

The Schmooze

Stories with a Yiddish Twist

HARRY HAMLIN: "SHEMEN ZOLSTU ZICH IN DEIN VEITEN HALDZ!"
YOU SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF YOURSELF!

Note: The Yiddish word for "ashamed" is "farshemt."
In Yiddish, a "costume" is a "kostyum"; to "apologize" is "betn mekhile"
The Yiddish word meaning "to offend" is "baleydikn."

by
Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe



Syosset, New York

DEAR HARRY HAMLIN,

You may be a famous American film and TV actor, but you're lacking "saichel"/"seykhl"-
-common sense, good sense, tact, and judgment.

Yes, I know you are a Yale graduate and have a Master of Fine Arts degree in acting.

Yes, in 1987, People magazine voted you "Sexiest Man Alive."

Yes, you're an advocate for Fusion energy.

Yes, you're a "Mad Men" star.

And, yes, you're married to Lisa Renna (AKA "The Body").

However, you seem to be unaware that the swastika symbol is most commonly
associated with Nazi Germany, the Holocaust, neo-Nazis and other hate groups!!!

The newspapers reported that you attended a celebrity-packed Halloween party given
by George Clooney and you showed up at the Casamigos tequila bash dressed as the

Sex Pistols' Sid Vicious and Nancy Spungen, wearing a leather black jacket, black pants, and a bright red T-shirt with a SWASTIKA printed on it. Renna wore a curly blond wig and black leather pants.

So, you were trying to recreate an iconic 1978 photo of the punk rock couple. You chose to wear this insensitive T-shirt because you wanted to appear "authentic"? This action wasn't an insignificant mistake--a "Bubu!" It was "bataytik"--SIGNIFICANT! "Es past nit"--It is not becoming.

I read that your costume was so offensive to the A-list crowd that one Halloween superhero was ready to fight you. The guest said, "Do you think that's a joke? You call that a Halloween costume? You know what [Hitler] did to our families?"

Yes, you did eventually swap your swastika tee for one printed with a peace sign, your mood changed...and you left the party early.

Renna apologized saying that she and you didn't mean to hurt or offend anyone.

Harry, if you've read the newspapers, you would be aware of the fact that swastika incidents are NOT NEW. Just this year [2015] Florida residents were "scared to be Jewish." Swastikas and hate messages were drawn on the cars of a Jewish family in Miami Beach. Daniella Fields told the local channel 10: "My family perished in the Holocaust. My grandma's entire family--she's the only survivor of everybody...To wake up with a swastika on my car...It's very concerning."

In February, hate messages appeared on homes, mailboxes and fences in Miami Gardens. And in 2014, there were several incidents where a swastika and the letters "KKK" appeared on a temporary sign at Temple Emanu-el, the oldest Conservative Jewish congregation in Miami Beach.

(Source: The Times of Israel, June 10, 2015)

And, Harry, ANOTHER HARRY, made the news in 2005. Prince Harry, then 20-years-old, proved himself to be Britain's most blundering royal:

He turned up at a "colonials and natives" costume party dressed as a Nazi. He wore a swastika armband and a desert uniform similar to those worn by Erwin Rommel's German Afrika Korps. He, too, apologized: "I'm very sorry if I have caused any offense. It was a poor choice of costume, and I apologize.

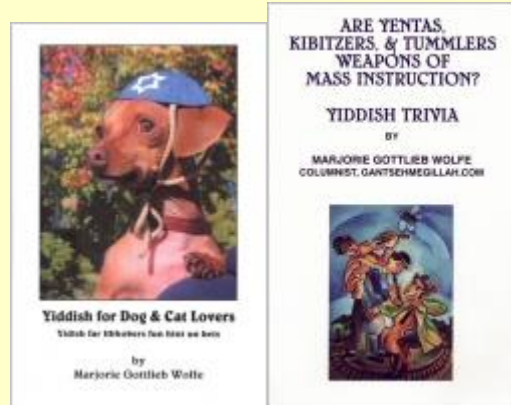
Rabbi Jonathan Romain, a spokesman for the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain, said, "But having been given, the apology should now be accepted." "But," he added, "The Board is pleased that he's apologized for the incident."

I'm sorry, Harry Hamlin, I can't forgive you. "Dos iz alts." (That's how it is.) Perhaps this Yiddish expression says it all: "Macht zich nit visindik." [You] pretend to be ignorant of fact.

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Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe is the author of two books:



"Yiddish for Dog & Cat Lovers" and "Are Yentas, Kibitzers, & Tumblers Weapons of Mass Instruction? Yiddish Trivia." To order a copy, go to her website: MarjorieGottliebWolfe.com

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