

Songs
Lyrics and music by the inhabitants of the Vilna Ghetto
translated and arranged by Jeremy Sams

Song Number One

UNTER DAINĖ VAISSE SHTEREN

In the sky the stars all glisten,
Here below I am lost in pain.
When I pray' does no-one listen?
Is my weeping all in vain?
As I watch, the stars all darken,
All alone I stand and stare.
Let the empty heavens harken
To my broken-hearted prayer:
Let the empty heavens harken
To my humble prayer.

Take my prayers and take my yearning
These are everything I own.
In my head a fire is burning
But my heart has turned to stone.
Cellars seethe with hell and fire
Streets are paved with black despair.
To the rooftops, climbing, higher,
Father let me find you there.
To the rooftops, ever higher
Let me find you there.

Silent screams are deafening
And moaning ghosts are everywhere.
I am like a broken string
But still I sing my broken prayer.
In the sky the stars still glisten
Lilies in a field of white.

How I pray that God will listen
To my lonely song tonight.
How I pray that He will listen
To my song tonight . . .

Song Number Two

HOT ZICH MIR DI SHICH ZERISSN

Someone stole my overcoat
So how will I keep warm?
Who will hide me from this biting cold
Or shield me from the storm?
So dance with me, and keep the cold away
If you've got your papers you can marry me today.

Every week they change the papers
Red or green or blue.
Every blessed week a different colour
What am I to do?
So dance with me . . . (etc.)

Ask for wood you get a splinter
Ask for bread, a stone.
Ah, this bitter wind, this cruel winter
Chills me to the bone.
So dance with me . . . (etc.)

Song Number Three

VEI ZU DI TEG

(Recit)

Ah my children, my children . . . such times we live in
A curse on the day . . . a curse on the night.

(Song)

It's a time of steel and concrete
A time of murder and machines.
Every night we hear the railways
Won't you tell us what it means?
Just say what you're thinking.
Don't be afraid to tell us what is wrong.
You walk round bewildered
Be silent if you must – but be strong.
Now nothing is right – there's nothing to say
A curse on the night – a curse on the day.

Song Number Four

'Swanee' by George Gershwin. Available from International
Music Publications, Unit 15, Woodford Trading Estate,
Southend Road, Woodford Green, Essex IG8 8HN.

Song Number Five

SHÄTLER, SHÄTLER

Go to sleep my little flower don't let them hear you cry,
Graves are growing hour by hour 'til they fill the sky.
Since your father went away the world is wearing black,
Many roads lead to Ponar but none of them lead back.
Hush-a-bye my little treasure – time to go to sleep;
It would only give them pleasure if they heard you weep.
Every prison has a door
And every wave breaks on the shore,
But pain for you and I will never die.

Spring is blooming here today and all the world is bright.
All we see is winter's grey, a cold and endless night.
Even when the flames of autumn flicker from afar
Still the mothers are the orphans – children in Ponar.
Still the river is in chains, still yearning to be free.
It grinds its way through Lithuania 'til it finds the sea,
Let the darkness fade away
And let us see the light of day.
Father come again and end our pain.

Pain is growing slowly here with sorrow all around,
 'Til our jailors disappear you may not make a sound.
 Do not snike until tomorrow, do not cry today.
 You must not betray our sorrow 'til it's died away.
 Sorrow's wider than a river, deeper than a well.
 Soon your father will deliver you and I from Hell.
 Soon the world will loose its chains
 And all the flowers will bloom again
 And heaven's golden grace will fill your face . . .

Song Number Six

LULLABY

Hush my child, the winds are blowing
 Sleep and don't despair.
 They took away your father from us
 God alone knows where.

Song Number Seven

YIDISHE BRIGADES

Forget the sun - forget the flowers
 Forget the rain that's going to fall.
 This golden time - it isn't ours
 We have the right to work, that's all.

Yidische Brigade
 Working ever harder.
 Our wages are blood and sweat.
 But we are not defeated yet.
 Yidische Brigade (etc.)

We do not ask for your compassion
 A man is proud to be a slave
 But all the songs we sing against you
 Will carry on beyond the grave
 Yidische Brigade (etc.)

We live like beasts inside the Ghetto
 You only lead us out to Death
 But we will sing and we will curse you
 Until we draw our final breath.

Yidische Brigade
 Working ever harder
 Our wages are blood and sweat
 But we are not defeated yet
 Yidische Brigade
 Working ever harder
 We're marching hand in hand
 Until we reach the promised land

Song Number Eight

ISRULLIK

(*Refrain*)

I'm Isrullik - the orphan of the Ghetto,
 I'm Isrullik - the boy the world forgot.
 Of all my family there's me remaining.
 I'm not complaining, I'm happy with my lot.

Your life is worth a farthing,
 Your work's worth even less
 So business gets tougher every day.
 No wonder we're all starving,
 No wonder life's a mess.
 You've got to find a way to make it pay.

(*Refrain*)

I'll flog you golden earrings,
 I'll flog you cigarettes,
 Or saccharin or bread or currant jam.
 If anyone starts jeering,
 If anyone forgets,
 I'll make sure they remember who I am.

(Refrain)

My mother I've forgotten,
I wouldn't know her face.
They took away my parents long ago.
I'm stuck here in this rotten
And God-forsaken place
It's better if you stick with what you know . . .

(Refrain)

I'm Istrulik and if you watch me closely
You might see me try to wipe my eye
We all have sorrows - so why regret them
You'd best forget them.
They'll only make you cry . . .

(Refrain)

Song Number Nine

FRILLING

I walk through the Ghetto alone and forsaken,
There's no-one to care for me now.
And how can you live when your love has been taken,
Will somebody please show me how?
I know that it's springtime, and birdsong, and sunshine,
All nature seems happy and free,
But locked in the Ghetto I stand like a beggar,
I beg for some sunshine for me.

(Refrain)

Springtime, what good is springtime,
What good is sunshine, when he is away?
Springtime, you shine upon my sorrow, but still tomorrow
Is as bleak as today.

The house that we lived in is now barricaded,

The windows are broken and bare.
The sun is so fierce that the flowers have faded,
They wilt in the wintry air.
Each morning, each evening I have to walk past it,
Hiding my eyes from the sight
The place where you loved me the place where you kissed
me,
The place where you held me so tight.

(Refrain)

How thoughtful, how kind of the heavenly powers
To send spring so early this year.
Why thank you for coming, I see you brought flowers
You want me to welcome you here?
They say that the Ghetto is golden and glowing
But sunlight and tears make me blind.
You see, my beloved, how soon they start flowing
I can't get you out of my mind.

(Refrain)

Song Number Ten

JE T'AIME - C'EST FOU
(lyrics by Joshua Sobol
music by Jeremy Sams)

Je suis peut être mal foutue
Je suis peut être pas normale
Mais j'aime l'amour que me tue
Oui j'aime l'amour qui m'fait mal.

Quand je re vois, ma bete
Je perds ma tete
C'est pas chouette
Mais c'est comme ça

Quand tu me tiens
Mon animal
Je me sens sale
Quand tu me fais mal
Mais c'est comme ça.

Embrasse moi
 Tout doux, c'est bon
 Embrasse moi
 Mon doux amour.

Je t'aime mon chou
 Mon beau Teuton
 Je t'aime: c'est fou
 Comme j'aime ma mort.

Quand tu me caresses
 De ton regard

Je suis ta maîtresse
 N'est pas bizarre -

Que quand je te vois dans mes rêves
 C'est drôle, mais je te vois qui crève.

Quand je te vois ma bête
 Je perds la tête.

C'est pas chouette
 Mais c'est comme ça.

Quand tu me tiens
 Mon animal

Je me sens sale
 Quand tu m'fais mal
 Mais c'est comme ça.

Embrasse moi
 Tout doux, c'est bon
 Embrasse moi
 Mon doux amour

Je rêve des nuits
 Je rêve des jours
 Ou je serais ta veuve
 Je la serais toujours, toujours, toujours

Song Number Eleven

MIR LEBN EIBIK

We'll live for ever - year after year.
 We'll live for ever, for we are here.
 And if they try to drag our names through the mud,

We will rewrite them in our enemy's blood.
 We'll live forever - beyond the flames
 And you will never forget our names.
 So we will fight and we will strive, to carry on, to stay alive.
 We'll live forever. We will survive.

Song Number Twelve

DREMIEN FEICL

Birds are dreaming in the treetops,
 Stars are in the sky.
 Who's the stranger by your bedside
 Singing you a lullaby?
 Liu, liu . . .

All our love lies cradled with you,
 Shielding you from pain;
 For your mother, your poor mother
 Won't be coming back again . . .
 Liu liu . . .

And I saw your father running
 In a hail of stones
 All our God-forsaken country
 Echoes to his moans
 Liu liu . . .

Song Number Thirteen

MAYDAY SONG

We've dragged through the mud
 And we're swimming in blood
 Our bodies can't take any more
 So stand and unite - move into the light
 You see how our people betray us.
 Don't waste your despair

On weeping and prayer.
 The heavens are empty there's nobody there.
 So stand and unite
 Move into the light.
 You see how our people betray us
 So fight!

Song Number Fourteen

ZOG NIT KEINMOL

Never say the final journey is at hand
 Never say we will not reach the promised land.
 Never doubt the day of reckoning is near.
 There's a drumming in the land - and we are here.
 From the land of palm-trees to the land of snow.
 We are marching we are singing as we go
 And each and every drop of Jewish blood to fall
 Will be tribute to the courage of us all.
 Our tomorrows will be bathed in golden light
 And our enemies will vanish with the night,
 And we know that perfect morning won't be long,
 When every generation sings this song
 It's a song that's from the fields and from the flood.
 It's a song that's tipped in steel and dipped in blood.
 It's a song that's of our people and our land.
 It's a song that has a sickle in its hand.
 Do not falter . . . (etc.)

Song Number Fifteen

PAK ZICH AIN

Move along, move along,
 Every Jew knows this song.
 Every year they sing it for us.
 All the world joins in the chorus,
 Move along, move along.

Move along, move along,
 Pack your bags, join the throng.
 Come on, change your life, resentle,
 Leave your wife, leave the shtetl,
 Move along, move along.
 Move along, move along,
 Earthly life won't last long
 But even faced with Heaven's glory,
 It will be the same old story
 Move along, move along.

UNTER DAINÉ VAISSE SHTEREN

Moderato

In the sky the stars all glis-ten here be-low I am
 lost in pain when I pray does no-one listen?
 Is my weep-ing all in vain? As I watch the stars all dar-ken
 All a-lone I stand and stare let the emp-ty hea-rens hear-ken
 To my bro-ken-heart-ed prayer let the emp-ty
 hea-rens hear-ken To my hum-ble prayer.

HOT ZICH MIR DI SHICH ZERISSN

Some-one stole my ov-er-coat so how will I keep
 warm who will hide me from this bit-ting cold or
 shield me from the storm so dance with me, and
 keep the cold a-way If you've got your
 pa-pers you can war-ry me to-day so
 dance with me and keep the cold a-
 way If you've got your pa-pers you can
 war-ry me to-day

It's a time of steel and con-crete
 time of mur-der and ma-drives
 Eye-ry wight we hear the rail-ways
 Wdnt you tell us what it means Just
 say what you're think-ing Dont
 be a-fraid to tell us what is wrong You
 walk a-round be-wild-ered Be
 sil-ent if you have to but be strong Now
 no-thing is right -and theres no-thing to say A
 curse on the night - a curse on the day Now

Andante
 Go to sleep my lit-tle flower dont let them hear you cry
 Graves are grow-ing here by hour til they fill the sky
 Since your fa-ther went a-way the world is wear-ing black
 Ma-my roads lead to Ro-nar but none of them lead back
 Husk-a-bye my lit-tle tree-sure - time to go to sleep
 I would on-ly give them plea-sure if they heard you weep
 Eye-ry pri-son has a door And eve-ry wave breaks
 on the shore But pain for you and I will ne-ver die.

LULLABY

Mod.

Hush my child, the winds are blowing
and don't despair. They
took a way your father from us
God alone knows where.

ad lib.

YIDISHE BRIGADES

Allegretto

Forget the sun - forget the flowers. Forget the
rain that's going to fall. This golden
time - it isn't ours. We have the
right to work, that's all

Yid - di-she Bri-gade

Work - - ing ev-er hard - er. Our
wa- ges are blood and sweat. But we are
not de-feat-ed yet.

Yid - di-she Bri-gade

Work - - ing ev-er hard - er. Our

Handwritten musical notation for the song 'GHETTO'. It consists of two staves of music in a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "wa-ges our blood and sweat. But we are not de-feat-ed yet."

ISRULIK

Con Moto

Handwritten musical notation for the song 'ISRULIK'. It consists of seven staves of music in a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "I'm Is-ro-lik the or-phan of the Ghet-to I'm Is-ro-lik the boy the world for-got Of all my fami-ly there's me re-main-ing I'm not com-plain-ing, I'm hap-py with my lot. Your life is worth a far-thing Your work's worth ev-en less So bus-i-ness gets tough-er eve-ry day No won-der we're all star-ving No won-der life's a mess You've got to find a way to make it pay"

FRILING

I walk through the ghetto to a lone and for-saken There's
 no-one to care for me now Ah
 how can you live when your love has been taken Will
 some-body please show me how? I
 know that it's spring-time, and bird-song and sun-shine All
 na-ture seems hap-py and free But
 locked in the ghetto I stand like a beggar I
 beg for some sun-shine for me Spring-time,
 what good is spring-time what good is

sun-shine when he is a-way
 Spring-time you shined - you my sor-row
 but still to - mor-row Is as bleak as to -
 day day.

JE T'AIME - C'EST FOU
 (lyrics by Joshua Sobol
 music by Jeremy Sams)

Je suis peit - et - re mal fon-
 tue Je suis peit et -
 re pas nor - male Mais

j'aime l'a-mour qui me tue
 Ou j'ai-me l'a-mour qui m'a fait
 mal
 Quand je te
 vois ma bé-te Je perds ma
 tête c'est pas chou-elle Mais c'est comme ça
 Quand tu me tiens Mon an-i.
 Je me sens sale Quand tu me
 fais mal Mais c'est comme ça Em-
 brass-e moi Tout doux c'est

bon Em-brass-e moi Non
 doux a-mour Je t'aime mon
 cœur mon beau Ten-ton Je
 t'aime: c'est fou- comme
 j'ai-me ma mort
 Quand tu me car-
 resses de ton re-gard je
 suis ta maî-trisse N'est pas bi-zarre
 Que quand je te vois dans mes
 rêves C'est drôle, mais je
 te vois qui creye
 Quand je te vois ma bé-te

je prends la tête C'est pas chquette mais c'est comme
 ça Quand tu me
 tiens mon an - i - mal je me sens
 sûr quand tu n'as mal mais c'est comme ça
 Em - bras - se moi tout
 doux c'est bon Em - bras - se
 moi mon doux A-mour Je
 rêve des nuits je rêve des
 jours on se se - rais ta Ven -
 ne Je te ser - ais tou - jours
 tou - jours tou - jours

MIR LEBN EIBIK

We'll live for ever year-of-ter-year. We'll live for
 ever, for we are here And if they try to
 drag our names through the mud We will re -
 write them in our en - e - my's blood We'll live for
 ever be - yond the flames And you will ne - ver
 for - get our names And we will fight and we will
 strive to car - ry on, to stay a - live We'll live for
 ever We will sur - vive.

DREMLEN FEIGL

Birds are dream-ing in the tree-tops
 Stars are in the sky
 Who's the stran-ger by your bed-side
 Sing-ing you a lull-a-by?
 Who's the stran-ger by your bed-side
 Sing-ing you a lull-a-by?
 lio, lio, lio, lio.

MAYDAY SONG

We're dragged through the mud And we're swim-ming in blood Our
 bod-ies can't take an-y more. So
 stand and u-nite - move in - to the light You
 see how our peo-ple be-tray us. Don't
 waste your des-pair On weep-ing and prayer The
 her-rens are emp-ty there's no-bod-y there So
 stand and u-nite Hove in - to the light. You
 see how our peo-ple be-tray us So
 fight!

Con Spirito

Ne-ver say the fi-nal jour-ney is at hand Ne-ver
 say we will not reach the prom-ised land, Ne-ver
 doubt the day of re-ken-ning is near There's a
 drum-ming in the land — and we are here.

PAK ZICH AIN

Have a-long, more a-long Ev-ery Jew
 knows this song. Ev-ery year they sing it for us
 All the world joins in the cho-rus Have a-long,
 more a-long