

## Contraband

### *First version from Sochaczew, Warsaw District*

**Note:** Title in Yiddish, *Treyfene Skhoyre*, means “non-kosher merchandise.”  
Italicized words are in Russian. Those in boldface are bilingual puns.

(Into the room rushes a Jew, a contrabandist with a sack on his back.)

JEW: Jews, Children of Mercy, let me hide a package of hot goods! I'm the father of small children. Don't tell them where I am. (He hides himself.)

(A police commissioner enters with a policeman.)

POLICE COMMISSIONER: *Master of the house, where is the Jewish contrabandist? Isn't he here?*

MASTER OF THE HOUSE (or mistress of the house performed by a male): *Not here.*

POLICE COMMISSIONER (to the policeman): *Search for him.*

(They search for the Jew and do not find him. They leave, come back in and ask the same questions again. The master/mistress of the house replies that he is not there. This is repeated several times. Finally the Jew inadvertently coughs and the policeman finds him. He drags him out from his hiding place, and the police commissioner blows his whistle. In come three more policemen and they circle the contrabandist. Then the district commissioner also enters. With pomp and ceremony they clear a passage for him, and the police commissioner yells out):

*Make way for him! The district commissioner is coming through!*

POLICE COMMISSIONER (to the contrabandist): *Do you have a passport [pashport, Russian for passport]?*

JEW: What do you want a **belt** [*pasikl*, Yiddish; *pas*, passport, Yiddish] for? I have no belt. What kind of belt? I know nothing. What?

POLICE COMMISSIONER: *Turn over the passport!*

JEW: Are you going to give me a **smack**? [*patshe*, Yiddish] I can give you two smacks (and he gives him a smack).

(The policeman takes the sack of goods and he gives it to the police commissioner for inspection.)

OFFICER (to the Jew): *Do you have a certificate [shvidestvo, Russian] for these goods?*

JEW: What do you want from me? A pair of **soles** [*podeshvelekh*, Yiddish]? I just resoled my shoes, and you want to tear the soles off?

POLICE COMMISSIONER: *Present the certificate for the goods.*

JEW: What do you want from me? It's raining outside, and you want to tear my **soles** off? Jews, Children of Mercy, he is confiscating my prayer shawl and phylacteries.

DISTRICT COMMISSIONER: *Arrest him!*

(The guards seize him.)

JEW (sings):  
Once I was a brave man, a brave man,  
With goods did I come to this land.

ALL (chorus) [sing melody].

JEW:  
I came to this land, to this land,  
The trusty police seized me and my  
contraband.

**Ikh Bin Amol Geven**  
Once I Was . . . .

*Vals Tempo*



Bin ikh a - mol ge - ven a  
Once I was a ve - ry brave man,

bra - ver man, a bra - ver  
ve - ry brave man, ve - ry

man. bin ikh ge - ku - men - mit  
brave, and so I came with my

skhoy - re kin di - zn land.  
mer - chan - dise to this land.

ALL (chorus) [sing melody].

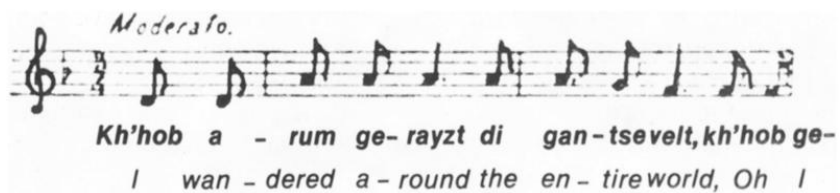
JEW (sings):  
Since there is no news to relate, no  
news to relate,  
I sing alone of my troubled and  
miserable fate.

ALL (chorus) [sing melody].

JEW (sings):  
Round the whole world have I traveled,  
I could have had cause to regale.  
Money gives me no satisfaction,  
I yearn to return to the jail.

**Kh'hob Arumgerayzt di Gantse Velt**  
I Wandered Around the Entire World

*Moderato.*



Kh'hob a - rum ge - rayzt di gan - tsevelt, kh'hob ge -  
I wan - dered a - round the en - tire world, Oh I

kent ho - bn dos gres - te glik. Kin  
 could have had much cause to re - gale. No

shum far - ge - ni - gn iz bay mir kin gelt,  
 plea - sure did mon - ey ev - er give to me,

tsu der tfi - se tsit mikh tsu - rik.  
 I yearn to re - turn to the jail.

POLICE COMMISSIONER: *What is your name?*

JEW: Eeenie Meenie Minie Mo.

POLICE COMMISSIONER: Eeenie Meenie Minie Mo—*what kind of a name is that?*

JEW: Moses-Mordecai, Jack the teacher, Moses find me if you can.

POLICE COMMISSIONER: *Where are you from?*

JEW: Warsaw Boondoggle region.

DISTRICT COMMISSIONER: *Put him down for five years hard labor.*

(The clerk sits at the table and writes.)

JEW (sings with the same melody):  
 I have lost 10 percent,  
 I heard [my sentence] clearly.  
 Alas, my heart is on fire.  
 I am extinguishing it with my hot tears.

Jews, Children of Mercy,  
 Take me out of their hands.  
 See what is happening,  
 A five-year sentence is planned.

A prisoner am I already,  
 Wife and children have I at home.  
 Beloved Jews, give me alms  
 For each member of my family.

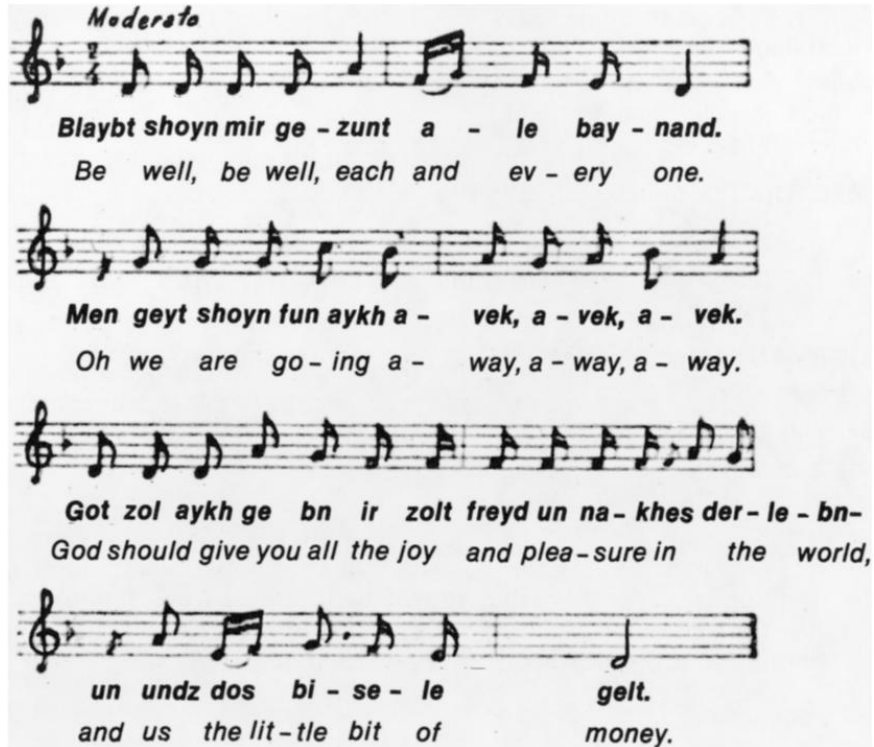
(The clerk stands up.)

ALL (sing):  
 May all of you stay well, each and every  
 one,  
 We are about to leave you, leave you,  
 leave you.  
 May God give you  
 Pleasure and joy,  
 And us a little money.

May all of you stay well, each and every  
 one,  
 We are about to leave you, leave you,  
 leave you.  
 May God give you  
 Dew and rain (or: health and life),  
 And us the happy path.

**Blaybt Shoy'n Mir Gezunt**  
**May All of You Stay Well**

*Moderato*



Blaybt shoy'n mir ge - zunt a - le bay - nand.  
 Be well, be well, each and ev - ery one.

Men geyt shoy'n fun aykh a - vek, a - vek, a - vek.  
 Oh we are go - ing a - way, a - way, a - way.

Got zol aykh ge bn ir zolt freyd un na - khes der - le - bn -  
 God should give you all the joy and plea - sure in the world,

un undz dos bi - se - le gelt.  
 and us the lit - tle bit of money.

**Contraband**  
**(Second version from Lowicz, Warsaw district)**

JEW: Good Purim, dear master of the house.

May you have joy this time next year.  
 May God bring every good thing your way.

From help and comfort, may your year never stray.

(The inspector enters, and the contrabandist hides under the table. [possibly, the host's dining table.])

INSPECTOR: *Did a man with smuggled goods come into this house?*

MASTER OF THE HOUSE: *Not here.*

JEW: Cock-a-doodle-do!  
 I'm right here.

(The policeman starts looking for him and finds him under the table.)

INSPECTOR: *Do you have a passport?*

JEW: Dear master of the house,  
 May you have joy,  
 You have a **belt**; I myself have a string.

Maybe you have one—loan it to me,  
 I'll give it to him.

INSPECTOR: Where is your **passport**?

JEW: I have a string; he insists on a **belt**.

INSPECTOR: **By what** [kak, Russian] *name are you known?*

JEW: **Shit** [kak, Yiddish] with blood and pus.

INSPECTOR: **What is your last name?**

JEW: **Shit** free of charge.

INSPECTOR: **What** [*tshto*, Russian] *kind of merchandise do you have?*

JEW: I have a few times **60** [*shok*, Yiddish] eggs and rags, Rubbish!

And throw in your head and feet, It'll be even heavier.

INSPECTOR (to policeman): *Write it down!*

(The policeman sits down and proceeds to write.)

POLICEMAN (to Jew): **What** *is your last name?*

JEW: **Shit** with blood and throw in your hands and feet.

INSPECTOR (to policeman): *Seize him!*

JEW: Master of the house, dear, ransom me; they are going to imprison me.

(The contrabandist takes money from the master of the house and presents it to the inspector.)

INSPECTOR: *Go away! Policeman, seize him!*

JEW: Master of the house, dear, give me more money. They are about to imprison me.

INSPECTOR (pushes him): *Forward!*

ALL: A good Purim.

**Note:** The English translation that appears with the music is slightly different from the translation in the text, due to an effort to make it "singable." The photographs are of the Sochaczew production.