

RESPONSA

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Q. Is there a list of the Zionist press in Vilna, up to World War Two?

The simple answer to this question, posed by a graduate student in Jewish Studies at Montreal's McGill University, is "No." To the best of my knowledge no such list has ever appeared, nor has there ever been an attempt even to compile a comprehensive list of all *Jewish* periodicals—regardless of political orientation and language—published in Vilna before the Nazi Holocaust. This may surprise some readers, who might assume that such an important topic surely would not have been neglected by bibliographers. Ample material exists for at least a partial bibliography of the Jewish, including Zionist, press in Vilna, which before the Second World War was the second most important center of Jewish printing and publishing in Poland, after Warsaw. The parts still need to be pieced together, however. Warsaw has recently benefited from a monograph devoted to the history of its Jewish press.¹ It may be that Vilna's turn is next, and it is the purpose of this reply to suggest ways in which the purely bibliographical portion of the task might be accomplished.

The first step to be taken in any in-depth bibliographical search of the Jewish press is to open the two volumes of Shlomo Shunami's *Bibliography of Jewish Bibliographies*², and turn to the heading "Lists of periodicals." This section is subdivided into the following categories: *general*, *by language*, and *by country*.

A glance through Shunami yields at least three potentially promising and quite specific citations, under the subheading for Poland. *Onē* (item no. 655) is a list of over 50 periodicals, culled from an article on the Yiddish press in Vilna since the First World War, published in the 1922 Vilna *Pinkes*.³ This turns out to be a descriptive article about Yiddish dailies, weeklies and other journals published in Vilna during and after World War One. This same article was subsequently revised, and printed in the 1935 collection *Vilne* (item no. 656 in

Shunami). Appended to the updated article is a list of thirteen Yiddish, eight Polish, one Russian, four Lithuanian, and five Belorussian periodicals which were published in Vilna as of 1934, compiled by the indefatigable bibliographer Ephim H. Jeshurin.⁴ In addition, Shunami cites an article (item no. 4860) by Marian Fuks (whom he erroneously identifies as Lajb (Leo) Fuks, a noted Dutch Jewish bibliographer in his own right), on the Jewish press in interwar Poland, published in the Bulletin of the Jewish Historical Institute in Poland.⁵ The article by Fuks, which is in Polish, includes a list of Jewish serials published in Poland as of the end of 1938. The list is arranged by city—not broken down by political orientation—and items no. 141-151 cover the Jewish press in Vilna.

Numerous other leads might be pursued. Researchers ought not overlook the list of Hebrew periodicals that is printed in volume one (the index volume) of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*.⁶ For our student's purposes, though, this alphabetically arranged list has serious drawbacks, among them the fact that it lacks a geographic index. Moreover, in the articles on "Press" and "Vilna," the encyclopedia gives only the names of the most prominent Jewish periodicals published in that city.

A somewhat more approachable arrangement is featured in the 1975 volume *Di yidishe prese vos iz geven*,⁷ which is devoted primarily to the fate of periodicals published in the years leading up to the German occupation of World War Two. This book includes a chapter on the Yiddish and Hebrew press in Vilna, by Khaye Lazar (pp. 259-283). The author's approach is highly selective, but each title treated is given a thorough description. In addition, thirty-eight more references to Vilna are listed in the geographic index.

Perhaps the best source for the Yiddish press in the Russian Empire (which included Vilna) before World War One is the bibliography *Di yidishe prese in der*

gevezener rusisher imperye, compiled by the Soviet Jewish bibliographer A. Kirzhnits, (which is listed in Shunami under the subheading for Russia (item no. 674).⁸ About 130 Yiddish periodicals published in Vilna are included in the index to this rather rare item.

As Chone Shmeruk has noted, the bibliography by Kirzhnits "takes stock of the most difficult area—the [pre-World War One] Yiddish press. But for the relatively short period of 1918-39 it seems that, despite the apparent abundance of publications, there are as yet no fundamental works."⁹ The various ancillary publications dealing with this period that are cited by Shmeruk include a checklist of incoming periodicals registered at the Vilna YIVO, two bibliographical annuals, and a list of Polish-language Jewish newspapers and serials.¹⁰ The most useful bibliographical sources for the interwar Polish-Jewish press, though, are two lists by the bibliographer Yisroel Shayn.¹¹

The first of Shayn's lists, on publications in Yiddish, Hebrew and Polish issued by various labor organizations in interwar Poland, was published in Warsaw, 1963. Though this list is quite impressive, including as it does twelve chapters on various Labor Zionist movements active in Poland during those years, its arrangement (by party) is not helped by the absence of an index. Title and geographical indexes ought to have been features of this bibliography. The task, then, of ferreting out Zionist titles published in Vilna is rendered all the more tedious. The second list by Shayn is a tentative bibliography of the "bourgeois" Yiddish press of Poland from 1918 to 1939. This list, which is included in the 1974 YIVO collection *Studies on Polish Jewry*, is in one alphabetic sequence, and includes a geographic index wherein 135 items for Vilna—not all of them necessarily Zionist in orientation—are mentioned.

By now it should be apparent that our Montreal graduate student will have a complex task, should she ever undertake it

earnest to compile a list of the Vilna Zionist press. Not all of the possible avenues of approach have been discussed here, and no doubt readers of this column will be able to bring omissions to my attention. This query serves to illustrate that sometimes the raw material for answering what might seem like a routine reference question is there, but the direct answer is not available in a single source.

Notes

¹Fuks, Marian. *Prasa żydowska w Warszawie 1823-1939* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1979). An extensive list of titles of newspapers and journals—in Polish, Yiddish, Hebrew, and other languages, with Hebrew-alphabet titles romanized, appears on pp. 312-340. This list is not complete, however, as Chone Shmeruk has pointed out in his review (note 9).

²Shunami, Shlomo. *Bibliography of Jewish Bibliographies*. 2nd ed. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1965. Supplement, 1975.

³Goldschmidt, Eliyahu Yaakov. "Di yidishe prese in Vilne tsayt der milkhome," in *Pinkes far der geschikhte fun Vilne in di yorn fun milkhome un okupatsye*, ed. Zalmen Reyzen (Vilna: Historish-etnografishe gezelschaft oyfn nomen fun Sh. Anski, 1922), cols. 571-612.

⁴Goldschmidt, Eliyahu Yaakov. "Di idishe prese in Vilne in di yohren 1914-1922," and Jeshurin, Ephim H., "Di idishe un algemeyne prese in Vilne hayntigen tog (1934)," in *Vilne; a zamelbukh...*, ed. Ephim H. Jeshurin (New York: Vilna Branch 367 Workmen's Circle, 1935), pp. 339-364.

⁵Fuks, Marian. "Z dziejow prasy żydowskiej w Polsce w latach 1918-1939," in *Biuletyn Żydowski Instytutu Historycznego*, (BZIH) vol. 75 (1970), pp. 55-73.

⁶*Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Jerusalem: Keter, 1972.

⁷Flinker, Dovid, Tsanin, Mordechai, and Rozenfeld, Sholem eds. *Di yidishe prese vos iz geven* (Tel Aviv: Velt-farband fun di yidishe zhurnalisten, 1975).

⁸Kirzhnits, A. *Di yidishe prese in der gevezener rusisher imperye*. Moscow-Kharkov-Minsk, 1930.

⁹Shmeruk, Chone. "A pioneering study of the Warsaw Jewish press," in *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, vol. 11, no. 3 (Nov. 1981), p. 48. This review of Marian Fuks' book *Prasa żydowska w Warszawie 1823-1939* (note 1) first appeared in Hebrew in *Kiryat sefer*, vol. 55 (1980), pp. 591-602.

¹⁰One checklist cited by Shmeruk is the *Reshime fun di peryodishe oysgabes vos kumen on in der bibliografisher tsentrale fun YIVO, 1935-1937* (Vilna: YIVO, 1938); Shunami no. 535. Bibliographical annuals cited by Shmeruk include: *Bibliografishe yorbikher fun YIVO* (Warsaw: Kultur-Lige, 1928); Shunami no. 1265, covering mainly Yiddish periodicals currently appearing worldwide, including in Poland; *Sefer ha-shanah le-bibliografiyah yehudit be-Polanyah; bibliografiyah shel defusim ivriyim, yudiyim, ve-yudaistiyim ha-mofii'im be-Polin*, ed. Eduard Yitshak Yaakov Poznanski, vol. 1, 1934 (Warsaw: Hevrat dorshe ha-universitah ha-ivrit bi-yerushalayim, 1936); Shunami no. 500. For a list of the Polish-language Jewish press in interwar Poland, see "Bibliografia dziennikow i czasopism zydowskich, wydawanych w Polsce 1918-1939," by Yisroel Szajn [= Shayn], in *BZIH*, vol. 78 (1971), pp. 107-132 (Shunami no. 6537). This list is also cited by Shmeruk.

¹¹Shayn, Yisroel, comp. *Bibliografye fun oysgabes aroysgegebn durkh di arbeter-parteyen in Poyln 1918-1939* (Warsaw: Yidish bukh, 1963); Shunami no. 4624, and Shayn, Yisroel, comp., "Materyaln tsu a bibliografye fun yidisher peryodike in Poyln, 1918-1939," in *Shudytes vegn yidn in Poyln 1919-1939* = *Studies on Polish Jewry 1919-1939*, ed. Joshua A. Fishman. (New York: YIVO, 1974), pp. 422-483.

Hebrew Bibliographic Data

- 2. שונמי, שלמה. מפתח המפתח-חות: ביבליוגרפיה של ביבליוגרפיות כל-ישראליות. מהד' ב' מורחבת. ירושלים: מאגנס, תשכ"ה. תוספת, תשל"ה.
- 3. גאָלדשמידט; אליהו יעקב. "די יידישע פרעסע אין ווילנע ציט דער מלחמה." אין: פנקס פֿאַר דער געשיכטע פֿון ווילנע אין די יאָרן פֿון מלחמה און אַקופאַציע. רעד. זלמן רייזען. ווילנע: היסטאָריש-עטנאָגראַפֿישע געזעלשאַפֿט אויפֿן נאָמען פֿון ש. אַנסקי, תרפ"ג, שפּאַלטן 571-612.
- 4. גאָלדשמידט, אליהו יעקב. "די אידישע פרעסע אין ווילנע אין די יאָרען 1914-1922," און ישורין, יעפים. "די אידישע און אַלגעמיינע פרעסע אין ווילנע היינטיגען טאָג (1934)" אין: ווילנע: אַ זאַמעלבוך. ניו-יאָרק: אַרויסג. פֿון ווילנער ברענטש 367 אַרבייטער רינג, 1935, ז' 339-364.
- 7. פֿלינקער, דוד; צאַנין, מרדכי; ראָזענפֿעלד, שלום, רעד. די יידישע פרעסע וואָס איז געווען. תל-אָביב: וועלטפֿאַרבאַנד פֿון די יידישע זשורנאַליסטן, 1975.
- 8. קירזשניץ, א. "די יידישע פרעסע אין דער געוועזענער רוסישער אימפעריע (1823-1916)." מאַסקווע-כאַרקאָוו מינסק, 1930.
- 9. שמרוק, חנא. "ביקורות ספרים," קרית ספר, כרך נ"ה, חוב' ג' תמוז תש"ם, ע' 591-602.

10. רשימה פון די פּעריאָדישע אַרויסגאַבעס וואָס קומען אָן אין דער ביבליאָגראַפֿישער צענטראַלע פֿון ייִוואָ, 1937-1938. ווילנע: ייִוואָ, 1938.

ביבליאָגראַפֿישע יאַרביכער פֿון ייִוואָ. וואַרשע: קולטורליגע, 1928.

ספר השנה לביבליוגרפיה יהודית בפולניה: ביבליוגרפיה של דפוסים עבריים, יודיים, ויוד-איסטיים המופיעים בפולניה, בעריכת אדוארד יצחק יעקב פוזננסקי. כרך א: 1934. ורשה: חברת דורשי האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים, תרצ"ז.


11. שיין, ישראל. ביבליאָגראַפֿיע פֿון אַרויסגאַבעס אַרויסגעגעבן דורך די אַרבעטער פּאַרטייען אין פּוילן אין די יאָרן 1918-1939. וואַרשע: ייִדיש בוך, 1963.

שיין, ישראל. "מאַטעריאַלן צו אַ ביבליאָגראַפֿיע פֿון ייִדישער פּעריאָדיקע אין פּוילן, 1918-1939," אין: שטודיעס וועגן ייִדן אין פּוילן, 1919-1939, רעד. שיקל פּישמאַן, ניו-יאָרק: ייִוואָ, 1974.

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SYNAGOGUE LIBRARIES

Establishing a Policy on Gifts for the Synagogue Library

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Introduction

A library's gift policy is usually based on its acquisition policy, which in turn reflects the basic philosophy of the institution. While it is preferable to have a formal acquisition policy, it is possible to establish a written gift policy even without such a document.

These are some of the questions that arise concerning gifts to the synagogue library:

- Who accepts or refuses book donations?
- How does one decide whether to accept or reject a collection?
- What is the library's policy on money or books donated with strings attached?
- How does weeding affect donated books in the collection?

The best way to deal with these issues is to establish a written gift policy, which will aid the librarian in resolving the various problems encountered in the handling of gifts from synagogue members.

Some of my views on these questions follow. I encourage submission of alternative opinions and sample policy statements by readers of this column.

Establishing the Policy

A policy may be developed by the librarian in consultation with the library committee, if there is one, or with the Rabbi and/or administrator of the synagogue. The minutes should be recorded and referred to when the need arises.

Synagogue libraries are dependent for their support on Boards made up of congregants. In establishing policy, therefore, one must strike a balance between professional standards and public relations concerns. In dealing with members of the congregation regarding gifts, it is essential that the librarian avoid confrontation. The librarian should cite the policy and speak in the third person, e.g., "The synagogue library's gift policy states . . ."

Accepting the Gift

It is unlikely that a synagogue librarian

would seek to establish a policy which would allow for the refusal of all book donations sight unseen, as hope always exists that a hardcover edition of an out-of-print favorite will be one of the titles in the donation box. A compromise policy might state that books given to the library are accepted with the following provisos: the librarian will choose to keep the titles needed for the collection, and all books not accepted remain the property of the donor; and the library will not dispose of, or distribute the remaining books to other parties. Alternatively, if local conditions make it possible, the librarian may volunteer to distribute the remaining books.

Handling the Offer of a Large Collection

A gift policy should deal with the offer of a large number of books to the collection which may have Jewish content, be in very good condition, and even valuable—but which deal with a subject area of little interest or use to a particular congregation. The addition of such a collection could markedly change the focus of a library, especially a small synagogue library. As a consequence of accepting a large special collection, the librarian would be compelled to choose between building upon this foundation or treating the collection as a "museum piece." Offers of large collections should be handled differently from the usual small donation of books; if a decision is made not to keep the offered gift, it would be good public relations for the librarian to volunteer to find a more suitable home for the collection.

Gifts with "Strings Attached"

How should one handle a gift of a large sum of money designated by the donor for the purchase of books on a very specific, narrow topic? If the subject requested is esoteric, or if the librarian senses that such material is not suitable for the synagogue collection, the donor should be persuaded to reconsider. It is a good idea to maintain a file of alternate suggestions to present at the opportune moment.

A synagogue library is essentially a circulating library for laymen, and while it serves students, it is not generally designed for scholarly research. Articulating this view, and documenting it as part of library policy, will prevent the problem of inappropriate gifts in almost all cases.

Acknowledgment of Gifts

In some cases, the librarian may be asked to send a letter to the book donor which includes a statement of dollar value for tax purposes. Policy should dictate that this request be refused. The librarian's evaluation has no legal standing. It is suggested that the acknowledgment letter merely state that the library received "X number of used books in good condition," or "X number of new books"—together with the usual expressions of gratitude.

Book Plates

The question arises as to whether or not it is necessary to plate each gift book. I'm convinced that unless there is an explicit request to plate a gift book, not every book acquired through donations requires plating. If a member of the congregation can be made to understand that money s/he donates to the Book Fund is pooled with other gifts and used to purchase books for the library, the concept of one check for one book can be discouraged. On the other hand, if a donor offers to contribute a sum of money large enough to cover the cost of a specific, expensive reference work, then by all means, a special book plate should feature the donor's name. In all questions of plating, common sense and good public relations dictate policy.

Weeding Donated Materials

Weeding, a necessary task in all synagogue libraries, presents a problem when the books to be weeded turn out to be gifts. An example serves to clarify this point. Some years ago, a member family donated numerous works by Sholom Aleichem to a synagogue library; the volumes in Yiddish