

Prof Roskies -

The cover letter is pretty self explanatory.

Professor Ruth Wisse
Semitic Museum
6 Divinity Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138

I hope you enjoy the paper & I would love to get any criticism & feedback you might have.

Best,
David

Dear Professor Wisse,

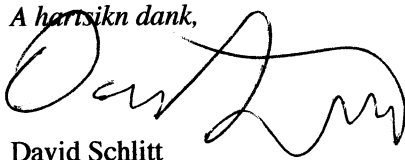
This past spring, I graduated from Columbia University with a degree in Yiddish Studies. Along with Hannah Pollin, I was one of two Yiddish majors at Columbia, and I worked under your former student, Professor Jeremy Dauber. At Professor Dauber's urging, I am sending you my senior paper.

I have some reservations about sending you this paper, because it is, in effect, a first draft of what I hope will be a larger and more thoroughly researched piece of work, so the seams show. The paper is on Zishe Landau, Reuben Iceland, and their relationship to the Yiddish daily press. In writing this paper, I've relied heavily on your scholarship on the Yunge. In the process I have become a great admirer of yours. I've fallen in love with *A Little Love in Big Manhattan*, though, right now, I am struggling to find a copy of my own—do you know where I could pick one up?

Many of the primary sources that I referenced in my thesis were texts that you had used in your own publications on the Yunge. At times I found these sources independently and later discovered that they overlapped with your own sources, and sometimes I scavenged from your bibliographies. But because of the limited number of available sources (would you believe that YIVO's journals were in storage while they underwent renovations this year?), there is considerable overlap with your source material. In my paper, I acknowledged this overlap whenever I was able, and I hope you will understand it to be a tribute to your exhaustive and discriminating research on the Yunge.

The second chapter of my paper, "*Vander-lider*," contains, I believe, my only original contribution to the existing scholarship on the Yunge, and it is the crux of my thesis. In the chapter, I make the argument that the Yunge's opposition to the press was not grounded solely within artistic differences between the young artists and the daily press. Rather, the Yunge's opposition stemmed also from the fact that a tight-knit and hierarchical clique of intellectuals controlled the press, dominated the cultural life of the immigrant community, and stifled the efforts of the Yunge. The research for this chapter is incomplete; my sampling of journals was not comprehensive enough given the time that I had to finish this project. Despite these flaws, however, I think I am on to something here, and I'd appreciate your feedback. I am in the U.S. until July 4th, after which time I will be in Israel, studying at Hebrew University's Rothberg School. I would be delighted to hear from you, either by e-mail (davidmschlitt@hotmail.com), post, or phone (617-953-5137), whenever it is convenient.

A *hartsikn dank*,


David Schlitt

cc: Professor David Roskies

Press and Pull:

**Zishe Landau, Reuben Iceland and the Yunge's Relationship to American
Yiddish Literature and the Yiddish Press, 1907-1919**

**David Morrill Schlitt
Yiddish Studies Senior Thesis
Professor Jeremy Dauber, Advisor**

Table of Contents

Introduction: Outside Drukerman's – 3

Vander-lider: Literature and the Press in the Early Twentieth Century – 10

Di yugnt and the Birth of the Yunge, 1907-1910 – 18

Busting the Literature Trust: David Ignatoff and the *Fareyn literatur* – 26

Turning Inward: The Yunge and *Shriftn*, 1910-1914 – 39

World War I and the Mainstreaming of the Yunge, 1914-1919 – 57

Bibliography – 70

Appendix A: A Selection of Relevant Poetry – 73

Appendix B: Neat Supplementary Material – 85

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my advisor, Professor Jeremy Dauber, for his advice and encouragement throughout this project, especially towards the end. I also want to thank Rebecca Joseph and Professor David Gerwin, who were essential in helping me shape and edit my thesis, and Hannah Pollin, my friend and Yiddish Studies comrade-in-arms. I owe thanks as well to Professors David Roskies and Arthur Goren for their guidance and advice. Thanks to Professor Ellen Kellman and to Professor Isaac “Ying” Halpern for their assistance and their generosity with their time. Thanks to Faith Jones for her help, both in her role as a librarian at the Dorot Jewish Book Room at the New York Public Library, and as a last-minute savior, assisting in editing, proofing, and cleaning up my woefully unstandardized footnotes. Professor Ruth Wisse was my primary source for secondary sources. Her work on the Yunge is unequalled, and it would have been impossible to write this paper without the benefit of her scholarship. Finally, I want to express my thanks to my parents, Jacob Schlitt and Fran Morrill Schlitt, for their support, patience, and long-distance edits during the course of this project. This won’t have been the first time that they have helped me through a challenging school-related ordeal.

Introduction: Outside Drukerman's

In his 1954 collection of memoirs and essays, *Fun unzer friling*, Reuben Iceland recalls his first encounter with the poet Zishe Landau. Iceland does not include the date of the meeting, but it most likely took place in 1906 or 1907. It was a chilly evening, he writes, either late fall or early spring, and a number of young poets were standing outside Drukerman's booksellers on Canal Street, waiting for a new journal that they had worked on to be delivered. The poets shuffled around in the cold, swaddled in heavy winter coats. One poet, new to the group, stood out. Thin and blond, he wore a light, leather overcoat more appropriate for the summertime. This kid, who could not have been more than seventeen or eighteen, wore his jacket buttoned tightly over a stiff-collared shirt, and crowned his dandified look with a derby. This was Zishe Landau.¹

By the time he met Landau, Reuben Iceland had already been living in America for a few years. He had a sweatshop job, was married, and had a child at home. Zishe Landau, born in Plotsk, a town fifty miles outside Warsaw, had just arrived from Vilne where he had been living with his uncle's family and working in their store. Though not particularly well off, Landau could claim an aristocratic lineage, as the grandson and great-grandson of the renowned Rebbes Wolf Strikover and Avrom Landau, respectively. Landau struggled with the burdens of his heritage, and eventually reacted to his *yikhes* by crafting an aggressively unpretentious demeanor.² But from this first meeting, says Iceland, one would not have guessed that such a rebellion was in the works: "*Far di vos*

¹ R. Iceland, *Fun unzer friling* (New York: Farlag inzl, 1954), 1-2.

² Ruth Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 50-51.

hobn gekent dem shpeterdikn breyt un shverleybikn landoy vet zayn shver zikh fortsushteln [...] az landoy flegt geyn ongeton vi a dendi[.]”³

The Landau on view in front of Drukerman’s was still in the thrall of the European poets to whom he was first exposed. As a child in Plotsk, Poland, Landau’s Hebrew tutor, Shmuel Penson, introduced him to the work of Heinrich Heine, and according to the *Leksikon fun der nayer yidisher literatur*, Heine’s early influence was at least partially responsible for Landau’s decision to take up writing.⁴ If one were to view the precise, formal poems Landau submitted to the *Forverts*, along with the precise, formal (if seasonally inappropriate) manner in which Landau was dressed, it would be clear that merely swapping continents had very little effect in weakening Heine’s influence over Landau.⁵

Iceland and Landau’s first exchange outside Drukerman’s gives a good feel for the jibing and one-upsmanship that characterized these young poets’ circles.⁶ The exchange also reveals the two poets’ artistic immaturity, and hints at the developmental paths they might yet travel. By the time the two men met, Iceland was already familiar with Landau’s published work, and he had taken notice when Landau used an awkward near-rhyme in one of his submissions to *Der arbeter*, the socialist journal founded in

³ “For those who knew the later, broader, hard-living Landau [...] it might be hard to believe that Landau used to go dressed like a dandy[.]”³ Ibid, pp. 1-2.

⁴ *Leksikon fun der nayer yidisher literatur*, s.v. “Zisho Landoy.” (New York: Altveltlekhn yidishn kultur-kongres, 1956), 430.

⁵ Ibid, pp. 430-431. Unfortunately, I have to take the *Leksikon* at its word regarding Landau’s earliest poetry. Zishe Landau was a notorious revisionist, scrupulously careful about how he chose to present his public image. For example, in a 1922 letter to the writer Melekh Ravitch, Landau asks Ravitch to remove a quote of his from an essay Ravitch was writing on Peretz Markish. In Ravitch’s essay, Landau is quoted as slamming Markish, but in the intervening years Landau had reconsidered his opinion of the writer, and, as he says in the letter, he did not want his former mistakes made public. (Melekh Ravitch, “Zisho Landoy,” in *Plotsk Yizkor Book* [Tel-Aviv: HaMenorah, 1967], 276.) As a result, it is likely no accident that his first poems are nearly impossible to find in published form. The only way to find and examine this body of work would be to hand-search the *Forverts* from the years 1906 and 1907—an undertaking too vast for the scope of this paper.

⁶ Ruth Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 15.

1904 by David Pinski. That evening, Iceland approached the fashionably attired Landau, looked him over from head to toe, and said, “*Zisho Landoy! Zayt ir dos take Zisho Landoy? Un vu zaynen di vontsn?*”⁷ With this greeting, Iceland was calling attention to Landau’s corruption of the word *vontses*, mustache, into *vontsn*, in order to force a rhyme with the word *tantsn*, to dance. For a writer like Landau, the success of whose poems depended largely on their technical precision, this was a brutal criticism. With one sardonic question, Iceland was able to fire off two related insults: Not only does your poetry suffer from a rigid formalism, but you are inept at fulfilling even your own formalistic requirements.

Landau’s response was just as cutting. He answered with an invocation of an image that Iceland overused in his own early work: “*Dort, vu ayer gold!*”⁸ With this rejoinder, Landau beat Iceland at his own game, managing, just as Iceland had been able to do, to attack both the substance and the style of his work. Where Landau’s formality limited his emotional expressiveness (his first published piece in the States sported the generic impassive title, “*Mayn lid*”⁹), Iceland’s ability to express himself was restricted for many years by a limited poetic vocabulary and constrained imagination. Iceland criticized Landau’s formal style (and his inability to adhere to it), but Iceland himself relied on established poetic conventions, falling back on the use of *skarbovishe* themes and repeated use of blunt imagery in place of original ideas. In criticizing Iceland’s “gold,” Landau is suggesting that Iceland suffers from a lack of originality that stems from an overall lack of talent.

⁷ “Zishe Landau! So you’re really Zishe Landau? And where are your whiskers?” R. Iceland, *Fun unzer friling* (New York: Farlag inzl, 1954), 2.

⁸ “Over there, with your gold!” Ibid, p. 2.

⁹ “My poem” *Leksikon fun der nayer yidisher literatur*, s.v. “Zisho Landoy.” (New York: Altveltlekhn yidishn kultur-kongres, 1956), 430.

In *Fun unzer friling*, Iceland, though an unremittingly harsh critic of his own early poetry, has a slightly different explanation for his overuse of certain imagery. In the memoir, Iceland explains that he used his “golden sun” as a desperate defense against the despair he felt working in a millinery factory. It was the one thing of beauty he saw on a daily basis. He clung to it, and it pervaded his poetic consciousness.

*Eybike tribkayt, shtikenish un eybiker geshtank, shtendike brekhenish in rukn un brenendike zoyln fun shteyn yedn tog tsen un mer sho af di fis, iz dos gemit geven batribt. Nor eyn likhtiker punkt iz geven in dem dozikn tribn lebn — di goldene kroyn afn turem-shpits fun a volknkratster gebeyde, vos men hot demolt nor vos gehat farendikt oder gehaltn in farendikn. Oyb der tog iz nor geven a sheyner, hot di dozike kroyn in a bashtimter sho yedn nokhmitog oyfgekhaft di shtraln fun der zun un iz aleyngevorn a zun—a gliendike goldene zun. In mayn tribn vinkl in der fabrik hot zikh di zun bavizn vi a nes.*¹⁰

Even without taking Iceland’s anecdote literally, it is easy to see the appeal that such a glowing, transcendent image might hold to a worker trapped in a miserable existence. Iceland was far from the only poet among his colleagues to take refuge in beauty, but it would still be some time until he could personalize his imagery and make it an expression of his own longing, rather than a stock image available for any poetic occasion. The first verse of “*A zumer-nakht kholem*,” from the November 1910 collection *Literatur*, offers a useful illustration of Iceland’s early work, replete with gold, mythological European landscape and *goyishe* King and Prince:

In flamendiken gold—vos shpreyt

¹⁰ “[The factory] was eternal misery: a suffocating and constant stink; a breaking back and burning soles from standing for more than ten hours a day: naturally, your mood was bleak. There was only one bright point in that gloomy existence—the golden crown on the spire of the skyscraper that was just being completed. If the day happened to be a nice one, at a regular hour in the afternoon the crown caught the rays of the sun and became a sun itself—a glowing, golden sun. That my dark corner of the factory should have its own ‘sun’ seemed like a miracle.” R. Iceland, *Fun unzer friling* (New York: Farlag inzl, 1954), pp. 2-3.

*Zikh oys a yam. Dort veyt vu s'halzt
 Der himl zikh mit barg un vald—
 Geyt af zayn shaynendik geshtalt.
 A yunger kenigs zun—
 Un zayn gezikht iz gold,
 Un purpur iz zayn kleyd.
 Un shtolts betret er dort dem vaysen shteg
 Mit zingendike trit.
 Un hoybt er af a hand, dan vebt
 A goldentroym zikh oys.¹¹*

Both Iceland and Landau were wounded by their initial encounter, at having their weaknesses so exposed. Neither one, asserted the other, could express himself effectively in his art. In poetry, that is a capital offense. But as Reuben Iceland admits, they were both on target with their criticisms. Zishe Landau was straitjacketed by his European formalism, and any authentic feeling in Iceland's work was suffocated by heavy-handed poetics. However, both Iceland and Landau would undergo significant changes over the next decade, prodded by an artistic community that encouraged competition, self-scrutiny, and merciless criticism. Eventually, the artists would shuck off the poetic templates they had adopted as young poets, so that they might find their own voices. Compare the above excerpt of "*A zumer-nakht kholem*" to a stanza from "*Fun ale teg*," a poem about the quiet routine of a factory worker, written by Iceland just four years later:

*S'iz mitog tsayt. Arum iz shtil. Bloyz vi a bin
 Dort zshumt in vinkl vu eyn eyntsike mashin.
 A meydl est un knakt di sholekhts fun an ey.
 Un eyner oder tsvey gemitlekh zupen tey.
 Derneben khromket emets tsibele mit broyt, —*

¹¹ "In fiery gold—that spreads/out like a sea. There, far away, where the sky/embraces mountain and forest—/his shining image rises./A king's young son [sun]—/and his face is gold,/and his clothing purple./And proudly he sets forth there upon the white path/with singing steps./And he lifts up a hand, thus casting/a golden dream out." R. Ayzland, "A zumer-nakht kholem." *Literatur 2* (New York: Fareyn literatur, 1910), 47.

*Un blase meydlekh ongefarbt af royt,
 Tsushtelen zikh bay ofene fenster oys,
 Un kukn zhedne ergets-vu aroys.
 Un and're lakhn kaykhendik un redn mit di hent
 Un redn mit di oygen un mit tseykhns af di vent.*¹²

① Where “A zumer-nakht kholem” is studied and escapist, “Fun ale teg” is disarmingly intimate and personal. And where “A zumer-nakht kholem”’s descriptions rely on colors and telegraphed visuals (“un zayn gezikht iz gold, / un purpur iz zayn kleyd”¹³), “Fun ale teg” focuses instead on its setting’s sounds (“A meyd est un knakt di sholekhts fun an ey.”¹⁴). In the 1910 poem, the factory worker Iceland seeks succor and release by conjuring up an idealized scene detached from his own reality. In 1914, he achieves those ends through a precise, sensitive depiction of his own condition.

The differences between “A zumer-nakht kholem” and “Fun ale teg” are representative of larger changes that took place within the literary community that Iceland and Landau inhabited. The Yunge, the literary school with which by 1910 both men came to associate themselves, developed as an opposition movement, finding its voice through its antagonism to the American Yiddish press. In its first years, from roughly 1907 through 1910, the movement played an important function through its defiance of the newspaper-dominated literary establishment. Its members saw an American Yiddish cultural scene that allowed no independent home for art, and they challenged it with work that was aggressively disengaged from its cultural and political context, such as “A zumer-nakht kholem”. Their most significant artistic contributions,

¹² “It’s lunch time. It’s quiet all around. But like a bee/one lone machine buzzes in the corner./A girl eats and cracks the shell from an egg./And one or two sip tea flaccidly./Nearby someone crunches an onion with bread,—/and pale girls painted red/take up position by the open windows/and stare out somewhere, yearningly./At others laughing gaspingly and talking with their hands/and talking with their eyes and with drawings on the walls.” R. Ayzland, “Fun ale teg,” *Shriftn* 3 (1914), 4.

¹³ “And his face is gold, / and his clothing purple” R. Ayzland, “A zumer-nakht kholem,” *Literatur* 2 (1910), 47.

¹⁴ “A girl sits and cracks the shell from an egg.” R. Ayzland, “Fun ale teg,” *Shriftn* 3 (1914), 4.

however, came only later. By means of self-published journals and coffee-shop salons, by 1912 the Yunge had succeeded in making a home of their own for art, albeit a small one. It was at this point, secure in their place, that the Yunge could begin to reengage with their world, as "*Fun ale teg*" illustrates. And it was at this point that their work broke new ground, eventually changing the face of American Yiddish literature. Reuben Iceland and Zishe Landau were at the center of this movement, and an understanding of their relationship to the Yiddish press, to their work, and to each other is essential to gaining a greater understanding of the Yunge's significance.

Vander-Lider: Literature and the Press in the Early Twentieth Century

From much of the existing scholarship on the Yunge or Yiddish literature, it is possible to get the impression that all of the literature published in the United States during the first decade of the twentieth century came out of the daily press. Miriam Weinstein's assessment in *Yiddish: A Nation of Words* is typical of the conventional wisdom on the subject: "In the period before World War II almost all Yiddish writing, of whatever genre, appeared first in newspaper form."¹⁵ And if one is to rely on early accounts of the Yunge and others critical of the press' role in American Yiddish literature, it would seem as though these newspapers, being beholden to bottom-lines and party lines, precluded the possibility of high quality Yiddish literature ever being published on the American scene. In the essay, "Yiddish Literature in the United States," Joseph Opatoshu, the Yunge's preeminent novelist, describes the conditions in the late 19th Century that accounted for the Yiddish press's centrality in Jewish immigrant society. He tells of a culture of upheaval: unstable and impermanent living arrangements, traditions disrupted or cast aside, and an institutional void created by the instability and economic exigencies of immigrant life. Coming to similar conclusions as Weinstein regarding the importance of the Yiddish press, Opatoshu asserts that it was the Yiddish newspapers that came to fill this institutional void, becoming patrons and publishers where none had existed. But, claims Opatoshu, "Such an environment could not bring forth a Yiddish literature."¹⁶

nice

¹⁵ Miriam Weinstein, *Yiddish: A Nation of Words* (South Royalton, VT: Steerforth Press, 2001), 137.

¹⁶ Joseph Opatoshu, "Yiddish Literature in the United States," translated by Shlomo Noble, from *Voices from the Yiddish*, Edited by Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg. (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1972), 309.

Even in 1907, however, it was possible to find a number of journals committed to the publication of high art, the likes of which might never see the light of day in a *Forverts* or *Yidishes tageblat*. *Di tsukunft*, a socialist monthly founded in 1892 and edited by Morris Winchevsky, and *Der arbeter*, David Pinski's De Leon-affiliated journal, were publications that, despite having definite political agendas, made a point of printing fine poetry even when it lacked a discernable political message.¹⁷ In *Tsukunft*, one could read pastoral *vander-lider* by Joseph Rolnik, poems about Cleopatra from Jacob Adler and reflections on the Catskill Mountains by the great Yehoash.¹⁸ *Dos naye leben*, for its part, featured translations of Lord Byron's poetry by a writer named Y. Blaykher.¹⁹ The existence of these high quality journals should put to rest any notions that the only Yiddish literature being published in New York in the early Twentieth Century came out of the daily press. Why, then, is the role of newspapers in American Yiddish literature so widely misconstrued and overstated, not just among those that champion the press as a positive force in Yiddish literature, but also among its detractors?

There are a number of reasons for this misperception. Yiddish newspapers, even without being the sole exponent of Yiddish literature that many authors argue they were, still played a central role in immigrant life, and were integral to the development of an American Yiddish literature. Mordecai Soltes, author of the 1924 study, "The Yiddish Press: An Americanizing Agency," neatly summarizes the unique role the newspapers played in New York's Yiddish-speaking community:

In their general features the Yiddish daily newspapers are generally journals for the masses. Their tendency is toward

¹⁷ Though it began publication one year later, in 1908, Chaim Zhitlowsky's prestigious political and literary monthly, *Dos naye leben*, might also be included in this category of highbrow magazines.

¹⁸ *Inhalts-fartseykhnis far yor 1909, Di tsukunft* (New York: Zukunft Press Federation, 1909).

¹⁹ *Tshayld Harold*, by Lord Byron, translated by Y. Blaykher. *Dos naye leben*, (March 1909): 27.

popularization, with sensationalism as the inevitable culmination. On the other hand, one of the distinctive features of the Yiddish Press is the disposition to devote an unusually large proportion of its space to solid reading material such that does not usually find its way into the American newspaper, but which goes rather into the American magazine. The reason for this phenomenon becomes clear when we remember that the Yiddish newspaper is very frequently the only source of information and guidance which the reader has.²⁰

Even though these monthly journals like *Arbeter* and *Tsukunft* existed, they were read by nowhere near as many people as the more broadly useful and inexpensive daily papers. Between the years of 1905 and 1910, the daily papers underwent a period of remarkable growth. Where in 1905 the combined circulation of Yiddish newspapers in New York was 190,000, by 1910 the Yiddish press was reaching over 336,100 readers.²¹ Given a total New York Jewish population of 1.1 million (including non-Yiddish-speaking German Jews, Levantines, and others) in 1910,²² and the fact that Soltes estimated that 44% of the newspapers sold were read by people other than those that bought the actual copies, this means that an astonishingly large percentage of Yiddish-speaking Jews must have read one of the four daily papers in production at the time.²³ And the *Forverts*, the largest Yiddish newspaper by far, had in 1913 a circulation of 142,191, exceeding the readership of six English-language New York dailies.²⁴ The *Tsukunft*, by contrast, had a circulation of 3,000 in 1912. In August 1912 the Forward

²⁰ Mordecai Soltes, *The Yiddish Press, An Americanizing Agency*. (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1924), 22

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 186

²² Edward L. Greenstein, "New York City," in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 1971.

²³ Mordecai Soltes, *The Yiddish Press, An Americanizing Agency* (New York City: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1924), 39. Soltes goes on to write that, by his results, the circulation figures of the Yiddish dailies "would have to be augmented by about 75% to obtain the actual number of readers." For the 1910 figures, this would result in an approximate readership of 588,210 individuals. Even without accounting for numbers of non-Yiddish speakers in New York (for which I was not able to find statistics), and for very young children, this is well over half of New York's Jewish population.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 185, Citing Ayer's American Newspaper Annual and Directory

Association took over *Tsukunft* and its readership skyrocketed, but even the 1913 figure of over 20,000 subscribers pales next to the circulation of its parent newspaper.

Most of the Yiddish literature being read by the masses came not from highbrow journals or bound volumes, but from the newspapers. Because of the economic realities of immigrant life, relatively few American Yiddish novels were released in book-form. Books that did come out were often published under the aegis of newspapers (most frequently the *Forverts*), and usually had either been first published serially, or were reprints of famous titles offered as premiums for subscribers (*Ale verk fun sholem aleykhem* was a popular favorite, as were Yiddish translations of Jack London and Guy de Maupassant, and general reference guides). The Yiddish press brought literature to those that might not otherwise have been exposed to it. Newspapers like the *Forverts* had a reach and influence that the smaller efforts could not have hoped to match, one that placed them at the center of the American Yiddish cultural scene. And many historians, enamored of a mass medium that purported to bring “the best in modern literature”²⁵ (as the *Forverts* claimed to do) to a proletarian audience, have emphasized this unique and significant institution to the exclusion of other publications.²⁶

But what of the Yunge, who depicted the pre-World War I period as a time that serious Yiddish literature could not exist in America? They may have loathed what they saw offered in the newspapers, but they must have been aware of the existence of publications that printed serious literature and art compatible with their budding aestheticist sensibilities. The Yunge would not have overlooked these journals based on

²⁵ Jacob Rader Marcus citing the *Jewish Daily Forward, United States Jewry, 1776-1985* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1989), 420.

²⁶ Refer to Irving Howe and Kenneth Libo’s monumental history of immigrant Jews, *World of Our Fathers* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976) for a sophisticated and relatively unsentimental version of the above tendency. See especially Howe’s chapter on the Yiddish press, pp. 518-551

their lack of mass influence, as popular historians have done. Indeed, the Yunge had a tendency to fetishize the unpopular and elite. Yet in nearly all of their accounts, the Yunge come to nearly the same conclusions as official *Forverts* histories regarding the press' total influence over the literary scene at the time, omitting the contributions of artistically progressive journals like *Arbeter*. Why do the Yunge argue that until their arrival, and their professed introduction of aestheticism and high art to the literary scene, American Yiddish literature was controlled solely by the press?

One answer can be found in the tables of contents of the monthly journals. Look at the literary contributors in *Di tsukunft*, *Dos naye leben* or *Der arbeter*, and you are likely to see certain names appearing again and again: Yehoash, M.J. Haimovitch, Joseph Rolnik, Joel Slonim, Abraham Reisen, I.J. Schwartz, Jacob Adler. Some of these authors, like Schwartz and Rolnik, would eventually come to ally themselves with the Yunge. Others, like Reisen, Yehoash and Slonim, were what Howe and Greenberg retroactively labeled "transitional" writers, unlucky enough to be grouped neither among the sweatshop poets nor the Yunge.²⁷ The names that one sees only occasionally in tables of contents are the names of the writers that launched the Yunge: Berl Senter, David Ignatoff, Mani Leib and Reuben Iceland (though at first Iceland was on the periphery of the group). The writers publishing their work regularly in *Tsukunft* and *Arbeter* were quite diverse, both in age and in ideology. There was Abraham Reisen, universally respected and about ten years senior to most of the Yunge, as well as Haimovitch and Schwartz, who had both their youth and their artistic philosophies in common with the

²⁷ Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg, eds., *Voices From the Yiddish* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1972), 289.

earliest Yunge. But what united these writers and distinguished them from the first members of the Yunge was the fact that in 1907, they all worked for the press.²⁸

Aaron Glants-Leyeles, the Introspectivist writer and journalist, describes the Yiddish newspaper world as something resembling a form of conscription, where aspiring writers had to enlist and perform basic journalistic tasks in order to earn the right to publish their art: "*Ikh veys yo, az in yeder redaktsie fun di teglekhe tsaytungen zaynen mit der tsayt arayngetrogn di merste poetn un beletritsn fun ale literarishe grupirungen. Bloyz a kleyener teyl fun zey tut in der tsaytung reyn literarishe arbet, dos heyst drukt dort lider, dertseylungen oder romanen. Der rov iz basheftikt zhurnalistish.*"²⁹ The editors of the distinguished monthlies, David Pinski and Morris Winchevsky (and later Zhitlovsky), concurred with Glants-Leyeles's assessment, as they used the newspapers as a farm system from which they could recruit their own contributors. The journals resented the cockiness of young writers who attempted to skip their apprenticeships and publish their work cold, without first having put in their time. This helps explain the infrequent appearances of Ignatoff, Iceland, Senter, Mani Leib, and to a lesser extent, Landau, in the monthly magazines. The editors' resentment came out most clearly when Berl Senter first published *Di yugnt*, a small literary magazine completely independent of the press. Both *Der arbeter* and *Di tsukunft* panned the effort, according to Ruth Wisse,

²⁸ Reisen, Adler, and Yehoash worked for *Forverts*, Haimovitch, Rolnik and Slonim were in the employ of *Varheit*. A. Glants-Leyeles, "Di yidishe literatur un di yidishe prese," in *75 yor yidishe prese in amerike*, Yankev Glatstein et al., eds. (New York: Y.L. perets shrayber fareyn, 1945), 85-90

²⁹ "I believe it was so that every board of the daily newspapers, after some time, was able to pull in the majority of poets and belletrists from all literary groups. Only a small portion of these did pure literary work for the papers, like poems, sketches and short stories. The majority were employed as journalists." A. Glants-Leyeles, "Di yidishe literatur un di yidishe prese," in *75 Yor Yidishe Prese*, Yankev Glatshayn et al, eds. (New York: Y.L. perets shrayber fareyn, 1945), 89.

with *Di tsukunft* coming down hardest on what it characterized as “the sloppiness of self-publishing, the ignorance and inexperience of the young writers.”³⁰

Although other voices existed in the New York literary scene apart from the shrill tones of the newspapers, they could never claim to be independent of the press. The Yiddish artistic community in 1907 was dominated by and organized under the daily press. It was a small world, necessarily incestuous, where everyone knew everyone else. According to Steven Cassedy, author of *To the Other Shore: The Russian Jewish Intellectuals Who Came to America*, Morris Winchevsky and Chaim Zhitlowsky were dear friends, and both were close to *Forverts* editor Abraham Cahan. Indeed, Cahan himself had been an editor at *Tsukunft* years before Winchevsky, and, in 1913, the Forward Association would take control of the magazine. David Pinski, though he was at odds with Cahan politically (Cahan being part of the faction that broke from Daniel De Leon’s Socialist Labor Party in 1897), still traveled in the same social and intellectual circles as Cahan and the others.³¹

Yiddish-speaking artists coming to the United States after the start of the twentieth-century arrived to find a tight-knit and hierarchical cultural scene in New York dominated by an older generation. The editors of the monthly journals, the editors of the left-wing newspapers and the leaders of the labor movement, writes Cassedy, all belonged to the same clique of New York immigrant intellectuals that had arrived in America before 1890.³² The *Forverts* was the powerful public face of this clique, and the Forward Building, an imposing ten-story edifice built in 1910, acted as a daily reminder

³⁰ Ruth Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1988), 18.

³¹ Steven Cassedy, ed., *Building the Future: Jewish Immigrant Intellectuals and the Making of the Tsukunft* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1999), 5.

³² *Ibid*, p. xiii.

of its influence in the Lower East Side. The first members of the Yunge looked out on this New York Yiddish cultural scene, and they saw a limited field of possibility. It was possible to make a name for yourself as a younger writer, but only on the terms set by the old guard. This meant, at least in part, working for the papers and, as the Yunge saw it, compromising your talents. When the Yunge argue that American Yiddish literature was controlled solely by the press, they do not mean to say that all literature came out of the daily papers. Rather, they are referring to a downtown cultural (and political) cartel led by the *Forverts* but which included magazines like *Der arbeter*, *Di tsukunft*, and *Dos naye leben* that set the tone of the Yiddish literary climate. This cartel, in which the representatives of high culture and the purveyors of *shund* were in bed together, and in which the world of the arts was enmeshed with the world of politics, was abhorrent to the high-minded young artists that had recently arrived in New York, and they were just cocky enough to challenge it.

Di yugnt and the Birth of the Yunge

The evening of their exchange, neither Reuben Iceland nor Zishe Landau left Drukerman's unscathed. However, Iceland, who sensed a talent gap between himself and the precocious Landau, believed that he got the worse of it, recalling nearly fifty years later: "*Landoy iz ober in der hincikht geven der geshikterer, un dos iz er shtendik geblibn. Azoy araynzogn, az es zol trefn in der zibeter rip arayn hot tsvishn unz keyner nit gekont.*"³³ Landau would go on to earn a special reputation for his caustic remarks, but this exchange can still be seen as emblematic of the combativeness that would define the world of the Yunge for its first few years. Indeed, the name "Yunge" was itself born out of conflict: In 1907, a small group of young writers confronted a literary scene dominated by newspaper novelists and sweatshop poets with a self-published magazine called *Di yugnt*. Following the release of this modest offering, the older, more established writers started referring derisively to the magazine's collaborators as *Yunge* ("Young Ones"). The young authors defiantly welcomed the name given them, embracing the generational terms on which they had chosen to frame their fight. And this confrontation, which gave birth to the Yunge, took place out of Sholem's Café, a coffeehouse in the Lower East Side.

For many years, Sholem's Café, located on Division Street, was the physical center of the American Yiddish literary community. According to Reuben Iceland, the coffeehouse was renowned throughout the United States Yiddish-speaking community as the place where well-known Yiddish writers congregated: "*Vegn der 'kibetsarnie' fun the*

³³ "Landau was, in hindsight, the more clever one, and it was always to remain that way. As the saying goes, he could cut me to the quick (*trefn in der zibeter rip*), in a way no one else ever could." Ibid, p. 3.

eltere shrayber hot men oykh gevust af der provints un kimat ale shtot-gest bay sholemen hot men der provints gehaltn far gedolim."³⁴ The prices at Sholem's Café were too steep for younger aspiring writers, so its patrons were limited mainly to established literary figures like Morris Rosenfeld and Joel Entin, who made at least part of their livings writing for the Yiddish daily press.³⁵ When in the fall of 1907 a group of young writers, led by the seventeen-year old *aspirant* and future businessman Berl Senter, decided to distribute their tiny journal *Di yugnt* in Sholem's Café, they were making a brash, confrontational statement, announcing their arrival to the Yiddish literary establishment.³⁶

The first issue of *Di yugnt* featured a short story by Isaac Raboy, an author considered by David Ignatoff, one of the Yunge's major ideologues, to be the first truly modern American Yiddish writer.³⁷ The piece, entitled "*Di royte blum*" ("The Red Flower"), revolved around a young couple going on a romantic sleigh ride, but the story's plot was of secondary importance to the author's sensualistic descriptions.³⁸ In *A Little Love in Big Manhattan*, Ruth Wisse describes the piece as being emblematic of the young group's artistic sensibility: "Raboy's story was characteristic of the magazine's contents not only in its first-person narrator and individuated theme (few subjects are as intimate as seduction), but in the opaque language and obscure intention."³⁹ "*Di royte blum*" and the magazine's other offerings, which included gauzy poems with names like "Clouds"

³⁴ "This coffeehouse of our elders was known even in the 'provinces,' [That is, cities other than New York] for almost all of the patrons at Sholom's [*sic*] were considered people of importance." R. Iceland, *Fun unzer friling* (New York: Farlag inzl, 1954), 188, translation by Nathan Halper, from Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg, eds., *Voices from the Yiddish*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), 301.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 188. Rosenfeld was on the staff of the *Forverts*, Joel Entin worked for the *Forverts* and later the *Varheit* (and eventually *Der tog*, when it took over the *Varheit*).

³⁶ David Ignatoff, *Opgerisene bleter* (Buenos Aires: Farlag idbuj, 1957), 68.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 68.

³⁸ Ruth Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 6.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 6.

and "Regret," divided the regulars at Sholem's.⁴⁰ Most labeled the work as decadent and fell upon its teenage editor with reproach, but a few of the writers at Sholem's actively defended it. Joel Entin, a *Forverts* writer who was born in 1874 (and had immigrated in 1891) but counted younger writers like Joel Slonim among his friends, was one of those that saw the potential of the writing in *Yugnt* No. 1 (In fact, Entin went on to take over the editing duties from B. Senter for the second issue of *Yugnt*, after Senter, according to David Ignatoff, had tired of constantly defending himself against the attacks of the establishment writers.).⁴¹ Young writers were emboldened by the publication of the journal and, according to Ignatoff, started going into Sholem's Café with the intention of starting quarrels with the older writers.⁴²

The young authors expected to be berated by professional newspapermen following the publication of *Di yugnt*, but they were surprised by the criticisms of the distinguished monthlies, which they had believed would respond to their earnest efforts.⁴³ Instead, the editors of *Tsukunft* and *Der arbeter* were irritated by the young writers' insubordinate enterprise, and their reviews focused on the writers' inexperience and lack of polish, which they took to be a consequence of their circumvention of established literary practice.⁴⁴ This patronizing response contributed to the young artists' disillusionment with the established literary community. Rather than discouraging them, however, it added self-righteous fervor to their crusade, as evidenced by *Di yugnt's*

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 6.

⁴¹ David Ignatoff, *Opgerisene Bleter* (Buenos Aires: Farlag idbuj, 1957), 68. Ignatoff goes on to describe Entin as playing an almost paternal role to the writers of the Yunge in their earliest days. See pp. 68-69, 72-75 in *Opgerisene Bleter* for more on Joel Entin's relationship to the Yunge.

⁴² Ibid, p. 68.

⁴³ Ruth Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 17.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 18.

second issue, which included a manifesto articulating their mission and calling out their enemies.

The manifesto in *Yugnt 2* was written by David Ignatoff, the young author who had quickly become central to the movement. In this piece, Ignatoff articulated a program that went far beyond the first issue's promotion of the modern sensibility embodied by "*Di royte blum.*" The essay asserted that the Yunge's mission was nothing less than the salvation of American Yiddish literature, and marked the Yiddish press as the culprit responsible for the degraded state of Yiddish letters:

Yiddish literature here in America has been boarding out with the Yiddish press that treats it as a stranger, a stepchild. The purpose of the press is either to turn a profit or to spread certain social or nationalistic ideals. It has never had any pure and authentic interest in literature...

As professionals, the young Yiddish writers in America are in love with literature, and it hurts us to see Yiddish belles-lettres in exile here, being treated with cynical abandon. We have united in *Di Yugnt* to create for Yiddish literature its own home to free it from its bruising battering exile.⁴⁵

It is the wish of the Yunge to create for Yiddish literature in America its own, independent home. Will we be successful? We do not know. But we believe in our strength. We also believe in the truth and craft of earnest efforts; we believe that the combination of truth, craft, and earnest effort must sooner or later forge a path.⁴⁶

Though this manifesto depicts the Yunge in the universal embrace of a clear, mutually understood crusade, the group was far from having their ideological ducks in a

⁴⁵ Ruth Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 8, Wisse's translation, citing *Di yugnt 2*.

⁴⁶ David Ignatoff, *Opgerisene bleter*. (Buenos Aires: Farlag idbuj, 1957), 69. Unfortunately, due to renovations at YIVO, New York's only extant copies of *Yugnt 2* were unavailable during the time I was working on this paper. As a result, I have had to rely on the excerpts provided in Ignatoff's *Opgerisene bleter* and Ruth Wisse's *Little Love in Big Manhattan* and "Di Yunge: Immigrants or Exiles?" *Prooftexts* 1 no. 1 (January 1981), 44.

row. A closer look at the text of the manifesto reveals complications within the Yunge's platform, and hints at disparate artistic influences. In the document, Ignatoff seeks to make America a home for Yiddish literature, and, as Ruth Wisse points out, describes "the liberation of aesthetic values ... in the language of American freedom."⁴⁷ There is a striking embrace of the American milieu in this manifesto as well as within much of the other early work of the Yunge. Still, in apparent contradiction to his commitment to all things American, Ignatoff describes American Yiddish literature as being in *goles*, exile. In the first years of the twentieth-century, the eyes of serious Yiddish readers were turned towards Eastern Europe. By 1907, in Warsaw, I.L. Peretz had begun writing *Bay nakht afn altn mark*, an impracticable play as radically modern as anything coming out of the gentile avant-garde communities of Europe, Russia or the States. If America was the *goles* of Yiddish literature, the Holy Land was still in Russia and Europe.

In this manifesto, Ignatoff reveals a basic quandary facing the young movement: What does a movement that presents itself as the first indigenous American Yiddish high literary movement do when it has only Europe and Russia (both for its Yiddish and gentile literature) to look to for artistic guidance? Moreover, can a movement that so flaunts its American identity entirely repudiate the press, the establishment that has played the single largest role in the creation of an authentic American Yiddish literature?

⁴⁷ Ruth Wisse, "Di Yunge: Immigrants or Exiles?" *Prooftexts* 1 no. 1 (January 1981), 44. For more on the Yunge's (and particularly David Ignatoff's) commitment to Americanism, see *Opgerisene Bleter*, p. 76, where Ignatoff quotes a tirade he gave to Moyshe Leib Halpern in an argument over telegrams sent out to European Yiddish writers: "*Ikh hob zikh di gantse tsayt arumgetrogn mit dem gedank, az mir do in amerike muzn zikh bafrayen fun der hegemonie fun der eyropeisher yidisher literatur.— Zoln zey dort nemen kukn af undz un nisht mir af zey. Un do gor mit amol aynlandungen tsu 'zey,' 'zey,' heyst dos, zoln undz kumen helfn basheyne undzer zamlbukh. Dos grobt dokh unter di gantse virde, dem gantsn farnem.*" ("This whole time I have gone around as a proponent of the idea that we in America must free ourselves from the hegemony of European Yiddish literature. They should be looking at *us*, not us at them. And now we're sending out calls for submission to them?? They should help us better *our* collection? That undermines our entire worth, our entire relevance.")

In comparing Yiddish literature's relationship to the press to that of a boarder to a lessee, Ignatoff demonstrates an awareness of the interdependent, if grossly unequal, relationship that the institutions had historically shared in America. But he does not provide an alternative outside of obliquely acknowledging Europe's centrality in the development of Yiddish literature. The answers to these dilemmas would have to come from the Yunge themselves.

The first efforts of the Yunge (as well a number of the artists that would later ally themselves with the group) further illustrate the movement's deficiencies. The Yunge's most talented writers, like Zishe Landau and Moyshe Leib Halpern, had a distinctly Russian or European tone to their early work. In 1910, Halpern, the last of the Yunge to arrive in America and the one Ignatoff described as "*eyropeyisher fun undz*,"⁴⁸ contributed a piece to *Literatur* entitled "*Mir hobn zikh geboden*." This poem stands in fascinating contrast to his later, more distinctively "American" work, such as the poems on display in his 1919 collection, *In nyu-york*. Just as with Zarkhi, a central semi-autobiographical character from 1924's *Di goldene pave*, the narrator of "*Mir hobn zikh geboden*" sits by the seashore. Unlike Zarkhi, however, who places himself clearly, irreconcilably on the New York shoreline, the narrator of this poem rests on a hazy idealized seashore and quotes German poetry:

*Ikh lig baym yam.
Es glet di nakht, di benkshaft fun mayn troym, mit finger fun parfumen...
Mayn oyg tsum himl kukt. S'iz vohr: "Es hat der Himmel seine Sterne"
Mayn zindike neshome ober libt di erd—di erd mit ihre blumen...*⁴⁹

⁴⁸ David Ignatoff, *Oggerisene bleter*. (Buenos Aires: Farlag idbuj, 1957), 77.

⁴⁹ "I lie by the sea./The night strokes my dream's longing with perfumed fingers.../My eye looks to heaven. It's true: 'Es hat der Himmel seine Sterne'/But my sinning soul loves the earth—the earth, with her flowers..." From M.L. Halpern, "Mir hobn zikh geboden," *Literatur* 2 (1910), 23.

In addition to the quoted German verse, *daytshmerizms* like “*shtilerhayt*” and “*shtunder*,” less common in Halpern’s later work, pervade this piece. And the dissonances and grotesqueries that came to characterize Halpern’s distinctive poetic voice are absent here, replaced by pretty, calming verse.

Landau and Halpern’s mimicry of European styles, however, was less of an issue for the Yunge than the fact that some of the poems they were publishing were, by their own admission, not very good. Zishe Landau used to refer to the early work of the Yunge as “*gedikhte*”—a pun on the word “*dikhter*,” poetry, meaning thickness or denseness.⁵⁰ A number of the poets involved with *Di yungt* did indeed show their rawness and inexperience in their writing, just as *Di tsukunft* had charged. David Ignatoff dismisses Reuben Iceland’s work through 1914 as “*blas, flakh, khotsh mit gute kavones, nor otemloz*,”⁵¹ and his previously cited “*Zumer-nakt kholem*” only seems to reinforce this assessment. These flaws were mitigated, however, as the group’s output grew. *Di yugnt* folded after only three issues, but the magazine had the effect of galvanizing the heretofore-unorganized community of young writers into a literary opposition movement. In the hothouse environment of a self-consciously defined literary movement—the first of its kind in America, according to Iceland⁵²—the writers could influence and critique one another, and produce a large enough body of work such that they would eventually

⁵⁰ *Leksikon fun der nayer yidisher literatur*, s.v. “Zishe Landoy.” (New York: *Altveltlekhn yidishn kultur-kongres*, 1956), 430.

⁵¹ “Pale, flat, though with good intention, only lifeless.” David Ignatoff, *Opgerisene bleter* (Buenos Aires: Farlag idbuj, 1957), 83-84.

⁵² R. Iceland, *Fun unzer friling* (New York: Farlag inzl, 1954), 6. For a contrasting view, see Joseph Opatoshu’s “Yiddish Literature in the United States,” in *Voices from the Yiddish*, Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg, eds., (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1972), 312: “It should be remembered that Yiddish literature in America had no ‘schools.’ *Di Yunge* was no literary school; nor were the ‘Introspectivists’ a cult.” Opatoshu was part of the faction that parted ways with the aestheticist wing of the Yunge in 1914. As a result, it is not surprising that he might view the group differently from those that stuck around, choosing to depict the movement as a loose collective of writers briefly united under the embrace of certain artistic principles and in common opposition to the literary establishment.

no longer be forced to look to Europe for antecedents, but now could develop a voice of their own.

Busting the Literature Trust: David Ignatoff and the *Fareyn literatur*

The first major evidence of the *Di yugnt*'s legacy came in 1910, two years after its demise, with the establishment of a writers' collective, *Fareyn literatur*. David Ignatoff, the author responsible for *Yugnt* No. 2's incendiary manifesto, started *Fareyn literatur* with the intention of creating an alternative approach to publishing to compete with the existing, newspaper-dominated system. Satirical magazines like *Der kibitser* and *Der groyser kundes*, which both began publication in April 1908, sustained the passion and momentum that *Di yugnt* had ignited, but it was not until *Fareyn literatur* that young writers had a regular opportunity to convene, and a physical meeting place in which they could gather.⁵³ In the chapter of *Fun unzer friling* where Iceland reflects on his relationship with Zishe Landau, he points to the *Fareyn literatur* meetings as the setting in which he and Landau finally began to warm to one another, and that the Yunge began to develop into a discrete, coherent group.⁵⁴ Seventy to eighty young people routinely showed up to the Sunday morning meetings of the *Fareyn literatur*, but the makeup of the crowd varied from week to week. The majority of these would contribute a poem or two, according to Iceland, but were not serious writers.⁵⁵ Eventually, a hardcore of regular attendees that included Landau, Iceland, Mani Leib, Joseph Opatoshu, and Moyshe Leib Halpern found each other and distinguished themselves from the casual

⁵³ In neither Iceland's nor Ignatoff's accounts is the actual location of *Fareyn literatur*'s meetings named. On page 72 of *Opgerisene bleter*, Ignatoff cites "151 Clinton Street," the former site of Clinton Hall, as the location for several of the fund-raising readings held by *Fareyn literatur*. However, Clinton Hall was likely too large and expensive a venue for regular meetings. It is more probable that the *Fareyn literatur* met at a venue along the lines of Public School 63, at 4th Street and Avenue A, where the Cloakmakers Symphony Society held meetings on Saturday evenings. (Interview with Arthur Goren, March, 2004)

⁵⁴ R. Iceland, *Fun unzer friling* (New York: Farlag inzl, 1954), 5.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 5.

attendees.⁵⁶ As conflicts and rifts arose in the *Fareyn literatur*, it was this hardcore that came to define the *Fareyn*, and, ultimately, the Yunge.

David Ignatoff had presided over the death of *Di yugnt*, shoving a pushcart filled with the copies of the final issue up Canal Street, from Lifshits' printing house to the public reading where the magazine was to be released.⁵⁷ And it was Ignatoff who was behind the organization of the *Fareyn* in 1910. From the start of the movement, Ignatoff framed the Yunge's struggle in social terms—the press was not the enemy simply because it cheapened and lowered the quality of Yiddish literature in America, but also because it exploited its writers' talents. In *Opgerisene bleter*, Ignatoff asserts that one of the reasons why the Yiddish press so resented the publication of *Di yugnt* was because it meant, just as *Yugnt* No. 2's manifesto suggested, that the young writers were bucking the system. Writers were no longer submitting to the press (pun intended) in order to establish themselves: “*Di prese hot zikh, agev, oykh gekvapet af di umziste 'lidlekh' un 'skitsn' fun di yinglekh. Emes, mir zaynen take 'dekadentn,' 'aristokratn,' 'talantlozikaytn,' un glat 'mishegoyim,' ober derlozn az di khevre zoln far zikh shafn an eygene tribune heyst dokh farlirn dos bisl nitsn vos men ken fun undz hobn.*”⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 5.

⁵⁷ David Ignatoff, *Opgerisene bleter* (Buenos Aires: Farlag idbuj, 1957), 69-70.

⁵⁸ “The press, by the way, was still eager for the vain little ‘rhymes’ and ‘sketches’ from us boys. True, we were ‘decadents,’ ‘aristocrats,’ ‘talentless hacks,’ and even ‘crazies,’ but to permit this gang to have its own Tribune robbed them of whatever use they could make of us.” Ibid, p. 70.

Ignatoff's take on the Yiddish press in this quote conflicts somewhat with Aaron Glants-Leyeles' assessment from earlier. Glants-Leyeles writes that writers had to do unglamorous journalistic tasks if they wanted to get their original work printed; Ignatoff seems to suggest that the papers would have taken the writers' original work alone. From the sources I could find, the truth lies closer to Glants-Leyeles' description. When Mani Leib, that most respected of Yunge writers, joined the *Forverts* in 1918, Cahan put him to work editing the *bintel brief* column, not content to have him only write his one poem a week (Ruth Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988], 65). Ignatoff is flattering himself somewhat to assert that the papers were interested enough in the Yunge's work that they would have taken it almost unconditionally. Still, Ignatoff's point is a valid one in as much as the newspapers *did* resent the writers for robbing them of their services, no matter what they may have been.

When Ignatoff started *Fareyn literatur*, he intended to build on the subversive success of *Di Yugnt* in creating an alternative to the daily Yiddish press's literature trust. He describes broad based support for the *Fareyn* in its first days, drawing large numbers of beginning writers, as well as more established authors like Joel Entin and the future editor of *Der tog*, Dr. Samuel Margoshes. "*Mit undzer tsol un tumel iz undzere fareyn 'literatur' mamesh gevorn a bavegung. A literatur bavegung af der yidisher gas.*"⁵⁹ Ignatoff's use of the word *bavegung* is not accidental, with its specific connotation to the social and political movements that pervaded the world of the Lower East Side.⁶⁰ Even as these aesthetes protested the politicization of art, they could still frame their struggle in political terms. This should not be seen an irony or a contradiction—to most of the Yunge, nearly all of whom were socialists, many of whom participated in the 1905 Russian revolution, the use of art toward political or material ends *was* exploitation.

Reuben Iceland's path to *Fareyn literatur* is fairly clear. Even if he lacked Ignatoff's confrontational style (not to mention the Forward Building-sized chip Ignatoff carried around on his shoulder), Iceland was sympathetic to the Yunge's goals from the beginning. Laughing off the antagonistic nature of *Di yugnt*, he implies that Senter and the others' decision to start up the journal was an eminently sensible one: "*Der nomen 'yunge' iz urshpringlekh geven a shpot nomen far a grupe yunge shrayber, vos hot nokh in 1907 gehat di 'khutspe' tsu derklern, az men darf dos bisl yidische literaturishe koykhes*

⁵⁹ "With our numbers and the noise we made our writers' union became a bonafide movement. A literature movement on the Yiddish street." Ibid, p. 72.

⁶⁰ Ignatoff's use of "*fareyn*" was also not accidental. Hadassa Kosak's book, *Cultures of Opposition: Jewish Immigrant Workers, New York City, 1881-1905* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), demonstrates how in the Lower East Side's atmosphere of heightened political consciousness it was normal practice to use labor formulations for non-labor struggles: thus, rent "strikes"; people who bought from kosher butchers during the kosher meat boycotts were "scabs"; etc.

*in amerike bafrayen fun dem apotropses fun di tsaytungen, un zey hobn gezukht tsu shafn an eygenem literarishn vinkl in di dine heftlekh fun dem khoydesh-zhurnal 'di yugend.'"*⁶¹

During the period between 1907 and 1910, Iceland's name made it into print from time to time, but only occasionally for his poetry. As if to contribute another slight to his fragile poetic self-confidence, journals tended to print Iceland's submissions of short essays or dialogue-based sketches with greater frequency than they did his poems.⁶² This would continue to be an issue for Iceland well into the time he was a central figure in the Yunge. In 1912, the first issue of *Shriftn*, the *zamlbukh* that would be the signature publication of the Yunge for over a decade was published. Along with poetry from Mani Leib, Zishe Landau and a short story by David Ignatoff, *Shriftn* featured an essay on the history of the Yunge and Yiddish literature by Reuben Iceland. Ignatoff gave him the assignment as consolation, after rejecting Iceland's offer to contribute some poems.⁶³

The Yunge never had to sell Iceland on their objectives: it was Iceland that had to prove his worth to them. Iceland was dedicated to the Yunge's aestheticist goals and immersed himself in their social circles, but it was not until later that he was recognized as a full artistic partner. In *Opgerisene bleter*, Ignatoff writes that Iceland remained loyal even after having his work rejected from the second issue of *Shriftn*: "*Ayzland iz undz keynmol nisht farlozn, er iz farblibn khasidish loyal un flegt vi frier frum ophitn zayne*

⁶¹ "The term 'Yunge' originated as a taunt meant for a group of young writers that had the 'temerity' to declare that perhaps a small amount of the Yiddish literary resources in America might be freed up from the guardianship of the newspapers, and they looked to fashion their own literary corner in the form of a flimsy little monthly journal, *Di yugend*." R. Iceland, *Fun unzer friling* (New York: Farlag inzl, 1954), 6.

⁶² This is based on an informal survey of issues of *Tsukunft*, *Arbeter* and *Dos naye lebn* from the years 1908 through 1910.

⁶³ David Ignatoff, *Opgerisene bleter* (Buenos Aires: Farlag idbuj, 1957), 84.

zuntiks bay mir in tsimerl."⁶⁴ Iceland would eventually make great strides as an artist, but for the time being, he would have to be content as the theorist and chronicler of the Yunge.

Zishe Landau, who had so stood out on that evening outside Drukerman's, and who had been publishing poems in the *Forverts* under the name Yehuda, had taken a less predictable route to Ignatoff's Union. A poet that displayed striking natural talent from early on, and one that had some involvement with the *Forverts*, Landau might not have felt as frozen out from the publishing world as Iceland or Ignatoff. From an informal survey of *Arbeter* and *Tsukunft* from the years 1907 through 1909, Landau's name appeared with greater frequency than the names of the other three men that would eventually make up the aestheticist hardcore of the Yunge, Reuben Iceland, Mani Leib, and David Ignatoff. Landau's interest in the Yunge, resultantly, likely had more to do with an affinity he felt for their artistic platform than with their organizational strategy. But as this paper has already noted, Landau's first published pieces exhibited little of the individualism so integral to the ideology of the Yunge. At what time during the four years between his immigration to the United States and the organization of *Fareyn literatur* did Landau become an adherent to the Yunge's aestheticist principles? A partial answer to this question can be found in the arrival of Kolye Teper, the author and Russian-educated intellectual, to New York in late 1907.

Teper, a one-time member of the Bund, was arrested in Russia following the 1905 revolution. With the help of a band of workers, Teper escaped from prison and made his way first to Germany and eventually to New York. In the intervening two years, Teper's

⁶⁴ "Iceland never abandoned us; he remained a fervent disciple, loyal, and, as before, he piously observed our Sunday tradition of get-togethers in my apartment." David Ignatoff, *Opgerisene bleter* (Buenos Aires: Farlag idbuj, 1957), 85.

ideology shifted from socialism towards anarchism and a philosophy of radical individualism.⁶⁵ According to the *Leksikon der fun nayer yidishe literatur*, Landau, who referred to Teper as his *madrikh*, his mentor or guide,⁶⁶ began to develop a distinct, individualistic voice only after Teper's arrival in the States.⁶⁷ It is possible that the two men's acid wit drew them together (according to Wisse, Moyshe Nadir cites Teper's irreverence as one of the qualities he admired most about the man⁶⁸), but it was Teper's depth and breadth of knowledge of European culture that made Landau so susceptible to his influence. When paying tribute to his teacher, says Wisse, Landau never failed to mention Teper's appreciation of fine literature.⁶⁹

In the U.S., Kolye Teper's reputation preceded him, and when he arrived in New York, he found in the Yunge an eager group of students. As Ruth Wisse explains, "His proficiency in several languages and wide erudition won Teper enormous influence among the Yunge, who looked to him for theoretical and literary underpinnings of ideas they had adopted instinctively."⁷⁰ As for Landau, who may not have had the same instinctive philosophical inclinations as the Yunge, Teper helped lend the movement the intellectual heft he had been seeking. If Landau's own modest publishing successes caused him to characterize the Yunge's early actions in the same way Pinski and Winchevsky did, as a mutiny of bitter inferior artists, he would have found a strong challenge to this argument in Kolye Teper, whose brilliance was unquestioned.

⁶⁵ Ruth Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 46

⁶⁶ A. Glants-Leyeles, "Di yidishe literatur un di yidishe prese," in *75 Yor Yidishe Prese*, Yankev Glatsheteyn et al., eds. (New York: Y.L. perets shrayber fareyn, 1945), 89.

⁶⁷ *Leksikon fun der nayer yidisher literatur*, s.v. "Zisho Landoy." (New York: *Altveltlekhn yidishn kultur-kongres*, 1956), 430.

⁶⁸ Ruth Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 46.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 46.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 46.

If Landau did not harbor the same initial bitterness toward the press as Senter or Ignatoff, he likely developed a fair amount of antipathy through his relationship with Teper. Even among the Yunge, Teper was exceptional for the venom he directed at the press, delighting in referring to it as a “*kretinen-gezintl*”—a mob of cretins.⁷¹ Teper’s opposition to the press was ideologically pure, untainted by conflicts of interest or resentment that might have arisen had he been a New York resident for longer. Teper could persuade Landau of the press’s impurity and its debasing influence in a way few other writers could. It is not surprising that Landau’s submissions to the *Forverts* dried up after Teper’s arrival. And neither is it surprising that, when David Ignatoff began *Fareyn literatur*, Zishe Landau became one of its regular members.

Ignatoff wanted to create a respected and viable alternative to the newspaper-controlled literary machine. To that end, he attempted to give his enterprise an air of legitimacy that the insurgent *Yugnt* seemed to lack. After staging a couple of public readings at Clinton Hall, *Fareyn literatur* had raised enough money to put out a volume of collected writings. Instead of selecting himself as editor, Ignatoff put together an editorial board of respected writers that had some truck with the existing literary establishment. There was Joel Entin, the writer that had been so supportive of *Di yugnt* initially, M.J. Haimovitch, another of Senter’s defenders at Sholem’s, and Joel Slonim, a writer held in high regard by the many of the early Yunge and a regular contributor to the Yiddish newspaper *Varheit*.⁷² These three men would edit the first volume of the self-importantly titled miscellany, *Literatur*.

⁷¹ A. Glants-Leyeles, “Di yidishe literatur un di yidishe prese,” in *75 Yor Yidishe Prese*, Yankev Glatshiteyn et al., eds. (New York: Y.L. perets shrayber fareyn, 1945), 89.

⁷² David Ignatoff, *Opgerisene bleter* (Buenos Aires: Farlag idbuj, 1957), 72. The *Varheit* was a newspaper established in 1905 by Louis Miller, who was, along with Ab. Cahan, one of the founders of the *Forverts*.

As Ignatoff tells it, his effort to appoint “*a yid mit a bord*” as editor of *Literatur* backfired badly.⁷³ Entin, Slonim, and Haimovitch, though receptive to the *Fareyn*’s aims with regard to the press, turned out to be less artistically progressive than Ignatoff had hoped. For the first volume of *Literatur*, Mani Leib, a fine young poet and a close friend of Ignatoff’s since their work together on *Yugnt*, submitted a series of poems called “*Ovnt un nakht*.” Ignatoff was smitten by the work: “*Di serie lider zayne [...] hot mamesh vi aroysgezungen fun mayn eygn blut aroys, azoy lib iz mir geven in yeder vort un yeder shure.*”⁷⁴ The poem’s innovative use of use of language, according to Ignatoff, was unlike anything he had ever seen. The poem danced with neologisms and unconventional constructions (“*shpreyt tsheshpreyter*”), unlikely metaphors (“*itster brenen reyter, reyter / mayne shtile royzn—mayne vunden*”) and uncommon rhythms.⁷⁵ The editors never even considered it for publication.

In *Opgerisene bleter*, Ignatoff describes how, not long before the intended date of publication, Joel Slonim pulled Ignatoff out of Sholem’s Café, walked him into Hester Park, and, barely able to contain his laughter, confided, “[*Ikh bin*] *poshet dershtoynt fun mani leybs lider ... Vi shraybt dos a mentsh on azoyne zinloze shures [?]*”⁷⁶ Slonim derided “*Ovnt un nakht*” as “*loyter gelekhter*,” pure ridiculousness, attacking it for its unconventionality and its defiance of literalist logic: “*vos heyst ‘toybn-shtile ovnt-*

The *Varheit* made claims to have higher literary standards than the *Forverts*, and, at times, the newspapers attacked each other bitterly. This does not, however, take away from the fact that both Miller and Cahan were still part of the pre-1890 clique of immigrant intellectuals that that Cassedy describes in *Building the Future*. In 1918, the ailing *Varheit* merged with *Der Tog*, bringing to *Der Tog* Louis Miller’s stable of writers, which included Slonim, Entin, Opatoshu and Samuel Niger.

⁷³ David Ignatoff, *Opgerisene bleter* (Buenos Aires: Farlag idbuj, 1957), 72-73

⁷⁴ “This series of poems made my very blood sing out—that was how in love I was with every word and every verse.” *Ibid*, p. 72

⁷⁵ “Spreads more spreadingly,” “Now they burn redder, redder/my quiet roses, my wounds” *Literatur* 2, (1910): 3

⁷⁶ “I am simply bewildered by Mani Leib’s poems ... How can a person write such senseless verse?” David Ignatoff, *Opgerisene bleter* (Buenos Aires: Farlag idbuj, 1957), 73.

*shtundn,' un vi az toybn zenen nisht shtil in ovnt? Toybn vorken dokh in ovnt iz vi azoy zogt men dos toybn-shtile? [...] un vi azoy farglaykht dos a dikhter royte royzn mit vundn? Dos iz dokh azoy umestetish!"*⁷⁷

Ignatoff was surprised and hurt by this exchange with Slonim, the youngest of the “*yidn mit berd*” (born in 1884, Slonim was just a year older than Ignatoff) and the one whom he had understood to have the most modern sensibility. Ignatoff took back the short story he had submitted to Entin, and convinced his colleagues to do the same, in recognition not just of a slight to Mani Leib, but of irreconcilable artistic differences with *Literatur*'s conservative editorial board. The first volume of *Literatur* was published in July 1910, but without the participation of any those that would later make up the Yunge's inner circle. Ignatoff, Mani Leib, Reuben Iceland, Moyshe Leib Halpern, Zishe Landau, and Opatoshu had all pulled out. *Literatur 1* was handsomely bound, and, at 144 pages, made for a fairly impressive literary offering, though very few people actually bought it. Following publication of the first volume the editors resigned, entrusting Moyshe Nadir, a writer as irreverent as Ignatoff was serious, with the stewardship of the next edition. Ignatoff was furious to find out that Nadir had been selected to be the next editor, and, after some time away from the *Fareyn*, he returned to the meetings with the object of wresting control of the publication from Nadir. Ignatoff succeeded, and in November the second *zambukh* was published without a credited editor, portrayed rather

⁷⁷ David Ignatoff, *Oggerisene bleter* (Buenos Aires: Farlag idbuj, 1957), 73. “What’s this about ‘Dovestill evening-silence,’ when doves are not still in the evening? Doves coo particularly in the evening, so why does he try to get away with this ‘dovestill’ stuff? ... And how can a poet compare a red rose with wounds? That’s *anti-aestheticism!*”

as the collective effort of twenty-three young writers. On its first page, in place of a manifesto or letter from the editor, Ignatoff printed Mani Leib's "*Ovnt un nakht.*"⁷⁸

The row over *Literatur* was a watershed moment for the Yunge. To this point, they had introduced relatively little that was genuinely new to the world of Yiddish literature. They championed art for arts' sake, but as this paper has already noted, one could already find numerous examples of a similar aestheticist sensibility in Rolnik and Yehoash's poems published in *Tsukunft*. And though the Yunge loved to beat up on Morris Rosenfeld as an example as all that was wrong with American Yiddish literature, his influence, along with that of the other sweatshop poets, was on the wane.⁷⁹ Until 1910, then, the Yunge's relevance stemmed mostly from their challenge to the press over its control of the American Yiddish literary culture. After the *Literatur* rebellion, however, the Yunge began to develop an identity beyond the common denominators of age and antagonism.

In *Fun unzer friling*, Reuben Iceland asserts that the most important overall contribution the Yunge made to Yiddish literature was their experimentation with the Yiddish language.⁸⁰ In its early stages, he writes, this was a reactionary impulse, finding its roots in the group's opposition to the press. The Yunge restrained themselves, not wanting to sound like the sweatshop poets or the newspaper hacks: "*kdey aley n it geshstroykht tsu vern un aley n un nit arayntsufaln in bombastik, hobn mir farvorfn sotsiale temes; kdey zikh tsu farhitn fun ale kugl melitses, hobn mir oysgemitn natsionale*

⁷⁸ Ruth Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 32.

⁷⁹ Irving Howe, with Kenneth Libo, *World of Our Fathers* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 423.

⁸⁰ R. Iceland, *Fun unzer friling* (New York: Farlag inzl, 1954), 8.

motivn...”⁸¹ When they adhered to a conservative form of aestheticism, imposing restrictions on what constituted acceptable topics or acceptable vocabulary (call it ascetic-aestheticism) the Yunge could count Entin and Slonim among their allies. Eventually, the Yunge’s experimentation took on a riskier and more constructive form. After cleansing Yiddish of its bombast, its *tsholent* language and its potato Germanisms, the poets were left with a more natural-sounding language, but one limited in its expression. For inquisitive writers, writes Iceland, finding the expressive potential of Yiddish came as a welcome challenge:

*Der kinstlerisher instinkt hot unz untergezogt, az es feln nit keyn verter in unzer shprakh far di tifste un dinste iberlebungen un faynste shtimungen. Men darf zey nor geyen zukhn afn rikhtikn ort. Oyb mir veln nit gefinen keyn fartike verter far alts, vos mir darfn, veln mir ober zikher gefinen verter vos lozn zikh oyssheyln, beygn, iberboyen un iberhafn azoy, az ie zey zoln dinen unzere tsiln un ie zey zoln zayn in gayst un klang fun unzer shprakh.*⁸²

Iceland traces back this expansion of the Yunge’s philosophy—the shift from reaction to action—to *Literatur 2* and its de facto manifesto, Mani Leib’s “*Ovnt un nakht*.” Whether by crafting neologisms or by digging through the written and oral traditions of Yiddish folk culture, poets like Mani Leib were beginning to believe that it ought to be possible to express the entire range of human experience in Yiddish without having to borrow from languages with more distinguished or developed literary traditions.⁸³ This stands in contrast to the previously cited example of Moyshe Leyb

⁸¹ “So that we would not be tempted to fall into bombast, we threw out social themes; to guard against clichéd ‘kugel language’ we threw out nationalist themes...” Ibid, p. 8.

⁸² “The artistic instinct told us that our language did not lack for words that expressed all experiences, narrow and deep, as well as the subtlest moods. One only had to look for them in the right place. If there is not a finished word for something, we take words and develop them, bend them, rebuild them into words that accomplish our goal while maintaining the spirit and sound of our language.” Ibid, p. 8.

⁸³ Ibid, pp. 8-9: “*Mani leyb iz avek un hot gefunen dos vos er hot gezukht in folks moyl. Landoy un ikh—in dem ongezamltn folks oytser: in der tsene rene, der tkhine, folks-lid, mayse-bikhl un khsidishe mayse*”

Halpern's "*Mir hobn zikh geboden*," which relied heavily on the German language and literary tradition in order to establish a particular mood. As opposed to looking to other traditions, the Yunge were now starting to search within themselves, their own traditions and their own perception, for a more precise means of expression.

Few people bought copies of the second volume of *Literatur*, just as few people had bought copies of the first. David Ignatoff estimates that out of the thousand copies of *Literatur 2* printed, eight hundred probably went unsold.⁸⁴ After the perceived failure of *Literatur 2*, and the disenchantment felt by the majority of the *Fareyn*'s members at not getting their work published, the *Fareyn literatur* disbanded.⁸⁵ If one were to judge the *Fareyn*'s success based on the criteria that Ignatoff set out at the beginning, than it would appear to have failed in its mission. It never developed into a true mass movement, it never was able to challenge the press' hegemony, and it never gained much of an audience outside of the artists themselves.

However, the *Fareyn literatur* served as a catalyst for growth and creative exchange for a small group of regulars who would eventually go on to impact nearly every aspect of American Yiddish literature. Indeed, there were already signs that certain communities were starting to take notice of the Yunge's ripening. As Ruth Wisse writes, in reference to Mani Leib's "*Ovnt un nakht*," "In Jassy, Rumania, the young Itsik Manger, excited by the 'halftones and three-quarter tones' of this poem, recited it to the students and workers of the Morris Rosenfeld Reading Circle as a model of the new

("Mani Leib found what he was looking for in our oral folk heritage. Landau and I found a source of words in our written folk heritage: the tsene-rene, the psalms, folk songs, chapbooks, and the Hasidic tales.")

⁸⁴ David Ignatoff, *Opgerisene bleter* (Buenos Aires: Farlag idbuj, 1957), 79.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 79

American Yiddish literature.”⁸⁶ For the first time, the Yunge were starting to attract attention from European writers. Just as important, they were garnering this attention as Americans, and as representatives of a new American Yiddish literature. In the three years since *Yugnt* No. 1, a group of young poets was beginning to come into its own—as Americans, as Yiddish writers, and, significantly, as American Yiddish writers.

⁸⁶ Ruth Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 33.

Turning Inward: The Yunge and *Shriftn*, 1910-1914

Two years would elapse between the end of *Fareyn literatur* and the publication of the Yunge's next *zamlbukh*, *Shriftn*. David Ignatoff describes the two years between *Literatur* and *Shriftn* as time spent by the Yunge in bitterness and solitude, but it is more likely he was only referring to his own experience of the time.⁸⁷ He tells of a period that was creatively fallow, where writers mulled over their defeats and their failure to win an audience for their work, but other accounts point to this period as being rather more lively. Landau and Iceland were getting published in the magazines, though perhaps not as often as they might have wished. A short-lived weekly edited by Abraham Reisen, *Dos naye land*, began publication in 1911 and it featured work from both men.⁸⁸ It was also during this time that the Yunge found a haunt for themselves separate from Sholem's Café—a dingy basement restaurant on East Broadway called Goodman and Levine's. In *Fun unzer friling*, Reuben Iceland writes an affectionate essay about Goodman and Levine's, describing the greasy spoon as being the site of some of the Yunge's most intense creative ferment:

“Do hot men gekont leyenen un hern a lid. Do hot men bikhlal gekont hern un lernen epes vegn dertseylungen, vayl shmuesn vegn literatur hobn do keynmol nit oyfgehert. [...] fun eyn teme iz men aribergeshpringen tsu a tsveyter, fun a tsveyter tsu a driter; bald iz men tsurik geven bay der ershter un men gezukht tsu bashtetikn mit tsitatn fun lider un fun dem, vos der oder yener oytoritet hot gezogt vegn dem inyn. Fun punkt azoy hot men gezukht tsu bashtetikn

⁸⁷ David Ignatoff, *Opgerisene bleter* (Buenos Aires: Farlag idbuj, 1957), 80.

⁸⁸ *Dos naye land*, Abraham Reisen, ed. (New York, 1911). I was only able to find one number of the magazine that featured the work of both Reuben Iceland and Zishe Landau in the same issue (Number 7, October 27, 1911). Landau's piece was a short poem entitled, “*Vek mikh nit!*” and Iceland's piece, *nebekh*, was a sketch called “*In langen kleyd.*”

*punkt dos farkerte un oykh fun dem hot men gefunen
shlogndike bavayzn bay andere oytoretzn.*"⁸⁹

The discussion and process of self-discovery that had begun at *Fareyn literatur* now had a chance to take off in this café environment, albeit necessarily during lunch breaks and after hours. When Iceland describes the Yunge as American Yiddish literature's first school, he uses Goodman and Levine's as illustration of how one could apply the term "school" to a group that never had a written platform and whose membership sometimes shared different artistic sensibilities. In another chapter of *Fun unzer friling*, Iceland writes that what united the Yunge as a school was their inquisitiveness and perceptivity; their continuing, probing dialogue. It was the smoke-filled setting of Goodman and Levine's that helped facilitate this dialogue:

*Teylvayz derklern ikh dos dermit, vos bay unzer gantser
farsheydnkayt hobn mir dokh gehat eyn eygnshaft a
beshutfesdike: — vakhkayt fun di khushim. ... eyne fun di
kardinale foderungen unzere iz geven nit tsufridn tsu shteln
zikh mit dem, vos men veys, vayl azoy iz ongenumen, vayl
azoy hot men gehert oder vayl azoy hot men 'geleynt in di
bikhlekh,' nor tsu yeder dershaynung tsugeyn mit ofene
oygn un an ofenen moyekh un pruvn zi oyfsney derkenen, af
an eygenem oyfn derkenen. ... Di foderung iz aleyne geven
der rezultat fun a derkentenish. A derkentenish, tsu velkher
mir zaynen gekumen behadroge nokh a langn forshn,
zukhn, leyenen un farglaykhn; nokh lange teg un nekht, vos
men hot farbrakht in fartifte shmuesn vegn an eyntsikn inyn
— di dikhtung[.]*⁹⁰

⁸⁹ "This was where you might recite a poem or hear one—where you might listen and discover something about poetry or stories, because the talk on literary topics never came to a stop. [...] From one topic we would leap into a second, from a second into a third. Soon we were back at the first, each trying to prove a point with a quotation with an essay or a poem. In the same fashion, others tried to prove the opposite and for this purpose were also able to find crushing statements from a different authority." R. Iceland, *Fun unzer friling* (New York: Farlag inzl, 1954), 187, 192; Translation by Nathan Halper, in Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg, eds., *Voices from the Yiddish* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), 300, 304.

⁹⁰ "Sometimes I believe that given our differences, we had one characteristic in common: a sensitivity of feeling. [...] One of our cardinal demands was that one should not be satisfied with what one knows, with what one assumes, with what one has heard or "read in the stories," but instead only to go around with open eyes and with an open mind and try to develop new paths of recognition and perception. [...] These demands came as the result of new realizations, which themselves came gradually after long periods of

The fact that they had their own restaurant underlined the change that had taken place within the approach of the Yunge. They were not storming into Sholem's to rabble-rouse and upset the literary status quo, but were looking inward, debating on their own terms and in their own salon. This shift in attitude might help account for David Ignatoff's gloomy description of the period between 1910 and 1912: the revolutionary-minded Ignatoff would no doubt have been depressed by what he perceived to be a surrender from a campaign to change the Yiddish literary establishment. Eventually Ignatoff came to terms with the Yunge's new organizational model, and upon awakening from his doldrums, he proposed a new *zamlbukh* based not around a large organization, but around the work of the few dedicated writers left standing after the end of *Fareyn literatur*. This collection would be called *Shriftn*.

The first issue of *Shriftn* was primarily the effort of five men: David Ignatoff, Zishe Landau, Mani Leib, Reuben Iceland and Joseph Opatoshu. In putting together the publication, David Ignatoff first sought out Mani Leib and Zishe Landau, as they were his favorite young poets, and the two that he considered the most talented. He also invited Joseph Opatoshu to submit a novella, the result being Opatoshu's "*Roman fun a ferd-ganef*." Ignatoff was interested in publishing Moyshe Leib Halpern, but he did not contact him until later issues, because, by his own admission, Ignatoff was put off by the amount of work Halpern published during the supposedly fallow period following the end of *Fareyn literatur*.⁹¹ Reuben Iceland, having gotten wind of the project, was eager to

investigation, searching, reading and comparing, after long days and nights spent in deep conversation over one topic: poetry." R. Iceland, *Fun unzer friling* (New York: Farlag inzl, 1954) p. 7.

⁹¹ David Ignatoff, *Opgerisene bleter* (Buenos Aires: Farlag idbuj, 1957), 83.

contribute, and Ignatoff gave him the task of writing the history of Yiddish literature from the perspective of the Yunge.⁹²

Wanting to avoid repeating the failures of *Literatur*, Ignatoff decided that *Shriftn* should make no claims to populism. Only a few hundred copies of the first edition were printed, and the book was priced at a dollar. This was four times the cost of *Literatur* and forty cents more than *Di tsukunft*, which was itself a “thick journal,” deliberately expensive so that it would be priced to keep.⁹³ In *A Little Love in Big Manhattan*, Ruth Wisse quotes an advertisement for *Shriftn* from the magazine *Di literarishe velt* meant to appeal to the reader’s “cultural snobbery”—a far cry from the *Fareyn*’s ‘*literarishe bavegung*.’ “An edition of this quality cannot be assembled for all the money in the world,” read the advertisement. “We know our reader—he has intelligent taste, he will appreciate every honest achievement.”⁹⁴

The first issue, according to Ignatoff, turned out to be more successful than he had anticipated. Before long, Ignatoff had a special edition of two hundred additional copies printed, due to the high demand. Future volumes of *Shriftn* would generally print in editions of between five hundred and one thousand copies. This was a small number compared to the circulations of the newspapers or monthly journals, but it represented a substantial and self-sustaining audience that could nourish the Yunge’s continued growth.

⁹² The only early issue of *Shriftn* available to me during my research has been No. 3. Iceland’s essay, which includes the first self-conscious history of the Yunge, might be very useful towards gaining an understanding of how the group viewed itself in 1912, and my paper suffers from its absence. As a result, I am forced to rely on Ruth Wisse’s descriptions of the collection in *Little Love in Big Manhattan*, pp. 40-41, 51-58, and David Ignatoff’s descriptions on pages 79-86 of *Opgerisene bleter*. Readers with access to *Shriftn 1* would be well advised to read the *zamlbukh* before taking me at my word about *Shriftn* and the evolution of the Yunge.

⁹³ Steven Cassedy, ed., *Building the Future: Jewish Immigrant Intellectuals and the Making of the Tsukunft* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1999), 11.

⁹⁴ Ruth Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 48.

Over the course of future issues, other writers such as Moyshe Leib Halpern, Isaac Raboy, Moyshe Dilon and I.J. Schwartz were invited to contribute, but the editorial duties remained with David Ignatoff, and it was the trio of Mani Leib, Zishe Landau, and Reuben Iceland that largely set the tone for the collection. Though he was instrumental in the printing of *Shriftn* 1 and published another novella in *Shriftn* 2, Joseph Opatoshu's relationship with the publication was growing increasingly strained between 1912 and 1914. By the time *Shriftn* 3 came out, Opatoshu, frustrated by the lack of engagement in political and social issues he saw demonstrated in the Yunge's work, founded a rival *zamlbukh* called *Di naye heym*, challenging *Shriftn*'s position as sole voice of the Yunge.⁹⁵ This faction of the Yunge, led by Opatoshu and I.J. Schwartz, was not the only element of the Yunge addressing the question of social relevance in their work. Though the breakaway group's response was the most visible and dramatic, during this period of introspection nearly all of the Yunge's members were asking themselves similar questions of art's relevance. Reuben Iceland and Zishe Landau, while today remembered as the Yunge's unwavering ideological stalwarts, grappled with this issue as well. Iceland's poem cycle "*Fun ale teg*" from *Shriftn* 3 and Landau's "*Epilog*" in *Shriftn* 2 each reveal complex and changing attitudes on the part of both writers regarding the artist's role in society.

"*Fun ale teg*" was the first poem of Iceland's that David Ignatoff permitted to be printed in *Shriftn*. Written in 1914, the piece was placed at the head of the collection, below a drawing by Zuni Maud, unofficial artist of the Yunge. For much of his career, Iceland's translations of the German poet Richard Dehmel, and his second-generation translations of Chinese poems by Si-Tang-Pa, Tu-Fu and Chang-Sze were considered to

⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 51.

be some of his strongest poetic work.⁹⁶ Iceland's translations were reverent and written with a light touch, benefiting from Iceland's reluctance to inject himself into his work.⁹⁷ The quality of unobtrusiveness that worked to great effect in his translations hindered his original work for many years. In 1914's "*Fun ale teg*," however, Iceland finds his voice, and the result is dramatically different from his earlier work, in both style and content. The poem is split into three parts, each describing a different portion of the narrator's day, morning, noon and night. There is no golden sun in this poem, no king or prince, and no *melitsedike* language. It is the story of a sweatshop worker, told in the first person and told simply, dwelling on the quotidian and mundane.

The poem returns to subject matter long shunned by the Yunge, the plight of the worker. However, Iceland's approach to the subject shares little in common with Rosenfeld's or Bovshover's. Absent a need to promote a larger political platform, Iceland can focus on the alienation of the individual in bleak conditions, as opposed to the alienation of an entire class. He fills his poem with observational details (the lowing of a ship's horn; the damp, gray weather; the onions and bread and hard-boiled eggs that make for the workers' lunches) that, in their understatement, are more affecting than many of the breast-beatings of the sweatshop poets. And the recurring image of the narrator (and others) staring out the window evokes longing and isolation with an acuity rarely achieved in Rosenfeld's heavy-handed lyrics ("I work, and I work, without rhyme, without reason— / produce, and produce, and produce without end. / For what? And for

⁹⁶ *Leksikon fun der nayer yidisher literatur*, s.v. "Ruvn Ayzland." (New York: Altveltlekhn yidishn kultur-kongres, 1956), 59.

⁹⁷ Zisho Landoy, *Antologye: Di yidishe dikhtung in amerike biz yor 1919* (New York: Farlag idish, 1919), 22-24

whom? I don't know, I don't wonder / —since when can a whirling machine comprehend?"⁹⁸).

The opening of Part II of "*Fun ale teg*" shows a sweatshop very different from the ones depicted in Rosenfeld's poetry. Where Rosenfeld portrays sweatshop life as a relentless grind and an atmosphere of collective dehumanization, Iceland depicts a different sort of scene, one no less authentic than Rosenfeld's portrayal, and no less tragic. In the previously cited stanza from Part II, Iceland describes lunchtime in the sweatshop. In contradistinction to the roar and clatter of Rosenfeld's sweatshop representing the communal suffering of the workers, Iceland picks out the hum of one lonely sewing machine, and focuses on lives led, as Thoreau wrote, in quiet desperation. The "*blase meydlekh*" in the stanza are pitiable, but Iceland makes no attempt to portray them as martyrs for any larger cause. The simple description is enough.

As Iceland noted in *Fun unzer friling*, he had long since abandoned the language of the sweatshop poets by the time he wrote "*Fun ale teg*."⁹⁹ Iceland and the other Yunge rejected the sweatshop poets not simply for their bombast, but also for their tendency to valorize the working class as a collective unit, neglecting the individual and individual feeling. Zishe Landau, in his 1919 anthology of Yiddish literature, expands on this point, citing a David Edelshtadt poem as illustration of the sweatshop poet's disregard for the individual: "*Hert zikh tsu, vos ikh vel zogn, / oyb ir vilt keyn keytn trogn, / kumt in unzer polk. / vos mir viln, iz nit fil brayen / un fun shlafen yokh bafrayen / dos untergedrikte*

⁹⁸ Irving Howe, with Kenneth Libo, *World of Our Fathers* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 422, quoting Morris Rosenfeld.

⁹⁹ R. Iceland, *Fun unzer friling* (New York: Farlag inzl, 1954), 9.

folk.”¹⁰⁰ The piece is meant not to illuminate the suffering of the individual, but is rather meant as a call to arms. And the poem’s artistic content is not only secondary to its message, but it mocks those who would talk rather than act (“*vos mir viln iz nit fil brayen*”¹⁰¹).

Iceland’s purge of social and political themes resulted initially in poems like “*A zumer-nakht kholem*”—work that was connected to his daily life only to the extent that it was an escapist reaction to it. Within Ignatoff’s statement that Iceland’s early work was lifeless and flat was the suggestion that very little of Iceland himself showed up in the work. It was not distinctive, it was not personal, and it revealed little about Iceland or anyone else. After *Fareyn literatur*, however, this began to change.¹⁰² Mani Leib’s influence encouraged the Yunge to take new liberties with language, and before long, poets began to take liberties with theme as well. Hashed out in Goodman and Levine’s, the Yunge’s definition of individualism was moving beyond a mimicking of European schools that wore the individualist mantle, and beyond a rejection of those movements that had no use for the individual. The Yunge’s individualism was maturing into a philosophy that responded to the uniqueness of its members’ condition and language by wholeheartedly encouraging—and placing relatively few restrictions on—introspection and personal expression.

Iceland contributed to this development through his reexamination of a theme that had once been off-limits to the Yunge. He was able to give new life to the sweatshop

¹⁰⁰ “Listen up to what I’ll say / If you do not want to be enchained / Come join our brigade. / What we want is not a bunch of talk / but to be freed from slaves’ yokes / This oppressed people.” Zisho Landoy, *Antologye: Di yidishe dikhtung in amerike biz yor 1919* (New York: Farlag idish, 1919), ii, quoting David Edelshtadt.

¹⁰¹ “What we want is not a bunch of talk” Ibid, p. ii

¹⁰² R. Iceland, *Fun unzer friling* (New York: Farlag inzl, 1954), 9.

poem by making it an outlet for individual expression. As demonstrated by the description of his miserable job at a millenary factory in *Fun unzer friling*, Iceland was intimately familiar with the life of a sweatshop worker. Zishe Landau and Mani Leib were both workingmen—Landau was employed as a house painter during this time, and Mani Leib made boots. However, of the three, only Iceland had spent years in a factory environment, and as a result, there was no mistaking the distinctive personal sentiment expressed in “*Fun ale teg*.” The poem is not straight autobiography—Iceland depicts the narrator as having physical characteristics different from his own (the narrator has a mustache, Iceland did not)—but the malaise expressed in “*Fun ale teg*” belongs to Iceland alone.

In *Opgerisene bleter*, David Ignatoff claims that “*Fun ale teg*” was a groundbreaking poem, contributing an entirely new tone and sensibility to American Yiddish poetry: “*A nayer ton vert do ongeschlogn, a ton fun zakhlekayt, a farb vos helft opshotenen, helft shtil un ruik arayngbrengen vikhtike vokhendikayt. [...] Es hot geshtelt a naye, nikhtere monung fun undz.*”¹⁰³ Ignatoff explains that Iceland helped the Yunge articulate their condition in a meaningful way (where before they had ignored it), by applying the restraint that had been so valuable in the Yunge’s initial construction of a new poetic language. In “*Fun ale teg*” Iceland describes poverty and misery simply, precisely, and without bombast or melodrama. Iceland’s major contribution to the Yunge’s philosophy, writes Ignatoff, was his recognition of the art in the everyday, in the prosaic, even in the depressing or ugly.¹⁰⁴ In this regard, he was able to subvert the

¹⁰³ “A new tone was set here, a matter-of-fact tone, a coloration that helped reveal, helped quietly and stealthily bring forward the important everyday. [...] It helped up bring forth a new, sober perspective.” David Ignatoff, *Opgerisene bleter* (Buenos Aires: Farlag idbuj, 1957), 86.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

sweatshop poets even more effectively than before: he revisited their well-worn territory and found art where they only saw craft and agitprop. It is Iceland's commitment to the "vikhtike vokhedikayt"¹⁰⁵ that would bring him and Landau together as artistic comrades-in-arms, even if each had his own reason for embracing the prosaic.

Where Opatoshu felt a need to flee *Shriftn* because of its commitment to *reyn kinstlerishe* aestheticism, Iceland saw in aestheticism a very real opportunity to reengage with social and political issues, but on terms that he himself could dictate, rather than within the authoritarian dictates of ideology. "*Fun ale teg*" is his first demonstration of this belief, and it makes a persuasive case indeed. Iceland would go on to develop this philosophy further, to the point that in later years, his defense of aestheticism would be based in a conviction that only when art was its own justification could it play a positive role in society. From 1925 to 1926, Reuben Iceland and Zishe Landau edited *Der inzl*, the last publication of the Yunge. In the inaugural issue, from March 1925, Iceland printed an essay entitled "*Kunst un profanatsie*." In the essay, Iceland distinguishes the role of the artist from the role of the prophet. "*Der kinstler iz keynmol nisht keyn novi*," explains Iceland.¹⁰⁶ The prophet is a monotheist, the artist a polytheist. The prophet offers a single way; his work is functional, he deals in allegory. The artist, for whom art is its own justification, offers up descriptions, potentials, possibilities.¹⁰⁷ The prophet, therefore, is authoritarian, and the only antidote to the prophet is found in the artist. More than a decade later, with a world hanging in the balance of totalitarianism, Iceland's theory was imbued with a new urgency. Bemoaning the new reality, in 1938 Iceland reiterates, "*Di dikhtung darf nit lebn in zkhush fun velkher es iz idea, vayl zi lebt in ir*

¹⁰⁵ "Important everyday." Ibid, p. 86.

¹⁰⁶ "The artist can never be a prophet." R. Ayzland, "Kunst un profanatsie," *Der inzl* 1 (March 1925), 13.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, pp. 13-15.

eygenem zkhush. [...] In unzer literatur hot dos geklungen fremd demolt un klingt nokh fremder haynt, ven parteyen un bavegunen bahershyn vider dos lebn, un dos vi keynmol nit frier, un ven zey leygn aroyf zeyere diktatorishe lapes af alts, un alts muz zey dinen."¹⁰⁸

Iceland's staunchest ally, not just with regard to simplicity in art, but also on the subject of art as its own justification, was Zishe Landau. Landau came to similar artistic conclusions as Iceland, but his beliefs were rooted in an irreverence that Iceland, ever the idealist, did not share. And though Mani Leib was part of the aestheticist core that helped define *Shriftn*, he parted ways with Landau and Iceland over the place of the quotidian in poetry. Mani Leib, who regarded himself as something of a modern-day folk balladeer, still fell into the camp of those Yunge that believed in the redemptive power of poetry. "[Mani Leib] was not prepared to admit drabness into art," writes Wisse, "except as the raw material that the poem would elevate."¹⁰⁹ In his work, Mani Leib was fascinated by the sublime, the transcendent, and he rejected the idea that, as Iceland put it, "*Men darf ingantsn farvarfn ale 'poetishe' motivn, un anshtot dem zukhn tsu fardikhtn dos eygene, vokhedike, alteglikhe lebn.*"¹¹⁰ Despite these artistic differences, however, Iceland and Mani Leib were still quite close. After all, Reuben Iceland's commitment to the poetry of the everyday was based in an idealism that was itself reflected in Mani Leib's commitment to the transcendent. Both men believed that the poet had a role to play in society, though they might disagree on certain procedural details. Zishe Landau and

¹⁰⁸ "Poetry must not find its justification in an idea, because poetry is its own justification. [...] In our literature that sounded strange then, and sounds even stranger today, when parties and movements rule every aspect of life as they never have before, and when they lay their dictatorial paws on everything and everything must serve them." R. Iceland, *Fun unzer friling* (New York: Farlag inzl, 1954), 7-8.

¹⁰⁹ Ruth Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 49.

¹¹⁰ "One must totally abandon all 'poetic' themes, and instead find the poetry in the personal, the quotidian, the every-day." R. Iceland, *Fun unzer friling* (New York: Farlag inzl, 1954), 9.

Mani Leib, however, would be at odds with each other for years. Landau's brusque skepticism and Mani Leib's earnest "zingevdikayt" as Iceland put it were simply incompatible.¹¹¹

In the years since his arrival in the United States, Zishe Landau had changed a great deal. No longer the thin young man with the *skotsishe* good looks, as Melekh Ravitch once described him, Landau had put on a few pounds, was married, and had two young daughters.¹¹² He now worked as a house painter (a profession that makes few allowances for vanity), and in a few short years he would have to give up all manual labor due to a heart condition. Landau's friendship with Kolye Teper over the years had further developed the poet's irreverent sensibility. And while this sensibility was one of the contributing factors that helped him find his way into the Yunge, Landau's irreverence cut both ways. Even as he heaped scorn upon the Yiddish literary establishment, Landau was just as skeptical of the soteriological role many among the Yunge believed poetry could play. In *A Little Love in Big Manhattan*, Ruth Wisse, referring again to Kolye Teper's influence, writes that "Landau showed some of Teper's self-consciousness about art, an awareness that poetry was 'unnatural' in its very essence. He held his own faith in beauty no less suspect than any other belief in the possibility of perfection."¹¹³ Indeed, Landau took great pleasure in cutting down the self-important poet, relishing the opportunity to take shots at both pretension and misguided idealism (attributes which would have characterized Landau just a few years earlier). In *Fun unzer friling*, Reuben Iceland recalls that if Landau happened to notice another literary-

¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 10.

¹¹² Melekh Ravitch, *Plotsk Yizkor Book* (Tel-Aviv: HaMenorah, 1967), 275.

¹¹³ Ruth Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 48.

type on the street, without fail, he would call him out with his trademark taunt: "*Makht a vare, a shrayber geyt!*"¹¹⁴

Landau's contribution to *Shriftn 2*, "*Epilog*," is a poem that wittily lays out Landau's cynical attitudes on the artist's place in society. Throughout "*Epilog*" runs a preoccupation with the material world that means to deny the poet any lofty spirit and to minimize the significance of his efforts. This is a long way from the idealism demonstrated in Mani Leib and Reuben Iceland's work, as well as from the "earnest efforts" to which Ignatoff committed the Yunge in 1908's *Yugnt* No. 2. However, beneath the poem's skepticism is an element of authentic longing and ambivalence that deserves a closer look.

Epilog

*Vayl s'hot azoy gemeyn farshvign mikh di prese
Un vos ikh es af mitog shraybt zi keyn mol nit —
Derfar ken ikh biz itst nit krign keyn metrese
Un nideriker faln alts mayn kredit.*

*Un vos a tog nem ikh in khoves tifer zinken,
Umzist nokh metsenatn shpreyt ikh oys di hent; —
A glik, vos kh'ken "Martel's" derloybn zikh tsu trinken,
Un shvartse kave kost in gants finef sent.*

*Volt kave tayer zayn — volt ikh zikh oyfgehangen,
Un dikhter glaykh tsu mir iz gor nishto keyn sakh!
Dokh vi der prayz shteyt itst — mit herlekhe gezangen
Ken ikh mir gliklekh makhn unzer folk un shprakh.*¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ "Make way! Writer coming through!" R. Iceland, *Fun unzer friling* (New York: Farlag inzl, 1954), 13.

¹¹⁵ "*Epilogue* / Because the papers meanly ignore me— / they think my luncheon menus not fit to print— / small wonder girls don't give me a tumble / and day by day my stock goes down. / And everyday my debts get higher. / Vainly my ten fingers stretch out for patrons. / It's lucky Martel's isn't beyond my reach / and coffee—black—is still a nickel. / If coffee goes up, I'll go and hang myself, / and how many poets are as classy as me? / But while the coffee's cheap, my marvelous songs / will bring happiness to our people and our tongue." *Epilog*, by Zisho Landoy, *Shriftn 2* (1913); translation by Irving Feldman, in Irving Howe, Ruth R. Wisse and Khone Shmeruk, eds., *The Penguin Book of Modern Yiddish Verse*, (New York: Viking, 1987), 275.

This poem, with its references to sex, nickel-and-dime finance, and cheap cafés, means to take poetry out of the realm of the fantastic. There is no horse and rider to be found in the grimy caffeine economy of the Lower East Side depicted by Landau. “*Epilog*” is almost obsessed with the ordinary and profane—not because it aspires to accuracy and emotional specificity, as with Iceland’s “*Fun ale teg*,” but because it uses the prosaic as a way to make a statement, to knock the poet down a notch or two. In the first two stanzas of “*Epilog*,” Landau rebuts writers like Iceland and Mani Leib, who held that the poet’s observations could be in-and-of-themselves valuable to society. Rather than acknowledging poetry’s potential for uplift, Landau reduces the art of navel-gazing to a coarse material inventory: “*ken ikh biz itst nit krign keyn metrese / un nideriker faln nemt alts mayn kredit.*”¹¹⁶

In *Epilog*’s last lines, Landau parodies those writers that saw themselves as inheritors of some greater spiritual or nationalist mission; poets like Mani Leib who saw themselves as troubadours for the *yidische folk*, and writers like Ignatoff who charged themselves with the messianic task of redeeming the Yiddish language in America. After writing a poem that revels in its uselessness, Landau finishes with a hilariously grand statement of his poem’s worth and impact: “*mit herlekhe gezangen / ken ikh mir gliklekh makhn unzer folk un shprakh.*”¹¹⁷ One might expect to hear terms like “*unzer folk*,” “*herlekhe gezangen*,” and “[*unzer*] *shprakh*” from someone like Dr. Chaim Zhitlowsky, the socialist territorialist who took the concept of crafting a national Yiddish-speaking identity very seriously, but coming from Zishe Landau’s narrator, who earlier implied

¹¹⁶ “*Epilog*,” by Zishe Landau, *Shrifn 2* (1913).

¹¹⁷ “With glorious song / can I being happiness to our people and our language.” *Ibid.*

that he used his poetry as a way to pick up girls, these last two lines act as an ironic sendoff.¹¹⁸

At his most defiant, Landau believed that it was not the poet's role to speak for his people or his language; the poet speaks only for himself. The poet did not have the power to rescue his people; his power was limited to rescuing art from itself (which is one reason Landau placed such a premium on knowledge of literature, even when he minimized art's importance—one had to be well-versed in a subject before he attempted to add, fix, or tamper with it.). Just as he had come to recoil at the implications of his rabbinic *yikhes*, with its presumption of continuity and communal responsibility, Landau bristled at the notion that the poet might have any greater responsibility to his community or society.

Though "*Epilog*" can be read as an attack on Landau's colleagues, it can also be understood as a self-indictment. Just as with his sidewalk razzes of Yiddish literary figures, Landau's criticisms were harshest when he observed the same traits in himself. Even during the period that he wrote "*Epilog*," Landau was still publishing lofty-sounding poetry. According to Ruth Wisse, in 1914, Moyshe Leib Halpern published a satirical piece in *Der groyser kibitser* (the satirical magazine that was the result of the merger of *Der kibitser* and *Der groyser kundes*) attacking Landau for his poems' unreality and for the poet's vanity. In the piece, a thinly veiled parody of Landau reads a thinly veiled parody of his poem "Scales," ("I would buy a horse if I could ride / and

¹¹⁸ Landau, unsurprisingly, had nothing but scorn for Chaim Zhitlowsky. On page 11 of *Fun unzer friling*, Reuben Iceland recalls Landau's response upon hearing that the respected Dr. Zhitlowsky wanted to submit something to the next collection of *Shriftn*: "'Azoy! A glik hot aykh getrofn! [...] Vet ir bay zayne poles zikh gikher konen araynsharn in der eybikayt.' Un keynmol hob ikh af landoy's ponem nit gezen aza oysdruk fun ekl vi demolt tsu yenem khaver." ('So! What a stroke of luck for you all! You'll all be able to scramble into history a little faster by latching on to his skirt!' And I had never before seen such an expression of disgust on Landau's face as when he was referring to that particular colleague.") R. Iceland, *Fun unzer friling* (New York: Farlag inzl, 1954), 11.

quickly set off on my way”) and basks in the praise of his colleagues.¹¹⁹ It is possible that Landau, in designing *Epilog*’s narrator, meant to purge himself of this vanity. By creating an autobiographical character more nonchalant about poetry than he, Landau was engaging in an exorcism of any residual feelings of self-importance.

But if Landau is trying to create an idealized version of himself, why is the narrator of “*Epilog*” such an unattractive character? The narrator’s almost sensual wallowing in his own failure does not make for a particularly flattering self-portrait. This unflattering depiction is partially a function of Landau trying to purge himself of his vanity, but it also has the effect of satirizing the poet that fetishizes his own obscurity. It is unclear whether or not Landau’s satire of the aestheticist *enfant terrible* is intentional, but whether conscious or unconscious, the ugly portrait suggests that Landau may be ambivalent about the change he has undertaken, from Dandy to Debunker. The poem reveals both types’ excesses and deficiencies. While Landau appears comfortable with his decision to shed himself of his earlier pretense, “*Epilog*” demonstrates that the life of a cynic offers few affirmative values and carries pretensions of its own. Over the course of his life, Landau has separated himself from dominant cultures, both religious and secular, and though he takes pride in his iconoclasm and skepticism, it may have had the effect of leaving him unfulfilled.

Taken the context of other developments in Landau’s life, the poem’s first two verses offer further insight into his dilemma of values. In the opening lines, Landau advertises his incompatibility with the press, calling attention to his role as outsider: “*Vayl s’hot azoy gemeyn farshvign mikh di prese / Un vos ikh es af mitog shraybt zi keyn mol nit.*” Given the poem’s occasionally ironic tone, it would seem reasonable to assume

¹¹⁹ Ruth Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 93.

that Landau was not bemoaning his outsider status, but relishing it: the poet, who makes a virtue of his uselessness, feigns indignation at not getting published in the newspapers. In reality, however, Zishe Landau had a closeted affection for the *Forverts* that suggests that his opening passage was more sincere than the rest of the poem might indicate.

In 1967, a memorial book for the Zishe Landau's hometown of Plotsk was published out of Tel-Aviv. Included within the *yizkor bukh* was an appreciation of Landau, written by the poet Melekh Ravitch. It is a warm and revealing piece, filled with anecdotes about Landau's work and relationships. Ravitch credits Zishe Landau with giving I.J. Singer his break at the *Forverts*, by bringing Singer's story "*Perl*" to Abraham Cahan's attention in 1922, and implies that, however unlikely it may seem, Cahan and Landau did have some sort of longstanding relationship.¹²⁰ "*Landoy—der 'dekadent,'*" writes Ravitch, "*flegt ale mol zogn, az er hot a shvakhkayt tsu kahanen.*"¹²¹ Landau's "weakness for Cahan" can be attributed to the lack of pretension he saw reflected in the *Forverts*, especially attractive in light of Cahan's intellect and extensive knowledge of literature. The individuals for whom Landau had the greatest weakness were men like Teper and Cahan, who could be erudite without putting on airs. Despite its hegemonic relationship to American Yiddish literature (itself an issue over which Landau did not demonstrate excessive concern), the *Forverts* held a certain appeal to Landau for the way it—sometimes—combined artlessness with intelligence.

Landau's weakness for Cahan and his *Forverts* foreshadows a new stage in his development. Rather than simply mocking both vanity and aestheticist excess, he would soon set out to find some way to reconcile, as Cahan had, erudition with a lack of

¹²⁰ Melekh Ravitch, *Plotsk Yizkor Book* (Tel-Aviv: HaMenorah, 1967), 275.

¹²¹ "Landau, the 'decadent,' used to always say that he had a weakness for Cahan." Ibid, p. 275.

pretension. Landau was beginning to seek out positive values: strict rejectionism was leaving him cold. As demonstrated by his interest in the *Forverts*, that pillar of secular Jewish society, Landau was beginning to consider the possibility of including himself within the larger Jewish community, as opposed to impulsively pushing it away. However, this would be easier said than done. Ab. Cahan's literary tastes ranged towards social realism and Russian literature.¹²² He disdained the self-indulgent aestheticism of the Yunge for which he took Zishe Landau to be the poster child. Though I was unable to find sources on whether or not Landau was submitting to the *Forverts* during this time (despite the first line of "*Epilog*," it seems quite unlikely, in light of the other activities of the Yunge), Landau would not have had to face Cahan's rejection directly to feel rejected by him. As Melekh Ravitch put it, "[Landoys] eygene lider hot [kahanen] nisht aribergelozt iber der papirener shvel fun zayn tsaytung."¹²³ Even in the improbable case that he lacked any reservations about working at the *Forverts*, Landau knew that his poetry—over which he was never willing to compromise—would not have been welcome there. Although his work from the period projects the image of a cynical writer committed to poetry's irrelevance, beneath the surface there are hints of a figure caught between his iconoclasm and his first stirrings of a desire for community and, indeed, relevance.

¹²² Of the four writers that made up *Shriftn*'s inner circle [David Ignatoff, Zishe Landau, Reuben Iceland and Mani Leib], Mani Leib was the only one that would end up working for the *Forverts*. In *Little Love in Big Manhattan*, Ruth Wisse explains Mani Leib's hire as being related to the fact that he was "the most Russian of the Yiddish poets[.]" Ruth Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 65.

¹²³ "Cahan never let Landau's own poems to cross the paper threshold of his newspaper." Melekh Ravitch, *Plotsk Yizkor Book* (Tel-Aviv: HaMenorah, 1967), 275.

World War I and the Mainstreaming of the Yunge: 1914-1919

During *Shriftn*'s first few years, the Yunge continued to have little to do with the daily press. The group's antagonism toward the newspapers had diminished somewhat as a consequence of their turn inward, but the Yunge still identified themselves as mavericks in the American Yiddish literary world, proudly separate from the *Forverts* establishment-types. Over the next few years, however, this would all change. By 1918, almost all of the writers most closely associated with the Yunge—Mani Leib, Reuben Iceland, Joseph Opatoshu, even Kolye “*Kretinen-gezint!*” Teper—would be working for a newspaper.¹²⁴ In part, the decision to work for the press came down to financial considerations. By the late teens, all of the Yunge were married, and many had children. The writers were entering their thirties, and for some, like Zishe Landau, strenuous manual labor was becoming problematic—or at the very least, undesirable. The newspapers could provide an escape from shop work or a steady paycheck to supplement an existing income.

Financial stability was not the Yunge's only incentive for a reconciliation with the press. During a tumultuous period, the Yunge found themselves seeking other forms of stability as well. From 1914 to 1918, World War I was being fought in Europe, and the war's effect on the world Jewish community cannot be overstated. Literally caught between the Russians and the Germans, Eastern European Jewish communities experienced displacement and destruction on an unprecedented scale. The war shook the

¹²⁴ A. Glants-Leyeles, “Di yidishe literatur un di yidishe prese,” in *75 yor yidishe prese in amerike*, Yankev Glatstein et al., eds. (New York: Y.L. perets shrayber fareyn, 1945), 88-90

Yunge deeply, and, for a number of different reasons, it had the effect of bringing the Yunge and the daily press closer over its four years.

One of World War I's more unlikely effects was the role it played in popularizing the Yunge's artistic sensibility. As this paper has already noted, by 1914 the Yunge were starting to make important artistic contributions to the larger Yiddish literary culture. However, it was only after the start of the war that they began to enjoy large-scale recognition for their work, from American and European critics and audiences alike. Describing the period from 1916 to 1919, Ruth Wisse writes of the Yunge, "Their collective publications ... were noted and reviewed, sometimes even in the daily press. As the war drew to an end, the Americans discovered how well known they were overseas to young Yiddish writers, who wrote to invite the Americans' participation in new magazines and strike up collegial contacts."¹²⁵ The Yunge's sudden prominence stemmed largely from the fact that Eastern Europe, the region to which "the eyes of serious Yiddish readers [had been] turned"¹²⁶ during the first years of the Twentieth Century, had descended into chaos. The European literary community, based largely out of Warsaw, had been brought to a standstill by the war. The attention of the world Yiddish literary community, therefore, turned to New York. And the Yunge, based on the strength of the work they had been producing, and based on some very lucky professional contacts they had made, were poised to take center stage in the new capital of Yiddish literature.

In 1913, *Literatur un lebn*, an impressive monthly based jointly out of New York and Warsaw, began publication in both cities. The journal was divided into two parts:

¹²⁵ Ruth Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 65.

¹²⁶ David Schlitt, *Press and Pull* (New York: Self-Referential Press, 2004), 22.

One half dealt with politics and was edited in the U.S.; the other consisted of literature, and, accordingly, was edited out of Warsaw. After the start of the war in October 1914, the European half of the magazine became cut off from its American counterparts.¹²⁷ One of the financial backers of the magazine, close to several members of the Yunge, offered the vacant literary editorships to his friends Mani Leib and Reuben Iceland.¹²⁸ As a result of the war and this fortuitous coup, therefore, the Yunge were able to set the literary agenda for one of the most distinguished journals in the Jewish world. In its first eight issues, *Literatur un lebn's* literary section was anchored by I.L. Peretz and Sholem Asch. After Reuben Iceland and Mani Leib took charge, *Literatur un lebn* began to feature the work of Moyshe Leib Halpern, Joseph Rolnik, H. Leivick, Joseph Opatoshu and Iceland and Mani Leib.¹²⁹

Following the publication and warm reception of two volumes of *Literatur un lebn* under Iceland and Mani Leib, the daily newspapers could no longer ignore the contributions—and the relevance—of the Yunge to the downtown cultural scene. The Yunge and the mainstream were beginning to merge, and both sides were beginning to recognize it. After the end of World War I, Zishe Landau, who had once reveled in his obscurity, now took up the mantle of spokesman for the new artistic mainstream. In 1919, Landau published an anthology of American Yiddish, remarkable for its audacious

¹²⁷ Dr. K. Fornberg, "Tsu undzere lezer," *Literatur un lebn* No. 9 (October 1914) In a letter to the reader, the American editor, Carl Fornberg, wrote: "*Di shoyderlikhe velt-milkhome hot oykh af unzer zhurnal gehat a krizis. Dem gresten teyl material flegen mir fun rusland bakumen. Un mit amol iz rusland ongeshnitn gevorn.*" (The terrible world war has also inspired a crisis at our journal. The greatest portion of our material used to come from Russia. And lately Russian has become cut off from us.), 3

¹²⁸ Ruth Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 57.

¹²⁹ *Literatur un lebn*, Issues 1, Volume I, through Issue 5, Volume II (1913-1915). Interestingly, Zishe Landau does not appear in any of these issues. It is possible that Mani Leib did not allow Landau's work in; as I have suggested, the two writers had been feuding. However, given Iceland's presence on the board it seems unlikely that Mani Leib would have been able to get away with this. A more probable explanation is that Landau would not have submitted his work to a magazine he would have likely characterized as pretentious.

revisionist reading of the story of American Yiddish literature. Unlike much of the Yunge's earlier work, Landau's *Antologye* was clearly meant for a wide and diverse audience, with its introduction written in the style of a general primer on the history of American Yiddish literature. What is striking is that both the anthology's introduction and its contents reduce nearly all earlier poetic developments in America to a prologue to the Yunge's arrival.¹³⁰ All but four of the twenty-eight poets featured in the collection were born after 1880, and Morris Rosenfeld was allowed a paltry three pages for his work.¹³¹ *Literatur un lebn* was not the only force helping to redefine the mainstream—the Yunge were beginning to seize the opportunity themselves.

Another of World War I's consequences was that it weakened the Yunge's opposition to traditional forms of Jewish community and institutions. This development, along with the Yunge's growing prominence within the world of Yiddish literature, was essential in helping facilitate a reconciliation with the press. Like most American Jews during this period, the Yunge anxiously followed the war's events, awaiting updates on family members and hometowns.¹³² In "*Mayn liber r. ayzland*," a piece written during wartime, Zishe Landau describes the war-obsessed conversations in which he and Iceland invariably engaged when they got together: "*Un [...] volt mir vider hern, / vos kh'ob*

¹³⁰ Ibid, pp. i-viii. The *Antologye* introduction is the source of the famous quote disparaging earlier poetry as the 'rhyme departments' of the Jewish labor and nationalist movements: "*Di natsionale un sotsiale bavegunen hobn bay zey gehat gramen departementen.*" (iv.) This is a very significant quote, not just for its wit in its dismissal of earlier poets, but also as an attack on the incestuousness of the downtown cultural scene.

¹³¹ Zishe Landau, *Antologye: Di yidishe dikhtung in amerike biz yor 1919*. (New York: Farlag idish, 1919), *inhalt*

¹³² Mordecai Soltes, *The Yiddish Press: An Americanizing Agency* (New York: Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1924), 28.

*gehert shoyrn toyznt mol dertseyln: / fun kantonistn, krimer krig un vos s'hot zikh farlozn / in zekhtsik dritn yor in poyln[.]*¹³³

During the period of 1914 through 1918, Zishe Landau became consumed with the war. After the U.S. entered World War I, he left his job as a housepainter and went to work in a munitions factory.¹³⁴ The tone and content of Landau's poetry changed dramatically during this time, reflecting new concerns. Where only a few years earlier Landau was writing pieces celebrating art's right and obligation to irrelevancy, now he was writing patriotic hymns and poems celebrating Neil Primrose, the Jewish Briton who fell in the Battle of the Dardanelles.¹³⁵ And where in 1913's "*Epilog*," Landau gleefully cut himself off from any obligation to the Jewish people, in 1916, when it faced a terrifying existential threat, Landau was actively including himself in the larger Jewish community. In "*Far unzer khorev yidish lebn*," Landau nostalgically eulogizes ravaged Jewish cities, and, as the title indicates, claims them as his own: "*Ikh veyn af undzer mame—vilne, / af kolomea un af brod*."¹³⁶

Reuben Iceland's reaction to the war was similar to Landau's. His wartime writings culminated in an epic elegy to his Galician hometown of Tarnov, which employed an uncharacteristically impassioned refrain signaling Iceland's commitment to his city and people: "*Undzer tarnov!*"¹³⁷ As the war wore on, both men came to include

¹³³ "And would I again hear, / what I have heard described a thousand times already: / of young Jewish draftees, Crimean battle and what's been lost / in three and sixty years in Poland" Zishe Landau, "Mayn liber r. ayzland." *Yiddish Literature in America 1870-2000, Volume One*, Emanuel S. Goldsmith, ed. (New York: CYCO, 1999), 390.

¹³⁴ Ruth Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 59.

¹³⁵ *Leksikon fun der nayer yidisher literatur*, s.v. "Zisho Landoy." (New York: Altveltlekhn yidishn kultur-kongres, 1956), 432

¹³⁶ "I weep over our mother—Vilne, / Over Kolomei and Brod." Zisho Landoy, "Far unzer khorev yidish lebn," *Velt eyn, velt oys* (1916), 54

¹³⁷ "Our Tarnov!" Reuben Iceland, "Tarnov," *Yiddish Literature in America 1870-2000, Volume One*, Emanuel S. Goldsmith, ed. (New York: CYCO, 1999), 348-350.

themselves in the greater Jewish community not just in their work, but in their lives as well. And for secular downtown Jews, the idea of Jewish community was still bound up with the institution that had helped define and build New York's dominant secular Jewish community: the Yiddish press. However, working for the *Forverts* posed problems for both men. Landau, though he maintained his affection for the paper, knew that he would not be able to find a home there. And Iceland, along with many of the other Yunge, still despised the *Forverts*, both for what it printed and for what it represented. They would have to find community elsewhere.

Other options were available to writers interested in joining a daily paper but uneasy about working for the *Forverts*. In the first years of the twentieth century, the *Forverts* had three major competitors: the *Varheit*, the *Morgn-zhurnal*, and the *Yidishes tageblat*. To some of the Yunge, the most palatable alternative to the *Forverts* was its breakaway cousin, the *Varheit*, founded in 1905. The *Varheit* claimed to adhere to a higher artistic standard than the *Forverts*,¹³⁸ and the loyalty of its writers suggests that they were better treated than those toiling in the famously difficult working environment of the *Forverts*.¹³⁹ A number of Yunge-affiliated artists, like Joseph Opatoshu, Joel Slonim and Moyshe Nadir, spent years at the *Varheit* when they would not have worked for the *Forverts*. To writers like David Ignatoff and Reuben Iceland, however, the *Varheit* was only a small step up from the *Forverts*. Almost as much as Cahan, Louis Miller, the *Varheit's* editor, was integral to the clique of Russian intellectuals that continued to

¹³⁸ D. Kaplan, "Di 'Varheit'" in *75 yor yidische prese in amerike*, Yankev Glatstein et al., eds. (New York: Y.L. perets shrayber fareyn, 1945), 83-84.

¹³⁹ Irving Howe, with Kenneth Libo, *World of Our Fathers* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 529, 533.

dominate the downtown cultural scene.¹⁴⁰ For the Yunge's most dedicated ideologues, this disqualified the *Varheit* straight-out, regardless of any claims to literary superiority. Until late 1914, the only daily newspapers that could reasonably be characterized as standing outside the downtown culture cartel's sphere of influence were the *Morgn-zhurnal* and the *Yidishes tageblatt*. However, their lack of affiliation with Cahan's clique stemmed from the fact they were politically conservative and religiously orthodox publications. That *Tageblatt* and *Morgn-Zhurnal* fought with the *Forverts* and *Varheit* like "two cats in a sack" might have held some appeal to the Yunge, but the idea working for these retrograde publications was anathema to these thoroughly secular socialist writers.¹⁴¹

On November 5, 1914, a new Yiddish newspaper called *Der Tog* debuted in New York. Like *Varheit*, *Tog* claimed to have higher literary standards than *Forverts* ("*Der 'tog' vet drukn di beste literatur ... fun di beste un barimste shrifsthteler in der velt,*" read a proposal for the newspaper written the previous April¹⁴²), and its commitment to "*reynkayt fun shprakh,*" echoed that of the Yunge.¹⁴³ Unlike the *Varheit*, however, *Der Tog* took pains to separate itself from the factions that defined and divided the New York Jewish community. The first issue ran an editorial outlining some of the newspaper's

¹⁴⁰ Steven Cassedy, ed., *To the Other Shore* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 66.

¹⁴¹ "Purity of language" William Edlin, "Der 'tog'—di tsaytung, vos hot arayngebrakht a nayem ton in der yidisher prese" in *75 yor yidische prese in amerike*, Yankev Glatstein et al., eds. (New York: Y.L. perets shrayber fareyn, 1945), 71

While the *Yidishes tageblatt* would remain a fairly shameless religious tabloid, the *Morgn-zhurnal* would undergo significant changes over the next decade. Its religious content would become less prominent, and its editorial board would switch from Anti-Zionist to Pro-Zionist. Writers that might not have considered writing for the paper at an earlier stage, like the Introspectivist Jacob Glatstein, eventually found a comfortable home there. Y. Fishman, "44 yor 'morgn-zhurnal,'" in *75 yor yidische prese in amerike*, Yankev Glatstein et al., eds. (New York: Y.L. perets shrayber fareyn, 1945), 62-64

¹⁴² "The 'Tog' will print the best literature from the best authors in the world." Herman Bernstein, "*Der Tog*," *Der Tog*, p. 6, November 5, 1914

¹⁴³ William Edlin, "Der 'tog'—di tsaytung, vos hot arayngebrakht a nayem ton in der yidisher prese" in *75 yor yidische prese in amerike*, Yankev Glatstein et al., eds. (New York: Y.L. perets shrayber fareyn, 1945), 71

goals: “*Es iz undzer hofenung un ambitsie tsu makhen dem ‘tog’ far a tsaytung vos zol in fulen zinen fun vort fardinen diezen nomen—reyn, umparteyish, umophengik un ehrlikh.*”¹⁴⁴ *Der Tog’s* backers helped lend credibility to this high-minded agenda. Among the paper’s founders was Judah Magnes, the rabbi at Fifth Avenue’s Temple Emanu-El, and a man deeply committed to the unity of the New York Jewish community. Magnes was one of those rare figures during the first decades of the twentieth century that commanded the respect of both the uptown Jewish elite and the Yiddish-speaking downtown populace.¹⁴⁵ Born in California to an Eastern European father and *yeke* mother, Magnes had an ability to rise above the fray in the fractured community.¹⁴⁶ And no one could accuse the Oakland native of being entrenched in the downtown intellectual old guard.

Der Tog’s nonpartisanship meant not only independence from the downtown culture cabal, but also contained suggestions of an anti-dogmatic, aestheticist sensibility. William Edlin, the paper’s editor from 1916 through 1925, specifically referred to the paper’s strength in appealing to the “*estetishen geshmak fun dem durkhshnitlikn intelligenten folks-mentsh.*”¹⁴⁷ More than any other paper, therefore, *Der Tog* was compatible with the Yunge’s ideals, and many of the Yunge eventually became quite attached to it.¹⁴⁸ By the time World War I was over, Iceland had become part of *Der*

¹⁴⁴ “It is our hope and ambition to make the ‘Tog’ a newspaper that, in every sense of the word, earns these titles—pure, nonpartisan, independent and honest.” Herman Bernstein, “*Der Tog*,” *Der Tog*, p. 6, November 5, 1914

¹⁴⁵ Arthur Goren, *Dissenter in Zion*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 16.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 7

¹⁴⁷ “aesthetic sense of a cross-section of intelligent people.” William Edlin, “*Der ‘tog’—di tsaytung, vos hot arayngebrakht a nayem ton in der yidisher prese*” in *75 yor yidishe prese in amerike*, Yankev Glatstein et al., eds. (New York: Y.L. perets shrayber fareyn, 1945), 72.

¹⁴⁸ In an essay from *Fun unzer friling* about Anna Margolin, Reuben Iceland’s praise of the newspaper is effusive. He goes as far as to credit *Der Tog* with revolutionizing the Yiddish press. (“*Der ‘tog’ hot [...] revolutsionizirt di yidishe tog-prese.*”) R. Iceland, *Fun unzer friling*. (New York: Farlag inzl, 1954), 158.

Tog's staff, and he was among friends. In its first years of publication, *Der Tog* was staffed by such writers as Chaim Zhitlowsky, Anna Margolin, and Kolye Teper¹⁴⁹ (Although by 1918, Teper had left the United States for the new socialist state in Russia¹⁵⁰). When the *Tog* absorbed the *Varheit* in 1918, the newspaper inherited the talents of Joel Entin, Joel Slonim, Opatoshu, and Moyshe Nadir, all writers with some connection to the Yunge.¹⁵¹ And coincidentally or not, the offices of *Der Tog* were located in the building that until recently had been home to Goodman and Levine's.¹⁵² Iceland would remain an important part of *Der Tog* until his death in 1955. As he grew older, The *Tog* community became a central part of Iceland's existence, with the newspaper supporting him through his last days in Miami Beach.¹⁵³

Zishe Landau, however, had no such relationship with *Der Tog*, or with any other newspaper. Working for the *Forverts* was not an option for Landau, and he could never have joined a newspaper that bore the masthead, "*Der Tog* is the newspaper for the Jewish Intelligensia," and claimed Chaim Zhitlowsky as one of its original members.¹⁵⁴ As such, Landau's search for community took him elsewhere than the Yiddish daily press. By the start of the 1920s, Zishe Landau had found a home working for the Federation for the Support of Jewish Philanthropic Societies, an organization staffed both by uptown and downtown Jews.¹⁵⁵ Landau eventually became the organization's director

¹⁴⁹ R. Iceland, *Fun unzer friling* (New York: Farlag inzl, 1954), 158

¹⁵⁰ Ruth Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 47.

¹⁵¹ William Edlin, "Der 'tog'—di tsaytung, vos hot arayngebrakht a nayem ton in der yidisher prese" in *75 yor yidische prese in amerike*, Yankev Glatstein et al., eds. (New York: Y.L. perets shrayber fareyn, 1945), 72

¹⁵² R. Iceland, *Fun unzer friling* (New York: Farlag inzl, 1954), 187.

¹⁵³ *Leksikon fun der nayer yidisher literatur*, s.v. "Ruvn Ayzland." (New York: Altveltlekhn yidishn kultur-kongres, 1956), 60

¹⁵⁴ David Passow, *The Prime of Yiddish* (Jerusalem: Gefen Publishing House, 1996), 26

¹⁵⁵ Daniel Soyer, *Jewish Immigrant Associations and American Identity in New York, 1880-1939* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 200.

of publicity, where he was responsible for the Federation's press releases and copy, in both Yiddish and English.¹⁵⁶

By the beginning of the 1920s, both Reuben Iceland and Zishe Landau were fully engaged in the larger Jewish communities of their choosing, as both artists and workers. By 1925, Landau had even begun to promote poetry's relevance to society, the very notion for which he mocked Iceland in 1913's "*Epilog*." In the first issue of Iceland and Landau's jointly edited magazine, *Der Inzl*, Landau opens the issue with an essay called "*Far'n koved fun vort*." The piece, a careful defense of aestheticism, echoes Iceland's message that it is the artist's job to observe, and the artist's observations help sustain society.¹⁵⁷ As one point in the article Landau quotes the expression, "*Di shtime fun folk iz di shtime fun got*."¹⁵⁸ The poet, he implies, in his role as voice of the people, is doing God's work. With this assertion, Zishe Landau not only agrees with Iceland, but he is also accepting Mani Leib's stance that poetry can indeed be the voice of the *folk*, and that it has the power to uplift.

As they entered middle age, the Yunge had succeeded in welcoming social relevance into their work, welcoming their own relevance, and embracing community, all on their own aestheticist terms. The greatest sign of this success was their changed relationship to the press. As evidenced by *Der Tog*, the Yunge managed to ally themselves with, and partially co-opt, the institution that had once been the symbol of all that was wrong with Yiddish literature. But the press, which had for so many years embodied and defined much of New York Jewish life, was now starting to face the prospect of its declining influence. After 1918, the number of subscribers to Yiddish

¹⁵⁶ David Roskies, Personal interview (25 March, 2004)

¹⁵⁷ Zishe Landau, "*Far'n koved fun vort*," *Der inzl* 1 (1925), 3-8.

¹⁵⁸ "The voice of the people is the voice of God." *Ibid*, p. 4

newspapers began to fall precipitously, and Mordecai Soltes suggests that they would have dropped even earlier if not for the bump in sales caused by readers looking for specifically Jewish news on World War I.¹⁵⁹ In 1916, the number of total subscribers in New York was 537,982. Only three years later, the number had dropped by nearly two hundred thousand, to 362,746.¹⁶⁰ The number of subscribers to Yiddish newspapers would only continue to decline over time.

A second generation of American Jews was coming of age, and they sought to distance themselves from immigrant society, both culturally and geographically. According to Mordecai Soltes, second-generation Jews preferred the English-language press, except for the purposes of following “significant Jewish current events.”¹⁶¹ By means of illustration, Soltes notes that by 1922, only eight percent of the Yiddish press’s readership was American born.¹⁶² And Deborah Dash Moore, discussing the demographic differences between first- and second-generation New York Jews, writes that between 1905 and 1915, two-thirds of the Lower East Side’s Jews left the area, either moving uptown or to one of the outer boroughs.¹⁶³ The crippling effects of a shrinking, increasingly-diffuse audience on Yiddish literature might have been offset by a new crop of immigrants, had the United States not placed severe restrictions Eastern European immigration following World War I. But the gates were closed now, and American Yiddish literature would lose the rejuvenative effects that new generations of immigrants had on art and culture, as evidenced by the contributions of the Yunge. In *A Little Love*

¹⁵⁹ Mordecai Soltes, *The Yiddish Press: An Americanizing Agency*. (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1924), 29.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 186

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 40

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 34

¹⁶³ Deborah Dash Moore, *At Home in America: New York’s Second Generation Jews*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 8.

in *Big Manhattan*, Ruth Wisse quotes an article by the author and playwright Leivick in *Tealit*, a journal of the Yiddish theater, describing the state of Yiddish and Yiddish literature in America in 1923. “This is not a crisis,” writes Leivick. “A crisis is temporary; this is expiry, decline.”¹⁶⁴

Following the end of World War I, the Yunge were in position to inherit the role that the clique of pre-1890 immigrant Russian intellectuals had played in the Lower East Side for decades. At *Der Tog*, Reuben Iceland and other Yunge-affiliated writers had succeeded in giving, William Edlin put it, “A *nayem ton in der yidisher prese*.”¹⁶⁵ And at the *Forverts*, according to David Roskies, Mani Leib truly had become the bard of the downtown *yidische folk*, permanently redefining the style and substance of Yiddish socialist poetry.¹⁶⁶ However, as the Yunge embraced their new roles and attained relevance in their field, they were faced with the new issue of their field’s growing irrelevance. The continued diffusion of the Jewish community (and the Yunge themselves) made it nearly impossible for the once “coherent and self-sustaining culture”¹⁶⁷ of the Lower East Side to be maintained.¹⁶⁸ As a result, it now seemed to matter little whether the downtown culture was to be defined on the terms of the old guard or the Yunge. Only a few years after Zishe Landau and Reuben Iceland had come to embrace relevance, they themselves no longer were. The Yunge might have sought to

¹⁶⁴ Ruth Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 108.

¹⁶⁵ “A new tone to the Yiddish press.” William Edlin, “*Der ‘tog’—di tsaytung, vos hot arayngebrakht a nayem ton in der yidisher prese*” in *75 yor yidische prese in amerike*, Yankev Glatstein et al., eds. (New York: Y.L. perets shrayber fareyn, 1945), 72.

¹⁶⁶ David Roskies, Personal Interview (25 March, 2004)

¹⁶⁷ Irving Howe, with Kenneth Libo, *World of Our Fathers* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York: 1976), 225.

¹⁶⁸ Deborah Dash Moore, *At Home in America: New York’s Second Generation Jews*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 20-22.

be engaged, but they could not find a partner in the changing American Jewish community.

Bibliography

Books and articles

Aizenberg, Eliyahu. *Toldot kehilah `atikat-yomin be-polin*. Tel-Aviv: Ha-Menorah, 1967.

Betsky, Sarah Zweig. *Onions and Cucumbers and Plums*. Detroit: Wayne State University, 1958.

Byalostotski, Binyomen. *Kholem in vor* [Dream in Reality]. New York: no publisher, 1956.

Cahan, Ab. *Bleter fun mayn lebn*, Vols. III-V. New York: Forverts, 1928.

Cassedy, Steven. *To the Other Shore: The Russian Jewish Intellectuals Who Came to America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.

_____. *Building the Future: Jewish Immigrant Intellectuals and the Making of the Tsukunft*. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1999.

Doroshkin, Milton. "The Yiddish Socialist Press in New York, 1880s—1920s." In *Politics of Yiddish*, Vol IV. Dov-Ber Kerler, ed. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 1998.

Encyclopedia Judaica, 1971.

Glatshetyn, Yankev. *In der velt mit yidish*. New York: Altveltlekhn yidishn kultur-kongres, 1971.

Glatshetyn, Yankev, et al., eds. *75 yor yidishe prese in amerike*. New York: Y.L. perets shrayber fareyn, 1945.

Goldsmith, Emanuel. *Yiddish Literature in America 1870-2000*. New York: Congress for Jewish Culture, 1999.

Goren, Arthur. *The Politics and Public Culture of American Jews*. Bloomington: Indiana University, 1999.

_____. *Dissenter in Zion*. Cambridge: Harvard University, 1982.

Halpern, M. *In nyu-york*. New York: Vinkel, 1919.

Halpern, M.L. *Di goldene pave*. Cleveland: Farlag grupe idish, 1924.

Howe, Irving and Eliezer Greenberg, eds. *Voices from the Yiddish*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1972.

- Howe, Irving, Ruth Wisse, and Khone Shmeruk, eds. *The Penguin Book of Modern Yiddish Verse*. New York: Viking, 1987.
- Howe, Irving, with Kenneth Libo. *World of Our Fathers*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976.
- Harshav, Benjamin, and Barbara Harshav. *American Yiddish Poetry*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986.
- Iceland, Ruben. *Fun mayn zumer*. New York: Farlag unzer shier, 1922.
- Iceland, R. *Fun unzer friling*. New York: Farlag inzl, 1954.
- Ignatoff, David. *Opgerisene bleter*. Buenos Aires: Farlag idbuj, 1957.
- Kellman, Ellen Deborah. "The Newspaper Novel in the *Jewish Daily Forward* (1900-1940): Fiction as Entertainment and Serious Literature." Ph.D. diss, Columbia University, 2000.
- Kosak, Hadassa. *Cultures of Opposition: Jewish Immigrant Workers, New York City, 1881-1905*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000.
- Landau, Zishe, ed. *Antologye: Di yidishe dikhtung in amerike biz yor 1919*. New York: Farlag idish, 1919.
- Leksikon fun der nayer yidisher literatur*. New York: Altveltlekhn yidishn kultur-kongres, 1956.
- Moore, Deborah Dash. *At Home in America: Second Generation New York Jews*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1981.
- Marcus, Jacob Rader. *United States Jewry, 1776-1985*. Detroit: Wayne State University, 1989.
- Passow, David. *The Prime of Yiddish*. Jerusalem: Gefen Publishing House, 1996.
- Soltes, Mordecai. *The Yiddish Press: An Americanizing Agency*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University: 1924.
- Soyer, Daniel. *Jewish Immigrant Associations and American Identity in New York, 1880-1939*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Weinstein, Miriam. *Yiddish: A Nation of Words*. South Royalton, VT: Steerforth Press, 2001.

Wisse, Ruth. *A Little Love in Big Manhattan*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.

_____. "Di Yunge and the Problem of Jewish Aestheticism." *Jewish Social Studies* 38 (1976).

_____. "Di Yunge: Immigrants or Exiles?" *Prooftexts* 1, no. 1 (1981).

Journals surveyed

Der arbeter (1908-09)

Der forverts (1914-22)

Der inzl (1918)

Der inzl (1925-26)

Literatur 1 and 2 (1910)

Literatur un lebn Vols. 1-3 (1913-16)

Dos naye land Vols. 1-2 (1911-12)

Dos naye leben Vol. 1 (1908-09)

Shriftn 3 (1914)

Der tog (1914-18)

Tsukunft Vols. 12-14 (1907-1909)

Other sources

Interview with Isaac "Ying" Halpern, March 2004.

Interview with Arthur Goren, March 2004.

Interview with David Roskies, 25 March 2004.

Appendix A: A Selection of Relevant Poetry

M.L. Halpern, “*Mir hobn zikh geboden*,” from *Literatur 2* (1910), 22-23.

Zishe Landau, “*Epilog*,” from *Shriftn 2* (1913) – Copy and translation courtesy of *The Penguin Book of Modern Yiddish Verse*, Irving Howe, Ruth Wisse, and Khone Shmeruk, eds. (New York: Viking, 1987), 274-275.

R. Ayzland, “*Fun ale teg*,” from *Shriftn 3* (1914), 3-7.

Zisho Landoy, “*Far unzer khorev yidish lebn*,” from *Velt eyn, velt oys* (1916), 54.

Ruvn Ayzland, “*Tarnov*,” (Year unknown) – Copy courtesy of *Yiddish Literature in America 1870-2000*, Emanuel Goldsmith, ed. (New York: Congress for Jewish Culture, 1999.), 348-353.

נאָלד-געצונדערן אלע בחור-אויגען... געלעבט אונעם — א וועלט פון שווימען
געלעבט ויר נאָך ביז ווייט אהין וואו ס'לעבט דער הימל צו דער ערד זיך זיינען —

און צווישען ערד און הימל ווערט די קרוין פון אבער-ליכל פערשוואונערן...
ברעט און ים און הימל שווימען — אלע ציטערדיגע ליפּען זינגען

שטילערדייט, דאָס אייביג יונגע ליעד: „איך האָב דיך ליעב.“ אויך נאָכ-ליעב רינגען

טראַגען זיך די עכצאָל-אָנגענוע אום... איך האָב דיך ליעב,“ אוי גערט זיכער וואו
דיין מאַמע, מיט א קוש אויך איהרע בלוטן-ליפּען, דיר אַנטקענען...
מיין קוש האָט ניט געוואָנט די לאַסט: „איך האָב דיך ליעב“ אַרויף צו לענען

אויך דיין נאָמער שולמעל-פּלאַר... איך האָב דיך ליעב מיין קינד, איך האָב דיך ליעב.

איך לויב ביים ים.

עס גלעט די נאָכט, די בענקשאַפט פון מיין טרוים, מיט שיינער פון פּאַרדוסמען...
מיין אויג צום הימל קוקט, ס'איז וואָהר: "ישׂה חַד הַיָּמִים הַזֵּה אֶת כָּל הַיָּמִים"
מיין זינגדיגע נשמה אָכער ליעבט די ערד — די ערד מיט איהרע בלוטען...
בלומען, בלוטען האָב איך שוין געליעבט אין מייןע יונגע קינדער-יאָרען.

אומגע נאָם — עס קוקען שוואַרצע מאַסע בלוטען רודף צעכראַכ'נע פּענסער
ווייט אַרויס אין פעלד, וואו ס'בלויזען רוישע בלוטען צווישען ווייז און קאַרן.
בלומען, בלוטען האָב איך שוין געליעבט אין מייןע יונגע קינדער-יאָרען.

אויך ווידער-לישען... ליבטו אויגס און שלאָפּס... און האַלס'ס זיכער ניט
פון יענעם נאָר, וואָס לינגט ביים ים אַלזין און פּרעסט די ליפּען זיינע
צו דעם זאָמער, אויך וועלכען ס'האַט דיין לייב גערהאַט אין צווישען-צייט פון באַרען.

הימל, ים.

און יערע וואַסער-וואַל בערהאַרט נאָך איצט מיין לייב מיט פּייער-פּענעל...
ס'האַט דיין יונגע שעהניטיג אין מיין יונגע האַרצען פּייער אָנגעצונערן —
שטיל און לוסטיג טרוימען יונגע קינדער, שטילער, לוסטיגער און אינגער

טרוימען איצער מייןע לויזען — מייןע קינדער, אין די אבער-שטערן...
שטילער, שטילער, ס'איז דעם פּאַסטור'ס בענקענדיג געוואָנט צום שלאָס נעמומען.
פון איהר לאַנגען שלאָס ערוואַכט די יונגע מענעגס-טאַכטער... נאָלד-געצונדערן

עפענען פּענסטער זיך... און פּיאַנאָ-פּלאַנגען — פּורפּור-רויטע שטערן, ציעלען
זיך צום נאָרטען, וויקלען זיך אַרום די בוימער דאָרט, אַרום די בלוטען —
געמען אלע בוימער צווישען — געמען אלע, אלע בלוטען בליחען — — —
שטילער, שטילער, שטילער. אין די אבער-שטערן טרוימען מינע לויזען...
ניר-יאָר, 1910.

ב. 5. האלפערן:

ס'יר האָבען זיך געבאָרען — — —

ווי אויג, מיין קינד, קען יענער זומער-טאָג אין האַרץ פּערטעמען ווערען?...

אייביג געהען מייןע טרוימען — יונגע קינדער-מחנות דיר אַנטקענען.
אייביג, אייביג לעבט אין שטערן-וועהערס אויך, דאָס קלאַהרע נאָלד פון שטערן...

הימל, ים.

אויך די ווייטע וואַלען און אויך דייע ארעכט טאַנגען זונען-שטראַהלען.

אין וואַסער מיט דער האַנד א פּאַסט — עס פּאַלט א בויגען נאָלד-נער רענען
אויך דיין בלאַנערן קאַפּ. א רגע דאָן — אין ס'וואַרמען זיך אַרויף די וואַלען

אַלע בחורים, און רוישיג-ווייטע קרויזען צייכען זייערע בליזער
ווייט אַרום דיין לייב, און נעמען זייערע קולות הילבענדיגע סלינגען,
זינגט דיין קאַפּ, מיט ריזען אין געוויכט, א לאַנגזאַמער צום ברוסט אַנדערע...

וויילעך, ווילדע בחורים, און ווילדער נעמען זיך די וואַלען טראַגען —
נעמען טאַנגען דרום די לענדען דייע, נאָלד-בעוויסע וואַלען-רינגען,
נעמען לוסטיג ווילדע שווימער, העט ביז ווייט אין מיט'ן ים זיך יאָגען

נאָך די וואַלען, וועלכע האָבען אַסערלע אָנגעהאַרט די לענדען דייע...
אבערדיין.

און שעהן ביסטו מיין קינד, ניט אַנדערש, אין א יונגען רויזען-יאָרטען
האַט די וועלט צום ערשטען מאל בענענעט זיך מיט דיר — מיט דייע אויגען...
וואָס הייבסטו צו דער זון אַרויף דיין קאַפּ, מיין קינד — וואָס ערלסט דאָרטען?...

אויך די אויגען דייע נעכטו דייע הענטלעך — נעכט דיין שעהניטיג יונגען
איהרע אבער-ליענדער... נעמען אלע, אלע בחורים זיך בויגען
סיעפער, סיעפער מיט די אויגען צו די אבער-רויטע וואַלען-רינגען —

שטערקען זיך אַנטקענען דיר די ארעכט זיילעך, בלינד און, נאָלד-געצונדערן — — —
טראַגען זיך אויך אבער-וואַלען מיזער זינגענדיגע וואַסער-מיידלעך — — —
אבער-יאָלד אין לאַסען-האַהר, מיט רויזען-קערען אַרום געבונדען,
טראַגען זיך אויך אבער-וואַלען, טרויער זינגענדיגע וואַסער-מיידלעך...
געלעבט אוועק.

אויך דיין ווייטען זומער-קלייד און אויך דיין נאָקטער רונדער שלאַטער, נליחען

Epilogue

Because the papers meanly ignore me—
they think my luncheon menus not fit to print—
small wonder girls don't give me a tumble
and day by day my stock goes down.

And every day my debts get higher.
Vainly my ten fingers stretch out for patrons.
It's lucky Martel's isn't beyond my reach
and coffee—black—is still a nickel.

If coffee goes up, I'll go and hang myself,
and how many poets are as classy as me?
But while the coffee's cheap, my marvelous songs
will bring happiness to our people and our tongue.

Irving Feldman

This Evening

Evening in the house
where you sit and look out
the window,
and in her chair your wife is knitting
or maybe sewing.
You turn around—and she is sitting there
doing nothing,
the needle, scissors, cloth
are lying idle in her hands,
and she is lost in thought over the days and days
that creep by in worries.
Here, we say, everything is always missing
and the daily grind is inescapable.
And every day that's gone is gone for good,
it won't come back again.
And just as this one has, the next too will pass,
and what was hoped for waited for

עפילאָג

ווייל ס'האָט אַזוי געמיין פֿאַרשוויגן מיך די פרעסע,
און וואָס איך עס אויף מיטאָג שרייבט זי קיין מאָל ניט —
דערפֿאַר קען איך ביז איצט ניט קריגן קיין מעטרעסע
און נידעריקער פֿאַלן נעמט אַלץ מיין קרעדיט.

און וואָס אַ טאָג נעם איך אין חובֿות טיפֿער זינקען,
אומיסט נאָך מעצענאַטן שפּרייט איך אויס די הענט; —
אַ גליק, וואָס כּיקען „מאַרטעלס" דערלויבן זיך צו טרינקען,
און שוואַרצע קאַזוע קאַסט אין גאַנצן פֿינעף סענט.

וואָלט קאַזוע טייער זיין — וואָלט איך זיך אויפֿגעהאַנגען,
און דיכטער גלייך צו מיר איז גאר נישטאָ קיין סך!
דאָך ווי דער פּרייז שטייט איצט — מיט הערלעכע געזאַנגען
קען איך מיר גליקלעך מאַכן אונזער פֿאַלק און שפּראַך.

היינט אָוונט

אָוונט אינעם הויז.

דו זיצסט אין הויז און קוקסט אַרויס
פֿון פֿענצטער דיר אַרויס.

דאָס ווייב זיצט אויף אַ שטול און העפֿט
און אפֿשר ניט.

איך קוק מיר אום און זע: זי זיצט זיך גלאַט אַזוי
און ניט זי העפֿט, און ניט זי ניט,

נאָר האַלטנדיק נאַכלעסיק אין דער האַנט
די נאַדל, שער, צי דאָס געוואַנט.

פֿאַרטראַכט זי זיך ווי טאָג נאָך טאָג
אין ראַגות נאָר פֿאַרגייען.

מען רעדט זיך דורך: אַט פֿעלט וואָס אויס
און קיין מאָל קענסטו ניט אַרויס

פֿון אָנגעצייכנטן און לאַנגווייליקן קרייז.

און יעדער טאָג, וואָס גייט אַוועק, איז דאָך אַ שאַד,
ער וועט צוריק שוין מער ניט קומען.

און גלייך ווי דער, וועט דאָך דער צווייטער איך פֿאַרגיין.

— TAN TAIKALUUL ; NUI OIA TAIKA KILIA
— S TIALI ORE ;

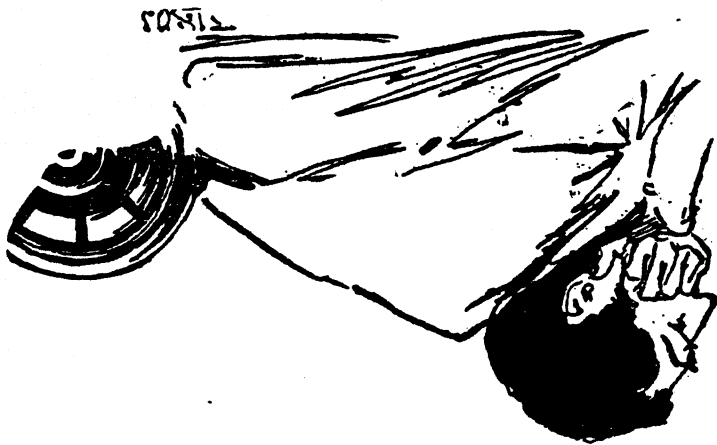
NUI NA UURLO ; NAI ORE KILACO LUI LADIG ;
IN OIL MOICAL' NAO LI OICLAL TIA'
SIALI OILIA NUI NEXG' TAO IN OIA' —
— UROAI LIL LUI ELIUAOIA' — NUI ERE.ULAI TADIG

GIL LI UACO NUI UACAI OICAI UACALIA IALAI'
LI EROREAG OICAI UACALIA NUI OIL'
OIAL' TIA NUCOACONAI TAOA KILIA LI OIL'
LIL LAO EROCAL OIA NUI XI OIL S OICAI OICAI'

I

GI KIL ORE

L' NUCOACAL :



Ireland opens party
sectors Lander closes it.

אזוי זיך גלאט ארויס.

אמענע פון א פענסטער ווינקט א מירדעל מיר.

און אפשר ווינקט זי ניט. איך קוק אויף איהר

און קוק אוועק.

און ס'פאלט מיין בליק אראפ צום וועג.

וואו ס'שלעפען קרעכענדיג בעלאדענט שווער.

זיך וועגען. פערד און קארס, אהין, אהער.

און אויף די טראטארען שוויבלען מענשען קעפ.

מיט היט פון שטרוי און פילי, און גלאט מיט צעפ.

און ערגעץ ברומט א שויף. און איבער אלע דעכער.

צושניידט א פייה די לופט. און ערגעץ ווייטער, העכער,

פערקלינגט א בלאסער קלאנג אין דעם געפילדער.

און ווילד און ווילדער,

צורייסט זיך אלץ די לופט פון פינפענייען.

און שיטערער אלץ ווערען אונטען יענע מענשען רייהען.

געדיכטער אלץ און די דערער שווערער,

און וואָס אכאל אלץ מעהרער.

און דא ארום מיר הויכט עם שטארקער אן צו זשומען.

און איינציגווייז עס פאנגען אן צו קומען.

צום וואַנט די שאַמענס און טיעפער דאָרט דאָרינען.

די מענשען איילענדיג צו ווערען מאַשינען.

און ב'ויז אזוי. די פיס פערלינגט א האַנד אין שויס.

און קוק זיך אום און קוק ארויס.

און קוק זיך ווערער אום.

און שטומ.

אַנבויענדיג דעם קאַפּ, הויב איך זיך אויף.

און לייג די הענט צוגוף.

און לאָז זיך לאַנגזאַם נעהן אהין.

צום ווינקעל. וואו עס וואַרט, זיך דרעהנדיג.

א ליידדיגע מאַשין.

דלויסען רענענט. גלאַנציג-שוואַרץ און נאַס,

ציהט אַ לאַנגע זיך פאַר מיר די נאַס.

מענשען איילען מאַפענדיג פון ביידע זייטען;

ווי אַ לאַנגע אויסגעדריעהטע שלאַנג. פון ווייטען

לויפט אַ צוג פערד'י דאָרט אויף אַ הויכער כריק.

כ'נעה אין שטראָם. און מענשען קראַמען—אַלץ אזוי בעקאָמט

און דאָך אזוי פרעמיר, זיך בייטען אלץ פאַר מיר.

נאַס נאָך נאַס. און אַט אין שוין דער פלאַז און דאָרט אַרויף די סהיר;

שיקדען נאָלדענע אין פענסטער, פענסטער אלץ אזוי בעקאָמט.

כ'שטעה ביים מהיר און וואַרט. אַ מירדעל קומט: -- גוט מאַרגען

ס'קומען יונגע, אַלטע לייט -- גוט מאַרגען און גוט יאָהר!

ס'עפענט זיך די סהיר. אַ נענער-יונג מיט קרויזלעדיגע האָר,

ציהט אַרויף אונז אין דער הויך. אַ ושום, אַ פליה.

כאַרץ מיר זיעען שוין אין יאָך ווי פיה.

און ציהען אויסגעמוטשעטע, געשפאַנט אין שווערע זאָרגען.

II.

ס'איז מיטאַג צייט. אַרום אין שטיל. בלויז ווי אַ ביהן

דאָרט זשומט אין ווינקעל וואו אין איינציגע מאַשין.

אַ מירדעל עסט און קנאַקט די שאַלעכץ פון אַן איי.

און איינער אָדער צוויי נעמיטהליך זופען פהין.

דערנעבען בראַמקעט עמיץ ציבעלע מיט ברויט, --

און בלאַסע מירדעך אַנגעפאַרנט אויף רויט,

צושטעלען זיך ביי אַם'נע פענסטער אויס.

און קומען זשענדע ערגעץ-וואו אַרויס.

און אַנר'רע לאַכען קייבענדיג און ריידען מיט די הענט

און ריידען מיט די אויגען און מיט צייענס אויף די ווענט.

און אויף אַ פענסטער זיך איך מיר אַליין.

די פיס פערלינגט, אַ האַנד אין שויס, און קוק אַרויס.

און ס'קומט צו געהן א קאץ מיט ווייס און געלע פלעשען,
 און שמעלט זיך אָפּ ביים שוועל און הויכט אָן שנאָרעכען, שמעקען,
 און בורמשעט וואָס, און קעהרט זיך אום צוריק און דרעהט איהר עק.
 א וויילע שטיל. און נאָכדעם געהען מענשען ווייטער אויף דעם וועג,
 און אַלץ דאָס זעלבניגע. איעדער וואָרפט אהין א פרעגענדיגע בליק,
 און געהען ווייטער, ווער ארויף, און ווער אראָפּ צוריק.
 און מיט אַמאָל — א קוויטש! און דאָן א שווערער פאַל.
 און טהירען עפ'גען האַסטיג זיך און ס'זוערט א פלאַשעריי,
 און מענשען לויפּען, ווער אהין, און ווער אַהער, מיט א נעשריי.

און אויף דער שוועל ביים טהיר — לינט אויסגעשמערקט א פרוי.

ב ו י ט .

זיץ איך מיר ביים פענסטער און איך קוק ארויס.
 פינסטער. א לאַמטערן. אין דער זייט א הויז.
 פאַר'ן הויז א נערמעל; לעבען פלויט א פרוי,
 מיט פערלייגטע אַרעכעם שמעהט און קוקט אזוי.
 וואונדער איך זיך: מאָדנע. אזוי שפעט אליין?
 ווייס איך? אפּשר זעהט זי, עמיץ קומט צו געהן.
 יא. מסתבא קומט ווער. וואָס זשע אַרט דאָס מיר?
 כ'זעה אוועק פון פענסטער, שמעל זיך ביי דער טהיר.
 שמעה אזוי א וויילע, ציהט עס מיך צוריק.
 אין א פוסטען חשך שלאָגט זיך אָפּ מיין בליק.
 אין א פוסטען חשך. יא, אין הויז איז ליכט.
 אויפ'ן גאָס א שאַמען, נ'פענסטער א געזיכט.
 נאָר ניט. ס'וואָרט אזוי זיך אויף עמיצען די פרוי.
 וואָס זשע אַרט דאָס מיך דען, אז עס וואָרט א פרוי?

III.

אַכענר. אָפּגענעמען, זען איך זיך אוועק.
 טראַכט זיך נאָנץ גלייכניגליג: ס'געהען אלע טעג,
 איינער ווי דער אַנדרער, אזוי גרוי און זייל,
 כאַטש געה נעם פון פּוילקייט און צועפען ס'מויל,
 אין א גרויסען גענעץ און שפיי ביטער אויס.
 אַרער עפען ס'פענסטער, וואָרף זיך גלאַט ארויס.

קומט צוגעהן מיין טאָכטער, שמעלט זיך לעבען מיר;
 ס'קליינע פון דער ווייטענס, קריכט אויף אלע פיער,
 און מיין ווהן, ער זיצט שוין בדייטלעך אויף מיין שייט.
 רייט אויף מיר א פערדעל, צופּט מיין וואַנצע אויס.
 און אַמאָל איז דאָס קליינע אויך שוין אויף מיין האַנט,
 פלאַשעלט "דאָ" און פאַטשעלט קיבלאַך דורכאַנאָנר.

וואָס די טאָכטער: "פאַפּא, געניץ ניט אזוי! ...
 ווייסט, איך קען שוין צעהלען? — איינס און איינס איז צוויי."
 בעט דער זוהן זיך: "פאַפּא, זינג פון אַלטען איר."
 — געהט אייך קינדער שלאָפּען, ס'איז דער טאטע מיער.
 "ווייל ניט געהן שוין שלאָפּען" — פלאַצט דער זוהן ארויס.
 און דער טאָכטער'ס אויגען ווערען גלאַנציג, גרויס. — — —

און א מענעמענס תיין.

א טהור שמעהט ווייט צועפענט, מען זעהט א ליידיג ציכער
 א מונקלעך נאָן פלאַס ברענט און ס'פאַלט זיין בלאַסער שיכער
 ארויס אין קאָרדיראַר, בעלייכטענדיג א וואַנר.

און מענשען געהן און געהן פאַרביי אַלץ דורכאַנאָנר
 און וואָרפען פרעגענדיגע בליקען; שאַפלען מיט די קעפּ,
 און געהען ווייטער, ווער ארויף, און ווער אַראָפּ די טרעפּ.

עס שמעקט מיט זאפראן, נעגעלעך און ענגלישן געווירץ.
 מיט זיסן צוקערווארג און שארפן קימל,
 מיט ריחות פון געוואנטן און מיט ראסט פון אמזן
 און מיט דער קעלט פון לאנגע שטאבעס שטאל.
 עס שמעקט מיט זעק און צוגעפילטן שטרוי,
 מיט קוישן, שאכטלען און מיט קאסטנס, וואס דערציילן
 פון ווינטע שטעט און פֿרעמדע מענטשן,
 און מער פון אלץ פון יענער שטאָט,
 וואָס איז פֿאַר מיר דער טויער צו דער גרויסער וועלט געווען.
 מןן שענסטער קינדער-חלום — טארנאָוו.

דו ביסט ניט איבעריק גרויס און ניט איבעריק שיין,
 דו, ליבסטע מניע פון די שטעט.
 צווישן בערגער צוויי ביסטו צונויפֿגעדריקט,
 ווי אַ ריזן-פֿויגל מיט צוויי לאַנגע אויסגעשפּרייטע
 און צוגעשפיצטע פֿליגל.
 איינער רעכטס און איינער לינקס.
 נאָר גרויס ביסטו
 מיט דעם שטאַלץ און טראָט פֿון די סוחרים דניע,
 און גרויס ביסטו מיט דעם רעש פֿון טויזנטער,
 וואָס קומען האַנדלען אין דניע טויערן,
 און גרעסער נאָך פֿון אלץ
 מיט דין ברייטן אָטעם,
 וואָס שפּרייט זיך אויס אויף וועגן און הויכט אָן לעבן
 אין פֿערציק שטעט און דערפֿער הונדערטער אַרום.

און שיין ביסטו מיט דניע טעכטער,
 די שענסטע פֿון גאַליציענס שינע שעכטער,
 און מיט דעם בלויען גלאַנץ
 איבער דניע רויטע דעכער.
 דאָך שענער נאָך
 מיט דניע גרינע פֿייערן, וואָס צינדן זיך אין רייען,
 אין די אויגן פֿון אַ יינגל,
 וואָס קוקט אויף דיר פֿון באַרג.
 און שענער נאָך און גרעסער אין דעם ציטער
 פֿון מניע קינדערשע חלומות.

עס שמעקט מיט זאָפֿראַן, נעגעלעך און ענגלישן געווירך.
 מיט קופּעס קאַלטע שטיינער און פֿריש געשיילטע קלעצער,
 וווּ ייִנגלעך טומלען רמטנדיק,
 און ייִנגלעך טומלען אויף שפּיץ-פֿינגער לויפֿנדיק,
 אין זומערדיקע אָונטן,
 ווען סיגליען אַלע שויבן אינעם מאַרק,
 און סיגליען זייערע קינדער-הערצער
 אין וואַרעמקייט און פֿרייד.
 און סיוואַקסט דער טומל און עס וואַקסט די פֿרייד,
 ביז סיווערן אַלע פּנימער ווי סאַזשע שוואַרץ,
 און מידע זעצט מען זיך אין רעדלעך אויס,
 און מיט אַ זיסער מידקייט אינעם קול דערציילט מען זיך:
 פֿון כּישוף-מאַכער און פֿון רויבער-באַנדעס,
 פֿון ליכטלעך, וואַס פֿאַרפֿירן און מתים אין דער שול;
 פֿון אוצרות און פֿון היילן, פֿון גרויסן פּוילן-אויפֿשטאַנד,
 פֿון גזירות תּ"ח און גאַנטאָ און טעכן ייִדיש בלוט.
 אַ דריקנדיקע שטילקייט נעמט אַלעמען אַרום
 און פֿון די גרויסע אויגן קוקט אַ צער אַרויס.
 דער שווערער צער פֿון דורות, וואַס מאַכט אַלע שטום.
 און פּלוצעם נעמט מען זיך דערציילן:
 פֿון אַלטן שלאַס אין קראַקאָ און קניזער-שלאַס אין ווין,
 פֿון מלכותדיקן הויף אין טשאַרטקאָוו
 און רבינס קלויז אין סאַנדז;
 פֿון פֿראַנקפֿורט און פֿון פּרעשבורג
 און פֿון אַלטן פּראַג.
 און הייבט מען שטעט אָן ציילן, וואַקסט פּלוצעם
 טאַרנאָוו אויס.
 און אַלע אויגן גלאַנצן אויף
 און ווענדן זיך צום ברייטן וועג, וואַס פֿירט אַהין,
 און אַלע הערצער אָטעמען מיט שטאַלץ:
 "אונדזער טאַרנאָוו!"

און פֿרעטיק נאַכט,
 ווען סײַצט אַ ייִנגל בײַ זײַן טאַטנס טיש,
 און סײַמעקט מיט ווײַן און סײַמעקט מיט פֿיש,
 און סײַמעקט מיט פֿרישע חלה און מיט זינד און אַטלעס;
 און צען לעכטער בלישטשען אויפֿן טיש,
 או צען שאַטנס טאַנצן אויף די ווענט,
 און סיגלעט דער טאַטע שטיל זײַן שוואַרצע באַרד,
 און סײַטונקט דער אורח זײַן המוציא אינעם באַנאָן,
 און טונקט אַ פֿינגער אין די ברעקלעך אמן,
 און קעטט בעימות,
 און קמענדיק דערציילט ער שטיל אַ מעשה נאָך אַ מעשה,
 און ווי עס לעבן ייִדן אויף דער גרויסער וועלט:

ראובן איזלאנד

אין קראָקאָ זענען יידן גוט און פֿרום,
אין וואַרשע איז אין יעדן הויף אַ שול,
אין לעמבערג האָט מען ליב אַ סך צו עסן,
און שטאַלצע זענען די קבצנים פֿון לובלין;
פֿאַרשינט אַביסל זענען שוין די ריישער יידן,
אין ווין איז טריפֿה דאָך אַיעדער שטיין,
אין דאַנציג זעט מען שוין קיין יידן ניט,
און וואַקסן וואַקסט איצט טאַרנאָוו,
דאָס ייִנגל האָרט און קוועלט אין זיך פֿאַר פֿרייד:
"אונדזער טאַרנאָוו!"

דער אורח גיסט אַ צווייטע גלעזל אָן,
פֿאַרקוועטשט די אויגן און פֿאַרבניסט,
און אַ דערוואַרעמטער, אַן אויפֿגעהשטערטער,
מיט אַ שמייכל אין די בלישטשענדיקע אויגן,
דערציילט ער וויטער, ווי עס וואַקסט און וואַקסט די שפֿע דאָרט,
און סיוואַקסן אויף גבירים,
מיט ברייטע הערצער און מיט ברייטע הענט:
איין מכניס-אורח איז דאָרט פֿאַראַן,
ליינט ער אַליין זיך שלאָפֿן אויף דער הוילער ערד
און זינע אורחים ווי די שררות ליגן אין זמן בעט.
דאָס ייִנגל האָרט און קוועלט אין זיך פֿאַר פֿרייד:
"אונדזער טאַרנאָוו!"

עס פֿאַרען שוין די טעלער אויפֿן טיש,
דעם אורחס רייד פֿאַרקלינגען אין געקלאַנג פֿון טעלער-לעפֿל,
אין ייִנגלס האַרצן קלינגט און קוועלט נאָך אַלץ די פֿרייד:
"אונדזער טאַרנאָוו!"

ער ווייסט: דאָרט בויט אַ שול זיך דרעסיק יאָר,
און שיטייען אַלץ נאָך הוילע ווענט,
און אַז אַן אַלטע הייל איז דאָרט פֿאַראַן,
ווי סיליגט אַן אוצר פֿון קדמונים אָן,
און נאָר דער למד-וואַוויניק אין דער גרויסער קלויז,
ער איז דער איינציקער, וואָס ווייסט דעם וועג אַהין,
נאָר זאָגן וויל ער קיינעם ניט.

זיין מאַמע שרייבט אויף אים: וואָס עסט ער ניט!
ווי אויף אַ גולם קוקן אויף אים זינע אַלע ברידער,
און אַ פֿאַרשעמטער כאַפט ער שנעל אַ לעפֿל נאָך אַ לעפֿל.
דאָך ברענען אַלץ די אויגן זינע נאָך,
און שטיל אין זיך הערט ער דעם למד-וואַוויניקס רייד,
וואָס גיט דעם סוד אים איבער,
און סיעפֿנט זיך פֿאַר אים די אַלטע הייל,
ווי סיליצט פֿון טעפֿ אַרויס דאָס גאַלד,
און סיליצט פֿון טעפֿ אַרויס דאָס זילבער,
און עדלשטיינער און קרישטאָלן בלענדן זינע אויגן.

עס שמעקט מיט זאָפֿראַן, נעגעלעך און ענגלישן געווייך.
מיט צאַנקנדיקע ליכט און טריפֿנדיקן חלב,
מיט וואַרעמקייט פֿון אויוון און וואַרעמקייט פֿון רייד,
וואָס טריפֿן פֿון דעם זיידנס ליפֿן,
ווי שווערע טראַפֿן האַניק.

און זיי דערציילן:

פֿון ייִדן חשובים, ייִדן גרויסע שררות,
פֿון פראַכט אַמאָליקן און הענטיקע שווערע צענטן,
און פֿון פרנסות ביטערע, און וואָס עס קען זיך טרעפֿן:
פֿון וועלף, וואָס קוקן הונגעריק פֿון וואַלד אַרויס,
און פֿון גזלנים, וועלכע לוייערן אויף בריקעס פֿול מיט סחורה,
פֿון אַ לץ, אַ דעטשל, מיט אַ לאַנגער צונג,
און פֿון אַ קאַלטער, שטורעמדיקער ווינטער-נאַכט,
ווען סײַהאַט אַ שד פֿאַרפֿירט זיין שליטן
אין אַ פֿישוף-קרעז:

— נעכט אַזוינע זאָלן מער זיך ניט אומקערן!

דו פֿאַרסט און פֿאַרסט און פֿאַרסט,
און רירסט דיך ניט פֿון אַרט,
און סײַפֿעפֿט אַ ווינט פֿון אַלע זענטן,
און טראַגט אָן שניי אין גאַנצע בערג,
און וואַיענדיק פֿאַרשיט ער דיר די אויגן,
און וואַיענדיק פֿאַרשיט ער דיר דעם וועג.
דאָס פֿערדל האָט שוין מער קיין כוח צו שלעפֿן,
און סײַוואַקסן צעפלעך אַזאַ אַן אויף דער באַרד,
און סײַוואַקסן צעפלעך אַזאַ אַן אויפֿן מויל,
און סײַשנעט די פֿיס און סײַשטעכט די פֿינגער,
און נאָר עס שנייט און שנייט און שנייט, —
און ניט מען זעט אַ ליכט און ניט מען זעט אַ וועג. —
בזם אויוון אין אַ ווינקל זיצט דאָס ייִנגל
צונויפֿגעדרייטערהייט

און האַרכט און האַרכט און וואַרט דעם סוף צו הערן,
כאַטש ער ווייסט אים שוין פֿון לאַנג.
און ווייסט שוין אויך: געשען איז דאָס
אַין יענעם גרויסן ווילדן וואַלד,
וואָס ציט אַ ממיל זיך רעכטס און ציט אַ ממיל זיך לינקס,
בז יענעם וועג, דורך וואַנען סיקומען סוחרים
און סיקומען גוטע ייִדן,
און אורחים, „אייניקלעך“
און וואַנדערער פֿון גאַר דער וועלט —
בזם וועג, וואָס פֿירט פֿון טאַרנאָוו.

ראובן איזלאנד

איין ליכטל צאנקט נאך קוים, און סיקלעפן זיך די אויגן,
און סיטריפן שווערער נאך דעם זיידנס רייד,
און איצט דערציילן זיי פון מחלוקת צווישן גוטע יידן,
וואָס האָבן שטעט פֿאַרוויסט און מענטשן טאַרבעס אָנגעהאַנגען.
און פֿון דעם גרויסן פֿייער צווישן סאַדיגור און צאַנז,
ווי ס'פלעגט דער אַלטער, בייזער צאַנזער הימלען שפּאַלטן
און טופּען מיט זיין לאַמען פֿוס,
און שעלטן זיין באַהעלפֿער, און שעלטן אַלע די,
וואָס האָבן זיך קיין סאַדיגור געקערט;
און פֿון זיין זון, דעם רידיניקער, דעם שלעכטן,
דעם קלוגן אַחיתופֿל, לאַנג און שוואַרץ
און ביז דעם אויג באַוואַקסן,
מיט אויגן ווי פֿון שטאַל און מיט אַ האַרץ פֿון שטיין. —
אַ גלעט די שווערע באַרד,
אַ טרייסל מיט דעם שטריימל אין דער ברייט,
און ס'האַבן חסידים שויבן אויסגעזעצט,
און קעפּ געשפּאַלטן,
און שטעט געברענט,
און מענטשן ביז צום בעטל-ברויט געבראַכט.
און ס'האַבן זיין געשטעלט זיך קעגן טאַטעס,
און וויבער האָבן פֿון די מענער זיך געשיידט,
און יונגע איידעמס האָבן אַלץ געוואַרפֿן,
פֿאַרלאָזן וויב און קינד,
געלאָזט זיך אין דער וועלט אַרײַן,
צעטיילט זיך אין צוויי מחנות, גרייט זיך צו פֿאַרטיליקן. —
אויך ראַפּטשיץ איז אַרײַן אין שפּיל.
פֿאַרלוירן דאָרט דאָס לעצטע ביסל גלאַנץ,
אַרויס צעריסן אָן איין גאַנצן אַבר,
פֿאַרבליבן איז איר נאָר אַ חכמהלע,
אַ שיינער ניגון און אַ מחנה אייניקלעך,
וואָס האָבן זיך צעזייט אויף אַלע וועגן,
אין זייערע קאַפּטאַנעס מיט סטראַקעס
און מיט די וויסע הויזן.
געשטאַנען אין אַ זינט איז בלויז דאָס קלוגע בעלז.
דאָס קלוגע בעלז מיט זינע ספּאַדיקעס,
מיט זינע בעקעשעס פֿון קאַטון
און מיט דעם ווילדן ברען.

און כאַטש דאָס יינגל שלאָפֿט שוין לאַנג —
זיין מאַמע האָט פֿון אים די שטיוול אָפּגעצויגן,
דאָס העמד אים אויסגעטאַן,
אַ וואַרעמען געלייגט אין בעט,
און איז מיט ווייכע טריט פֿאַרשוונדן,
דאָך הערט ער נאָך ווי סיטריפֿן שווער דעם זיידנס רייד
און אים איז גוט,

און אַלעס מישט אין איינעם זיך צונויף:
 דער אַלטער צאַנזער, ווי זען שטייגער, שטאַלץ און בייז;
 דער סאַדיגורער, מילד און איידל, מיט די ווייכע אויגן;
 דער קלוגער בעלזער מיט אַ לאַנגער ליוולקע איינעם מויל,
 די ראַפּטשיצער אין קאַפּטאַנעס אָן קלאַפּן,
 מיט אויפגעשטעלטע בלויע סאַמעט-קראַגנס,
 מיט סאַמעטענע מאַנקעטן,
 און ברייטע שוואַרצע אַטלאַס-גאַרטלען.
 און פּלוצעם וואַקסן אויס:
 אַ פּריצהלע, אַ דעטשל מיט אַ לאַנגער צונג,
 און סיצייט אַ לאַנגע שורה וועגן אויף אַ באַרג אַרויף,
 און ווייט פֿון הינטן ווערן המזער קלענער אַלץ און ענגער,
 און סיצידן גרינע פֿמערן זיך אין לאַנגע רייען,
 און סיצידן גרינע פֿמערן זיך אין זענע אויגן.
 עס שמעקט מיט זאַפּראַן, נעגעלעך און ענגלישן געווירץ,
 מיט זיסע צוקערואַרג און שאַרפֿן קימל,
 מיט ריחות פֿון געוואַנטן און מיט ראַסטן פֿון אמזן
 און מיט דער קעלט פֿון לאַנגע שטאַבעס שטאַל.
 עס שמעקט מיט זעק און צוגעפֿוילטן שטרוי,
 מיט קוישן, שאַכטלעך און מיט קאַסטנס, וואַס דערציילן
 פֿון ווייטע שטעט און פֿרעמדע מענטשן,
 און מער פֿון אַלץ פֿון יענער שטאַט,
 וואַס איז פֿאַר מיר דער טויער פֿון דער גרויסער וועלט געווען,
 מיין שענסטער קינדער-חלום - טאַרנאַוו.

שטיללעבן

1

ברויט און קעז און האַניק אויפֿן פּראַסטן טיש.
 גאַלדיק רופֿט צו זיך דער טיי,
 אין דינע גלעזער צוויי.
 און גרינלעך, קיל און פֿריש,
 ווינקט דער וואַסערקרוג, באַצויגן מיט אַ טוי.
 אויף אַ קאַט דאָס טאַשנטיכל פֿון אַ פֿרוי.
 און דערבש אַ קליינע, קלוגע האַנט
 אויף אַ שמאַלן לידערבאַד,
 אין ווינקאַלירטן זמד.

2

ווי קילע, פֿולע בריסט, מיט אַ באַהאַלטן פֿמער,
 ליגן שווערע טרויבן לעבן ברוינע,
 מענלעך לאַנגע באַרן.
 פֿרויענהאַפּט פֿאַרשניטע, מיט פֿאַרצערטער רויטקייט
 טוליען זיך צוויי עפל צו אַ קאַלטן,
 פֿול מיט חכמה שניענדיקן אַראַנדזש.
 ווי די גולמס טעמפע גלאַצן צוויי באַנאַנען.
 גיריק ווי אַ מיידל נאָך אַן ערשטן קוש,
 רמסט זיך פֿונעם שטענגל רויט אַ קאַרש.

פאר אונזער חרוב אידיש לעבען...

פאר אונזער חרוב אידיש לעבען
פאל איך און בעט פאר דיין גענאָד!
איך וויין אויף אונזער מאמע — ווילנא,
אויף קאַלאָמעצ און אויף בראָד,

אויף ווארשוי, קאָוונאָ, קאליש, לעמבערג,
אויף גרויסע און אויף קליינע שטעט,
וואָס ס'איז דער שונא שוין בעפאלען,
וואָס שפעטער נאָך בעפאלען וועט.

אויף יעדען אידיש שמוציג געסעל,
אויף יעדער קראָם, — וויין איך און קלאָג,
אויף יעדער שענס, לאַמבארד און קרעטשמע,
אויף אַנגזער פאלשער מאַס און וואָג;

אויף יעדען אידיש פרעהליך הייזעל,
וואָס אין אַ גוי'איש שטעדטעל שטעהט —
אויף אלץ וואָס איז געוועזען אונזערס
און מיט'ן רויך אַצינד פערנעהט.

ס'איז ריין און העל אלץ וואָס ס'איז אידיש!
דאָס אַר'מע לעבען בוי צוריק!
און די פּעראומערטע נשמות
מיט אַ ניטדאָאיג וואָרט פּערוויג.

Appendix B: Neat Supplementary Material

Map of Lower East Side, courtesy of MapQuest.com

Portrait of the staff of *Der Tog*, circa 1940s, courtesy of *75 yor yidishe prese in amerike*, Yankev Glatshetyn, et al., eds. (New York: Y.L. perets shrayber fareyn, 1945), 70.

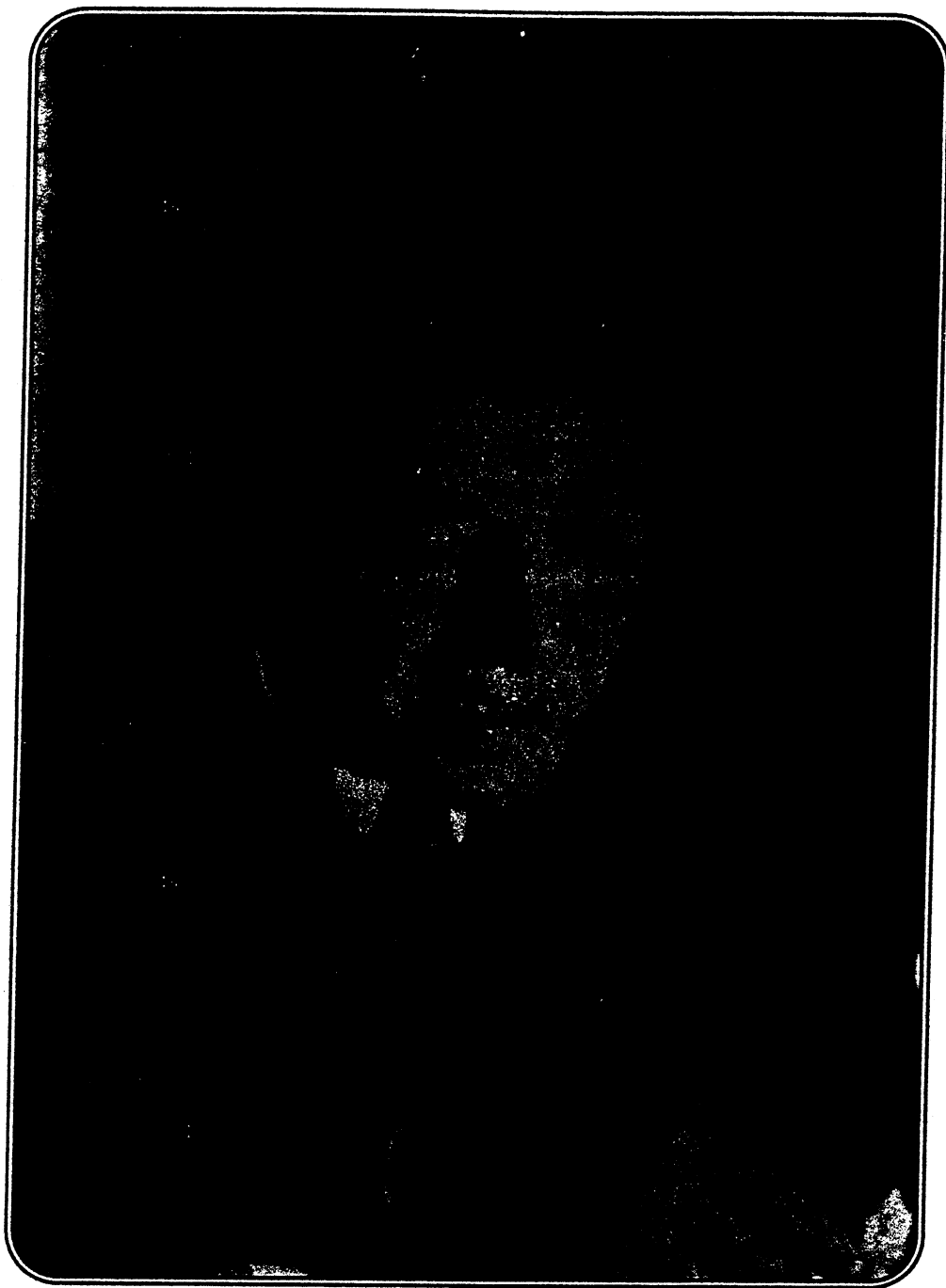
Portraits of Zishe Landau, Reuben Iceland, David Ignatoff, Mani Leib, courtesy of *Yiddish Literature in America 1870-2000*, Emanuel Goldsmith, ed. (New York: Congress for Jewish Culture, 1999.)

די רעדאקציע פון "טאג"



75 יאר יידיש פארעס אין אמעריקע

פון רעכטס צו לינקס, ערשטע רייע: ב. צ. גאלדבערג, א. זעלדן, א. לוצקי, א. גלאני, י. אפאטאשו, ש. נינער, ס. דינגאל, וו. ערלין, צווייטע רייע:
 ל. פיינבערג, ש. ז. צוקערמאן, מ. אונגער, ל. אלפערין, נ. ב. לינדער, דר. ב. מ. סייקין, ה. אקערמאן, ש. ביקל, ב. רעסלער, א. עפשטיין, חיענע נפה, ר.
 אייזלאנד, ד. טשאורני, מ. שטארקמאן, דריטע רייע: ל. באראדוולין, ע. פליישמאן, ה. מארגענשטערן, ל. שפיוזמאן, י. חייקין.
 לידער פאלן אויפן בינד די פאלגנדע מיטארבעטער: א. בוקשטיין, ב. י. גאלדשטיין, מ. דאנצין, פ. הירשביין, ה. לייזיק, ראז לעפענסבוים,
 דה. זי. מאהר, א. שמואל, סמואל, ש. ערדבערג, י. פאשא, ב. רונין, וו. רונין, ש. ראזענבערג, ז. שוסטער, י. מ. רובין, ל. פינקעלשטיין.



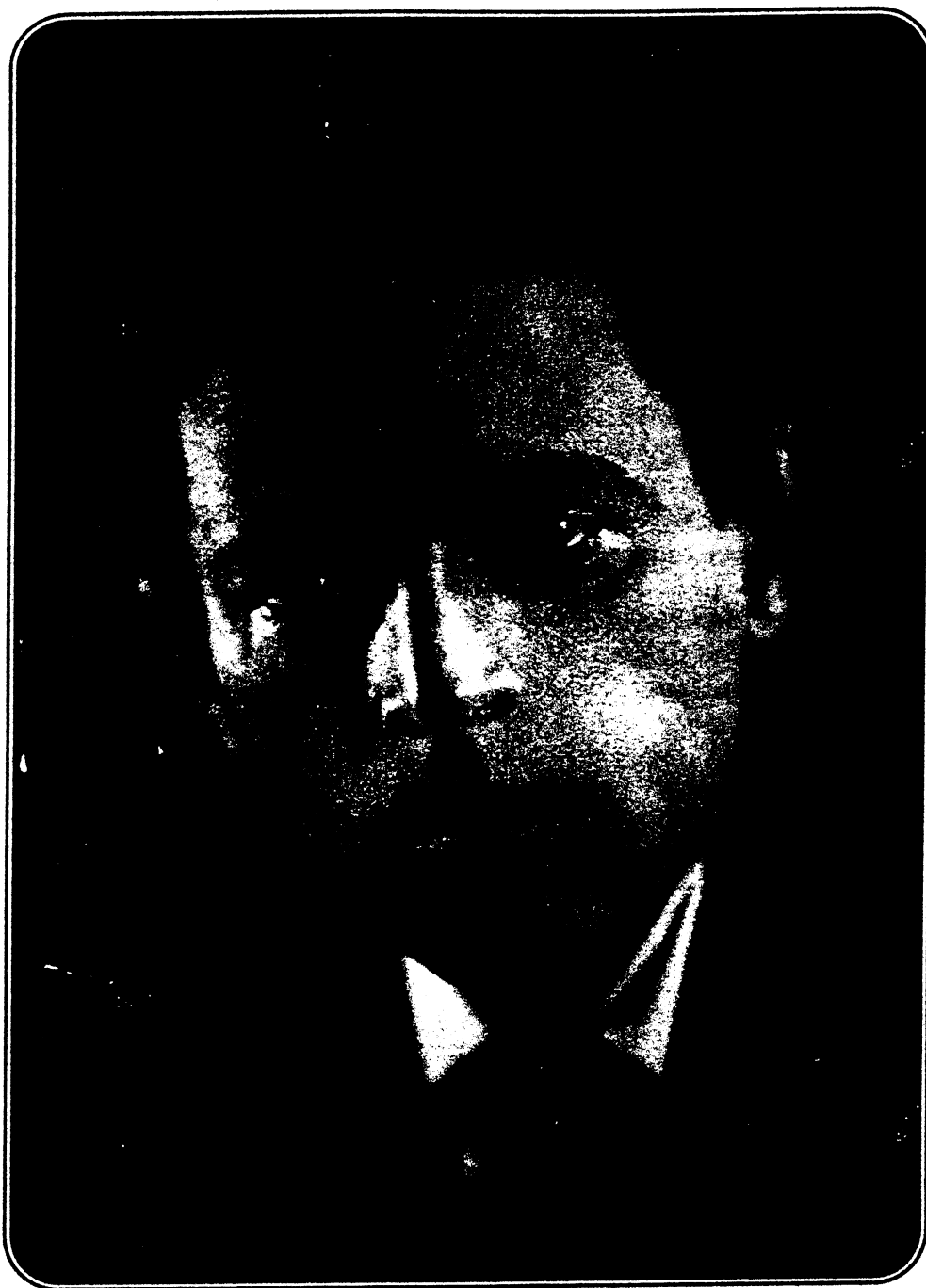
זישאָ לאַנדוי

1937-1889



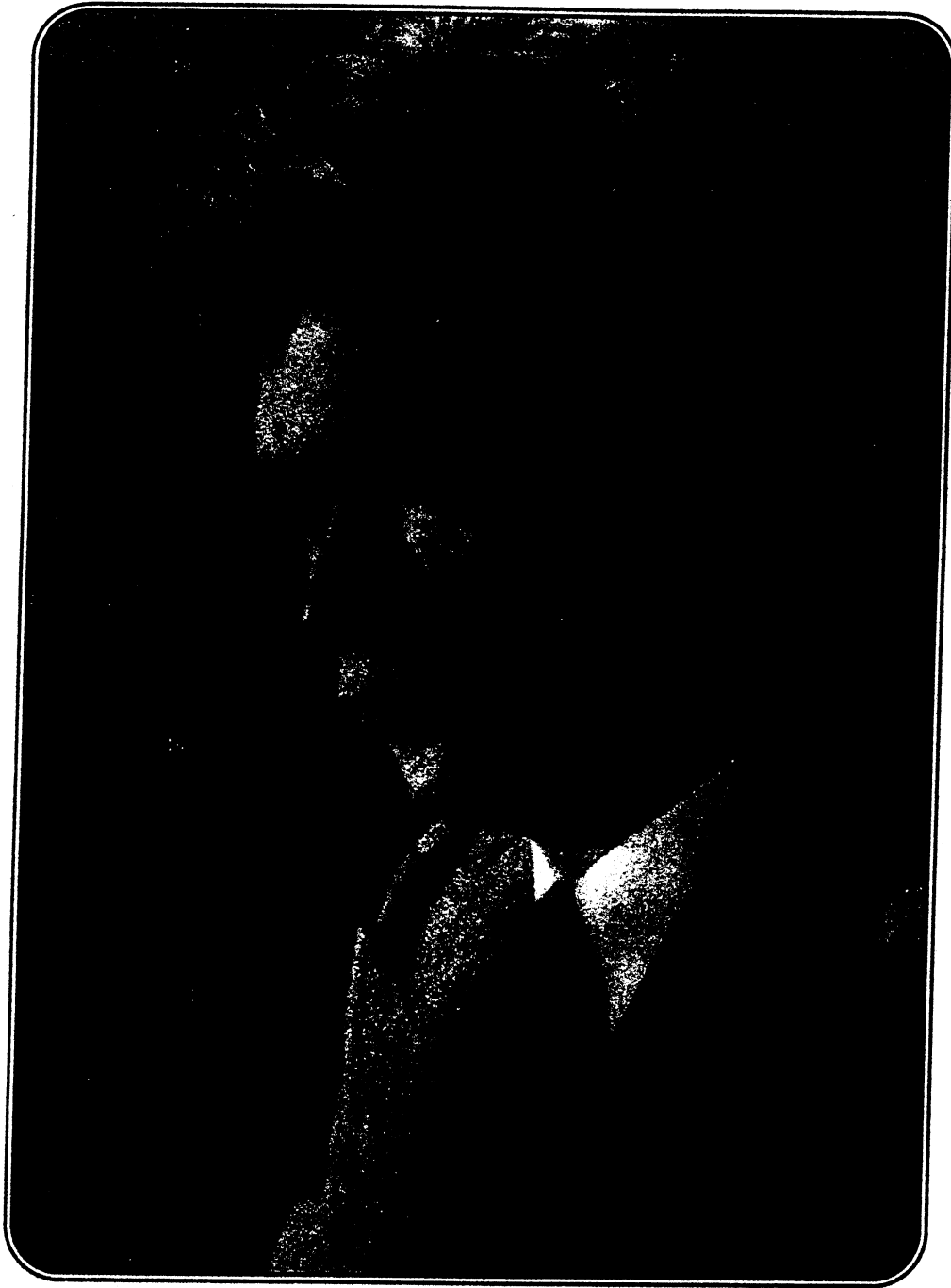
ראובן אמזלאנד

1955-1884



מאני לייב

1953-1883



דוד איגנאַטאָוו

1954-1885

