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The Dorot Jewish Division  
present

# Who Are The Litvaks?



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an illustrated lecture  
with  
**Dovid Katz**


**Monday, April 11, 2016**  
**6:30 PM on the Sixth Floor**

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This illustrated lecture examines Litvak history, lore and cultural trends (and battles) from the fourteenth century to predictions about the later twenty-first century. A major, but little-understood tribe of East European Jews, the Litvaks, hail from a territory of northeastern Europe that today includes Lithuania, Belarus, Latvia, parts of northeast Poland, eastern Ukraine and some snippets of westernmost Russia. The Litvak ethos lurks in many of today's Jewish people internationally. The Litvaks are known internationally for their unique dialect of Yiddish and (Ashkenazic) Hebrew, as well as for their alleged stubbornness, love of learning, and lack of patience with the presumably unsubstantial, and at times humorlessness and eccentric streak. Some (sympathetic) time to non-Litvaks, especially *Galitsyáner*, is also featured. This stimulating evening will include ample time for audience Q&A.

About the Presenter:

**Dovid Katz** is a Vilnius-based Yiddish scholar, author and educator, and cultural historian of Lithuanian Jewry (the Litvak heritage). In recent years, he has become a human rights defender specializing in contemporary legacies of the East European Holocaust.

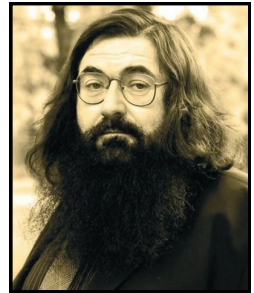


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A native of Brooklyn, he grew up in the home of his late father, Lithuanian Yiddish poet Menke Katz, steeped in Litvak culture. He majored in Yiddish linguistics at Columbia University and founded Yiddish Studies at Oxford. When Eastern Europe opened up at the end of the Cold War, he embarked on a new linguistic and cultural atlas of the Litvaks' homeland, and produced numerous articles, studies, and maps on the people, the language, the culture of the Litvaks. After a year at Yale, he settled in Vilnius, Lithuania to take up a new chair in Yiddish studies at Vilnius University, which he held until 2010. His books include *Vilna Jewish Book Stamps* (2008), *Seven Kingdoms of the Litvaks* (2009), *The Unfinished Story of Yiddish* (2007), and the folio volume *Lithuanian Jewish Culture* (2010), which contains a translation of the Vilna Gaon's sons' biography of their father.

In the 1990s he published three collections of original Yiddish fiction, mostly set in pre-World War I Jewish Lithuania, which won numerous Yiddish literary awards including the Manger Prize. He is finishing a fourth collection. In 2015, he began to translate the Bible into Lithuanian Yiddish, and has to date completed First and Second Kings and Esther (Ruth and Daniel are in progress). In 2008, when some Lithuanian Holocaust survivors were accused of war crimes in an attempt to rewrite the Holocaust, he became a major Litvak activist combating today's East European state attempts at revisionism of the history of the Holocaust. He has published dozens of articles and is the editor of a major web journal in the field, *Defending History* [DefendingHistory.com](http://DefendingHistory.com).

Website: [www.dovidkatz.net](http://www.dovidkatz.net)

This program has been made possible through the generosity of the Dorot Jewish Division.

Elevators access the Sixth Floor after 6 PM

All programs are FREE and subject to last-minute change or cancellation.