

RAKHMIEL PELTZ and  
MARK W. KIEL

from Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Soviet National Languages: Their Past, Present and Future,  
ed. Isabelle T. Kreindler, Amsterdam: Mouton,  
1985, pp. 277-309.

## Di Yiddish-Imperye: The Dashed Hopes for a Yiddish Cultural Empire in the Soviet Union

### I. Introduction:

#### Yiddish Language and Culture Until the Revolution

Yiddish speaking Jews came from West and Central Europe and settled in Poland, Lithuania and the western Ukraine starting in the thirteenth century. The acquisition of these territories by Russia after the partitions of Poland and the Napoleonic wars put the largest Jewish community in the world at that time, under Tsarist rule. Official policy towards the Jews in the Russian empire was bipolar, directed towards isolating them on the one hand and ~~assimilating or Russifying them on the other~~. Jewish domicile was restricted to a Pale of Settlement along the lines of the frontier of the Old Polish Kingdom. Jews were prohibited from living in the cities unless they received special privileges, granted only to a few wealthy and Russified Jews. Internal religious and communal administration as well as official relations with the central governing authorities were carried out by the *Kehile*, the local Jewish self-governing body. Most Jews lived in small towns, alongside Poles, and to a lesser degree Germans, Ukrainians, Belorussians and Lithuanians.<sup>1</sup>

Yiddish, the language of Ashkenazic Jewry, has been spoken for about a thousand years; it is thought to have arisen when speakers of Romance vernaculars moved into the area near the Rhine and Moselle. *Ashkenaz* is the traditional Jewish term for the Jewish community which developed on Germanic territory. The language evolved as a fusion of elements modified from many stock languages. The major components of Yiddish are Germanic, Semitic (mainly derived from Hebrew and Aramaic, but herein referred to as Hebrew), and Slavic (chiefly derived from Czech, Polish, Ukrainian and Belorussian). The Yiddish vernacular exhibited a diglossic relationship with Hebrew, which was generally reserved for religious and communal functions. Although the Germanic component predominates, as a result of the eastward

migration the Slavic component was integrated in the language in lexical and morphological forms as well as grammatical constructions, Germanic in form but modelled after Slavic usage. Jews were largely multilingual and usually had a knowledge of one or several of the languages descended from the stock languages of Yiddish. Therefore, despite the integrated nature of the components, speakers of Yiddish often developed a sensitivity to aspects of componential differences. The complicated interrelationship between Yiddish and its source languages, which sometimes continue to serve as coterritorial vernaculars, have influenced standardization processes both in toward-German (or Hebrew or Slavic) developments and away-from-German (or Hebrew or Slavic) developments.<sup>2</sup>

Both from within and without the Jewish community, Yiddish was subjected to denigration, scorn and criticism, with attacks on its lack of authenticity, beauty and autonomy. However, it was the major language for Jewish communication as indicated by the declaration by 97% of the Russian Jews in the 1897 census, that Yiddish was their mother tongue. Slowly the language gained public defenders, especially starting in the nineteenth century. It was then that the societal functions of Yiddish expanded in Congress Poland and other parts of the Russian empire. Despite problems with official censorship and permission to publish, a full range of modern belles lettres developed, aided by a stable weekly press starting in 1842. A Russian-Yiddish dictionary was published in 1869 and a Yiddish-Russian dictionary in 1876. By the end of the century the functions of Yiddish embraced such social niches as popular theater and revolutionary propaganda. Although Yiddish had been the centuries-old mediator language for religious education, it was first applied as the sole language of instruction in schools with a secular curriculum at the turn of the century. In addition, at the end of the nineteenth century, the first Yiddish dailies appeared in America, and by 1903 there was one in Petersburg. At the outbreak of World War I, thirteen Yiddish and two Hebrew dailies were appearing in Russia.<sup>3</sup>

The new secular functions of Yiddish were opposed both by the religious establishment and by the emerging political and cultural Zionist movement. Hebrew was also being developed at that time as a modern literary language, and Zionists generally advanced it as the Jewish national language. On the other hand, many Jewish labor and revolutionary organizers turned from their base in Russian culture to the formation of Jewish parties and the support of Yiddish. The Jewish socialist movements coupled their fight against capitalism with the advocacy of expanded functions for Yiddish, in order to broaden the cultural and intellectual horizons of the masses.

Influenced by stirrings on the East European ethnic front, supporters of a Yiddish-based nationalism appeared during the years between the revolution of 1905 and World War I. Besides demanding political rights, intellectuals collected folklore, delved into philological research, and attempted to codify grammar and orthography. All these factors added to the rising prestige of Yiddish.<sup>4</sup>

During the first World War and its aftermath the subject of national minority rights ranked high on the political agenda of the Allies and the emerging nations. The strongest claims Jews made to parity status in Eastern Europe were tied to the role of language in defining the national character of a people. In the platforms of the various Jewish nationalist parties, emphasis was placed on propagating national culture in Yiddish: in literary expression, in governmental affairs where Jews were concerned, and in state recognized and supported Jewish school systems.<sup>5</sup>

By the time the Bolsheviks took power, a host of Yiddish political and cultural institutions were in full operation in the former territories of the Tsar. However, unlike the other revolutionary parties in Russia, the Bolsheviks had virtually neglected work in Yiddish. Consequently, they were unprepared to administer Jewish society. Furthermore, many of the Yiddish cultural leaders had spent their formative years in Jewish socialist parties, and even after some of them joined the Bolsheviks after the Revolution, they were never forgiven for their former competing socialist achievement. The Bolsheviks followed an ambivalent policy of both granting Jews national status, and, at the same time, favoring their assimilation into the new Soviet society.

*Bolshevik ambivalent policy toward Jews*

## 2. The Short-Lived Cultural Construction After the Revolution Language Status Planning and Institutional Development

In the years following the Revolution there was a flowering of newly formed Yiddish-language institutions, including newspapers, schools, courts, soviets, and industrial and agricultural collectives. The construction of a Yiddish-based culture in many social sectors in geographic areas with sizeable Ashkenazic Jewish populations, namely the Ukraine, Belorussia and to a lesser extent the Russian republic, paralleled cultural construction for other nationalities in the 1920's. Later in the 1930's Yiddish institutions were also developed in Birobidzhan, the Jewish autonomous region. This deliberate status planning for the Yiddish language had overwhelming consequences for the

future development of Jewish culture in the Soviet Union. Synagogues and religious schools were closed, and secular Hebrew literature and theater were halted.<sup>6</sup> Left with no overt competition on the Jewish scene, the new Yiddish institutions dominated Jewish culture.

The Soviet Union, the only society offering considerable governmental financial support of Yiddish cultural work, attracted many Yiddish intellectuals who envisioned a highly developed Jewish secular culture as an integral part of the new Soviet society. Leading Yiddish writers and critics, including Bergelson, Der nister, Erik Markish, Shtif and Viner, migrated to the Soviet Union by 1930's. Some were more committed to communism than others, but it is extremely difficult from the evidence available to us to describe the complexity of both overlapping and conflicting loyalties of the Soviet Jewish cultural leaders. A segment of the Jewish intelligentsia both inside and outside the Soviet Union were advocates of Yiddishism, the espousal of Yiddish language and culture, as the major factor for Jewish national identity.<sup>7</sup> Yiddish language was regarded as the self-conscious medium of secular Jewish culture as law and custom had been the medium of traditional, religious Jewish culture. Within the Soviet Union the Yiddish language came to be defined as the organic expression of the Jewish people, embodying and insuring an authentic balance struck between Jewish national tradition and the new culture of Soviet society, which itself was a composite of many nationalities. Yiddish culture could thus develop within the constellation of Soviet nationality cultures. Of course, the increasing competition with Russian, a language already known by a large portion of the growing Jewish urban population, caused the Jewish cultural leaders to constantly look over their shoulder as they strove to raise the status of Yiddish in its assigned social roles.

The Jewish sections of the Communist party, the Yevseksyie (formed in 1918 and disbanded in 1930), assumed general responsibility for Jewish cultural and economic reconstruction after the Revolution. It is hard to disentangle the contradictory attitudes of the Communist Party to Yiddish cultural activity, even for the period of widespread construction in the 1920's. Jewish members of the general Party resented the existence of the Yevseksyie and their cultural work in Yiddish.<sup>8</sup> Of 45,000 Jewish Party members in 1927, 18,000 declared Yiddish as their mother tongue, but of these only 2,000 belonged to Yiddish *kemerlekh* ("cells") where business was conducted in Yiddish. For most Jewish Communists, Russian had higher status; even some Yevseksyie leaders spoke Russian at home and sent their children to Russian schools. At the inception of the Yevseksyie some of its

leaders had declared that they were not "fanatics of the Yiddish language" and as Communists would not bemoan total language assimilation in the future.<sup>9</sup> Although the Yevseksyie acquired a negative reputation in many Jewish circles because of assimilationist tendencies and their role in uprooting traditional Jewish institutions, recent studies have also demonstrated their variegated nature and positive accomplishments.

It was in a hierarchy permeated with ambivalence that the Yevseksyie confronted the central Party and had to justify their custodianship of Yiddish cultural activity and indeed their own existence.

Most Yiddish institutions housed affiliated local party *Kemerlekh*. However, many of the cultural leaders, including teachers, writers and researchers, were not party members. These veteran architects of Yiddishism had to constantly fight for their constructive recommendations.<sup>10</sup>

Let us briefly examine some of the diverse institutional settings in which Yiddish developed after the Revolution. Yiddish flourished as a language of literature and the arts. The greatest contribution of Soviet Jewish culture has been in the area of Yiddish belles lettres.<sup>11</sup> But creativity was not limited to the written word. Yiddish theater was very popular and it developed on a high artistic level; in addition, the film medium was experimented with.<sup>12</sup>

Looking at the record of Soviet publications in Yiddish, we see an abundant variety of periodicals, ranging from daily newspapers, to journals in specialized fields of agriculture and industry, from magazines for children, to academic serials.<sup>13</sup> With regard to books, 849 Yiddish books and brochures appeared just in the first five years following the Revolution.<sup>14</sup> Altogether, some 7,237 Yiddish books and pamphlets appeared in the Soviet Union from 1917 through 1948. Of these, about half were translations, mainly from Russian belles lettres, children's literature and government writings, which included party matters and propaganda. Less than ten per cent of the works originally written in Yiddish were of a general party nature. Thus, about forty per cent of the publications were of a more Jewish nature, in the sense that they were directed towards a specifically Jewish audience. They spanned diverse subjects, but editions of the Yiddish classics (Mendele, Sholem Aleykhem and Perets) predominated. Of course, the works of Soviet Yiddish writers were highly represented, reflecting in their thematics new developments in Soviet society.<sup>15</sup> The Soviet writers consisted of those who had established reputations before the Revolution, others who first developed their skills in the flurry of activity after the Revolution, and a younger group who were products of the Soviet Yiddish educational system.

After they came to power, the Communists appropriated the existing

ant. relig. inst. anti-Hebr. party

secular Jewish culture

competition w/ Russian

Soviet Yiddish literature

desire for linguistic assimilation among many p. communists

secular Jewish schools and Sovietized them. Over the next ten years there was tremendous growth of new Yiddish schools. These encompassed a host of pre-schools, four and seven year schools, and by 1930, ten year schools beginning at age eight. Better than fifty per cent of all Jewish children attended Yiddish schools at the height of Yiddish educational development in 1932-33. While this figure may have lagged behind those of some other ethnic groups, it far outstripped the number of students attending Yiddish schools in America and Poland, the two other major centers of Yiddish speaking Jewry.<sup>16</sup> Only 3.7% of Jewish students attended middle and professional schools in Yiddish and an even smaller figure went to the Yiddish sections of the universities. The few Yiddish institutions of advanced training did not meet the varied needs of the Jews. Parents kept their children from attending Yiddish schools in general because they feared that the inadequate training in these schools in Russian, the regional language, or German, would prevent admission to schools of higher education.<sup>17</sup> The Yiddish school curriculum did in fact include these languages, although it was difficult to teach them all successfully. Besides the general subject matter of all Soviet schools, such as the study of mathematics and Soviet society, the Yiddish school also taught specifically Jewish subjects, the major ones being Yiddish language, literature, and Jewish history, with emphasis on the secularization of Jewish life and participation in the class struggle.<sup>19</sup> Altogether, several generations of Jews in large numbers passed through the Soviet Yiddish schools until they were closed in 1941.

The founding of institutes for advanced study and academic research can be viewed as the pinnacle of nationality cultural construction. Such was the case for the Ukrainians and Belorussians, and similarly for the Jews. Chairs of Yiddish language and literature were established at several institutions in Moscow, Minsk, Kiev, Kharkov, and Odessa. In addition, Yiddish programs were offered at a number of professional, technical and pedagogical institutes. The two major centers of Jewish scholarship were at the Jewish sections of the Ukrainian and Belorussian Scientific Academies. The Kiev Academy housed one of the world's major Jewish libraries and archives, and awarded graduate degrees in several programs which were conducted in Yiddish.<sup>19</sup>

Let us now turn to the inroads Yiddish made in a very different realm of Jewish life in the Soviet Union. As a language in the courts and administrative Soviets, it experienced a changing history. Based on the different guarantees of the Belorussian and Ukrainian republics, Yiddish was tried out in the Vietbsk courts in 1922; by 1931 there were 46 Yiddish courts in the Ukraine, ten in Belorussia and eleven in the Russian republic. In addition, the Jewish

national soviets and five national regions utilized Yiddish for administrative purposes. These institutions were manipulated at different times by the conflicting interests of the central Russian authority and the ruling nationality leaders of the republics. Moreover, Jews did not always support these institutions or turn to them for help. Nevertheless, they did function for almost twenty years, requiring such affiliates as legal codes in Yiddish, as well as police, investigators, lawyers and judges who could perform functions in the language. As late as 1937, there were 20-25 Yiddish courts, and in 1936, the Kiev court handled 1174 cases.<sup>20</sup>

We will now focus on Yiddish language planning concerns which grew out of the status planning decisions that assigned societal functions to Yiddish in the Soviet Union. Most of the new Yiddish institutions were closed by the beginning of World War II. Consequently, evaluation of the results of implemented recommendations, an integral part of language planning in general, was rarely achieved by the Soviet Yiddish regulators. Moreover, in studying the issue today, we have little basis for exploring the more complex relationships, such as to what extent language shift in one societal function may bring about a shift in a second area. In retrospect, upon considering the short lifetime of Soviet Yiddish institutions, the accomplishments of language development to meet Jewish needs during this period seem all the more impressive.

### 3. The Arena for Language Development and Planning

The stated goal of the planners was to educate the workers and enrich the Yiddish language so it could be used for new functions. Through education the new "proletarian Yiddish" was to spread, under the assumption that the Soviet Jewish worker was interested in pursuing Yiddish cultural activity.

The extent of organized language planning affected the various sectors differently. Conscious planning for meeting language needs was most intense in the press and in the schools soon after the Revolution. Linguists and writers created and translated many textbooks for children. This was followed, starting in the mid-1920's, by limited activity on the language of the courts and administrative governmental bodies. Worker organizations were not subject to as much regulation, but here too, specialized terminologies were eventually developed, and worker correspondents actively wrote for local bulletins and the daily press. One book, for example, showed workers how to carry on propaganda work, take minutes at meetings, and deliver speeches and oral reports.<sup>21</sup>

Yiddish schools - limited attendance cause to fear that they will not learn Russian

curriculum

Yiddish SK ↑ AM

Yidd. courts

terminological contributions much translation from Russian

Linguists played the leading role in the language planning process, particularly after the institutes of advanced Yiddish study were well organized in Minsk, starting in 1925 and in Kiev a year later. Throughout the years, however, a diverse group of non-linguist planners were also active in deliberations. For example, it was the teachers in the Yiddish schools opened for children of displaced families in Russia during World War I who initiated the naturalization of the spelling of the Hebrew component of Yiddish. They argued that orthography based on phonetics would make it easier to teach children who did not know Hebrew how to read and write Yiddish correctly. Implementation was effected by the Yiddish press immediately after the Revolution.<sup>22</sup> In the early 1920's, the press was also the arena for the first public discussion of which language standard to follow. A range of language levels was supported in letters to the editor and in meetings with readers.<sup>23</sup> Another example of the involvement of the press in language planning were the meetings called by editors and journalists in Kharkov in 1930 because of their concern about non-standardized usage in the nine Yiddish periodicals published there.<sup>24</sup> Yiddish writers too discussed the nature of the literary language, in articles and at conferences dedicated to language planning and literary matters.<sup>25</sup>

Other non-linguist planners were active in establishing standards for using Yiddish in its new social niches. In working out terminologies for the Yiddish courts, lawyers and judges played a key role in the committees, first in Minsk and later in Kiev.<sup>26</sup> Courses were offered to familiarize party officials with the language of the Yiddish press, their chief political tool.<sup>27</sup> We do not have much evidence on the working relationship between linguist and non-linguist planners, but one of the only Soviet Yiddish linguists of that period still living, reminisces that decisions on lexical differentiation of Yiddish following the Revolution were made in a non-academic environment by "linguistic ignoramuses."<sup>28</sup>

The journals and conferences organized by linguists became the major sites for language planning. Along with a variety of other linguistic research projects, a major concern of the linguists was normative work. In their first collective volume, a product of a short-lived philological committee in Kharkov in 1923, the linguists discussed the principles of language standardization and called for the active collaboration of "teachers, school organizers, literati and journalists."<sup>29</sup> The major Soviet journal on Yiddish linguistics and language planning, *Di yidische shprakh*, Kiev, was envisioned as "a language laboratory" with the aim of "breaking conservatism." Its editor, Shtif, claimed that subjects such as international politics, law, industrialization and

agricultural colonization had become everyday topics for the masses, and it was for such needs that adequate terminologies were required. The journal, however, saw itself in an advisory capacity, claiming that it "does not decree, it only suggests." The editor addressed the journal to worker correspondents, cultural leaders, jurists, administrators, translators, teachers, and journalists. He invited as contributors not only language researchers but also "consumers" of the language.<sup>30</sup>

#### Standards

The standards operating in language planning can be studied from three kinds of sources: published descriptions of theoretical standards; the products of corpus planning including terminologies, dictionaries, grammars, and the guidelines described therein; and reports of language use. Of course, the gulf between theoretical standard and actual language use can be quiet large.

In *Di yidische shprakh*, the chief concern was the ideal *kulturshprakh*, a level of language that would apply to diverse situations, such as the press, teacher conferences, popular science books, translations, and the business office. Three language styles were first offered as potential standards: 1) the "living *folkshprakh*," defined as the language of both the existing older generation and of writers up to Sholem Aleykhem, 2) the new literary language represented by Bergelson, and 3) the "actual *kulturshprakh*" most typically represented by the newspaper. Confusion over the difference between folk and literary language was reflected in the definition of "living *folkshprakh*" as both spoken vernacular and literary creation. This normative journal had definite views. Rather than mechanically accept a foreign influence, the defense of the *folkshprakh* was sought. In addition, the language of the press was not a favorite standard. Even though it represented a unique style, the same linguistic norms were to hold for the press as for the literary language. Although Bergelson's language loomed high as an acceptable standard, reservations were expressed about the applicability of the individualistic literary language to the more general *kulturshprakh*. Even the *folkshprakh* standard, for which Shtif and his journal were later to be repeatedly derided, was recognized for its limitations. *Di yidische shprakh* acknowledged that *folkshprakh* was relatively undifferentiated regarding contemporary terminology and was permeated with expressions of the worlds of religion and capitalism.<sup>31</sup>

Another point of view was offered by Zaretski, the leading Soviet Yiddish grammarian, who insisted that the major criterion for literature and press should be the language which the Jewish worker spoke and understood.<sup>32</sup>

Contributors  
of  
non-linguist  
language  
planners  
through  
shprakh  
spelling  
standardization

linguists:  
normative  
work

Shtif: defended kulturshprakh as norm

Thus, he agreed only partially with Shtif's dual standard which gave primary importance to the spoken language of the masses and considered the language of literature secondarily.<sup>33</sup> Perhaps the possibility that the two standards could approach one another was not unreasonable to the Yiddishists who saw the language "effecting a reconciliation between the masses and the...intellectuals."<sup>34</sup> The Soviet school of *lingvotekhnik* as represented by Zaretski accepted only those criteria for language planning that supported the new social order.<sup>35</sup> He adamantly decried traditional criteria of normative action, such as purity, correctness, beauty and past traditions. Such proclamations gave Soviet language planning a "radical" reputation.<sup>36</sup> Independent of whether this attribution is appropriate or not, recommendations did exclude words that "supported chauvinism" and terms that "supported religion." Such efforts paralleled the official exclusion of *zhid* (derogatory word for "Jew") from the new Belorussian dictionary.<sup>37</sup> These recommendations indicated great faith in the role that language education could play in transmitting social values.

If we take one specific example of corpus planning, the work of the committee on legal terminology, we can see how multiple criteria may apply to one project. The committee stated several principles for word formation: 1) understandibility, the word of the masses, 2) (no) hazy, broad terms, 3) internationalisms preferred over newly created Yiddish terms, 4) Ukrainian or Russian terms only if used widely by Jews, 5) words of Hebrew origin if they are not "archaic remanants" of religious life whose meaning has not been neutralized, 6) avoidance of direct calques from Russian.<sup>38</sup>

Ironically by the late 1930's when Yiddish expression and institutions were curtailed, the expressed standards for language planning were broader, more liberal, and more variegated than in earlier years. This tendency probably reflected the unwillingness of the planners to be charged with supporting a single standard which could at some point fall out of favor. But much evidence also shows that the linguists eventually operated in a freer framework, which allowed them to acknowledge the complex structure and history of Yiddish and to plan for the continuity of its integrity. Still, despite the acknowledged greater diversification of guiding principles, limitations remained. Unlike their Western contemporaries, for example, none of the Soviet planners ever proposed the language of the *talmid-khokhem*, the "religious scholar," as a standard.<sup>39</sup>

Spivak, who specialized in terminology and morphology and led Yiddish linguistics and language planning in the later years, brought *folkshprakh*, the standard Shtif had championed, back to arena. He appealed to so-called

Zaretski

Legal terminology criteria

greater understandability in language planning while expressions + institutions were curtailed

*masntimlekhkayt* ("the way of the masses") rather than *yidische folkstimlekhkayt* ("the way of the Jewish folk"), though both actually meant the same thing: the specifically national-historical form of the language. The uniqueness of Yiddish was not to be obliterated, according to Spivak, although he supported widespread use of internationalisms. He argued for lexical standardization and innovation based on all the components of Yiddish, which he outlined as: mainly Germanic, secondarily Slavic and then Hebraic. Alternatively we can trace his puristic tendency, advocating the elimination of "unnecessary Germanisms, Hebraisms that have become superfluous, and non-integrated Slavicisms."<sup>40</sup>

While there was an orientation in Soviet Yiddish language planning away from Hebrew and toward Slavic elements, we will show later in this essay that such generalized criteria are greatly oversimplified. It should be remembered, nevertheless, that Yiddish was developing in a society in which both secular and religious Hebrew language activity was drastically curtailed. At the same time there was an increasingly pervasive influence of Russian, while Yiddish cultural institutions were formed side by side with Ukrainian and Belorussian bodies.

When we study the structure of Yiddish that was used during this period in the Soviet Union, we find it to have characteristics which are different from the earlier language as well as from Yiddish of the contemporary period in other parts of the world. One published list contained 1500 new terms which dealt with new social concepts, such as "one day a week of voluntary work" (*shabesnik* or *komunistisher shabes*), "collective farm" (*kolvirt*) "militant anti-religion campaigners" (*krigerishe apikorsim*), and "members of the Communist youth movement" (*komyugistn*). Analogous terms were formed in most languages of the Soviet Union. One Soviet observer commented that the common features of the new Yiddish terminology were the "emphasis on the class aspect, exactness, expressiveness, and lightened politicization and militancy." Structurally, the terms consisted largely of composites, containing contractions and abbreviations.<sup>41</sup>

Along with lexical innovation, morphology and grammar also changed. Accompanying the productive use of the suffixes *-ish* and *-ik*, already common to Yiddish, *-bar*, common to German, appeared. In addition, adjectives were employed widely where noun compounds were traditionally used in Yiddish. Largely under the influence of the Russian language press, Yiddish syntax developed a complicated sentence structure, often containing multiple clauses, a tendency that the master stylist Shtif opposed.<sup>42</sup>

Soviet Yiddish - ↑ Slavisms  
↓ Hebraisms  
+ bar  
↑ complicated sentence structure due to Russian influence  
↑ adv use instead of noun compounds  
special administrative terms

### Conferences

In conferences dedicated to language questions, the full scope of language construction was evident: the changing publicly approved standards and related dissensions were revealed. Foremost on the agenda of the 1928 Second All-Union Cultural Conference in Kharkov was standardized orthography. The conference accepted the guidelines for Yiddish spelling in the Soviet Union, which included the elimination of the special word-terminal forms in the alphabet.<sup>43</sup> Litvakov, editor of *Der emes* (Moscow), gave the keynote address on language to the scientific session, immediately revealing conflicting standards. According to him, the *folkshprakh* should be the object of linguistic research, but only its secular and "productive" elements. For Litvakov, however, the favored standard was the language of the Soviet press. It was the broad-based field of Yiddish linguistics that was acknowledged in the Conference resolutions. Principal attention was given to normative work on the language of schools, press and publishing, to be accompanied by the production of the gate-keeping tools of corpus planning – specialized terminologies, popular dictionaries for translating Russian, Belorussian and Ukrainian, and translations of laws into Yiddish. The more descriptive work was not neglected, however, with research planned in fields such as dialectology and language history. Finally, the idea of institutionalized standardization of language was accepted and norms were demanded for questions of gender, plurals, verbs inflection and the use of prepositions.<sup>44</sup>

In 1931, the First All-Union Yiddish Language Conference was convened in Kiev under the auspices of the Institute for Jewish Culture of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences and the All-Union Communist Academy. The participation of the latter political group was repeatedly mentioned, seemingly to indicate the proper attention to political responsibility that was then required of academic and cultural endeavors. The Yiddish work was presented with reference to Marxist goals in general linguistics, yet no commitment was made to any one existing approach. Forced to look inward at its faulty record, Yiddish language planning was accused of transgressions. Despite the highly charged and critical tone, the conference of 1931 left room for some diversity and independence. Although *folkshprakh* was discouraged as a standard, a gate was constructed to impede an influx of Russian elements into Yiddish. The concept of standardization was maintained, but the new militant Yiddish *shprakhfront* openly decried any individualistic standards. A battle against Yiddish linguistics outside the Soviet Union was declared, whereas domestically Shtif received the brunt of criticism, especially because of his interest in older language sources. In short, we see changes in the

organizing authorities of the conference, the phraseology used, the question of the association of Yiddish linguistics to broader Soviet society, and in the realm of criticism in which the new vitriolic air rendered previous criticism of standards modest by comparison.<sup>45</sup>

The Ukrainian Yiddish Language Meeting in Kiev in 1934 signified an important assertion by the linguists and language planners of control over their work. The report of the meeting confirms the participation of the proper political authorities, as in 1931, but their contributions were limited to short speeches. The dominating enterprise was clearly lengthy scientific addresses. The list of participants provides a picture of the public setting for language planning at this time. Of the 166 voting delegates from 25 cities, 33% were researchers, 34% journalists, 30% teachers, and only 2.7% party leaders. 56% were not party members, 37% party members, and 7% Communist youth. 59% possessed higher education and 41% high school level education.

The prevailing political standards for linguistic work in 1934 were succinctly posited by the Jewish party intellectuals, Liberberg and Levitan, and importantly corroborated in the speeches of the Ukrainian leaders, Zatonski and Khvilya. The "natsdemishe" and purist tendency of "nurturing *folkstinkh-kayt*", represented by the then deceased Shtif, was to be avoided. Rather the masses were to be raised to a "higher level." At the same time the planners had to refrain from "leftist imperialist chauvinism," mainly the artificial introduction of Russian as a standard. The chief political idea was, thus the "struggle on two fronts." The 1934 meeting distinguished itself, however, by the strong critique of the "leftist" stance, a critique only weakly expressed in 1931. Surprisingly, the Ukrainian officials backed this position for Yiddish, even though the analogous advocacy for Ukrainian vis a vis Russian was considered treason in both 1931 and 1934. By 1934 the linguists' strong message was that Yiddish linguistics would continue on an autonomous and purist path. They criticized those who "ignore the specifics of Yiddish" as well as "every bureaucratic interference" in language planning, in effect, rejecting the politicization of 1931.<sup>46</sup>

Using published guidelines and conference reports from 1928 through 1924, we have followed diversification in both the sources and goals of Soviet Yiddish language planning. Even in 1931, the time of electrified faultfinding and political intrusion, the initiation of criticism of the "leftist" position enabled the linguists to later bounce back in 1934 and defend a stance which protected the historical evolution of Yiddish. Although the record is full of repeated contradictions, Soviet Yiddish linguists remained dedicated to language planning.

1931 anti influx of Russian elements  
war against non Soviet Yiddish linguists  
vitriolic air of criticism

1934: Yiddish will continue on autonomous path  
struggle against Russian ≠ Volkstinkh-kayt

### Polemics

During the time of Jewish cultural construction, controversy accompanied experimentation on language.<sup>47</sup> The polemics which enveloped the application of Yiddish to an array of social functions covered a multitude of questions relating to the nature of linguistic research, the language of the newspaper, the use of traditional phraseology, the influence of Russian, the relationship to neighboring Belorussian and Ukrainian, the role of the Hebrew component, and the nature of language in education.

The field of Yiddish linguistics was ridiculed for its involvement in theoretical rather than practical work, even though the linguists maintained a consistent and sincere dedication to language planning. The Minsk institute, which came under more political control than Kiev after the death of its leader Veynger in the beginning of 1929, was chided for its two major projects, a linguistic atlas and an academic Yiddish dictionary. Dialectology was taken to task for its geographic basis, which neglected the study of social dialects. The orthodox Marxists were searching for support of the new social order through linguistic research. Zaretski and Shtif resisted this pressure by maintaining that linguistics possessed neither the methods nor the experience to depict the social differentiation of contemporary speech.<sup>48</sup> Both men, however, suggested programs for recording local speech.

The major sparring, however, took place over the language of the press. The Soviet newspapers in the 1920's represented a range of language levels, from a Yiddish full of Russian words ("proste Yiddish") in *Der veker* (Minsk) to the purist Yiddish of the editor Litvakov in *Der emes* (Moscow). In between stood *Di komunistishe fon* (Kiev), which declared that "we do not write, nor do we seek to write, either for the *intelligent* or in a vulgar fashion."<sup>49</sup> Journalists and political leaders were interested in matters of style and actively took part in evaluating and regulating the journalistic language. For example, *Der shtern* (Kharkov), surveying the reactions of their readers, found that nine hundred out of 1153 respondents were satisfied with the newspaper's language, but 138 (mostly older than 30) complained of too many Hebrew words; others protested against foreign words and abstruse ("tif-yidische") literary terms that were not understandable.<sup>50</sup> The response to claims of unintelligibility came from Litvakov: "Because our Soviet life is becoming Yiddishized, new words must be created which are not understandable in the beginning." But he also argued to the contrary, that the young readers forced the editors to use "incorrect, non-Yiddish expressions."<sup>51</sup>

The linguists monitored the press and analyzed its language.<sup>52</sup> They

politically (ideologically) polemics about standard language & planning - involved

noted the presence of innovative words, new kinds of substantivization and adjectivization, and use of suffixes which connote great emotion, such as *-ay*, *-ray*, *-even*, *-yada* for terms describing revolutionary goals. Regarding the influence of Russian, the newspapers were found to avoid borrowing old Russian words, but often to adopt new Soviet Russian words. For example, in the same paper, *ispolkom* competed with the Yiddish version *oysfir-komitet* ("executive committee"). However, the main influence of Russian was identified in sentence structure. As we have mentioned, this was Shtif's major bone of contention. He allied himself with the newspaper editors Litvakov and Shprakh in defending the traditional phraseology of Yiddish.<sup>53</sup> But Litvakov refused to accept this alliance, claiming that Shtif and his journal resisted everything new while nurturing that which is ancient.<sup>54</sup>

On the pages of *Di yidische shprakh* and the daily press, attacks and counterattacks ensued during 1928-1929, with the journal advocating purism and *folkshprakh*, and the newsmen defending their revolutionary language, open to new words and foreign loans.<sup>55</sup> Of course, the language of the press was far from monolithic, as we have discussed. Not only did politicians and journalists attack linguists, but splits developed within the linguist camp, with Zaretski and the orthodox party linguist Gitlits disavowing purism as the best approach to planning.<sup>56</sup> The common address for blame was Shtif, the linguist holding most responsibility. His old interest in medieval Yiddish literature and in collecting folksayings was ridiculed by those who denigrated his planning considerations based on *folkshprakh*. He was the major figure during the public recantation of linguistic work in 1932. After his death in 1933, as had earlier been the case for Veynger, he became yet a more convenient scapegoat.<sup>57</sup>

During the confusing time of vacillating standards, caustic attacks and political pressure (1929-1932), the linguists sometimes took short-lived extreme positions. Thus, the encouragement of a new influence of Russian on the developing Yiddish language of culture, a position held by only a few political leaders and journalists, was transiently espoused by Zaretski.<sup>58</sup> His proposal of a new Yiddish-Russian language was accompanied by a renunciation of this stance by his editor Shtif, in a prologue to the work, and elsewhere by more lengthy criticism.<sup>59</sup> As we have seen, Zaretski was forced to disavow the position, which became the disapproved leftist side of the double-edged plank in the 1934 conference.

Although the attitudes of both Yiddish speakers and linguists toward the stock languages and different linguistic components have always varied, the Soviet Yiddish language planners in general accepted the old integrated Slavic



forms (the Slavic component) as a property of the language, but stood firmly against the introduction of new Russian forms. Soviet linguists paid increased attention to determining the historical influence of Slavic languages on the development of Yiddish, but rarely went beyond using Russian for calques in the new lexicon.<sup>60</sup> They were generally proud of the new Yiddish innovations which were accepted instead of Russian forms (*kemerl* vs. *yatsheyke*, "party cell"; *kohvrt* vs. *kolkhoz*, "collective farm"; *shlogler* vs. *udarnik*, "shock worker").

In the discussion of language standards, there was hardly mention of a new influence of neighboring Belorussian and Ukrainian on the development of the Slavic component of Yiddish. During the official campaigns against the cultural independence of these nationalities and the purges of their linguists, the Yiddish planners avoided extensive involvement in the issue. After the first purge, the newly appointed head of the Ukrainian Linguistics Institute published, in Yiddish, a veiled warning aimed at the Yiddish planners.<sup>61</sup> The few brief references in Yiddish to the deposed linguists consistently excoriated the "language destroyers" ("*shprakhlekhe shediker*"). Moreover, one of the resolutions of the 1934 Yiddish conference clearly stated the independence of the Yiddish planners, who therein claimed for Yiddish a common lexical base with German, not Russian. Not mincing words, the conference declared, "Do not apply to Yiddish in a superficial vulgarized fashion the scheme of the struggle on the Ukrainian and Belorussian linguistic front."<sup>62</sup>

The attempt to dehebraize, to remove the Hebrew component from Yiddish, is one of the most widely discussed issues relating to Yiddish in the Soviet Union. Careful study of the issue shows it, however, to have been limited to three presentations in the linguistic literature.<sup>63</sup> The position was soon rejected by the linguistic establishment as being ahistorical and against the integrity of Yiddish.<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, more than any other issue, the suggested dehebraization enraged Yiddish intellectuals outside the Soviet Union.<sup>65</sup> The timing of this recommendation can be interpreted as coinciding with great political pressure to cut ties with non-communist planners outside the Soviet Union. In addition, the discussion of diminishing the Hebrew component, the component of Yiddish which could be identified as most specifically Jewish, occurred at the height of the campaign against the Belorussians and Ukrainians for nurturing their natural specificity.<sup>66</sup> This period, 1929-1931, also coincided with the iconoclastic cultural revolution occurring in the Soviet Union in general.<sup>67</sup>

As with other language questions, the attitude toward the Hebrew component was varied. Litvakov often drew from Hebrew for new Yiddish words

required in the daily news, while journalists who were more influenced by the Russian of the day avoided such borrowings.<sup>68</sup> An examination of some of the specialized terminologies shows many recommended terms from the Hebrew component without evidence of dehebraization of the lexicon.<sup>69</sup> In addition, the treatises of the language planners themselves made full use of the Hebrew component.<sup>70</sup> Yet, evidence emerging from comparing different editions of the same text shows that some terms from the Hebrew component were displaced in belles lettres in the 1930's.<sup>71</sup> A study of language use in various social sectors would be required to determine the extent to which conscious dehebraization of Yiddish was practiced. Certainly, by the late 1930's Hebrew was part of the heterogeneous pantheon of sources in Yiddish language planning.<sup>72</sup>

Virtually every aspect of the controversies relating to language in general was reflected in the dialogues on the nature of language instruction in the schools. On one issue, the relative attention given to grammar in the curriculum, Shtif was pitted against grammarians, such as Zaretski. Shtif thought that grammar as taught in the Yiddish schools since the publication of Zaretski's grammar text in 1926,<sup>73</sup> presented linguistic models from an artistic literary language that were impossible for most students to emulate. He preferred language study through field observation and practical use in writing and speaking, rather than the formal study of rules which apply to an esoteric language. Recognition, according to Shtif, was to be given to the ingrained knowledge that the children brought with them to the primary grades.<sup>74</sup> Shtif wanted more stress placed on stylistics, on the mastering of the language which is spoken and written, rather than on rules which are formulated by grammarians. He did recognize a place for grammar in the curriculum, but his critics misinterpreted him as denying the legitimacy of the field per se.<sup>75</sup>

One of the most debated problems dealt with the role of the schools in implementing standardized pronunciation, orthoepia, for Yiddish. To this day, Yiddish cultural leaders throughout the world have never expressed consensus on whether standardized pronunciation is necessary. But Yiddish teachers both in and outside the Soviet Union in the 1920's were faced with the practical problem of determining which dialect to teach their students. The Soviet language planners held various positions. Veynger supported the Lithuanian dialect as the spoken standard, whereas Tsvayg argued that not even the Minsk State Theater exhibited a uniform spoken language.<sup>76</sup> Spivak, as did Birnboym outside the Soviet Union, argued against orthoepia as a destructive force in language development.<sup>77</sup> It presented the danger of

Hebr. used as source of metaphors for notation

dehebraization  
ambiguity

unsettling the child's linguistic ties to his home, where the local dialect was still spoken. Teachers pointed to the confusion Jewish children in the Ukraine would face when they would be trained in a standard Yiddish based on the Lithuanian dialect and then would have to make sense of the Ukrainian Yiddish dialect of Sholem Aleykhem's characters.<sup>78</sup>

Zaretski demonstrated an understanding of the problem's complexity and accordingly distinguished between a maximal and minimal approach to standardized pronunciation: the former, a thoroughgoing process suitable for theater performances and formal occasions; the latter, appropriate for the schools, and tolerant of all but the most extreme provincialisms, using it for dictation and reading, but not speaking. Zaretski made clear the difficulty of the undertaking and stressed the need for greater research into the question, for general conceptual analysis, the gathering of statistics on word usage, and the determination of standardized pronunciation of new international and Russian borrowing into Yiddish.<sup>79</sup>

#### *Continuities and Discontinuities*

It would be unfair, in the light of contradictory standards and shifts in positions of individual language planners, to establish a regular scheme of development for Yiddish in the Soviet Union between the two World Wars. Despite the uneven course of Soviet Yiddish language planning, which to a certain extent reflects properties of both the general discipline and the specific case of the field in the Soviet Union, we must search for explanations of problems related to Yiddish language in both its broadest social perspective and most specific level of the individual speaker and planner. The history of Yiddish provides a background for the problem, and the greater picture of Soviet society provides a timetable for the observed changes. Although we noted divergences from Yiddish developments outside the Soviet Union and from happenings on the internal Soviet nationality front, the parallels must also be drawn.

Despite the fact that Yiddish was applied to diverse societal settings also in Poland and the Baltic states, and to a lesser degree in the communities of Jewish immigration in the western hemisphere, nowhere else did the diversity of application and the level of productivity reach that of the Soviet Union. The major rival language planning effort was that of the Yivo in Vilna, which was able to effect a wide range of research and normative projects without government support. Both the Yivo and Soviet efforts stressed standardization, development of a *kulturshprakh*, and the Yiddish language as both a mediator and an object of research. The two plans for standardized orthography, for

YIVO: no govt support

example, possess many more shared principles than divergent points.

Compared with the unfoldment of language and culture for other Soviet nationalities, the Yiddish scene presents both similarities and discrepancies.<sup>80</sup> In general, cultural construction proceeded through the 1920's but faced more restriction and central control after 1928. It was then that *folkshprakh* as a standard was attacked, that some of the more academic language research projects were curtailed, and that dehebraization was suggested. For the constructive cultural work, Yiddish could follow a tradition started before the Revolution that did not require a cadre of newly trained nationalist leaders, as in the *korenizatsiia* process for other nationalities. Many Jewish political and cultural activists, previously affiliated with other revolutionary parties, joined the Bolsheviks soon after the Revolution. Later, Yiddish language planning did not undergo the same convulsive purges as did the Belorussian and Ukrainian endeavors starting in the late 1920's. One reason was that the two leaders, Veynger and Shtif died, conveniently allowing for reorganization. The Yiddish effort in Minsk was then greatly diminished and subjected to supervision by Jewish politicians. On the Ukrainian nationality language front, the work of the newly appointed linguists after the purges has been characterized as "polemics of little scholarly substance."<sup>81</sup> The Yiddish work in Kiev, on the other hand, retained a rather high level. The new Ukrainian normative work showed a blatant gravitation toward Russian and to decry this standard was treasonous. At the same time, the rejection of a direct Russian influence on Yiddish language planning was an approved guideline.

The Yiddish alphabet, shared with Hebrew and other Jewish languages, was also a sign of the relative independence of Jewish cultural work. While most other languages with non-Cyrillic alphabets were subject to Latinization and Cyrillization, Yiddish retained its alphabet with relatively minor changes being introduced by the new standards for orthography. Latinization was briefly discussed, but not any more so than in the non-Soviet Jewish cultural world.<sup>82</sup> Cyrillization was hardly mentioned. Not only was the alphabet conserved, but the language as a whole, which the planners called Soviet Yiddish starting in 1934, was also largely the same as Yiddish outside the Soviet Union. Although we lack evidence for the spoken language of the period, such was the case for the extensive literature produced.

Language was embedded in Soviet society and subject to all the disruptions which individuals and institutions experienced. A Soviet Yiddish linguist of the period, reminiscing in 1967, commented that the factors which dictated language issues were not "the struggles on the pages of newspapers and of

little difference between Soviet & non Soviet Yiddish on the whole

little direct input from Moscow  
nationalist  
criticism

linguistics journals," but life itself.<sup>83</sup> Vacillating short-lived positions should not always be interpreted by rational arguments. One might expect that the Yiddish work was closely controlled by the central party in Moscow. However, a former *Yevsekriyie* leader has claimed that such directives were relatively rare, but that the Yiddish cultural leaders practiced much second guessing, interpreting and reinterpreting, attacking and counterattacking. The immediate response to their interpretation was often based not on who was more communist or liberal, but rather on geographic rivalries and questions of hegemony.<sup>84</sup> In an atmosphere in which no interpretation of a social issue is guaranteed long life, we still can recognize individuality. For example, even though Shtif and Zaretski were subjected to sharp criticism and forced public recantation, they managed to make substantial contributions to descriptive and prescriptive language work, in addition to the short-lived extreme positions they represented.

The planners were individuals with different backgrounds and capabilities. Although exhibiting varying degrees of enthusiasm and dedication, their work committed all of them to constructing Yiddish institutions, thus continuing a tradition predating the Revolution. They operated, however, in a greater society of Jews and non-Jews which was ambivalent towards their goal. This society supported or tolerated their activity during the early 1920's, but during the 1930's viewed it as a threat, a nationalist deviation. Ironically, there could be relative freedom in language planning in the late 1930's because the domain for applying decisions was shrinking. Much of the vacillation exhibited in Yiddish language work points to the tightrope the planners walked as they built Yiddish institutions, while at the same time attempting to interpret the changing and often unarticulated attitudes of the Soviet leadership.

By the late 1930's most of the Yiddish institutions were only shadows of their expanding forms of ten years earlier. Although Yiddish linguists were not killed at the time of linguistic purgers for other nationalities, in the late 1930's many Yiddish political and cultural leaders, including a group of outstanding writers in Minsk, were arrested and killed.<sup>85</sup> Soviet Yiddish culture was never to regain its former stature.

4. World War II Until Today:

Relieve, Destruction, Isolated Maintenance

Although Soviet Jews represent the only sizeable East European Jewish community remaining today and exhibiting continuity, the cataclysms

which they have experienced since World War II render futile any comparison with the first decades following the Revolution. Firstly, the Soviet-German pact in 1939 put areas to the West with large Jewish populations under Soviet rule. Then, after Germany attacked the Soviet Union, Jewish civilians were brutally killed and many Jewish soldiers fell while serving in the Red army. In addition, segments of the population were dislocated eastward during the war. Before much chance for recovery, practically all remaining Jewish institutions were closed by the state in 1948, and between that year and 1953 thousands of Jews were incarcerated. In the late 1960's Jewish emigration mainly aimed at Israel began and associated nationalist dissidence sprouted up. All these demographic and political changes jolted every aspect of Jewish life.

The Yiddish institutions, already on the wane, never recovered their stature, but the onset of World War II did allow for some new activity. In the newly occupied areas, existing Jewish institutions were disbanded and Yiddish ones were established on the Soviet model, including schools and newspapers. These lasted until the Germans attacked. Yiddish writers, however, were put in an awkward position by the new Soviet collaboration, since they were no longer permitted to criticize the Nazis. Yet very soon the order was reversed. The Nazis overran large areas, specifically destroying the Jewish population. Practically the only surviving Yiddish institutions were the newly formed Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee and its weekly *Eynikayt*. The sole inheritor of Yiddish language planning and scholarship, the small Office for the Study of Soviet Yiddish Literature, Language and Folklore was evacuated from Kiev to the East. Its language planning activity was limited to a study on the language of the War.<sup>86</sup> During the war, Yiddish books that appeared exhibited more specifically Jewish content. This trend continued in the years after the war, when Yiddish writers wrote on nationalist themes and expressed solidarity with their decimated people.

By 1949 a halt was put to all Yiddish language institutions: the then thrice-weekly *Eynikayt*, the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, the Eines publishing house (Moscow), the short-lived periodicals *Heymland* (Moscow), *Der shtern* (Kiev) and *Birobidzhan*, the few remaining schools in Birobidzhan, Kovne and Vilna, and all Yiddish theaters, including the Jewish State Theater in Moscow. The only remnant was the modest *Birobidzhaner shtern*, which still appears three times a week, consisting of translations from the Soviet news services, but containing almost nothing specific to Jewish culture. Access to Yiddish books was barred in public libraries and book stores, and the academic collections in Kiev were dumped into caves and used to

Murder of political, non-linguistic leaders dealt blow to Yiddish culture

1949 cease of Yiddish activity

wrap food. The leading Yiddish intellectuals were arrested, charged with treason, and executed in 1952, including the linguist Spivak, the actor Zuskin, and the writers Bergelson, Fefer, Hofshiteyn, Kyitko, Markish and Persov.<sup>87</sup> *Murders of Yiddish intellectuals*

Yiddish culture in the Soviet Union never recovered from that blow. The major public voice of Soviet Jews to appear since then is the journal *Sovetish heymland* (Moscow), founded in 1961 and appearing now as a monthly. It is the largest (in pages per year) Yiddish language journal appearing in the world. Mostly consisting of belles lettres, it includes memoirs, notes on performances, art work and political commentary. After 1967 it developed a vituperative stance towards Israel. Despite the emigration of many writers to Israel, the journal has been able to maintain rather high literary standards.<sup>88</sup> Recently it announced the training of young Yiddish editors and published some of their writings.<sup>89</sup> Two studies of the language of the journal have shown some of the specificities of the past, including the influence of the Soviet normativists who were more open to recent German influence than other Yiddish standardizers.<sup>90</sup> However, on the whole, Yiddish literature in the Soviet Union, as elsewhere, inherited the general standards established in the literary language of the late nineteenth century. Since 1958 only about eighty Yiddish books have been published, but 444 Yiddish works have been translated into Russian and other Soviet languages. One observer calls these translations "the major phenomenon of Jewish cultural life in the USSR."<sup>91</sup> The only ongoing research project in *Sovetish Heymland* is a lexicon of Soviet Yiddish writers, which had been started in Minsk in the 1930's.<sup>92</sup>

Although linguistics and language planning have not been major topics in the journal, when Shapiro (the author of an announced, but yet to appear, new Russian-Yiddish and Yiddish-Russian dictionary\*) wrote that he recommended eliminating "archaic" and "bookish" elements of the Hebrew component, he was accused from across the ocean of creating an "elementary language."<sup>93</sup> Another polemic in which the focus was reminiscent of the 1930's criticized the linguist contributors to the journal for neglecting the *folkshprakh* standard.<sup>94</sup> But the language planners no longer had institutions for which to plan. On the positive sides, monthly Yiddish lessons in Russian were instituted by the journal in 1969, and with the initiation of publication of adjunct booklets to the journal each month, three collections of lessons have appeared in this form.<sup>95</sup> These represent the first Yiddish textbooks to appear in the Soviet Union since before World War II.

\*The Russian-Yiddish dictionary was published in 1984. (Editor)

*Little activity outside of Soviet Heymland* *Dj Yiddish-Imperye 299*

Outside the realm of *Sovetish heymland*, Yiddish activity has only been sporadic and oftentimes discouraged by the authorities. No Yiddish schools have been reopened, neither was the language taught in any official insitution. In 1979, however, elementary Yiddish language instruction was introduced in three schools in Birobidzhan, and in 1982 a Yiddish primer for schoolchildren appeared there.<sup>96</sup> Requests by individuals to the authorities for permission to start Yiddish classes (not publicized in the U.S.S.R.) have been met with negative replies.<sup>97</sup> Although the "underground" nationalistic awakening of Soviet Jews have largely been associated with Zionism, Hebrew culture and Hebrew language instruction, there have also been reports of some unofficial instruction in Yiddish.<sup>98</sup> Despite the fact that Yiddish has sometimes been associated by young activists as an "official" Jewish culture which collaborates with the government, some other youth, especially from the Western territories which became part of the Soviet Union more recently, identify the language as a positive part of their personal heritage.<sup>99</sup> The elements of Yiddish culture which have had the most popular appeal have been concerts of Yiddish song, which were permitted to start in the late 1950's, and theater performances which started in the early 1960's.<sup>100</sup> In addition, shortwave radio transmissions in Yiddish from Israel (one half hour, twice daily, in the mid-1970's) are popular among Soviet Jews.<sup>101</sup>

Throughout our study, we have neglected the spoken language because of the absence of adequate data. We know that schools, press and literature will not guarantee maintenance of a language, in the absence of actors at home or in the greater society which add to the prestige or positive feeling towards the language. Except for the newly expressed dissident movement, which has given its support to Hebrew and not Yiddish, we know of no group-instigated forces, other than the Yiddish language institutions which could further Yiddish maintenance. On the other hand, since Yiddish was the language of the home of almost all Ashkenazic Jews in the Russian empire, continuation of ethnic identity might be aided by warm feelings to family traditions, despite the dislocating forces. We must ask, has Yiddish been maintained as a spoken language of Jews in the Soviet Union?

The evidence is not easily interpreted, but shows a continual decline in Yiddish as claimed "mother tongue" or "second language." Mostly based on Soviet census data, it is subject to criticism. For example, a study based on emigrant ethnic Germans has shown that some individuals misclaim nationality, and that inexact listing of nationality results from ethnically mixed marriages. In addition, the assertion of "mother tongue" was noted as reflecting emotional overtones and not necessarily language knowledge or use.<sup>102</sup>

Specific corrections to the data on Jews have to be made because of the category "Jewish language" which includes the Jewish languages of oriental Jews,<sup>103</sup> and because comparison for different years should correct for changes in border.<sup>104</sup> Corrected figures give a comparison for the per cent of Jews declaring Yiddish as their "mother tongue" in the following decreasing proportion: 96.9% (1897), 72.6% (1926), 41.0% (1939), based on incompletely published data), 17.9% (1959).<sup>105</sup> Noncorrected data from Soviet sources show further figures of 17.7% (1970) and 14.2% (1979).<sup>106</sup> Moreover, the census as an indicator of linguistic Russification of Jews shows even more striking figures than for the decrease of Yiddish as declared "mother tongue." In the Slavic republics, for example, the percentage of Jews who declared Russian as their first language was between 85-90% in 1979, and those who declared it as either their first or second language was higher than 98%.<sup>107</sup>

Although it is clear that proficiency in speaking and understanding Yiddish has decreased, with opposite results for Russian having occurred, we can also be sure that we do not have any basis for quantitation of this proficiency. Studies on recent immigrants to the United States give confusing results with which to view the Soviet census data. One study of a group with 70% deriving from the Ukraine and only 8% from Moscow and Leningrad showed 13% declaring Yiddish as native language and 30% speaking it fluently; another group with only 24% from the Ukraine and 45% from Moscow and Leningrad reported that 56% spoke or understood some Yiddish.<sup>108</sup> The latter group would be expected to be the more linguistically Russified, yet it indicated a high percentage of "passive knowledge" of Yiddish; supposedly the percentage for the first group if measured would have been much higher than for the second. Therefore, the "mother tongue" and "second language" census categories should not be considered to be laden with enough information to allow us to discount varying degrees of knowledge and language proficiency. The only study known to us about linguistic characteristics of the Yiddish of recent immigrants showed that for older Ukrainian Jews, who were often displaced from their birthplace at an early age and claimed to have spoken mostly Russian during their adult lives, all phonological markers studied in their Yiddish, showed retention of the geographic specificity for the birthplace.<sup>109</sup> Obviously many more studies have to be made before we can declare that Soviet Jews have not retained their Yiddish language.

insufficient information on Yiddish <sup>active competence</sup> ~~usage~~ <sup>comprehension</sup> ~~comprehension~~ among Soviet Jews.

## Abbreviations

As Afu shprakhfront; DYS Di yidishe shprakh; SH Sovetish heymland; SJA Soviet Jewish Affairs.

## Notes

1. Semen M. Dubnov, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publications Society of America, 1916-1920). Louis Greenberg, *The Jews in Russia* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976); Isaac Levitats, *The Jewish Community in Russia: 1772-1844* (New York: Octagon Press, 1970); Isaac Levitats, *The Jewish Community in Russia: 1844-1917* (Jerusalem: Posner and Sons, 1981); Salo W. Baron, *The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1976); Zev Katz, "The Jews in the Soviet Union," *Handbook of Major Soviet Nationalities*, eds. Zev Katz, Rosemarie Rogers, and Frederic Harned (New York: the Free Press, 1975), pp. 355-389.
2. Uriel Weinreich, "Yiddish Language," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 16 (Jerusalem, 1971), pp. 789-798; Max Weinreich, *History of the Yiddish Language* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980); Solomon Birnbaum, *Yiddish: A Survey and a Grammar* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979); Marvin I. Herzog, "Origins and Evolution of the Yiddish Language," *Genetic Diseases among Ashkenazi Jews*, eds. R.M. Goodman and A.G. Motulsky (New York: Raven Press, 1979), pp. 47-57; Joshua A. Fishman, "The Phenomenological and Linguistic Pilgrimage of Yiddish: Some Examples of Functional and Structural Pidginization and Depidginization," *Advances in the Creation and Revision of Writing Systems*, ed. Joshua A. Fishman (The Hague: Mouton, 1977), pp. 293-306; Joshua A. Fishman, "The Sociology of Yiddish: A Forward," *Never Say Die!: A Thousand Years of Yiddish in Jewish Life and Letters*, ed. Joshua A. Fishman (The Hague: Mouton, 1981), pp. 1-97.
3. Fishman, 1981; Emanuel S. Goldsmith, *Architects of Yiddishism at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1976); Dan Miron, *A Traveler Disguised* (New York: Schocken Books, 1973); Yankev Shatski, "Der Kamf arum geplante tsaytschrift far yidn in Kongres-poyln (1840-1860)," *Yivo-bleter*, 6(1934), 61-83; A. Kirzshnits, *Di yidishe prese in der gevezener Rusisher imperye (1823-1916)* (Moscow: Tsentraler Felker-farlag fun F.S.S.R., 1930); Katz, 1975.
4. Although advocacy of Hebrew achieved primacy among various Zionist groups, a wide array of Zionist organizations carried out their work and even fostered Yiddish cultural activity in the diaspora, in contrast to their plans for Hebrew in Palestine. The socialist workers' *Poalei-tsiyon* party was one of the strongest supporters of Yiddish on the Jewish scene in general; Fishman, 1981; Goldsmith, 1976; Lucy Dawidowicz, ed., *The Golden Tradition* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967); Yehoshua A. Gilboa, *A Language Silenced: The Suppression of Hebrew Literature and Culture in the Soviet Union* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and Nerzi Press, 1982).

5. Oscar Janowsky, *The Jews and Minority Rights* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), pp. 210-223; Yoysef Tenenboym, "Di yidishe shprakh af der tog-ordenung fun der sholem-konferents in Pariz, 1919," *Yivo-bleter*, 41 (1957/1958), 217-229; Mark Kiel, "The Ideology of the Folks-Partey," *SJA*, 5 (1975), 75-89; Fishman, 1981, p. 26; Arye Tartakover, "Di yidishe shul in Poyln tsvishn tsvey milkhomes," *Sefer hashana/Yorbukh*, 2 (1967), 210-265.
6. The *kehile* was dissolved in 1918 by act of *yevkom*, the Jewish Commissariat, and the *yevseksye*, the Jewish sections of the Communist party, and formally approved by Stalin, Commissar for Nationality Affairs, in 1919. The height of the campaign against the *kheyder*, or religious primary school, took place in 1922-1923. The near total extinction of Hebrew culture, instigated by the *yevseksye*, was achieved by the early 1920's. Secular Hebrew culture, including schools and literary production, developed in Poland and the Baltic States between the World Wars. In the Soviet Union, some religious institutions remained, and some writers continued to write in Hebrew, but their works were not published. Zvi Gitelman, *Jewish Nationality and Soviet Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 271-272, 277-281, 305; Gilboa, "Hebrew Literature in the U.S.S.R.," *The Jews in Soviet Russia since 1917*, 3rd ed., ed., Lionel Kochan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 226-241; Gilba, 1982, loc. cit.; Joshua Rothenberg, *The Jewish Religion in the Soviet Union* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1971); Rothenberg, "Jewish Religion in the Soviet Union," *The Jews in Soviet Russia Since 1917*, pp. 168-196.
7. In the mouth of Soviet Yiddish writers in the thirties, *yidishizm* became a term of opprobrium. Actually it stood more narrowly for the activities of the Yiddish research institute in the West, the Yivo in Vilna. Vaysrusishe visnshaft-akademye: yidisher sektor, *Fahizirter yidishizm un zayn Visnshaft* (Minsk: Vaysrusishe visnshaftakademye, 1930).
8. Gitelman, 1972; Mordekhay Altshuler, *Hayevseksye bevrut-hamoatsot (1918-1930); beynleumiyyot likomunizm* (Tel-Aviv: Sifriat Po'lim, 1980).
9. Gitelman, 1972, pp. 110, 322-323, 366-367; Altshuler, 1980, pp. 133-155, 158.
10. One of the major problems in the historiography of Soviet Jewish culture is determining the extent of Party control of cultural activity. Recent memoirs by former Party cultural leaders of this period who are presently residing in Israel stress that certain institutions attracted grass-roots popular support, and that some *yevseksye* leaders were more dedicated to Yiddish culture than others. Hersh Smolyar, *Fun ineveynik: zikhroynes vegn der yevseksye* (Tel-Aviv: Perets-farlag, 1978); Ester Rozental-Shnayderman, *Oyfevgn un umvegn*, vol. 2 (Tel-Aviv, 1978); Rozental-Shnayderman, "Oyf der partey-reynikung," *Yerusheleymmer almanakh*, 11 (1980), 144-155.
11. Ch. Shmeruk, "Yiddish Literature in the U.S.S.R.," *The Jews in Soviet Russia since 1917*, pp. 242-280; Kh. Shmeruk, ed., *A shpigl oyf a shteyn: antologye poezye un proze fun tsvelv farshnitene yiddishe shraybers in Ratn-farband* (Tel-Aviv: Farlag Di goldene keyt-Farlag Y.L. Perets, 1964); Irving Howe and Eliczer Greenberg, eds., *Ashes out of Hope: Fiction by Soviet-Yiddish Writers* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977); Chimen Abramsky, "The Rise and Fall of Soviet Yiddish Literature," *SJA*, 12 (1982), 35-44.
12. Nahma Sandrow, *Vagabond Stars: A World History of Yiddish Theater* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), pp. 222-250; Nakhman Mayzil, *Dos yidische shaft un der yidisher shrayber in Sovetnfarband* (New York: Ikuf-farlag, 1959), pp. 161-167; Lois Adler, "Alexis Granovsky and the Jewish State Theater of Moscow," *The Drama Review*, 24 (1980), 27-42; Faina Burko, "The Soviet Yiddish Theater in the Twenties" (Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Illinois University, 1978); Beatrice Picon-Vallin, *Le Théâtre Juif Soviétique pendant les Années Vingt* (Lausanne: La Cité-L'Age d'Homme, 1973); Eric Goldman, "The Soviet Yiddish Film, 1925-1933," *SJA*, 10 (1980), 13-28.
13. Kh. Shmeruk, "Hapirsumim biyidish bevrut-hamoatsot bashanim 1917-1960," *Pirsumim yihudiim bevrut-hamoatsot 1917-1960*, ed. Kh. Shmeruk (Jerusalem: The Historical Society of Israel, 1961), pp. LV-CXXXI.
14. Mayzil, pp. 154, 159-160.
15. Shmeruk, *Pirsumim*, pp. LXIV-LXIX, CXIII.
16. Elias Schulman, *A History of Jewish Education in the Soviet Union* (New York: Ktav, 1971); Zvi Halevy, *Jewish Schools under Czarism and Communism* (New York: Springer, 1976); Y. Mintsin, "Shul bildung ba yidn in Rusland un Poyln," *Shriftn far ekonomik un statistik*, vol. 1, ed. Y. Lestshinski (Berlin: Yivo, 1928), p. 243; N. Gergel, *Di lage fun yidn in Rusland* (Warsaw: Brzoza, 1929), p. 220. Percentages of students in Jewish schools were highest in the Baltic countries; Eli Lederhendler, "Jewish Nationality in the Baltic Soviet Republics" (Master's thesis, Jewish Theological Seminary, 1977), p. 12.
17. Zvi Halevy, *Jewish University Students and Professionals in Tsarist and Soviet Russia* (Tel-Aviv: Diaspora Research Center, 1976), p. 132.
18. Gitelman, 1972, pp. 339-343; Schulman, pp. 97-122; Altshuler, 1980, pp. 316-329.
19. Alfred Abraham Greenbaum, *Jewish Scholarship and Scholarly Institutions in Soviet Russia 1918-1953* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem Center for Research and Documentation of East European Jewry, 1978); Y. Liberberg, "Di yidishe visnshaftleke arbet in Ratnfarband," *Yidn in F.S.S.R.*, ed. Sh. Dimanshteyn (Moscow: Farlag Emes, 1935), pp. 123-130; Gitelman, 1972, p. 348; Y. Reznik, "Di aspirantur fun Institut far yidisher proletarisher kultur," *Visnshaft un revlutsye*, 1-2 (1934), 133-140; E. Shulman, *Yidische kultur-tetikeyt in Minsk 1917-1941*, *Avrom Golomb voyvl-bukh*, ed. Moyshe Shtarkman (Los Angeles, 1969-1970), pp. 779-798; Mordecai Altshuler, "Jewish Studies in the Ukraine in the Early Soviet Period," *SJA*, 7 (1977), 22-30.
20. Benjamin Pinkus, "Yiddish-Language Courts and Nationalities Policy in the Soviet Union," *SJA*, 1, (1971), 40-60.
21. M. Gitlits, *Prozavish-gesheftlekh shprakh* (Moscow: Farlag Emes, 1932).
22. The traditional spelling for this component was based on the Hebrew model, but without vowel markings. The orthographic reform was based on phonetics and morphology, using the literary language as a standard for general consideration of pronunciation. The press did encounter opposition in instituting the new rules in 1917-1919. *Yevkom* decided to naturalize or *faryidish* the spelling in November 1918. Government decree in 1920 required naturalization to be observed in all Soviet schools and publishing facilities. B. Slutski, "Tsu der oysleyg frage," *DYS*, 8-9 (1928), 27-32; Elye Falkovitch, "A vort tsu der zakht:

- polemik," *SII*, 2(1978), 180-190; Mikhl Yankivski, "Fuftsik yor sovetisher Yidish-oysleyg," *SII*, 11 (1978), 173-175; Rachel Erlich, "Politics and Linguistics in the Standardization of Soviet Yiddish," *SJA*, 3 (1973), 71-79; Gitelman, 1972, p. 129; "Oysleyg numer," *DYS*, 8-9 (1928).
23. A. Zaretski, *Far a proletarisher shprakh* (Kharkov: Tsenterfarlag, 1931), pp. 11-20; Kh. Holmshtok, "Fuftsik yor oktyaber-revolutsye un der yidisher shprakh-front (eynike sakhaklen)," *Tsum fuftsntn yortog oktyaber-revolutsye: literarish-linggisticsher zambukh* (Minsk: Jewish Section, Belorussian Academy of Sciences, 1932), pp. 45-75; Kh. Faynzilber, "Fuftsik yor leksik arbet," *Tsum fuftsntn yortog*, pp. 113-140.
  24. The leading figure in these discussions was Kamenshteyn, administrator of the Yiddish section of the Central Publishing House in Kharkov. He was known for his suggestions of original purist neologisms using the German component, but following an away-from-German principle (i.e. *viflkayt* and *viazoykayt* for "quantity" and "quality" *tsol* and *kvalitet* or *eykhes* in standard Yiddish. "Di shprakh baratung in Kharkov," *DYS*, 23-24 (1930), 85-90.
  25. D. Bergelson, "Leksik problemen in der yidisher literature," *Forpost*, 4 (1937), 141-153.
  26. Institute far vaysruslendisher kultur: yidisher opteyl, *Yuridische terminology proyekt* (Minsk, 1926); Y. Pekar, "Di arbet fun der yuridisher terminologisher komisyte ba der filologisher sektsye funem Institut far yidisher kultur (Kiev)," *DYS*, 26-27 (1931), 87-94.
  27. S., "Vi halt dos mit Yidish kenen," *DYS*, 3-4 (1927), 77-78.
  28. Personal correspondence between Leyzer Vilenkin, Jerusalem, and Rakhmiel Peltz, September 18, 1981.
  29. Yidische filologishe komisyte bay der tsentraler byuro fun Folkombild, *Yidish: ershte zamlung* (Kharkov, 1923).
  30. "Di yidische shprakh," *DYS*, 1 (1927), 1-6.
  31. *Ibid.*
  32. A. Zaretski, "Problemen fun yidisher lingvotekhnik," *DYS*, 20 (1930), 1-10.
  33. N. Shtif, "Shprakhkultur III. Do sotsyale natur fun der shprakh, di sotsyale diferentsyatsye in der shprakh: vi azoy vayzt men dos shulkinder," *DYS*, 23-24 (1930), 8.
  34. Goldsmith, 1976, p. 67.
  35. Zaretski, "Problemen fun yidisher lingvotekhnik," loc. cit.
  36. Mordkhe Schaechter, "Four Schools of Thought in Yiddish Language Planning," *Michigan Germanic Studies*, 3.2 (1977), 34-66.
  37. The terms reserved for non-Jews that were suggested to be discontinued included *goy* ("non-Jew"), *sheygets* ("youth"), and *peygern* ("to die"). Among the terms that "supported religion" were *opgot* ("false god"), *got veys* ("God knows"), and *got tsu dank* ("thank God"). Zaretski, *Far a proletarisher shprakh*, pp. 79-95.
  38. Pekar, loc. cit.
  39. cf. Yudi Mark, "Lomir oyfhitn dl ashires fun dem talmid khokhem's shprakh," *Yidish shprakh*, 1 (1941), 65-77.
  40. E. Spivak, "Tsu der problem fun leksisher fareynhaytlekhung un regulirung inem literarishn Yidish," *AS*, 1 (1937), 3-46; Spivak, *Naye vortshafung* (Kiev, 1939), pp. 141, 158.
  41. H. Shklyar, "Di sovetische naybildung in Yidish," *Lingvistishe zamlung*, 2 (1934), 46-90; Shklyar, "Di antviklung fun dem revolutsyonern leksikon in Yidish," *Afn visushaftlekhn front*, 7-8 (1935), 159-160.
  42. N. Shtif, *Yidische stilistik* (Kiev: Tsenterfarlag, 1930).
  43. The detailed plan was worked out largely by Veynger (Minsk) and Zaretski (Moscow). Most of the points were similar to the later scheme of the Yivo (Vilna-New York), except for the Soviet naturalization. For evidence of the suppression of overwhelming support for naturalization at the Yivo orthographic conference, see Yudi Mark, "Vi halt men mitn cynheytlekhn oysleyg?," *Yidische shprakh*, 19 (1959), 83-96. The main Soviet innovation of 1928 involved the final letters. As with other aspects of corpus planning, the linguists disagreed on the necessity of this step and made plans for gradual implementation. Slutski, "Tsu der oysleyg frage," loc. cit.; "Tsveyter alfarbandisher kulturtsuzamenfor in Kharkov un di shprakh-arbet," *DYS*, 10 (1928), 53.
  44. "Tsveyter alfarbandisher kultur-tsuzamenfor," 49-60.
  45. The name change of *Di yidische shprakh* to *Afn shprakhfront* was realized soon after the conference, inaugurating, at least symbolically, an era of militancy and struggle. "Rezolutsyas ongenument af der ershter alfarbandisher yidisher shprakh konferents in Kiev," *DYS*, 25 (1930), 15-24.
  46. "Ukraynishe yidische shprakh-baratung 7-11 May, 1934 y.," *AS*, 3-5 (1935).
  47. Erlich, loc. cit.
  48. H. Shklyar, "Di yidische dialektologishe forshung in sovyetnfarband," *Tsum fuftsntn yortog*, pp. 141-163; A. Zaretski, "Vos ken men tun af di erter far yidisher shprakh-arbet?," *DYS*, 11-12 (1928), 57-64; Zaretski, "Derlernt di sotsyale diferentsyatsye in Yidish: program far aktivistn," *AS*, 26-27 (1931), 69-80; Shtif, "Shprakhkultur III," loc. cit.
  49. Zaretski, *Far a proletarisher shprakh*, pp. 11-19, quotation p. 13, 50. F. Shprakh, "Der masn-leyner vegn der tsaytung shprakh," *DYS*, 10 (1928), 15-20.
  51. Zaretski, *Far a proletarisher shprakh*, pp. 18-19; M. Litvakov, *In umru*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Shul un bukh, 1926), pp. 157-158.
  52. B. Slutski, "Di arbet fun der filologisher sektsye ba der katedre far yidisher kultur (Kiev) af der shprakh fun der sovetisher yidisher prese," *DYS*, 16 (1929), 23-26; M. Khayimski, "Di shprakh fun der provintsyeler prese," *AS*, 28 (1932), 21-34.
  53. "Fun der redaktsye," *DYS*, 14 (1929), 53-54.
  54. "Fun der redaktsye," note added to B. Slutski, "Tsvey yor 'Di yidische shprakh'," *Der emes*, February 9, 1929.
  55. A. Gurshteyn, "Vegn cynike taynes tsu 'Der yidisher shprakh'," *DYS*, 14 (1929), 39-44; Sh. Dobin, "Kegn di taynes (an entfere dem Kh. A. Gurshteyn)," *DYS*, 14 (1929), 43-54; "Fun der redaktsye," *DYS*, loc. cit.; Slutski, "Tsvey yor," *Der emes*, loc. cit.
  56. A. Zaretski, note attached to Sh. Katsnelson, "Vegn fargrebung un farkriplung fun der rusisher shprakh," *DYS*, 15 (1929), 42; A. (M?) Gitlits, "Kegn klasn-fremde teories in der shprakhvisnshaft: veg Kh. Shtif's arbetn," *Rambildung*, 3-4 (1932), 108-126.
  57. "Revizye-number," *AS*, 31 (1932); M. Gurevitsch, "N. Shtif der lingvist," *Der emes*, May 15, 1933, p. 2; M. Maydanski, "Problemen fun shprakh-unterikht in Kh. Shtif's arbetn," *AS*, 2 (1934), 39-67.

58. Zaretski, "Problemen fun yidisher lingvotekhnik," 1930, loc. cit.
59. A.R. Tsvayg, "Lingvotekhnisher 'ekizm'," *DYS*, 21-22 (1930), 49-52.
60. Shklyar, "Di antvicklung fun der revolutsyonern leksikon," op. cit., 129-161.
61. N. Kaganovitch, "Fölksh-shprakh un literarische shprakh," *DYS*, 21-22 (1930), 39-48; 23-34 (1930), 67-74.
62. "Ukraynishe yidische shprakh-baratung," 1935, 261.
63. Nokhm Shtif, "Di sotsyale diferentsyatsye in Yidish," *DYS*, 17-18 (1929), 1-22; Shtif, "Revolutsye un reaktse in der shprakh," *AS*, 26-27 (1931), 33-54; 28 (1932), 11-22; Zaretski, *Far a proletarisher shprakh*, 1931, 21-78.
64. E. Spivak, "Vegn dehebreizatsye un vegn dem hebreysishn 'element' in Yidish (tsum Kh. Shtif's shteln di frage)," *AS*, 2 (1934), 3-22.
65. Maks Vaynraykh, "Vos volt Yidish geven on Hebreysish," *Di Tsukunft*, 36 (1931), 194-205.
66. Rakhmiel Peltz, "Dehebraization as an Issue in the Language Planning Efforts of the Soviet Yiddish Linguists" (Master's essay, Linguistics Dept., Columbia University, 1981).
67. Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Cultural Revolution as Class War." *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931*, ed. Sheila Fitzpatrick (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), pp. 8-40.
68. Perhaps the most often cited example is his choice of *mashkhis* for the Soviet concept of "saboteur" or "wrecker" ("Antdekt a vaysgvardeyishe mashkhisim-organizatsye," title of an article, *Der emes*, Aug. 25, 1928, p. 4). This word has been discussed in many sources, from Zaretski, *Far a proletarisher shprakh*, 42-43; to Uriel Weinreich, "The Russification of Soviet Minority Languages," *Problems of Communism*, 2 (1953), 52. *Mashkhis* competed with the Yiddish innovative word *shediker*, a Germanic component lexeme, and the word used in contemporary Russian, *veditel*. A reader of *Der emes* wrote to the editor that Jewish farmers only use the Russian word, because the hard Russian "i" connotes more feeling to them than the weak "sh" of *mashkhis*.
69. Peltz, "Dehebraization," 61-66.
70. N.P. (Noyekh Prilutski), "Tsum vikuakh vegn di hebreizmen," *Yidish far ale*, 3 (1939), 65-75.
71. Kh. Shmeruk, "Araynfür," *A shpigl oyfa shteyn*, pp. xxv-xxvii.
72. E. Spivak, "Problemes fun sovetishn Yidish," *AS*, 3-4 (1935), 28-76; Spivak, *Nave vortshafung*, loc. cit.
73. N. Shtif, "Shprakhkultur un gramatishe kultur: an entfer mayne oponentn," *DYS*, 23-24 (1930), 61; A. Zaretski, *Praktishe yidische gramatik far lerers un studentn* (Moscow: Shul un bukh, 1926).
74. Shtif, "Shprakhkultur un gramatishe kultur," 52ff., 65; Shtif, "Shprakhkultur: I, II," *DYS*, 21-22 (1930), 2, 3, 5, 8, 10.
75. Kh. Loytsker, "Vegn dem tsushtand funem shprakh-limed in shul," *AS*, 3-4 (1935), 202, 207; cf. A.F. Tsvayg, *Muter-shprakh in shul fun der ershter shtufe: metodisher hantbukh* (Moscow: Tsenterfarlag, 1929); and M. Maydanski's criticism, "Vegn di lernbikher af Yidish," *AS*, 3-4 (1935), 230-249; Schulman, *A History of Jewish Education*, pp. 99-104; Debra Silin-Vinograd, "Kavim ledinuto shel bethaseyfer haychudi bivrit hamoatsot," *Behinot*, 5 (1974), 106, 220; E. Falkovitch, "Yidish in shul," *AS*, 3-4 (1935), 193; Falkovitch, "Shprakhkultur un gramatik," *DYS*, 23-24 (1930), 59; Sh. Dobin, "Gramatik un stilistik," *DYS*, 23-24 (1930), 29-42.
76. M. Veynger, "Vegn yidische dialektn," *Tsaytshrift*, 2-3 (1928), 615; A.R. Tsvayg, "Materyaln fun a sisteyn yidische ortoepye," *DYS*, 15 (1929), 24.
77. A. Zaretski, "Vegn yidisher ortoepye," *DYS*, 15 (1929), 29-26; on Spivak, see Ester Rozental-Shnayderman, *Oyf vegn un umvegn*, vol. 3 (Tel-Aviv: Perets-farlag, 1982), pp. 165-179; Birnboym, now in his nineties, still maintains this position in his recent, *Yiddish: A Survey and Grammar*, op. cit., pp. 100-101.
78. Zaretski, "Vegn yidisher ortoepye," 26.
79. *Ibid.*, 27, 31-33.
80. U. Weinreich, "The Russification," loc. cit.; Paul Wexler, *Purism and Language* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1974).
81. Wexler, p. 158.
82. N. Shtif and E. Spivak, "Vegn latinizatsye," *AS*, 29-30 (1932), 93-100; David L. Gold, "Successes and Failures in the Standardization and Implementation of Yiddish Spelling and Romanization," *Advances in the Creation and Revision of Writing Systems*, op. cit., pp. 307-369.
83. M. Shapiro, "Eynike bazunderhaytn funem eynhaytlekhn literarishn Yidish in Sovetnfarband," *SH*, 3 (1967), 141.
84. Smolyar, op. cit., pp. 435-437.
85. At this time, although no linguists were killed, many leaders of the former *Yevetskyse* were tried and killed. The purged leaders included Litvakov, Dimanshteyn (former head of *Yevkom*), Frumkin, Levitan and Liberberg (former head of the Institute for Jewish Proletarian Culture of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, and newly appointed head of the Jewish autonomous regions, Birobidzhan). The Minsk writers included Akseleod, Khraik and Kulbak. When the Institute for Jewish Proletarian Culture in Kiev was dissolved in 1936 the literary historian and critic Erik was arrested; he died in a Siberian prison camp.
86. This office had been reconstituted in 1936-1937 after this dissolution of the Institute for Jewish Proletarian Culture, where more than one hundred researchers had worked. The new office with only a few workers was called by Jewish cultural leaders "*dos sdovm-betl fun der yidish-sovetisher kultur*" (the Bed of Sodom of Soviet Yiddish culture)' Spivak was its director until it was closed in 1949. He authored *Di shprakh in di teg fun der foterlendisher milkhome* (Kiev, 1946); Ester Rozental (Shnayderman), "Der Babi-yar fun yidishn vort", *Di goldene kevt*, 69-70 (1970), 75-103; Shmeruk, *Pisumim*, 1961, entry 919.
87. The planned decimation of Yiddish culture was lauded in January 1948 by the death of the most popular actor and director of the Moscow Theater, Mikhovels, who had also been head of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. His death has been interpreted as murder at the hands of the secret police. References for the fate of Yiddish culture during and after the war: Yehoshua Gilboa, *The Black Years of Soviet Jewry: 1939-1953* (Boston: Litter Brown, 1971), pp. 23-29, 106, 187-193; Rozental (Shnayderman), 1970, loc. cit.; Kh. Sloves, *Sovetishe yidische melikheshkeyt* (Paris, 1979). For information on the *Birobidzhaner shtetn* today, see Ilya Falkov, "Stain azoy: an entfer oyf der vendung fun 'Biro bidzshan' r shtetn", *Forverts*, January 11, 1983.



88. Joseph Brumberg and Abraham Brumberg, "Sovetish Heymland — an Analysis," *Ethnic Minorities in the Soviet Union*, ed. Erich Goldhagen (New York: Praeger, 1968), pp. 274-315; Ch. Shineruk, *Yiddish Literature in the U.S.S.R.*, loc. cit.; Lukasz Hirszwicz, "The Soviet Jewish Problem: Internal and International Developments 1972-1976," *The Jews in Soviet Russia since 1917*, 1978, op. cit., pp. 366-409.
89. "Verk fun studentn fun' der yidisher grupe af di hekhste literaturkursn bam literarishn institut af Gorki's nomen," *SH*, 12 (1981), 140-157; *SH*, 10 (1982), 97-138; "Af der plenarer zitsung fun der redkolegye fun 'Sovetish heymland,'" *SH*, 6 (1983), 127-134; Elye Shulman, "Naye penimer in der yidisher literatur in Rusland," *Forverts*, November 21, 1982, pp. 12, 18.
90. Mordkhe Shekhter, "D'os loshn fun *Sovetish heymland*," *Yidische shprakh*, 29 (1969), 10-42; 30 (1971), 32-65; Solomon A. Birnbaum, "Soviet Yiddish," *SJA*, 9 (1979), 29-41.
91. Lukasz Hirszwicz, "Translations from Yiddish Published in the U.S.S.R., 1958-1959," *SJA*, 12 (1982), 34.
92. cf. K.D., "Vegn sovetishn yidishn literarishn leksikon," *Afn visnshaftlekh front*, 5-6 (1934), 184-191; and Berl Kahn, "Materyaln far a leksikon fun der yidisher sovetsisher literatur," *Di tsukunft*, 88 (1982), 252-254.
93. Shapiro, 1967, 144; Yankev Glatshiteyn, *In der velt mit Yidish* (New York: Congress for Jewish Culture, 1972), p. 377.
94. Moyshe Margolin, "Tsu di problemen fun hayntsaytikn Yidish," *SH*, 1 (1978), 154-161; Falkovitsh, 1978, loc. cit.
95. Shimen Sandler, *Limudim fun Yidish*, books 1, 2 and 3 (Moscow: Sovetski Pisatel, 1980, 1982, 1983), supplements to the following issues of *SH*: no. 8, 1980; no. 8, 1982; no. 7, 1983.
96. "Yidische shprakh in di shuln fun Birobidzhan," *SH*, 3 (1981), 150-151; Arn Vergelis, "Der aleibeys un dos lebn," *SH*, 5 (1983), 160-165; Leybl Botvinik, "Yidische oyses on a simin fun yidishkeyt," *Forverts*, August, 19, 1983, p. 9.
97. Shimen Teplitski, "Briv fun leyner: Yir hot a toyes tayerer fraynd," *Morgenfravhart*, July 27, 1980, pp. 5, 11.
98. cf. William Korey, "International Law and the Right to Study Hebrew in the USSR," *SJA*, 11 (1981), 3-18; and Yoysef Kerler, *12ter Oygust, 1952: zikhroynes. artiklen. lider* (Jerusalem: Farlag eygns, 1978).
99. Dovid-Hirsh Roskes, "Yidn in Sovetn-farband — an ersht-hantiker reportazsh," *Yugntruf*, 24 (1971), 5-7, 15-18; 25 (1972), 13-17; Dovid Fishman, "Protret fun a yungn yidishn held," *Yugntruf*, 51-52 (1981-1982), 5-7; Dovid Toker, "A neyder," *Yugntruf*, 51-52 (1981-1982), 8-9.
100. Hirszwicz, 1978, loc. cit.; Kerler, loc. cit.; Sh. L. Shnayderman, "Kreml shlogt propagande kapital fun yidishn teater," *Forverts*, February 24, 1980, pp. 8, 20.
101. Joshua A. Fishman and David E. Fishman, "Yiddish in Israel: A Case Study of Effort to Revise a Monocentric Language Policy," *Advances in the Study of Societal Multilingualism*, ed. J.A. Fishman (The Hague, Mouton, 1978), p. 226.
102. Rasma Karklins, "A Note on 'Nationality' and 'Native Tongue' as Census Categories in 1979," *Soviet Studies*, 32 (1980), 27-42.
103. Mordkhay Altshtuler, *Hakibuts hevchudi bevrit-hamoatsot biyameynu: nitukh sotsyo-demografi* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1979), pp. 206-234; Harold Haarmann, *Studien zum Multilingualismus aschkenasischer und orientalischer Juden im asiatischen Teil der Sowjetunion* (Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag, 1980); Lukasz Hirszwicz, "Further Data on the Jewish Population from the 1979 Soviet Census," *SJA*, 11 (1981), 53-61; Y. Kantor, "Some Notes and Conclusions about the Published Totals of the Soviet Census of January 15, 1959," *Studies in Jewish Biography, History, and Literature in Honor of I. Edward Kiev* (New York, 1971), p. 150; Katz, loc. cit.; Thomas E. Sawyer, *The Jewish Minority in the Soviet Union* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1979), pp. 62-64, 268-280.
104. Harry Lipset, "A Note on Yiddish as the Language of Soviet Jews in the Census of 1939," *Jewish Journal of Sociology*, 12 (1970), 55-57.
105. *Ibid.*
106. John L. Scherer, ed. *USSR Facts & Figures Annual*, vol. 5 (Gulf Breeze, Florida: Academic International Press, 1981), p. 51. *Aliva* activists (those demanding emigration to Israel) in the U.S.S.R. urged Jews to list Yiddish as "mother tongue" in 1970; Altshtuler, 1979, p. 208.
107. Hirszwicz, 1981, 55.
108. Jerome J. Gillison, "The Resettlement of Soviet Jewish Emigrés: Results of a Survey in Baltimore," *Studies of the Third Wave: Recent Migration of Soviet Jews to the United States*, eds. Dan N. Jacobs and Ellen Frankel Paul (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1981), pp. 29-56; Stephen C. Feinstein, "Soviet-Jewish Immigrants in Minneapolis and St. Paul: Attitudes and Reactions to Life in America," *Studies of the Third Wave*, pp. 57-75. Altshtuler mentioned a questionnaire of immigrants to Israel in 1975, in which only 4.5% responded that a Jewish language was spoken in the family, whereas 94.8% listed Russian; Altshtuler, 1979, p. 207. In Gitelman's study of Soviet immigrants to Israel, two-thirds of the Jews from the more recently acquired western areas and one-third of the respondents from the rest of the U.S.S.R. (overall average, one half) said their parents spoke Yiddish at home. Only 15% of the immigrants themselves called Yiddish their "native language," while two-thirds identified Russian; Zvi Gitelman, *Becoming Israelis: Political Resocialization of Soviet and American Immigrants* (New York: Praeger, 1982), pp. 203-204.
109. Rakhmiel Peltz, "Yiddish in the Ukraine: A Project with Recent Soviet Immigrants," (unpublished paper, Linguistics Depts., Columbia University, 1981).