least 200 who put on tefillin every day, wear tsitse kanfess, etc. (needless to say Philip and Max never do, and don't). Thank Rachel Hulands () for her interest anyway. Is she married, engaged, going steady? If not, on the assumption she's presentable - one can take it for granted she's intelligent - I would have a chidduch for her, if the geographical barriers could be overcome.

All the best, remember me to Paul, and once more all my thanks

175
5th
Avenue,
NY 10010
NY

11
12th February 1976

Mr Samuel Gross,
Sepher-Hermon Press,
175 5th Avenue,
10010 N.Y.

Dear Mr Gross,

MUMME LOOHSHEN: AN ANATOMY OF YIDDISH

By Joseph Witriol

I understand from Mrs Sylvia Wagreich, 318 Victory Blvd., New Rochelle, that you might be interested in publishing the above.

The book, which runs to about 60,000 words, is a comprehensive survey of the Yiddish language. It has a subject-index and four word-lists: Yiddish, German and Middle High German, Slav and Hebrew and Aramaic.

Perhaps I should stress that the book differs both from Leo Rosten's Joys of Yiddish and Lillian Mermin Feinsilver's The Taste of Yiddish (Yoseloff) in that Mumme Loohshen has a strong linguistic bias .

The book is discursive in style and, I hope, makes pleasurable reading. Inevitably, however, there are a few parts which are of a text-book nature. The book contains a great deal of solid linguistic information which I believe can be found in no other English book, certainly not in Leon Rosten's or Lillian Mermin Feinsilver's. Germanisten, in particular, would find the description of the links joining Yiddish with Archaic German and Middle High German of great interest.

I am asking Mrs Wagreich to be kind enough to send you the prelims. If you then desire to read on, she would let you have the complete MS, without obligating you of course.

Yours sincerely

Joseph Witriol

Copy to Mrs Sylvia Wagreich

SEPPER-HERMON PRESS, INC.

175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010 Tel. 212/777-4530

March 15, 1976

Mr. Joseph Witriol
63 Mayfield Avenue
North Finchley, London
N12 9JG England

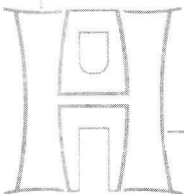
Dear Mr. Witriol:

We have received your letter of February 12th prior to which we received, from Mrs. Wagreich, a small part of your manuscript. I have read with great interest the material received, even though it did not contain any portion of your book proper, consisting of ^{entirely} preliminary material. Even so, it was enough to intrigue me as the Table of Contents alone is indicative of an interesting work.

Yet, I'm afraid it might be too technical for the average reader, and thus it would appeal to a rather limited circle of readership. You yourself mentioned the titles of two popular books on Yiddish to which I might add a third, Voices from the Yiddish edited by Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg. As a matter of fact, this latter title, originally priced \$8.95 is now available at the reduced price of \$1.95. This indicates that the book was less than a commercial success.

Considering all circumstances and especially the prevailing economic climate, we could not undertake the publication of this book without some sort of subsidy. I doubt that any commercial publisher would be willing to finance its publication.

On the other hand, should you be able to obtain any grants to cover a substantial part of the publishing cost or should you be in the position to participate in it yourself, we would be interested in undertaking the publishing of the book including some financial stake.



*Evidently
an author
of translations
from Yiddish -
not a
book
about Yiddish*

21st March 1976

Dear Sylvia,

The saga continues. You must be getting pretty fed up with it, but please bear with me a little longer.

Mr Gross may ask you to let him have the full MS. If he does, I may then ask you to find out, if you can, what sort of books Hermon publish, it would be good if I could have one or two titles. The fact that he raises the question of subsidy leads ~~xx~~ me to wonder whether perhaps this may be his normal line of business, whether he does not get rich gown manufacturers to pay him for publishing "A Boyhood in Plotsk", "East Side at the Turn of the Century" sort of things- books which the authors give to their cronies, as no one else would dream of borrowing them from the public librarty - if the public library were to get them in the first place.

Anyway, Mr Gross may say, before or after reading the complete MS, that he would want more than \$4,000. In that case, as I say in my letter, copy herewith - you have a copy of Mr Gross's letter to me, too - I would abandon discussions with him, and ask you to send the complete MS to Vantage Press, and that would be the end.

We're all well here, hope you're all fit too.

All the best,



SEPPER-HERMON PRESS, INC.

175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010 Tel. 212/777-4530

April 12, 1976

Mr. J. Witriol
63 Mayfield Ave
North Finchley
London, N12 9JG

Dear Mr. Witriol:

I received your letter of March 20th and after serious consideration I came to the conclusion that we are not in the position to handle the publication of your book.

As prices go today (mainly up) it is highly doubtful that \$4,000.00 could cover publication costs. Also, with the Pound hovering at close to \$1.80, and chances are it may fall below that, you may not be able to guarantee even the \$4,000.00 by the time the deal would be concluded.

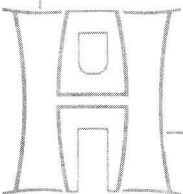
I still think that you should approach the Jewish Memorial Council and other funds for possible grants. This, together with your own resources might make it possible. Should you succeed in this, please let me know.

In any event, I wish you success and a joyous Passover.

Very sincerely yours,


Samuel Gross

SG:ss





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Joseph Witriol Esq.,
63 Mayfield Avenue,
North Finchley,
London, N12 9JG

21 April 1976

Dear Mr Witriol,

It would be worth our costing your An Anatomy of Yiddish on the basis of a subsidy of £1,500. I therefore look forward to receiving a photostat copy of the complete manuscript as soon as possible. I emphasise that it should be complete apart of course from the index. I should very much like to have it costed reckoning on a 20% overall reduction in length. It would be a pretty costly book to produce because of the intricate nature and the extent of foreign words so such reduction can only help.

Yours sincerely,

Antony Wood
Senior Editor

23/4/76

- Thank -

Perhaps we ought to agree on the meaning of "subsidy".
Venture Press of New York, whose arrangements you may have seen in the Daily Telegraph "American publisher asks author" require a payment from the author (\$2000-\$5000 or more) and give the author 40% of the net selling price (the price paid by the purchaser at a retail bookseller's) on each copy sold.

I would not expect such a high percentage but I would suggest - if you desire to publish - say 20% on each copy sold. Thus if, for ease of calculation, the net of the book was £4.00 and it sold 2,000 copies in two years you would have received £2400 from me. I have not seen the book.

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27 April 1976

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Mr Joseph Witriol
63 Mayfield Avenue
North Finchley
LONDON N12 9JG

Dear Mr Witriol

Thank you for your letter of 23 April. Vantage Press I suppose can offer the terms they are ~~said~~^{subscribed} to be offering because all they do is print and bind, with none of the other publishing functions.

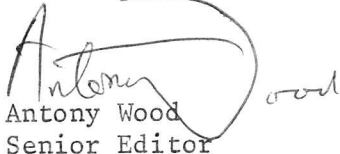
We certainly could not offer a royalty of more than 10% on the published price - which would be £10 rather than £4, so in fact it would bring you in more than 20% of £4 -- and if the costing would be helped by starting at a slightly lower royalty, say 7½%, then this might have to be considered. But I would hope that the economics of the project would allow a 10% royalty.

The subsidy of £1500 we should ask to be non-returnable, and payable at least in part fairly early in the proceedings to cover the costs that we should begin to incur as soon as we started work on the project.

I think we should have to insist that we should have to find an American co-publisher to make this project worthwhile at all, even with a subsidy.

If these considerations meet with your approval, then I look forward to having the photostat manuscript, which we shall at once cost. I should like to reckon on an overall 20% cut, which you said you would consider. We simply cannot under-estimate the production cost of this book, which is going to be very considerable indeed.

Yours sincerely


Antony Wood
Senior Editor

Directors Paul Elek Elizabeth Elek H S Freeman Moira Johnston, B.Sc. Mary Butler Trevor Tummon Ann Douglas
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Joseph Witriol Esq
63 Mayfield Avenue
North Finchley
London, N12 9JG

5 May 1976

Dear Mr Witriol,

Thank you for your letter of 1 May. I appreciate that the sales threshold for a rising royalty should be fairly low for you - if not 500 copies, then certainly 1,000. I also think this project is not worthwhile if only a few copies are printed; I too feel that 2,000 would be the rough minimum but we must reserve the right to print slightly less, say 1,500, if we consider it necessary. The decision must be ours because it is based on commercial realities.

Your present feeling that the book should not be cut will be respected because it is your book. If, however, you do see a way to reducing the length at all this would be very useful. Thank you for showing me your American correspondence which I return herewith. To take things any further at all, we must see the complete photostat manuscript; we simply cannot estimate on guess work. My recollection was that the text looked longer than 65,000 words. As soon as we have the manuscript we can do a realistic estimate of costs.

You are right - we shall probably wish to get a referees report and that again may have things to say about length. Thank you very much for your recommendation of a possible printer - this could well prove useful.

I look forward to having a copy of the manuscript as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,


Tony Wood

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May 20, 1976

Mr. Joseph Witriol
63, Mayfield Avenue
North Finchley
London, N12 9JG

Dear Mr. Witriol,

Many thanks for the manuscript, which we shall now cost. I should like to check with you that all notes can appear at the back of the book, and not as footnotes, which are rather costly. Perhaps you had intended this and that explains the heading 'Notes' on the last page - could you confirm that there will be no further material in this manuscript?

We ought to have an American co-publisher in our sights - is Sepher-Hermon still interested? Any further ideas you have would be helpful. Alternatively, we may be able to market the book ourselves in America, as arrangements are now being made to that effect for our list as a whole.

As soon as I have your answers to the above, we can get on with the costing.

Yours sincerely,

Antony Wood
Senior Editor

Directors Paul Elek Elizabeth Elek H S Freeman Moira Johnston, B.Sc. Mary Butler Trevor Tummon Ann Douglas
Non Executive Prof D A Bullough F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.

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17 June 1976

Mr Joseph Witriol
63 Mayfield Avenue
North Finchley
LONDON N12 9JG

Dear Mr Witriol

Before we complete our costing on THE ANATOMY OF YIDDISH, Mr Elek has asked me to write to you.

We had the comment recently from a prospective American co-publisher that they would have much preferred the standard academic transcription of Yiddish, in spite of your expressed reasons for having your own system. For this reason largely they turned the book down as it did not appear to them to be the 'standard linguistic treatment'. This straw in the wind makes us think that it would be even more difficult than we realised to place this book in America - which it is essential to do, subsidy or no subsidy. Although we now have our own distribution arrangements as I told you, it is infinitely preferable to set up a full-scale American co-publisher who can do complete justice to the project particularly one as expensive as this one.

Under the circumstances, before we complete our costing we should like to sound you out on whether you could increase your subsidy. It now looks as if to be worth while it ought to be £2500 at the very least. If we know that you will not be able to provide this sum, then the project really will not be possible after all for us. I hope you understand that we have to be realistic.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Antony Wood
Senior Editor

Directors Paul Elek Elizabeth Elek H S Freeman Moira Johnston, B.Sc. Mary Butler Trevor Tummon Ann Douglas
Non Executive Prof D A Bullough F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.

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PAUL ELEK (SCIENTIFIC BOOKS) LTD 706607 ENGLAND

Attn. Mr Antony Wood

22nd June 1976

Paul Elek Limited,
54-58 Caledonian Road,
London, N1 9RN

Dear Mr Wood,

In reply to your letter of 17th June, to ensure the co-operation of a full-scale American co-publisher who can do complete justice to the project, I am prepared to increase my subsidy to £2,500.

I must stress that this amount is an absolute maximum, and subject to a number of provisos. One, that you have sub the entire MS to a reader with a good knowledge of Yiddish who has reported favourably on it. Two, that my MS is not cut in any way except, as I mentioned previously, for minor omissions which I agree are justifiable editorially and that you accept minor revisions, in not more than half a dozen places and not amounting to more than 500 words in all, if I feel such revisions are called for. That the total first impression on both sides of the Atlantic, is a minimum of 3-4,000 copies so that over a period of five years or less I could recover all, or very nearly all, my ~~xxxxxxx~~ subsidy by way of royalty on the assumption that the first impression would be sold out within five years. This would mean there would have to be a clause in the contract stipulating the book could not be remaindered, by either publisher, within five years. Four, that I would have the full support of your editorial services in ensuring consistency in the MS as regards book references, punctuation, italicization, use of quotation marks, lower case and upper case, etc. - I am not asking for the book to be "subbed" - and in having the proofs double-checked, by you and ~~xxx~~ then me (or vice-versa).

Frankly, the idea of using the "standard academic transcription" of Yiddish in a book specifically stated to be for the general reader strikes me as preposterous. I open a book completely at random (The Field of Yiddish, The Hague (Mouton) 1965 at p. 87 at an article "Yiddish in Bohemia and The Vowel Question" by Pavel Frost, and read: It was characterized, on the whole, by u for MHG u, uo, surek and kik and not in manifest accordance with u u. In another article incidentally, I find Hebrew words printed in Hebrew characters and finally, on p. 2 I find (this is quite representative) er aste zi il evene er arf den zak cu der erden... If my transcription is expensive, the "standard academic transcription" (which I presume is involved in the "standard linguistic treatment") would be astronomical. In any case, imagine The Joys of Yiddish in a "standard academic transcript.

23rd June 1976

Attn. Mr Antony Wood

Paul Elek Limited,
54-58 Caledonian Road,
London, N1 9RN

Dear Mr Wood,

Please forgive me - I should have "slept" on your letter which I received and answered yesterday. Since writing yesterday I have had serious misgivings, and have now to inform you that I cannot, after all, increase my originally proposed subsidy of £1,500.- for publication in full of my MUMME LOOSHEN MS.

Of course, I very much hope that you will find on comparing your costing that publication will be possible with my original subsidy, even if there can be no co-operation with a "full scale American co-publisher", but only distribution as mentioned in your letter of 4th inst.

I appreciate that with the co-operation of a "full-scale" American publisher a higher subsidy might ultimately be offered by ~~higher~~ increased royalties, but in view of my age - 64 - and the fact that I still have three school-age children to put through University, I feel I must minimise potential losses rather than maximise potential gains.

Should you not find it possible to publish with the aid of a subsidy of £1,500.- I must very reluctantly ask you to be kind enough to return the photocopy MS at your convenience.

Yours sincerely


Joseph Witriol

Martin Secker & Warburg Limited

Joseph Witriol Esq.,
63 Mayfield Avenue,
North Finchley,
London N12 9JG.

4th January 1977

14 Carlisle Street
Soho Square
London W1V 6NN
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telephone 01-437 2075
telegrams
Psophidian London
Registered London
31133

Dear Mr. Witriol,

Mamme Loohsen : AN ANATOMY OF YIDDISH
by Joseph Witriol

Thank you very much indeed for your letter of December 23rd and for the enclosed material. I am afraid that I too must return you a dusty answer.

I feel that the material is very interesting and is worthy of publication, but I cannot see in the present state of the market and the inflation we all suffer that this is going to work out.

My only advice, I'm afraid is to try the house of W.H. Allen who did do very well indeed with the hard cover edition of THE JOYS OF WIDDISH by Leo Rosten and they might well be a priori more interested than we.

Failing that, I would suggest a university press, possibly even one in Israel since I'm sure that there must exist such a body.

Sorry not to be more helpful and thank you for thinking of us and for your courtesy in providing an s.a.c.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,



T.G. Rosenthal

TGR:cat

With respect to the...

See...

Over

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JULIE ANN GORDON
AGENT
150 EAST 56TH STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10022
(212) 593-0239

September 4, 1979

Recd 17/9/79

Mr. Joseph Witriol
63, Mayfield Avenue
North Finchley
London, N.2 9JG, England

AIR MAIL

Dear Joseph Witriol:

There is no doubt there is more interest in Yiddish in America than in England, and I would like to handle your "Anatomy of Yiddish" if you are willing. My fee is 15% of whatever royalties you receive. I'll be in London at the Mayfair Hotel from 12 September for a fortnight, so please send or bring your manuscript there.

The reason I am optimistic is that, although I am not even Jewish, my associate is, and he knows many publishers of language books in America. Among his contacts are the editors of dictionaries, and he himself is an etymologist. I myself am not acquainted, but I have a lot of chutzpah.

Yours truly,

Julie Ann Gordon
Julie Ann Gordon

JAG:TN

Mayfair Hotel 629 7777
Sept 12 WED
19 WED
26 WED



ML/FEK/CLM

Joseph Witriol Esq
c/o Mr John Rees Smith
Editor, Middlesex Polytechnic
Modern Langs. Journal

THE UNIVERSITY OF ASTON IN BIRMINGHAM

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Professor of Language: F Knowles MA, MSc

Reader in General Linguistics: J O Ellis, BA, PhD

Reader in the History of European Universities: J M Fletcher MA, DPhil

16 September 1983

Dear Mr Witriol

I was very interested to read your article in the first issue of Middlesex Polytechnic's Modern Languages Journal. Although I am by training a Slavist (having specialised in and taught Russian and Polish for many years) I have had an amateur interest in Yiddish for sometime. I approached this subject through an East European environment and by having read extensively what I could find to read about Jewish culture and history over the last 200 years in East Europe. My interest in this subject was certainly fostered by friendship with Professor Wolf Moskovich of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Professor Harry Prais, formerly of Herriot-Watt University in Edinburgh. In my present position, which is that of Professor of Linguistics, I have found that students of Sociolinguistics are fascinated by the rich "harvest of pickings" which the Yiddish language and culture area has to offer.

I was most interested to see the mention in your article of your own unpublished monograph on Yiddish: Mumme Loooshen: An Anatomy of Yiddish. I should like to ask you whether it is possible for me to obtain a copy of this from you. I am, of course, most willing to pay any costs that may be involved. (Incidentally I have made a rudimentary study of Hebrew and am conversant with the Hebrew and Yiddish writing systems).

May I take the liberty of enclosing a couple of documents with this letter, namely a brief bibliography on Yiddish Language Studies which I have compiled for students, and secondly a review article which I published a couple of years ago in Quinquereme. Please accept these offerings as those of an amateur (in both senses of the word) rather than as a professional.

With very best wishes,

Yours sincerely

F E Knowles
F E Knowles
Professor of Language

Encs



ML/FEK/CLM

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Professor of Language: F Knowles MA, MSc
Reader in the History of European Universities: J M Fletcher MA, DPhil

8 May 1984

Dear Mr Witriol

It is quite some time now since you very kindly sent me a draft copy of your book entitled "An Anatomy of Yiddish". I was very interested to read your manuscript and regretted very much that you had had no success with publishers. Our experience with publishers is that they tend not to be interested unless a sales volume of about 5,000 copies can be guaranteed (preferably over 3 years!). This is why so many academics and other people who write on fairly esoteric subjects seem to be turning more and more to micro-publication which appears to be the up and coming technical term for a mode of publication in which profits are not striven for and which does not involve anything more than photographing from camera-ready copy and providing a reasonably serviceable binding. The resulting product, given a print-run of about 500 copies can often be pleasantly inexpensive. Have you ever considered this approach?

Our Department has had a number of publication projects that have materialised quite successfully in this way.

I recently travelled to Israel in order to take part in the conference of which I enclose details. This conference was most successful and very enjoyable and Professor Wolf Moskovich is aiming to produce a collected volume of papers some time later this year. My own paper was not the one listed in this leaflet - I have not managed to complete that project yet. Instead I made a contribution on my analysis of Strack's "Jüdisches Wörterbuch", published in Leipzig in 1916. This brief dictionary of just over 8,000 head words contains the best part of 2,000 items which betray Slavonic etymology. When I have written up the final version of my paper, I will send you a copy.

May I thank you once again for your kindness and wish you all the best. I hope that our paths may cross sometime - it would be nice to meet you.

Yours sincerely

F E Knowles
Professor of Language
Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor

Answered 23/5/84

Enc