

A Milestone in Jewish Sociolinguistics

by Dovid Katz

ARCHITECTS OF YIDDISHISM AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

A STUDY IN JEWISH CULTURAL HISTORY, by Emanuel S. Goldsmith. Rutherford, Madison, Teaneck, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and London, Associated University Presses, 1976. 309 pp. Illus. Bibl. Index. US \$15.00, £7.50.

The need for a reliable work on Yiddishism has been underscored in recent years by the ever growing spread of the language and its culture among young people in far flung corners. We mention but a few recent and current advances. There has just appeared in Jerusalem a Hebrew edition of Uriel Weinreich's (1977)* *College Yiddish*. The original English version has already gone through five revised editions and fifteen printings.¹ Niborski and Lerman are preparing a new Yiddish grammar and dictionary in Buenos Aires.² Schaechter (1976) has published the preliminary edition of a new textbook for intermediate university courses. Younin and Younin (forthcoming) are preparing for publication a textbook for high school students. Ueda (1970) compiled a Yiddish grammar in Japanese.³ Yeshiva students in New York led a rebellion against the exclusion of Yiddish from a curriculum that included mandatory French and Spanish instruction (see Bard 1972). The number of students studying Yiddish in North American universities has climbed dramatically (see Heuman 1974). The Israeli Ministry of Education has announced the preparation of a nationwide curriculum for high school courses in Yiddish.⁴ The second Conference for Yiddish was held in Jerusalem (23-26 August 1976), as Dr. Goldsmith's book was in press.⁵

* An author's name followed by a date and, where appropriate, a page number, refers the reader to the appended References section.

Architects of Yiddishism centres on the First Yiddish Language Conference at Chernovtsy (Czernowitz, Cernauti), Bukovina, in 1908.

Dr. Goldsmith introduces the reader to the historical role played by Yiddish:

Never before in the history of Jewry had any one language been the vernacular of so many Jews . . . Yiddish literature attained a *degree of excellence equal to that of many of the most advanced European literatures* (p. 16).

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries it spread to North and South America, to Africa, Australia, and the Middle East. It became a truly international language rivaling English, German, French and Spanish in terms of geographic distribution (p. 30).

The leading sociologist of language, Professor Joshua A. Fishman (1965: p. 74), notes that Yiddish leaped from a folk language to "a language of scholarship and poetic finesse within a single generation", whereas other European languages made the "same steep ascent—but with armies, with tax supported schools and with official governmental recognition and intervention".

These and other factors make the mystique of Yiddishism intriguing. The movement for Yiddish can be viewed within the framework of the rise of the European vernaculars to national languages during the Renaissance (in which case Yiddishism lagged by centuries) or as a product of nineteenth century nationalism (in which case the rise of Yiddish occurred more or less concurrently with similar developments among Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Finns and other European nationalities).

Within the framework of twentieth century linguistics, the phenomenon of Yiddishism can best be viewed as a specific case of what is generally known among linguists as the *Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis* or *Principle of Linguistic Relativity*, claiming that a speaker's specific language helps determine his view of the world.⁶ According to this theory, the thousand-year-old Ashkenazi Jewish civilisation can only be preserved through its living language, and many of the theoretical formulations of Yiddishist thought referred to in Dr. Goldsmith's *Architects* use this argument in one form or another.⁷

The well-researched⁸ and meticulously prepared⁹ *Architects of Yiddishism* is the first work offering a structurally synthetic view of twentieth century Yiddishism.¹⁰ Dr. Goldsmith traces the lives and ideological development of four of the century's leading Yiddishists before the Chernovtsy Conference, their positions at the Conference, and their subsequent careers. But Chernovtsy did not arise in a vacuum; it represents but one period in the history of what we may (deliberately vaguely) call "efforts on behalf of Yiddish" for centuries before Chernovtsy and in the years since. A provisional division might recognize five distinct periods:

(1) *Pre-nineteenth century efforts on behalf of Yiddish.*

The seminal paper is Tsinberg's (1928) study, but the author has availed himself of many additional sources. Since Tsinberg's claim, there has been debate as to whether the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century "Yiddishists" can properly be viewed as forerunners of modern Yiddishism.¹¹ The names most often mentioned are: Yoysef ben Yoker,

Yankev ben Yitskhok Ashkenazi, Yekhiel-Mikhel Epshteyn, Khayem ben Nosn, Arn ben Shmuel, Moyshe Frankfurt, Tsvi-Hirsh Khotsh, Gdalye Teykus, Nakhmen Bratslaver.¹² The material already available on these and other early champions of Yiddish direly requires re-examination from the vantage-point of modern sociolinguistics.¹³

(2) *Nineteenth century proto-Yiddishism.*

During the nineteenth century the "prestige of Yiddish rose together with the growth of Jewish national sentiment and self-respect" (p. 51). The author traces the friends and foes of Yiddish during the *Haskalah*¹⁴ and into the modern Yiddishist period. The well-coined term *proto-Yiddishism* (p. 38) is used to describe the efforts of Dr. Markuze (p. 37), Mendl Lefin Satanover (pp. 38-39) and Y. S. Bik (p. 39), all of whose works turned a new page in the historical sociology of Yiddish: they consciously and explicitly justified their use of Yiddish and their writings are among the first in which the living, spoken Yiddish of Eastern Europe (Eastern Yiddish) replaced (or began to replace) the archaizing, stylised Western Yiddish standard which had dominated written Yiddish, even in the East. The author traces the development of proto-Yiddishism to Yiddishism through the ideas of (among others) Y. M. Lifshits, the father of modern Yiddish lexicography (pp. 47-48), Mendele Moykher Sforim (p. 48), Y. Y. Lerner (pp. 53-54), Y. H. Ravnitsky (pp. 54-56), Bal Makhshoves (Isadore Elyashev, pp. 67-68) and the *volte face* (from anti- to pro-Yiddish) of Simon Dubnow (pp. 56-58; cf. Dubnow 1929).

Yiddishism grew with the mass migrations of East European Jewry to England and America toward the end of the last century. The rise of immigrant communities engendered the "flourishing of Yiddish literature, press, and theater" (p. 65). The author starts the history of Yiddishism in the United States with the pamphlet on Yiddish published in 1887 by the great Yiddish lexicographer, Alexander Harkavy.¹⁵

In the nineteenth century the antithesis of Yiddishism, hatred of Yiddish, which is generally traced to the late eighteenth century Berlin circle of Moses Mendelssohn and his friends, also gained momentum. Dr. Goldsmith notes some colourful instances. In 1862, Daniel Nayfeld stormed in the assimilationist Polish-Jewish journal *Jutrzenka* which he edited: "Down with filth, spiderwebs, jargon and every kind of refuse! We need a broom, a broom!" (pp. 50-51). Y. L. Gordon in 1889 wrote to Sholem Aleichem: "It would be a sin for you to educate your children in that language" (p. 53). Harvard literary historian Leo Wiener (1899: p. 12) noted at the turn of the century that "there is probably no other language in existence on which so much opprobrium has been heaped".

In the early years of this century, the political impetus in favour of Yiddish grew. The South African parliament recognized Yiddish in 1906 (p. 96). The Bundists (who originally saw Yiddish only as a "temporary vehicle"—p. 82) participated in the campaign for the recognition of Yiddish in the Austrian census of 1910 (p. 85). Poaley Tzion established the first Yiddish secular schools in the United States (p. 93).

(3) *Chernovtsy and its champions.*

The nucleus of *Architects of Yiddishism* is the story of the First Yiddish

Language Conference at Chernovtsy in 1908, which proclaimed Yiddish to be a national Jewish language.¹⁶ Whatever protocols or minutes there may have been are lost. In 1928, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Conference, Zalmen Reyzen and Max Weinreich, both twentieth century masters of Yiddish philology and co-founders of the Yiddish Scientific Institute (YIVO) in Vilna in 1925, embarked on the task of finding and assembling documents and press reports on the Conference. The result was the invaluable volume of raw materials entitled *Di ershte yidishe shprakh konferents* (The First Yiddish Language Conference), published as part of the series "Biblyotek fun YIVO" (1931). This volume is Dr. Goldsmith's key source although he has made use of a vast amount of supporting material in diverse fields and languages, especially the academic literature in Yiddish, with which he is entirely at home.

The four leading personalities at Chernovtsy were Nathan Birnbaum—founding Zionist turned diaspora nationalist turned religious Jew—who was the initiator of the Conference; Y. L. Peretz, one of the three classicists of modern Yiddish literature, whose personality "dominated the Conference proceedings" (page 121); *Matsiyohu Mieses*, brilliant linguist and anthropologist, whose shining address at Chernovtsy at the age of 23 secured him an everlasting place in the annals of Yiddishism; Chaim Zhitlovsky, Yiddishist theoretician, who was the acting chairman at the Conference.

"In declaring Yiddish to be a national language of Jewry, the Conference symbolised the culmination of a thousand years of Jewish linguistic and cultural creativity" (p. 97). While none of the immediate plans of the Conference reached organised fruition, Zhitlovsky reminisced 20 years later that

in all our finest achievements in the fields of education, literature, press and theatre, the spirit of Czernowitz lives, acts, and gives strength to continued life and work (p. 218).

A significant contribution of the present book is the well deserved emphasis on the roles of Nathan Birnbaum and *Matsiyohu Mieses*, both often neglected in Yiddish literary and cultural circles to this day.¹⁷

Nathan Birnbaum coined both the words "Zionism" (p. 102) and "Yiddishism" (p. 109), and his long ideological odyssey is a tale in itself. A Western European who did not speak Yiddish himself, Birnbaum, unlike his contemporary German-Jewish intellectuals, had the genius to appreciate the greatness of East European Jewry. He "believed that the eternalness and exaltedness of Hebrew did not nullify the power, intimacy, elasticity, freshness, and adaptability of Yiddish" (p. 115). He said later of his efforts:

I began to wage a long war in order to raise its esteem among those who spoke it, among other Jews and even among other nations (p. 109).

Birnbaum was as much man of action as theoretician. In 1905, he founded "Yidishe kultur", the first student organisation devoted to Yiddish culture (p. 109). It was he who proposed the idea of a Yiddish language conference in the spring of 1908 while on a visit to America (p. 111). In 1910 he "led thousands of Jews in a march through the streets of the city [Chernovtsy] to the provisional government building, where a delegation of Bundists, Zionists, and Poaley Zionists presented a memorandum to the government on behalf of the entire Jewish population" (p. 224).

Birnbaum's love of Yiddish did not wane as he espoused Orthodoxy in his later years, but he grew wary of the secularist and radical parties which had, in his view, "virtually monopolised the Yiddish language", making it "suspect among the masses of pious Jews, the first and true creators of Yiddish" (p. 230).

Matisyohu Mises proclaimed to the assembled at Chernovtsy:¹⁸

The nineteenth century created the rights of man, the twentieth has the responsibility of creating the rights of languages. Affording Yiddish the right to develop is a sacred national cause and a contribution to the progress of humanity (p. 208).

Before Chernovtsy, Mises had debated with Sokolov in 1907 in *Ha-Olam*,¹⁹ claiming prophetically that in the diaspora, "if Yiddish is abandoned, its true adversary, the language of the country, will be victorious" (p. 142). After Chernovtsy, Mises debated with Ahad Ha-am in *He-Atid*. From that point onwards, Mises devoted all his talents to pure scholarship.

Mises' (1915) comparative study of the various Jewish diaspora languages established the field of *Jewish interlinguistics*, a repudiation of H. Loewe's (1911) contention that the Jewish languages arose as a result of oppression and ghetto life. Mises argued that these languages were born as a direct result of the autonomy, separateness and creative capacity of Jewish religious life. This outlook led to a chain reaction: many Yiddish philologists, such as S. A. Birnbaum (1942) and Max Weinreich (1956, 1973: vol. I, pp. 48-183; vol. III, pp. 33-156) analysed and compared the Jewish languages in what is today a fruitful and expanding field of Jewish scholarship.²⁰ Mises' (1924) historical grammar of Yiddish is likewise the work of a master.²¹

(4) *The Soviet period.*

Perhaps because the reviewed book is concerned in the main with the early twentieth century, the Soviet period is accorded only brief passing mention (pp. 254-256, 268, 271); the author has, however, provided a bibliography of works dealing with the subject (p. 272). Although Yiddish *belles-lettres* and scholarship flourished in Soviet Russia before the purges and liquidations, the ideological framework was dictated by Bolshevism and thus suffused with dogmatic anti-Hebrew, anti-Zionist and anti-religious invective. Yiddishism, on the other hand, represented an amalgam of the most diverse (and often diametrically opposed) ideologies as is so admirably illustrated in the book under review. The reviewer believes that the Soviet period does not constitute a chapter in the history of Yiddishism *per se*.²² It is no anomaly that to Soviet Yiddish scholars, "Yiddishist" and "Yiddishism" were dirty words to be hurled pejoratively at their non-Soviet counterparts (see e.g., Zaretski 1930: p. 6; Spivak 1935: p. 17).

(5) *The current period.*

The reorganisation and continuation of the movement for Yiddish after the Holocaust, despite the vastly reduced numbers of native speakers, as well as the resurgence of Yiddish among young Jews (mostly students) in North America, which picked up steam in the sixties and is growing today, are phenomena that require scholarly coverage but are outside

the scope of the present work. One hopes the modern period will enjoy treatment by a cultural historian as superbly qualified as Dr. Goldsmith.

The author believes Yiddishism "contributed immensely to the dynamism and fascination of Jewish life in modern times" (p. 17). He argues that it can best be understood in light of the convergence of historical conditions and forces: "The Jewish socialist movement, Zionism, and the rebirth of modern Hebrew . . . the struggle for Jewish national rights in Eastern Europe" were all factors that "contributed to the emergence of Yiddishism" (p. 69).

The Yiddishist movement drew support from religious traditionalists, the rising Jewish middle class, the Jewish proletariat and Zionists (pp. 265-266). It became a major factor in Jewish life in the twentieth century due, in Dr. Goldsmith's opinion, to the convergence of five forces; firstly, the awareness of the development of Yiddish to a "language of national significance and literary status"; secondly, the success of the *Haskalah* in secularisation and modernisation; thirdly, Jewish nationalism; fourthly, the Jewish working class and the socialist and revolutionary movements; finally, the "flowering of modern Yiddish culture (press, theater, literature, and education)" (p. 259).

The author considers the major weaknesses of Yiddishism to be its inability to "deal with the full range of issues in Jewish life"²³ (p. 271) and the inherent difficulty faced by any language-oriented ideology: "The notion that a language expresses a national or folk soul is essentially mystical and incapable of rational demonstration" (p. 273).

It is fortunate that the first work of this kind was written by an American-born Yiddish scholar in his early forties. The book suffers neither from apologetic complexes nor from the narrow party allegiances that afflict some scholars with knowledge of the field. Dr. Goldsmith is a friend of Yiddish himself and is proud to be one. The dedication to his family is in Yiddish and four poems, by Avrom Lyesin (p. 70), Avrom Reyzen (p. 258), Morris Rosenfeld (p. 44) and Zalman Shazar (p. 276), are reproduced in the original Yiddish.

Architects of Yiddishism should pave the way for further analysis of twentieth century Yiddishism, in which more archival materials, personal correspondence and other unpublished sources will be utilised. At the present time a work such as the book under review, which provides a broad, structured view of Yiddishism, is the most valuable contribution conceivable.

Among the many issues that might be included or elaborated upon in future work are: the sharply differing views on the status of Yiddish of Lloyd George and President Wilson at the 1919 Paris peace conference (see Tenenbaum 1958); Jewish education in the Yiddishist framework (see Kazdan 1947); the Yiddishism of Orthodox Jewry (see S. A. Birnbaum 1930a, 1930b and especially 1931). More emphasis might be placed on the role played by Ber Borokhov, whose pioneering works in Yiddish linguistics contributed immeasurably to the growing prestige of Yiddish, and who fearlessly defended the language (see Borokhov 1913, 1965: 9-157, 364-367).

Architects of Yiddishism is free of random and self-righteous prophecies on the future of Yiddish (which are perhaps better left to soothsayers than to scholars).²⁴ It is a firm work of scholarship of lasting value for students of Yiddish, sociolinguistics, sociology and Jewish history.

- 1940 "Yidish", pp. 23-90 in *Algemejne entsiklopedye*, Yidn B., Dubnov-fond: Paris.
- 1944 "Der YIVO in yidishn lebn" in *YIVO bleter* (New York), vol. XXIII, pp. 4-16.
- 1953 "Yiddishkayt and Yiddish . . .", pp. 481-514 in *Mordecai M. Kaplan Jubilee Volume*, Jewish Theological Seminary: New York.
- 1956 "Yiddish, Knaanic, Slavic: The Basic Relationships", pp. 622-632 in *For Roman Jakobson. Essays on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday*, Mouton: The Hague.
- 1967 "The Reality of Jewishness versus the Ghetto Myth: The Sociolinguistic Roots of Yiddish", pp. 2199-2211 in *To Honor Roman Jakobson. Essays on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, vol. III, Mouton: The Hague.
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- 1959 and Beatrice Weinreich, *Yiddish Language and Folklore. A Selective Bibliography for Research*, Mouton: The Hague.
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- 1930 "Problemen fun yidisher lingvotekhnik" in *Di Yidishe shprakh* (Kiev), vol. IV, no. 1, pp. 1-10.

- 1 *Yedies fun YIVO*, no. 139 (December 1976), p. 5.
- 2 I am thankful to Dr. Mordkhe Schaechter for this and other information; to Mr. Wolf Younin for much help in obtaining valuable materials in connection with the present review; to Miss Dinah Abramowicz and the staff of the YIVO library for their kind help in locating materials.
- 3 Our brief and surely incomplete listing of recent achievements in the field of Yiddish consciously includes only works whose express purpose is the teaching of Yiddish (as distinguished from the many fine contributions of a purely academic nature). Schaechter (1976: p. iii), for example, considers "Yiddish as a living, spoken language" as "the goal of this textbook". The new Hebrew edition of *College Yiddish* carries on the title page Uriel Weinreich's (1949) dedication in the original Yiddish, which reads (in transcription): *a matine di dle, vos bay zeyere kinder in moyl vet yidish lebn.*
- 4 *Ma'ariv*, 5 May 1976, p. 4.
- 5 For a masterly sociolinguistic critique of the Jerusalem Conference see Fishman (1976).
- 6 See Whorf (1956) and Sapir (1970). Both volumes or posthumously published anthologies of essays on the subject. Cf. Fishman (1972), Gipper (1972) and U. Weinreich (1944).
- 7 It should be noted that the opposite trend, *linguistic universalis*, is now very popular, especially in America. This is largely under the impact of Noam Chomsky and the M.I.T. School.
- 8 The most important possible inaccuracies found are the following:
The assertion that Wiener's (1899) work was the "first history of Yiddish literature in any language" (p. 66) might be modified to credit Blozer Shulman's work of the 1880s and 1890s (cf. Borokhov 1913b: p. 21; Wiener 1899: p. 200).
The author's claim that Mieses' address at the Chernovtsy Conference was the "first scientific essay in the area of Yiddish linguistics in modern times" (p. 139) is, technically, debatable as scientific work in the field had already been published by Gerzon (1902), Landau (1895), Manach (1888-1890), Saineanu (1889) and others (cf. Herzog 1965: pp. 1-5; Ginzinger 1938). Mieses' address, however, represented the first scientific approach to Yiddish as a synchronic structure to be studied from within (not as a subfield of Germanic philology or dialectology). Mieses' work was thus far more important for the future of Yiddish linguistics than that of his German-oriented forerunners. His outlook, furthermore, approximated more closely than that of anyone else the principles and goals of Yiddish linguistics, as laid down explicitly several years later by the founder of modern Yiddish linguistics, Ber Borokhov (1913a).
Finally, the theory that "Jews from Germanic lands brought Yiddish to Poland in the fifteenth century" (p. 28) has been discarded by modern Yiddish linguistics in favour of an earlier and less rigid dating for the origins of Eastern Yiddish (see S. A. Birnbaum 1939: p. 41; M. Weinreich 1940: pp. 37-39; U. Weinreich 1971: p. 795).
- 9 The only errors found that are not self-correcting are the following:
In two references to Tsinberg's (1928) "Der kamf far yidish in der alt-yidisher literatur" (pp. 33, 293), *alt* is missing, i.e. "Yiddish literature" for "Old Yiddish Literature". The difference here is crucial.
The philosophical notion *dialectical* is substituted for the language-geographical term *dialectal* (p. 244).
- 10 There are, however, numerous works touching on the sociology of Yiddish relevant to the study of Yiddishism. See e.g. Niger (1941), Poll (1965), Roskies and Roskies (1975), Samuel (1971), M. Weinreich (1936, 1944, 1953, 1967, 1973) as well as geographically limited studies in Yiddish sociology, e.g. on Holland (Beem 1954), London (Nicole 1966), Israel (Fishman and Fishman 1977), USA (Fishman 1964, 1965; Doroshkin 1969). All students of Yiddish sociolinguistics eagerly await Joshua A. Fishman's forthcoming book on the sociology of Yiddish (title unannounced at the time of writing).
- 11 See M. Weinreich (1973: vol. III, p. 275).
- 12 On the Khsham-Soyfer (Moyshe Shrayber) see Noble (1943: p. 17).
- 13 The sociology of Yiddish and Hebrew in traditional Ashkenazi society has received the most profound and extensive treatment to date in Max Weinreich's (1973: vol. I, pp. 251-320; vol. III, pp. 253-331) "Inevynikste yidishe tsveyshprakhikayt" (Internal Jewish Bilingualism), a section of his monumental *History of the Yiddish Language*. The reservations expressed by Shmeruk (1976: p. 6) vis-à-vis M. Weinreich's synthesis of the opposing points of view are terminological.
- 14 Unfortunately, use was apparently not made of the seminal work in the area, Zalmen Reyzen's (1923) *Fun Mendelton bis Mendele*. The anthology of Z. Reyzen's writings (see Reyzen 1965) referred to by the author of the present book in notes and the bibliography, like the other works being published now in Argentina as part of the "Musterverk" series, is most valuable for teaching Yiddish, but unreliable for research (cf. Roskies and Schaechter 1973: p. 9).
- 15 It may be added that Alexander Harkavy's importance for the rise of Yiddishism in America does not end with his 1887 pamphlet. He followed this up with a long list of articles and studies on the Yiddish language from a number of perspectives. See the bibliography issued in honour of his seventieth birthday ("Amerikaner opteyl . . ." 1933) by the American section of the YIVO. I am grateful to Mr. Gershon Harkavy (New York), cousin of the late lexicographer, for kindly providing me with the bibliography and other relevant materials.
- 16 "Innocuous as it may seem today, this resolution was revolutionary in its time . . ." (Rothstein 1977: p. 104).
Sholem Aleichem (1919: pp. 69-70) gives a beautiful literary portrayal invaluable for the understanding of the impact of the Chernovtsy Conference on East European Jewry.
On the Chernovtsy Conference and Jewish nationalism see Lerner (1957).
- 17 The positions on Yiddish of Peretz and Zhitlovsky are too well known to require repetition in the present review. See e.g. pp. 121-136, 231-235 on Peretz and pp. 161-181, 245-256 on Zhitlovsky in the present book, and, of course, the relevant articles in Z. Reyzen's (1926-1929) *Leksikon*.
- 18 The entire text of Mieses' address is reprinted in "Biblyotek fun YIVO" (1931), pp. 141-193 (see note 8 above).
- 19 I am thankful to the staff of the Whitechapel Library (London) for their kind help in locating these articles.
- 20 During the academic year 1977-78, a course in Judezmo ("Ladino") was introduced at Columbia University. It is taught by a young (Ashkenazil) scholar trained as a Yiddish linguist, Mr. David Bunis. Were it not for the chain of scholarly development in Jewish interlinguistics initiated by Mieses (1915), this would scarcely have come about —cf. Bunis (1975, 1976).
- 21 His daring theories on the history of Yiddish, especially in the area of historical phonology, have made Mieses' (1924) historical grammar of Yiddish the subject of attack by many Yiddish linguists (e.g. M. Weinreich 1923: pp. 20-21; U. Weinreich 1959: p. 34; Bin-Nun 1973: pp. 285-292). This does not detract from the originality or value of the vast amount of material drawn upon by Mieses. The weaknesses which have made the work so controversial derive from Mieses' attempt to prove origins of Yiddish sounds in terms of *phonetics* (articulatory and acoustic features of speech sounds) rather than *phonology* (the system of sounds in a language). Had Mieses' work been written

- after that of Trubetzkoy (1939), his arguments would have been formulated differently.
- 22 Of course, historical sociology could trace major threads of pre-Soviet (early twentieth century) Yiddishism being re-interpreted and re-framed in terms of Soviet dogma. On Soviet or non-Soviet Yiddish scholarship see Althaus (1972).
- 23 For an attempt to formulate a theory of Yiddishism see (in addition to sources cited by Dr. Goldsmith) Roback (1938).
- 24 Note Doroshkin's (1969: p. 179) word of caution: "History has played some tricks on our ability at prognostication. For example, the virtual destruction of Yiddish and Jewish creativeness in the Soviet Union, where Yiddish culture was making some of its greatest strides, ran counter to the expectations of most informed observers. On the other hand, the renaissance of interest in Yiddish in America comes as a surprise to many."

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