

CONCERNING YIDDISH LITERATURE IN POLAND (in Holocaust Issue of *Di tsukunft*)

I. The Haskalah and its Discontents

1. [Polish] shtetl entered modernity in WW I
immediate & total cultural revolution
self-loathing
hurban beit hamidrash
2. The literary landscape
old forms lost; nothing new to replace them
Peretz-Asch-Nomberg
Frischmann-Weissenberg-Zeitlin
word inflation
literary Sabbateanism = Futurism [i.e. Expressionism]
the new radical intellectual = neo-Maskil
class consciousness replaced Bildung
blanket indictment of Yiddish modernism in Poland and USSR
I. J. Singer-Fuchs-Warshawski = Haskalah in new clothes

II. The politics of Yiddish: Optimists vs. Pessimists

1. socialists, communists = optimists
excoriated the writers as reactionaries
Singer-Zeitlin-Kulbak et. al owe nothing to the Futurist revolution
cursory overview of Yiddish poetry: Zeitlin = most imp. poet
2. The **thematic impoverishment of Yiddish literature**
does not even reflect impoverished worldlines of the Jewish street
epic list of new secular phenomena [118]
triple indictment:
 - a) the writers' own inexperience
 - b) formal deficiency of the Jewish intelligentsia--impossible to render
 - c) inappropriateness of the Yiddish languagePeretz: seeks the profoundly Jewish, the eternal
rejects the art of creative betrayal [120]
3. It was godly without a god, worldly without a world
Yiddish writers felt the oncoming catastrophe

III. The distinct culture of Polish Jewry

1. landkentenish: The Shtetl
2. The Yiddish Writer's Club: the bourse of eccentrics
3. This world is now dead