



Mendy Cahan, our man in Jerusalem.

Center to Open Office in Israel

The National Yiddish Book Center has announced plans to open an office in Israel. Headed by Mendy Cahan, a graduate student in Yiddish literature at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the office will serve as a central address for donations of Yiddish books from all over Israel. In addition, Mendy will coordinate a growing network of Israeli zamlers, process book orders (which will be paid for in shekels and then forwarded by fax to the Center's Massachusetts warehouse), administer the Gildin Fund for Israeli students, sign up Israeli members, and generally work to strengthen Yiddish culture in Israel.

Mendy was born in Antwerp, Belgium, in 1965. The son of Holocaust survivors, he grew up in a religious home and received an excellent traditional Jewish education. His first language was Yiddish, which he spoke at home, with friends and at school. At 15 Mendy entered public high school in Antwerp, and after graduation went to Israel where he studied in a yeshiva for two years. He continued his education at Hebrew University, earning a B.A. in Jewish Philosophy, and is currently completing an M.A. in Yiddish Literature with a dissertation on the *Purim shpil*. Fluent in five languages, he is also a fiction writer,

translator, and an accomplished Yiddish singer and actor.

Mendy was in Amherst in mid-October to meet with Center Executive Director Steve Hays to work out financial and logistical arrangements. For the time being, the Center's Israel Office will operate out of Mendy's Jerusalem apartment. That may seem like a humble beginning, but, as Aaron pointed out, just ten years ago the entire Yiddish Book Center was operating out of his apartment in Amherst. Mendy promises to keep Center members informed of his progress through a regular "Letter from Israel," which will appear in upcoming issues of *Der Pakn-treger*.

The Israel Office is scheduled to open for business on November 1. The telephone number in Jerusalem is 02-252401.

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