

DREAM AND EXPERIMENT

Time and style in 1920s Berlin émigré magazines: *Zhar Ptitsa* and *Milgroym*

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Introduction

Who were those people who made Berlin the cultural centre of Russian emigration? They were a heterogeneous crowd of émigrés: the Russian aristocracy and intelligentsia, the Russian artists, many of them Jewish-born, and the representatives of various Yiddish and Russian modernist movements. Some of them proclaimed themselves to be emigrants; others considered Berlin merely a gathering point, a transitional staging post, rather than a declared destination of emigration. A further group of Russian Berliners emerged following the Treaty of Rapallo in April 1922, whereby Germany accorded de jure recognition to the USSR: pro-Soviet intellectuals, travelling legitimately on Soviet passports. Despite deep antagonisms between these groups, in many instances intellectual exchanges took precedence over political recriminations, and their encounters led to an enormously fruitful cultural production, reflected by some 150 Russian political journals and reviews,¹ as well as 34 Yiddish periodicals,² including journals of parties and organisations, as well as those addressing a wider audience, the so-called *Publikumszeitschriften*.³

There was a third group of émigré publishing outlets: magazines of arts and belles-lettres in both Russian and Yiddish. Their influence represents a topic largely omitted from previous studies on Berlin émigré culture. In this article we will outline the principal attitudes of Russian- and Yiddish-speaking intellectuals towards artistic heritage and modern art by comparing their most representative publishing outputs: the art and literary émigré magazines *Zhar Ptitsa* (*Firebird*) and *Milgroym* (*Pomegranate*). Both their names and subtitles point to a chiefly artistic orientation, and it is this very aspect on which our analysis will concentrate. We will introduce *Zhar Ptitsa* and *Milgroym* in the context of Berlin émigré culture, and compare the essential ideas of time, style, and cultural identity they represented.

Our choice of these two magazines for analysing and comparing the principal issues of Russian and Jewish émigré⁴ artistic identity is determined by their roles and mission statements. Both *Zhar Ptitsa* and *Milgroym* were most representative and influential with regard to their respective audiences, the former within the cultural milieu of Berlin émigré circles, the latter within Jewish modernist groups in Europe, Palestine, and America. Launched by the same person—Aleksander Eduardovich Kogan—they also shared much similarity in terms of typography and design.⁵ To what extent their contents were related remains to be seen. Although both relied heavily on contributions of the Berlin-based émigrés, their artistic and cultural messages were entirely different. It was here in early 1920s Berlin that the problem of cultural identity became acute for all Russian émigrés, many of them Jewish. Cut off from their roots, they not only were faced with post-war Western realities but also had to

renegotiate their own cultural identity. In fact, the problem of coming to terms with their historical identity correlated with the problem of constructing a new artistic identity, one that would be appropriate for the new context. In this perspective *Zhar Ptitsa* and *Milgroym* represented two very specific, and sometimes contrasting, approaches which we will examine in this paper.

For *Zhar Ptitsa* the idea of Russianness and Russian art was rooted in the historical passé, the present and future of Russian art still being vague.⁶ This retentive mode of vision led to a reconsideration of Russianness and Russian style as a synthesis between West and East, or Europe and Asia, without, however, undergoing any radical implementations for the programming of a future Russian art and style. Similarly to the 19th-century historicist incantations for a "new style," *Zhar Ptitsa's* contributors metaphorically called for a future Russian art without, however, describing any precise manifestation of its character.

This passé mode of *Zhar Ptitsa* was strikingly different from the attempt to spark a new Jewish style in *Milgroym* within the context of revisiting and outlining the Jewish artistic heritage: the editors of *Milgroym* tried to uncover the historicity of Jewish artistic tradition, and to relate it to the construction of a new Jewish style. In contrast to *Zhar Ptitsa*, this new Jewish style represented not only a quintessence of the preceding tradition, but a synthesis of heritage and innovative modernist inspiration. The notion of a Jewish art as such was completely new, recently discovered in the medieval Jewish manuscripts,⁷ the expeditions to Jewish sites in Eastern Europe,⁸ and the Jewish topics of 19th-century art.⁹ *Milgroym*, by means of Rachel Wischnitzer's research publications on style and symbolism in Jewish art, tended to create a panoramic vision of Jewish artistic experience.

If at first glance *Zhar Ptitsa* and *Milgroym* shared much in common, more detailed study of their subject matter reveals two quite different cultural and artistic messages: *Zhar Ptitsa* was primordially a splendid requiem upon the great heritage and offered, out of this nostalgic view, definitions of both Russian style and its European dimensions. *Milgroym* in contrast, was "historically futuristic" in orientation, discovering an artistic heritage in order to construct a new, modern Jewish style as a bizarre synthesis of historicism and modernity. These two different concepts of *time* and *style* form the core subject of our comparative analysis, which, we hope, will contribute to a more detailed study of the formative artistic moods and movements within the milieu of 1920s Berlin émigré culture, and shed fresh light on the inspiration and messages that infused into the German, Jewish, and Russian cultures.

***Zhar Ptitsa* in the Context of Other Russian Art Magazines**

Zhar Ptitsa was launched in 1921 by A. E. Kogan (1876–1949), a prominent figure in fine art printing.¹⁰ Prior to his emigration from Russia in 1920, he had edited the newspapers *Kopeika* (*The Kopeck*), 1908–18, and *Solntse Rossii* (*Sun of Russia*) and contributed to the publishing house Vsemirnaia literatura.¹¹

Unlike the editors of similar art magazines, who remained relatively isolated within the microcosm of émigré circles, such as Aleksander Drozdov, who issued *Spolokhi* (*Northern Lights*) and *Vereteno* (*Spindle*), Kogan reportedly exercised enormous influence on both Russian and German professional circles during his relatively short period of creativity in Germany. He taught the most advanced specialists of prestigious German publishing houses, who were eager to learn from him.¹² The fact that Kogan moved among Russian émigré circles and Germans is all the more remarkable, since Germans did not normally mingle with the émigrés and even ignored them, while the latter, too, preferred to stay

among themselves. Even those literary figures who did know enough German to have a conversation with their German colleagues—Bely, Ehrenburg, Pasternak, and Pilniak—did not mix with them socially.¹³ The most vivid example is perhaps Vladimir Nabokov, who under his pen name “Vladimir Sirin” published some of his early poems in *Spolokhi*. After his graduation from Cambridge he went to Berlin, not only because it was the capital of Russian emigration but also because he knew no German to speak of and cared nothing for Germany or German culture and hence thought the environment was much better suited than were either England or France to the task of becoming a Russian writer.¹⁴ In his cynicism he goes as far as talking about the Germans as personified *poshlost*—a term that stands for rudeness, bad taste, ineptitude, tactlessness, and coarseness.¹⁵

Besides *Zhar Ptitsa*, another six Russian art magazines featured the cultural milieu of Berlin-based émigrés: *Znamia* (*The Standard*), published in 1921; the above-mentioned *Spolokhi*, which existed from 1921 to 1923; *Teatr i Zhizn'* (*Theatre and Life*) during the same period, 1921–23; *Vereteno* (*Spindle*)—only one issue appeared, in 1922; *Veshch* (*Object*) with its sister German and French journals *Gegenstand* and *L'objet*, 1922,¹⁶ and finally a single issue of *Zlatotsvet* (*Chrysanthemum*), a lavishly decorated magazine, largely inspired by *Zhar Ptitsa*, published in 1924 when the bulk of the émigrés had already moved on to Paris.

The magazines *Spolokhi*, *Vereteno*, and to a certain degree also *Znamia* mainly published belles-lettres, especially prose fiction and literary criticism. They can be seen as the continuation of the so-called “thick” (*tolsty*) journal that dominated the 19th and early 20th century in Russia and through which a variety of intellectual, cultural, and literary topics found an outlet.¹⁷ The magazines *Veshch* and *Teatr i Zhizn'* concentrated on artistic culture, and did not publish many literary contributions. *Teatr i Zhizn'* devoted itself mainly to the theatrical arts, and *Veshch–Gegenstand–l'Object* saw itself as an “International Survey of Contemporary Art.”

A closer look reveals three different classes of magazines: there were first of all those functioning within the microcosm of émigré circles: *Spolokhi*, *Teatr i Zhizn'*, and *Vereteno*. Whether produced by a single editor or an editorial board, whether consumed individually or collectively in the great Russian tradition of the 19th-century literary *soirée*, in the *vecherinka*, or in the literary salons and societies, they all had one thing in common: editors, writers, and readers did not mingle with local intellectuals, a phenomenon that has been described as “water and oil.”¹⁸

A second class of magazines addressed target groups both within and beyond émigré circles, with the declared intention to bridge the gap between a potential readership in Germany and Western Europe, and the Russian communities in Berlin: *Znamia*, *Zlatotsvet*, and *Zhar Ptitsa*. Whereas *Znamia* and *Zlatotsvet* did so through almost identical parallel editions in German (*Znamia* also had an Italian edition, *Il vessillo*, which lasted even longer than the German and Russian ones), *Zhar Ptitsa* provided German translations of many articles, besides summaries in English and French, which indicates that the credo of the magazine increasingly stressed a European orientation.

The third class of magazine went far beyond national boundaries. This applies to *Veshch*—an outsider within the émigré press scene—focusing on international orientation and exchange. It was edited by two Russian Jews, El Lissitzky and Ilya Ehrenburg, who set themselves the task of acting as a “link between two neighbouring communication trenches,” and thus initiated the exchange “of experiences, of achievements, of ‘objects’ between young (Soviet) Russian and western European masters.”¹⁹ The appearance of *Veshch* in early 1922 was met by an unprecedented critical attack within the Russian

émigré press.²⁰ Published in Russian, German, and French, the magazine was radically international, and radically contemporary in that it represented an international call to avant-gardists who had been separated by the Great War.²¹ *Veshch* had no direct analogues, either in the Russian or in the Yiddish émigré press; it represented a modernist art magazine, assembling the latest developments in Russian Constructivism and Suprematism, Berlin and European Dadaism, Parisian *Esprit Nouveau*, Dutch *De Stijl*, and other modernist movements of the period 1910–20, in a wonderful juxtaposition of ideas and subject matters.

Zhar Ptitsa lasted longer than all the other magazines that could last no longer than the years of German hyperinflation (November 1921 to July 1923). Altogether 14 volumes of *Zhar Ptitsa* appeared, 13 of them in Berlin and the last one in Paris in 1926. The magazine's artistic director was the art historian G.K. Lukomsky; the poet Sasha Cherny signed himself as editor responsible for the literary section while A.E. Kogan looked after technical and financial matters.²²

Its mission was outlined in the first issue:

Our magazine's name is *Zhar Ptitsa*—what an unusual sounding name to a German ear! What does it mean? Shall we call it "Firebird" or even "Glowbird." Mind you, it is not the legendary phoenix from the German fairy tale, but rather its Russian sibling, lighting up with its glowing plumage a dark garden at midnight. On its wings, it carries the dream of nostalgia, joy and desire! We all know that weight of darkness upon our Russian homeland. Heavy as a nightmare is the news reaching us from there. Today Russian artists, like so many others, are scattered around the globe. But why should they not be given a voice just because they had to leave their country? This magazine attempts, in its own modest way, to assemble and unite what belongs organically together. Russian arts, above all the Russian ballet and theatre, are world famous; the art of Russian painting is highly honoured but, unfortunately, not very well known in Europe, particularly in Germany. This Russian magazine will be supplemented by a short, explanatory German text to summarise those Russian essays in the form of a German translation or précis, illustrating Russian life in art, above all Russian painting, ballet and theatre. We hope that our German readers will also welcome literary essays on important new publications of Russian. We are strangers in this country with its extraordinary, rich culture surrounding us like the breaking waves of the sea, and as guests we are anxious to offer, even in a modest way, what we are able to contribute. We would be delighted to see our Glowbird making friends in this country.²³

This mission statement was in keeping with Kogan's other publishing projects, such as *Russkoe Iskusstvo* (*Russian Art*): to acquaint the European public with Russian art in all its manifestations²⁴ covering aspects of painting, graphics, engraving, architecture, sculpture, literature, theatre, music, dance, folklore (rural art), and industrial art.

Zhar Ptitsa was inspired by the Russian Silver Age variety of luxurious art magazines such as *Mir Iskusstva* (1899–1904)²⁵ and *Apollon* (1909–13); this is obvious from its format and typography, besides the orientation and cultural trends set by contributing artists such as Leon Bakst, Aleksander Benois, Sergej Sudeikin, and Mikhail Vrubel. *Zhar Ptitsa* looked back to such diverse traditions as those of Russian icon painting, the *Peredvizhniki*,²⁶ *Mir Iskusstva*, and some contemporary artistic developments. Its émigré passé mood, however, greatly differed from the cultural activism of the magazine *Mir Iskusstva* while it also included refined contributions by Filosofov, Benois, and others.²⁷

Whereas *Mir Iskusstva* had presented Russian history and European culture in an *Art Nouveau* mode, thus propagating a European–Russian synthesis, *Zhar Ptitsa* accomplished the mission of representing Russian art of the Silver Age to the West, a mission that had already been outlined during the years preceding the 1917 Revolution by Sergei Diaghilev in his Russian seasons in Paris, and other activities of *Mir Iskusstva*.²⁸ *Zhar Ptitsa*'s message to European culture was probably one of the final grand expressions of the great art and spirituality of the Russian Silver Age. Alexei Tolstoi, Andrei Levinson, Sergei Gorny, and other authors of *Zhar Ptitsa* stressed the distinctive character of Russia's contribution to the physiognomy of Silver Age art, while at the same time pointing to its European character.

Andrei Levinson emphasised the expressive formula of European–Russian synthesis in the concept of *Mir Iskusstva*:

Empire of Petropol [St Petersburg], Rococo of *Tsarskoe Tselo* in their unique grace are penetrated with the influences of the West; in short—it is a fascination for the West, grandeur and refined epoch, reflected in Russian feeling. Our travellers in the “time machine” [the *Mir Iskusstva* artists] went back to rediscover the Petersburg of Pushkin or Catherine the Great—Louis' Versailles, Casanova's Venice, the “artistic paradise” of Watteau or Fragonard. When *Mir Iskusstva* sensed its spiritual calling, the Western continuity in Russian art was already interrupted for many decades, “the linkage of times was broken”.²⁹ This linkage of times was pinned together again by five or six young men, connected by relative ties or school years, who even found each other instinctively, but forever: Alexander Benois, K. Somov, L. Bakst, S. Diaghilev, E. Lansere—here are the names of these enthusiasts.³⁰

While taking forward this basic understanding of Russian art as centred on Europe, *Zhar Ptitsa* presented a variety of concepts. In a programmatic paper entitled “Russkoe iskusstvo s Evrope” (Russian Art of Europe), Andrei Levinson exposed a gradual history of European–Russian links. He emphasised that the “Russian School” had been born twice: both times under the aegis of foreign art—“classical Byzantium” and “declined” European Baroque. “Does the devotion of Russian art reduce to peculiar deformation another's undertakings in the mode of ornamentation and turbulent overflow of colour? ... Seemingly not. In the Russian ground there are certain currents, regenerating even the western blood.” The essential quest for Levinson was “what is the art that might be called ‘Russian?’” While he does not answer this question, he mentions that it is impossible to fully rationalise a history of the Russian school in the plastic arts.³¹ His article on the irrational character of Russian artistic identity certainly represents one of *Zhar Ptitsa*'s central themes and we will return to it when comparing these themes with similar approaches to establish a Jewish art and style in *Milgroym*.

Another attempt to identify new trends in Russian art was made by the concept of *Evrzistvo*.³² Within the discussion of the European prospective of Russian art some contributors to *Zhar Ptitsa* tried to evaluate a distinctive character of Russian cultural identity as European–Asian or West–East synthesis. Aleksei Tolstoi refers to this synthesis in his remarks on Sergei Sudeikin's painting: “Sudeikin combines in himself two eternal contradictions, two cultures: East and West. An ancient debate on the paths of Russian art gives, in Sudeikin's art, a strong advantage to those who affirm that the cultural mission of Russia lies in the connecting of two worlds, East and West—two hostile and separately non-complete worlds, attracting but not able to comprehend each other, like two beginnings—male and female.”³³ This messianic theme of Russian artistic synthesis as the fulfilment of separate, non-complete cultural universes can also be traced in other articles of *Zhar Ptitsa*.³⁴ It turns out to be

essentially similar to the mission statement outlined in *Milgroym*, as well as to the idea of an Asian–European synthesis expressed by the Russian and Jewish avant-garde work.

The idea of an East–West synthesis penetrated the Silver Age and avant-garde thinking throughout the Russian Silver Age, and was stressed in *Evrzistvo's* messianism. Messianic themes were characteristic of the Russian artistic mentality during the period 1910–20. The artistic developments of the early 20th century were placed into the broad and all-embracing vision of the forthcoming messianic New Era,³⁵ in which art not only reflected this apocalyptic mode, but also constituted it by constructing a new universe of forms, the evolution of Suprematism³⁶ being one of its most intriguing examples. In 1915 Kazimir Malevich proclaimed that he had transformed himself into “Zero form” and from this Zero form a development of new art and a new world would follow. The *Black Square on White* was a sensitive representation of this Zero form as a starting point, representing nothingness and infinity simultaneously. In the Russian apocalyptic discourse of the Silver Age, zero was a significant number, marking the start of a new spiritual age.³⁷

El Lissitzky incorporated this idea of Malevich in the UNOVIS almanac,³⁸ by drawing a successive picture of universal order from the Old to the New Testament, finally reaching the Communist era and, through it, the final accomplishment—the Suprematist Covenant of Malevich.³⁹ We cannot attribute to the authors of *Zhar Ptitsa* such radical apocalyptic thinking, but the theme of destiny and messianic fulfilment through contemporary Russian art was a recurrent feature.

Art is always prophetic. As in the birds' dress and flight we convey spring or autumn, so by the attire and upswing of art we guess the forthcoming days. And so, we are standing at the other side of the abyss [*bezdna*]. The past—a heap of smoking ruins. What did happen to the art? Did it die? ... It is difficult to comment on the whole of Russian contemporary art: it is stretched out through the world, and only now it starts gathering into units. But observing the fragmentary parts of it, especially in painting and music, we could foresee a new blood and a new force: the transfiguration ... Nobody knows the road Russia will follow, what will be the paths of its art, but by its tinge, by its upswing one could feel in the haze of the future a spring flowering, not the hopeless going out of autumn.⁴⁰

This almost irrational belief in the future, expressed also by the artistic forms, finally brought Aleksei Tolstoi and a few other *Smenovekhovtsy*⁴¹ back to Soviet Russia in 1923.

The artistic-poetical mission statement of *Zhar Ptitsa* was enunciated by two contributions in its first issue, delivered by the poet Sacha Cherny and the writer Aleksei Tolstoi. In his poem “Art,” Cherny evokes a dramatic picture of art as redemption and dream.⁴² Art is flight from terrible reality:

God, our awful father, templated us with Eden
And then betrayed us to the Dogs and expelled us to darkness
And only Muses with their tender harem
Like signs of Paradise come down to our prison-house

Art is a dream (“dreams will slake our thirst”), a boat of reverie (“in a boat of reverie we will be consoled not for once”), a light-garden (“a spirit crucified breaks off all bonds in rage, more and more in madness bursts to the Garden of Light”). Evident traces of Art Nouveau and Symbolist poetics of art can also be traced within this identification of art with dreaming, introduced into the world, a fragile Paradise washed from all sides by heavy waves of the world, a bout of escape from Reality. As Levinas later on critically remarked, art tends to

create a substitution for being; it is a dangerous play with reality. Art, creating a self-sufficient world and substituting reality, tends to neutralise our activity directed to the world.⁴³ This very function of Symbolism-oriented art as a substitution for reality was established in the first issue of *Zhar Ptitsa*, following through its entire history as a kind of shelter from the realities of émigré existence in Weimar Berlin.

The “Three-Dimensional” Background of New Jewish Art Exposed by Milgroym

Of the 28 Yiddish journals published in Berlin between 1918 and 1924,⁴⁴ seven contained literary and/or artistic contributions. Of those, *Milgroym* and *Albatros*⁴⁵ were the most distinguished, the former concerned with bringing respect for traditional Jewish life into harmony with Western civilisation, the latter rejecting the idea of *Yiddishkayt* aesthetics and universalism, and ultimately Yiddish itself, as well as the Jewish condition on European soil.

Milgroym appeared in Berlin from 1922 to 1924 in six issues. It was edited by Mark Wischnitzer and Rachel Wischnitzer-Bernstein, and had a cognate Hebrew journal called *Rimon*, which, though it contained different articles, was almost identical in form to *Milgroym*. Both titles translate as *Pomegranate*—the fruit that in the Song of Songs symbolises the beauty of the beloved woman. The Song of Songs has often been used as an allegory for the love between God and the people of Israel.⁴⁶

Yet, like so many other modernist works, *Milgroym* was published away from its natural constituency.⁴⁷ According to its editors, they wanted to reach out to the Jewish groups in America and the growing Jewish community in Palestine, rather than the local Yiddish-speaking Jews who were passing through and living in Berlin at the time.⁴⁸ The use of both Yiddish and Hebrew seemed appropriate to the editors for yet another reason: they wanted to maintain a scholarly neutrality in the language battle between Yiddishists and Hebraists.⁴⁹

Both editions included Hebrew illuminations, and, as we shall see, it was not a coincidence that both titles refer to the Jewish tradition. Although it was mainly artistic in orientation, the magazine also featured literature⁵⁰ under the editorship of David Bergelson and Der Nister—avant-gardists of the former the *Kultur-lige* in Kiev.⁵¹

From the perspective of living Yiddish culture, *Milgroym* might be considered a case of retreat. This point was supported by Delphine Bechtel: “In fact, the first issue of *Milgroym* had been greeted by a wave of protest from the most famous Jewish critics and artists in the East. It was condemned for displaying “popular art from the British Museum instead of looking for its authentic living forms in Eastern Europe.” The Warsaw poet Melekh Ravitch emotionally treated *Milgroym* as a case of desertion from the realities of Yiddish culture: “Somewhere in Berlin, in the smoky atmosphere of the ‘Romanisches Café,’ some of the best creators of Yiddish culture are hanging around, pretending to create a Yiddish culture. But those who are sitting in the ‘Romanisches Café’ and looking at us from afar, as we are pulling the carriage of our culture, are simply deserters.”⁵²

But what kind of Yiddish culture did *Milgroym* present? The magazine was a rupture in the evolution of “organic” shtetl-based Jewish culture. Even if *Milgroym* covered various topics on Jewish “organic” culture, and the historical passé (like e.g. Rachel Wischnitzer’s article on iconography and symbolism in ancient and medieval Jewish art, the contributions by E. Toeplitz on wall paintings in 17th- and 18th-century synagogues, and Jewish ornamented

windows, and by E. Sukenik on the architecture and decoration of ancient synagogues in Palestine), its major intention was to outline both the historical and contemporary background for a new Jewish art and culture, considered in universalistic perspective. Wischnitzer wrote later, "I have always regarded Jewish art as part of the general creative process moulded inexorably by the times and the artist's personality, rather than by national characteristics."⁵³ This universal approach towards a new Jewish art as part of the world perspective was stressed by the conjunction of material on new and old Jewish art, architecture, and literature, with articles on Leonardo da Vinci, observations on Muslim architecture, Chinese painting, and Hippolyte Taine's philosophy of art; it has to be mentioned that the evaluation of international cultural experiences broadened from the first to the last issue of *Milgroym*.

In *Milgroym's* introductory essay on "Modern Art and Our Jewish Generation," which can be considered an academic manifesto, Wischnitzer emphasised an emerging will for artistic expression and new art within the Jewish cultural milieu,⁵⁴ and promoted it as a rediscovered opportunity for Jewish self-expression and self-understanding. The Jewish artists followed the general tendency of national stratification in modern art. As early as her introductory paper Wischnitzer linked the late 19th- and early 20th-century trends of putting Jewish art into universalistic perspective.

The concept of Jewish art was noted positively in the second half of the 19th century by Vladimir Stasoff, who encouraged the development of various national styles in the perspective of Universal History, calling on Jewish artists to abandon non-Jewish themes and express their identity by turning to their history as their main thematic source.⁵⁵ The political and social emancipation of the Jews and their increasing secularisation meant that by the late 19th century Jewish artists—in the post-Renaissance sense of the word—were leaving their mark all over Europe, without having to suppress their Jewishness. Examples are Max Liebermann in Germany, Camille Pissarro in France, and Yehuda Pen in the provincial town Vitebsk, who was to be the first teacher of Marc Chagall.⁵⁶

Stasoff proceeded to characterise the distinctive features of Jewish artistic experience as compared with other nations. In his album *L'ornement hébreu*, which he published in collaboration with Baron David Ginzburg in 1905, he illustrated the variety of Jewish illuminated manuscripts, and a fulfilled vision of Jewish artistic tradition. Stasoff's concept and Russian 19th-century approaches to understanding Jewish art as part of a universal artistic heritage form a backdrop for understanding *Milgroym's* central theme. The editor Rachel Wischnitzer originating from Minsk, at the time a centre of vivid traditional and modern Jewish culture, had settled in St Petersburg in 1900, where she was involved in the cultural and intellectual milieu, and contributed to both the Russian-language *Jewish Encyclopedia* and the influential Jewish magazine *Novy Voskhod (New Dawn)*.⁵⁷ Following the concept elaborated by Stasoff and encouraged by the discovery of medieval Jewish illuminated manuscripts held by the St Petersburg Public Library, she perceived the impulse of Russian—or even St Petersburg's—understanding of Jewish art as part of a universal Jewish heritage.⁵⁸ This concept forms the central theme in *Milgroym*, supported by Wischnitzer's personal interest in Jewish illuminated manuscripts as an expression of Jewish artistic roots. She published a cycle of iconographical studies based on medieval manuscripts and eventually resumed these studies in a monograph on symbols and images of Jewish art.⁵⁹

Milgroym freely introduced a variety of artistic and cultural topics originating from an almost unlimited locus of space and time—from the ancient synagogues and Jewish medieval illuminated manuscripts to the recent avant-garde endeavours. Some of these publications had the character of truly original and authentic contributions; others were just

observations of a state of affairs. Rachel Wischnitzer's original studies on the "Motif of the Porch in Book Ornamentation"⁶⁰ and "David and Samson Slaying the Lion"⁶¹ in ancient-medieval Jewish art were the two most sophisticated art-historical publications in *Milgroym*, delicately combining formal analysis with iconographical investigation of Jewish artistic motives in the broad context of world art. Even if they were written in relatively popular discourse (compared with Wischnitzer's research papers published in English and German academic presses), these publications introduced iconographical methodology into the researching of Jewish art (iconographical studies of types and motifs of Christian and Renaissance art were launched about 100 years earlier).

Looking at the promotion of Jewish art as the expression of a specific Jewish vision, and a reflection of the recent developments in European and Russian art, one could also trace an echo of the *Kultur-lige's* modernist play.⁶² The passionate manifesto "The Paths of Jewish Painting," published by members of the *Kultur-lige*, Boris Aronson and Issachar Rybak in its almanac, presented a vision of Jewish art as an expression of genuine Jewish sensibility towards an abstract form, correlating with the most advanced trends in European and Russian art; they emphasised the historical background of "new" Jewish art, and introduced it into the context of the evolution of modern artistic ways of representation (texture, colour, form shaping). *Milgroym* responded to and further developed the *Kultur-lige's* understanding of modern Jewish art, attempting to discover and construct—in retrospect—an enigmatic and "hidden" Jewish style and hence a new Jewish art.⁶³ To this extent *Milgroym* pursued the understanding of the *Kultur-lige's* concept of a new Jewish art as a sign of Jewish sensitivity towards visual forms and the recent European and Russian avant-garde attitudes, revealed in the contributions to *Milgroym*⁶⁴ by R. Wischnitzer-Bernstein⁶⁵ and H. Berlewi.⁶⁶ It traced the historical background of modern Jewish art and architecture, together with its early historical roots, as demonstrated in the contributions by R. Wischnitzer-Bernstein,⁶⁷ El Lissitzky,⁶⁸ E. Täubler,⁶⁹ E. Toeplitz⁷⁰ and E. L. Sukenik⁷¹ and put modern Jewish art into the context of post-Renaissance art styles and techniques, as shown by the contributions of G. Inbar,⁷² G. Marzynski,⁷³ H. Struck,⁷⁴ and R. Wischnitzer-Bernstein.⁷⁵

As early as Wischnitzer-Bernstein's introductory article entitled "Modern Art and Our Jewish Generation" in the first issue of *Milgroym* this "three-dimensional" background of new Jewish art was portrayed. Wischnitzer-Bernstein outlined the correlation between the new Jewish art and its historical roots, revealing a thread from the ancient-medieval epoch to modernity, putting the so-called "new" artists, among them Marc Chagall, Issachar Rybak, Boris Aronson, and El Lissitzky, in the context of the evolution in European art. Wischnitzer emphasised the avant-garde character, with its expressionistic and apocalyptic features, of the works created by new Jewish artists, inspired by recent European and Russian trends:

The artists of today are called Expressionists. Unlike Manet, Pissaro and Liebermann—who are commonly referred to as Impressionists—they are not interested in fixing the chance impression made on them by an object in a particular moment. They are looking for the internal face, the soul of the object. These modern artists are also known as Ecstasies, because they need to immerse themselves in an object with heart and soul and to lose themselves completely in it, in order to grasp the essence of the object itself. Or is it maybe the essence of the artist himself? This ecstatic aptitude, which we find also in the Middle Ages and later during the Counter-Reformation, has now affected many artists due to the war and the turbulent events of recent years. There are those who hope that a religious art will grow out of this new Holy Spirit, that religious pathos will blossom in the arts. Once

again man and his innermost struggles are considered worthy as an object of art, after the Impressionists had reduced him to the level of mere still life. Once again the artist's horizon is filled with figures from myths, folkloric legends and holy stories.

The apocalyptic atmosphere of the destruction of the world, the holy *dibbuk* of the prophets—those are the main themes of contemporary artistic creation. We are standing under the sign of Dante, of Rembrandt, of Moses.⁷⁶

New Jewish art emerged, in the vision of Wischnitzer-Bernstein and that of the *Kultur-lige*, as a revelation of genuine Jewish, non-imitational sensitivity. The historical passé made obvious the inadequacy of a mimetic attitude for the Jewish artistic experience:

Naturalism did not have any important representatives among Jews. The tree, the lake or the mountain by itself never had any significance for a Jew, not even the human figure in as much as it is only an external appearance. The Jewish eye is never curious to examine all the nuances of a small green leaf fluttering in the sunlight. The pleasure we derive from observing a typical movement, like that for instance of a farmer working the field, a mother rocking her child or a galloping horse, et cetera, still remained completely unfamiliar to the Jewish artist. Only when art moved away further from the world of physical appearances, it started drawing him [the Jewish artist] in closer. Levitan was only able to become an interpreter of the Russian landscape after the Naturalists had discovered the elements of the landscape and the task of the artist became to organise, to build again from scratch, rather than to slavishly imitate. So he rendered a lyrical landscape, that is, nature as it is reflected in the eyes of an intellectual who had enough of the city. Pissaro could only come to the fore when the Impressionists had attempted to reorganise nature.⁷⁷

This kind of historical narrative doesn't express the "Jewish soul" (which, in Wischnitzer's understanding, is an equivalent of the German expressionist notion of *Geist*). So "new" Jewish artists, as Wischnitzer called them, diverging from the "old" ones, had to create a new paradigm of Jewish art as the expression of an authentic Jewish vision. From this perspective, she portrays Issachar Rybak as an almost "ideal" Jewish artist, who combines genuine Jewish sensibility with the new strategies dominating recent European art:

Then comes Rybak and he paints an old Jew. Many times, countless times even, he has been depicted in different versions, the old Jew. We are all familiar with them and we all loved them when we were young. Rybak's Jew is of another order. He does not owe his existence to the viewer and does not seek any sympathy from him. He is standing there, a figure, as it were cast in iron. Eternal exaltation, wrath, his destiny, a whole world. His clothes are worn-out, his surroundings provincial, like the clock which can be seen from a distance. Who has not seen such a clock then in a kitchen or a vestibule in a Jewish home in a small shtetl? That man on the canvas does not strike us as particularly sympathetic or unsympathetic. He is simply there. And we feel that here in front of us there is a being that continues to exist. Rybak accomplished this impression through his free Cubistic technique, making the man larger than life. His figure, which has been divided in gigantic building blocks, conjures up in the mind of the viewer an impression of the eternal quiet thoughtfulness of stone buildings. The spaciousness of his stylised Cubistic technique also enabled him to leave out anything insignificant or coincidental.

The wooden synagogue in Dubrovne exults in expressive opulence. Or at least, that is what it looked like to Rybak. He did not notice the submissiveness or the broken down nature of

the old building. On the contrary, he saw something of the stubborn arrogance and the will to live he also felt inside himself. The movement of the lines and the division of the light surfaces are submitted to the tragic desire of the artist.⁷⁸

Wischnitzer-Bernstein's poetical analysis of Rybak might be taken as a formula for summarizing a certain period in the evolution of new Jewish art (late 1910 to the early 1920s). Symptomatically, in search of an "ideal Jewish artist" she referred to Rybak—the representative of the *Kultur-lige*, marking a programmatic succession from *Kultur-lige* to *Milgroym*. In general, she identified "new" Jewish artists as Expressionists, who during that time—the early 1920s—were experiencing their concluding phase and were seriously undermined by the new artistic and political trends.

The Polish Jewish artist Henryk Berlewi, in a commentary on the works by Jewish artists shown at the famous Russian art exhibition in Berlin 1922, further developed Wischnitzer-Bernstein's portrait of new Jewish art.⁷⁹ Referring to such artists as Marc Chagall, El Lissitzky, Natan Altman, and David Shterenberg, he principally put their works into the dynamic picture of Russian avant-garde developments. Berlewi stated the principal characteristics of Russian avant-garde art as a whole, stressing its two rather contradictory shaping forces: the elaboration of pure abstract forms of expression, and the orientation towards primitivism (*icon, vyveska, lubok*):

More than ever the artist today aspires to a uniform and consistent form, which gives his whole creation a particular physiognomy. Many modern artists move away therefore from sentimentality, from an abundance of feeling, from spontaneity in their work, and they rely more on sober intellect, which is not as distracting as blind instinct (creative though it may be).⁸⁰

The revealing of previously concealed primitive forms of artistic expression was especially fascinating to Berlewi:

Thanks to this specifically Russian form of responsiveness to new ideas and styles, Russia has reached such high levels of artistic development in the last 15–20 years, that it has moved way beyond those European countries, whose avant-garde artists had been examples for Russia earlier. However, to claim that the new Russian art has drawn its strength solely from external sources would be a mistake. Icons, popular prints, shield painting—they have all contributed in no small degree to the search for the new. Especially the popular print and the provincial shield played a significant part in the formal transformation. Before the eyes of the artist a new world revealed itself in them, full of higher artistic values and possibilities. That which had been completely ignored earlier and considered of lesser importance has now become elevated to an apotheosis.⁸¹

In his further consideration of Jewish artists Berlewi also showed a great fascination with the primitive artistic heritage, both Jewish and Russian. Chagall, from his point of view, was able to move these two forces—romantic primitivism of the Jewish traditional world and inspiration for form—into a synthesis:

The most significant and typical representative of such an artistic approach is Marc Chagall. He is perhaps also the only artist, who has really succeeded in organizing two entirely different worlds into one holistic vision. In his works we clearly see the formal elements from which these works have sprung: the Russian popular print, the old-Jewish mural as well as Cubism. But because of his particular conception of art, which transcends

the national and personal level (despite his strong sense of individuality) and which I would like to call cosmic, he has managed to lift himself up above the formal particularity, and to bring together in his own metaphysical world two so-called diametrically opposed worlds—the exotic of the Orient with its strong mystical component on the one hand and the severe, monumental Cubism of Europe on the other—in one powerful, harmonious sounding choral. I will say it once again: Chagall is a unique phenomenon in that sense. The whole Pleiad of young, mostly Jewish artists, who are also trying to Europeanise the Jewish popular prints, display a great deal of clumsiness. They happen to lack the typical intellectual rigour that has hitherto been Chagall's monopoly, which has enabled him to realise his oeuvre. And it is not at all surprising that they find themselves in such a difficult situation.⁸²

Chagall's art, however, established a certain visual stereotype for new Russian Jewish art as a conjuncture of romantic national primitives and modernity. Considering El Lissitzky's works, Berlewi introduced a notion of "Chagallism," treating it rather sceptically. Pursuing vivid and analytical glimpses of the oeuvres of Natan Altman and David Shterenberg, presented at the exhibition, and interpreting them in the context of current developments in European art, he arrived at a debatable conclusion:

Shterenberg and Chagall—they are the only two artists in Russia who have found a positive solution, each in their own different way, for the new problems in painting. That is, they have given us a guarantee that art is alive, that it cannot be torn away violently from life itself, which is what some Constructivist theoreticians are thinking.⁸³

Berlewi's sharply subjective and competent analysis of new Jewish art was a highlight of *Milgroym's* art criticism. Only a few *Milgroym* contributions reached this level of critical inquiry while most of its articles struck a balance between manifesto and popular account. They were written with the purpose of entertaining and enlightening the reader and in this they fully corresponded to the tradition of the modern Jewish press with its emphasis on education rather than information.⁸⁴ Other characteristics of the magazine, typical of the modern Jewish press, were its bilingualism and ephemerality. Its ephemeral nature was due as much to the end of the favourable conditions created by the German inflation as to the geographical separation of editors and readers.⁸⁵

Milgroym followed up the developments of 19th- and 20th-century European art, thereby establishing a broad context for a new Jewish art. It is symptomatic that Jewish-born artists in these *Milgroym* articles were considered mostly not from the point of view of their Jewishness or Jewish topics, but as representatives of the common art stream. In general, contributions equilibrated between analytical approaches towards the strategies and media of modern art, and attempting to be accessible to a broad Jewish public, again in keeping with trends and programmatic statements set out in earlier Jewish journals. A statement aiming at widening the circle of readers of cultural treasures and making them accessible to a mass Jewish audience had for example been issued by the editors and critics of the Vilna monthly *Literarische monatsshriftn*, Sh. Niger, Sh. Gorelik, and A. Vayter, back in 1908.⁸⁶

Conclusion

Both *Zhar Ptitsa* and *Milgroym*, with two different declared missions and two different subjects of coverage, shared certain traits. Both identified the historical heritage as a corner-

stone of artistic identity. *Zhar Ptitsa* nostalgically observed the proximity of Russian culture and history, the brilliant architectural landscapes of Moscow, St Petersburg, and Kiev, and the treasures of Russian art from early icon painting to the avant-garde. The research and attribution issues took second place to the magnificent literary discourse of nostalgia, cultural reflection, and poetic sympathy. *Milgroym* followed up another challenge—to discover and describe, sometimes for the first time, works of the Jewish artistic and cultural past. The research and didactic aims took precedence over the literary presentation.

While *Milgroym* was a laboratory for implanting new Jewish art, *Zhar Ptitsa* hypostasized Russian art of the Silver Age, and only observed new developments in the émigré artistic work of Mikhail Larionov, Natalia Gontcharova, Leon Bakst, and Marc Chagall while, at the same time, almost ignoring the new Soviet radical avant-garde art. *Milgroym*, in contrast, attempted to depict and manifest new emerging Jewish modernist artists. This difference between *Zhar Ptitsa* and *Milgroym* reflected the real situation of Russian émigré art. Larionov, Gontcharova, Bakst, and other representatives of both Russian Silver Age and pre-revolutionary avant-garde circles—the main heroes of *Zhar Ptitsa*'s contributions—developed in emigration their refined pre-revolutionary style and vision, aesthetically distancing themselves from contemporary art. Chagall, Gabo, Sutin, and other Jewish painters fled Soviet Russia, and rushed into the active experimental avant-garde game of the contemporary European arts.

These two discourses on art reflected two quite different attitudes. For *Zhar Ptitsa* the heritage of great Russian art was a matter of nostalgia; for *Milgroym* the newly discovered areas of Jewish artistic history performed the role of inspiring a new Jewish art and the search for a specifically Jewish style.

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NOTES

1. Kratz et al., *Russische Autoren und Verlage in Berlin nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg*; Scandura, "Das 'Russische Berlin,'" Drews, "Russische Schriftsteller am Scheideweg;" Walravens, "Russische Kunstverlage in Berlin."
2. Neiss, *Presse*; Valencia, "The Vision of Zion;" Fuks and Fuks, "Yiddish Publishing Activities;" Alt, "Survey of Literary Contributions."
3. Neiss, *Presse*, 1.
4. In the present context, we have used the term "émigré" in the sense of Mark Raeff's definition, referring to those who refused to accept the new Bolshevik regime established in their homeland after 1917 and formed a society in exile (Raeff, *Russia Abroad*, 6).
5. As the art director of *Milgroym* Rachel Wischnitzer-Bernstein recalled, "the production of the first issue of the magazines was in the hands of Alexander Kogan, the publisher of *Jar Ptitsa* (Firebird), a Russian art magazine. The format and general appearance of our journals showed the influence of *Jar Ptitsa*." Wischnitzer, "From My Archives [a]," 168. Bezalel Narkiss, who was well acquainted with Rachel Wischnitzer-Bernstein, also confirms the influence of *Zhar Ptitsa* on the layout of *Milgroym/Rimon* (Narkiss, "Rachel Wischnitzer," 18).

6. For a brief observation of *Zhar Ptitsa's* content see Trubilina, "Zhar Ptitsa."
7. Ginzburg and Stasoff, *L'Ornement Hébreu*. Katharina S. Feil mentioned the publications of David Kaufmann, a prominent Hungarian historian of Jewish art and culture, on medieval Jewish manuscript illumination as the source of *Milgroym's* inspiration from Jewish illuminated manuscripts (Feil, "Art under Siege," 177–178). However, the pioneering research carried out by both David Ginzburg and the leading Russian art historian Vladimir Stasoff within the famous St Petersburg collection of medieval Jewish manuscripts represented an earlier source for the Berlin work of Rachel and Mark Wischnitzer, who had been closely attached to both Ginzburg's St Petersburg-based Institute for Oriental Studies and the St Petersburg Judaica circle during the 1910s (Wischnitzer, *From Dura*, 14–16. See also Narkiss, *Illuminations from Hebrew Bibles*; Rainer, "Awakening of Jewish National Art".)
8. Kantsedikas and Sergeeva, *Albom evreyskoi khudozestvennoi stariny Semena An-skogo*.
9. Kazovsky, *Khudozhniki Vitebska*; Amishai-Maisels, "The Emancipation."
10. Fleishman, "Gorki i zhurnalny proekt A.E. Kogana."
11. Rossiiskaia Gosudarstvennaia Biblioteka. Otdel Literatury Russkogo Zarubezhia: Nezabitye Mogily. Rossiiskoe Zarubezhe: Nekrologi 1917–1997 v shesti tomakh, sostavlenn V.N. Chuvakov, tom 3 [I-K], (Moscow, 2001), 353.
12. Levitan, "Russkie izdatelstva v 20-kh g.g. v Berline," 449.
13. Hinrichs, *Verbannte Muse*, 69.
14. Field, *Nabokov*, 142.
15. Urban, *Vladimir Nabokov*, 142.
16. A bibliographical commentary on all three issues of *Veshch* was published, together with translations of relevant articles, in both German and English, by Lars Mueller (Baden, Switzerland, 1995).
17. Maguire, "Introduction to Literary Journals," 1.
18. Andreev, "Vosvrashchenie v zhizni," 119.
19. *Veshch*, nos 1/2 (1922): 1.
20. Molok, "Berlinsky zhurnal 'Veshch' i ego russkie kritiki."
21. On the nationalistic orientations in the avant-garde movements before, during, and after World War I see Cottington, *Cubism in the Shadow of War*; Paret, *German Encounters with Modernism*, 133–85; Basner, "My i Zapad."
22. Lurie, *Zhurnal Zhar Ptitsa*, 5.
23. "Zum Geleit," *Zhar Ptitsa*, no. 1 (1921): 1.
24. "Khronika Izdatel'sva 'Russkoe Iskusstvo,'" *Zhar Ptitsa*, no. 1 (1921): 41.
25. The magazine *Mir Iskusstva* (*World of Art*) was founded in 1899 in St Petersburg by Alexandre Benois, Leon Bakst, Dmitri Filosofov, and Sergei Diaghilev. They aimed to assail the low artistic standards of the obsolescent *Peredvizhniki* school and to promote artistic individualism and other principles of Symbolism and Art Nouveau. In contrast to the social presuppositions that the *Peredvizhniki* had stressed, *Mir Iskusstva* emphasised aesthetic artistic values, and expressed Russian history and European culture in an Art Nouveau mode. Apart from the founding fathers, active members of the *World of Art* included Mikhail Dobuzhinsky, Eugene Lansere, and Konstantin Somov. Exhibitions organised by the *World of Art* attracted many illustrious painters from Russia and abroad, notably Leon Bakst, Mikhail Vrubel, Mikhail Nesterov, and Isaac Levitan. See Sarabianov, *Istoriia russkogo iskusstva*, 62–119.
26. *Peredvizhniki*: the Society of Travelling Artists or Exhibitions (Tovarishchestvo peredvyznykh khudozhestvennykh vystavok) of the so-called *Peredvizhniki* movement was founded by

Ivan Kramskoi as a result of the “uprising of the fourteen” (refusal of the 14 best graduates of the Academy to paint diploma pictures on religious themes). The *Peredvizhniki* attempted to reform the academic artistic tradition and to create a new realistic art, involving social processes. However, at the beginning of the 20th century the *Peredvizhniki* turned into a rather orthodox and routine critical realistic group, and new waves of early 20th-century Russian art, like *Mir Iskusstva*, emerged in evident or hidden opposition to the *Peredvizhniki*. See Sarabianov, *Istoria russkogo i sovetskogo iskusstva*, 201–42; Rogynskaya, *Tovarishchestvo peredvizhnykh khudozhestvennykh vystavok*.

27. On the concept and programme of the journal *Mir Iskusstva*, see Shestakov, *Iskusstvo i mir v "Mire iskusstva."*
28. Williams's and some other studies on Russian émigré culture state that *Zhar Ptitsa* exposed pre-revolutionary, émigré, and Soviet art side by side (Williams, *Culture in Exile*, 307–8). This statement needs clarification. *Zhar Ptitsa* mostly presented artists of the Russian Silver Age (Alexander Benois, Konstantyn Somov, Mikhail Vrubel, Leon Bakst, Isaak Levitan, Boris Grigoriev, Mikhail Larionov, Natalia Gontcharova, Leonid Pasternak, and others). Some of them actively continued their work after the Revolution abroad, e.g. Bakst, Larionov, and Gontcharova, who were artistically shaped before 1917. *Zhar Ptitsa* referred to their post-revolutionary works, usually in the context of their pre-revolutionary activities. Only briefly and occasionally did *Zhar Ptitsa* consider the works of post-revolutionary “Soviet” artists (as e.g. in Osborn's short review on the Russian Art Exhibition in Berlin, “Russkaia Khudozhestvennai vystavka v Berline”), the major events of avant-garde Russian Soviet art during the early 1920s—Constructivism, Suprematism, and others—being practically ignored.
29. I.e., the linkage of European continuity in Russian art, interrupted by the “critical realism” of the *Peredvizhniki*.
30. Levinson, “Somov,” 17.
31. Levinson, “Russkoe iskusstvo s Evrope,” 10, 13–14.
32. *Evraziistvo* (Eurasianism): an original concept of Russian cultural identity which was first outlined in N. S. Trubetskoi's *Evropa i Chelovechestvo*, and later on elaborated in Russian émigré literature and the philosophical discussions of the 1920s and 1930s. Critically considering the limitations of European and Eastern (Asian) civilisations, the Eurasianists emphasised a unique cultural mission of Russia. The idea of Eurasianism was developed by L. Karsavin, P. Savitsky, G. Florovsky, and other Russian émigré thinkers during the 1920s and 1930s, emphasising the continuation of Russian culture following the 1917 Revolution, and its spiritual mission (Böss, *Die Lehre der Eurasier*; Tolstoi, “Trubetzkoy i Evraziistvo;” Ivanov, *Evraziiskoe prostranstvo*).
33. Tolstoi, “Pered kartinami Sudeikina,” 28.
34. Makovsky, “Vrubel,” 21–26; Isarlov, “M. F. Larionov,” 26–30; Eganbury, “Gontcharova i Larionov,” 39–40.
35. Katzis, *Russkaia eskhatologiya i Russkaia literatura*.
36. Suprematism (from Latin *supremus*) was elaborated by Malevich from the 1910s as an abstract artistic strategy aimed at creating a new non-objective “Suprematist order” that was artistic and universal at the same time. Suprematism was introduced at the “0–10” exhibition (1915) in St Petersburg. Among other works, Malevich presented the famous *Black Square on White*, conceived during his earlier work on the opera *Victory over the Sun*. Malevich wrote in *The Non-Objective World*, “When, in the year 1913, in my desperate attempt to free art from the ballast of objectivity, I took refuge in the square form and exhibited a picture which

consisted of nothing more than a black square on a white field, the critics and, along with them, the public sighed, 'Everything which we loved is lost. We are in a desert ... Before us is nothing but a black square on a white background!'" During the later 1910s, Suprematism became an important avant-garde trend pursued by O. Rozanova, El Lissitzky, I. Kliun, I. Puni, and other artists. In post-revolutionary Russian art and architecture it was paralleled by the development of Constructivism; the competition between Suprematism and Constructivism shaped Russian avant-garde art in the early 1920s (Sarabianov and Shatskiy, *Kazimir Malevich*).

37. Apocalyptic numerologies of the Russian Silver Age regularly introduced "Zero" as a sign-measure of a new age (Katzis, *Rusaskaia eskhatologiya*, 12–34).
38. UNOVIS: Affirmers of New Art. The group was formed as an association of students of Kazimir Malevich at the Vitebsk Art School (1919–21).
39. Lissitzky, *Suprematizm zhyznestroitel'stva*. See the interpretation of Dukhan, "El Lissitzky, evreyskii styl, avangard."
40. Tolstoi, "Pered kartinami Sudeikina," 24–26.
41. Aleksei Tolstoi moved to Berlin in 1921 and joined the *Smenovekhovty*. (*Smena Vekh*: volte-face group gathering around the magazine *Nakanune*. *Smena Vekh* in fact moved gradually to an idealistic recognition of the Soviet regime and many of its members decided to return from emigration to the USSR.)
42. Cherny, "Iskusstvo," 6.
43. Lévinas, "La Réalité et son ombre;" Dukhan, "Ethics of Representation."
44. Neiss, *Presse*, 14.
45. Avant-garde magazine published by Uri-Zvi Grinberg. Only the last issue (nos 3–4) appeared in Berlin in 1923.
46. Marten-Finnis and Valencia, *Sprachinseln*, 79–100.
47. Wolitz, "Between Folk and Freedom."
48. Wischnitzer, "From My Archives [b]," 7.
49. Feil, "Art under Seige," 168.
50. It contained poems by two fellow members of the original *Kiewer grupe*, Leyb Kvitko and Dovid Hofshsteyn, as well as Moshe Kulbak and Aaron Kushnirov. All of them, with one exception, were Symbolist in approach. Only Hofshsteyn's "Di lid fun mayn glaykhgilt" is avant-garde, even in the Grinbergian sense of referring to the motif of the brotherhood of Jesus. See Alt, "Survey of Literary Contributions."
51. Members included Zelig Kalmanovich, Nokhum Shtif, Volf Latski-Bertoldi, Dovid Bergelson, Boris Aronson, Issachar Ber Rybak, Leyb Kvitko, and Joseph Tschaikov. It was not by chance that such a group was established in Kiev, since, as early as the beginning of the 20th century, Kiev was one of the centres of Yiddish literature, and after the 1917 February Revolution became a major centre of diverse Yiddish cultural activities. Founded in 1918, the *Kultur-lige* functioned for nearly three tumultuous years during the time of revolutionary ferment and civil war in the Ukraine. Not affiliated with any political party, the *Kultur-lige's* general goal was to foster an international movement for Yiddish culture, and it managed to operate on many cultural fronts throughout the Ukraine during a succession of political regimes, establishing schools of music, art, and drama, a publishing house, and a central library, besides producing literary and pedagogical journals. When the Soviet government gained control of the Ukraine in late 1920, it removed from office the non-Bolshevik members of the *Kultur-lige's* Central Committee and in the winter of 1921 the entire organisation was closed down. Six of its leaders left for Warsaw at that time,

- intending to continue the cultural and political work they had begun in Kiev, while others moved on to Berlin. See Kazovsky, *Artists of the Kultur-lige*, 16.
52. Bechtel, "Milgroym," 423.
 53. Wischnitzer, *From Dura*, 166.
 54. Wischnitzer-Bernstein, "Modern Art and Our Jewish Generation."
 55. Rajner, "Awakening of Jewish National Art."
 56. Bohm-Duchen, "Road from Vitebsk," 60.
 57. Narkiss, in Wischnitzer, *From Dura*, 12–16.
 58. Ginzburg and Stasoff, *L'Ornement Hébreu*.
 59. Wischnitzer-Bernstein, *Symbole und Gestalten der Jüdischen Kunst*.
 60. Wischnitzer-Bernstein, "Motif of the Porch."
 61. Wischnitzer-Bernstein, "David and Samson Slaying the Lion."
 62. On the *Kultur-lige's* artistic statement and activities see Kazovsky, *Artists of the Kultur-Lige*.
 63. Dukhan, "El Lissitzky," 313–40.
 64. The titles of articles in Yiddish will be given in translation only.
 65. Wischnitzer-Bernstein, "Modern Art and Our Jewish Generation."
 66. Berlewi, "Jewish Artists in Russia."
 67. Wischnitzer-Bernstein, "Motif of the Porch; "David and Samson Slaying the Lion;" "Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts in Munich."
 68. Lissitzky, "Synagogue of Mohilev."
 69. Täubler, "Biblical Stories."
 70. Toeplitz, "Wall Paintings in Synagogues."
 71. Sukenik, "Ancient Synagogues in Palestine."
 72. Inbar, "Lithograph."
 73. Marzynski, "Modern Portrait."
 74. Struck, "The Engraving."
 75. Wischnitzer-Bernstein, "Max Liebermann;" "Emanuele Glicenstein."
 76. Wischnitzer-Bernstein, "Modern Art and Our Jewish Generation."
 77. *Ibid.*, 2.
 78. *Ibid.*, 6–7.
 79. Berlewi, "Jewish Artists in Russia."
 80. *Ibid.*, 16.
 81. *Ibid.*, 14.
 82. *Ibid.*, 15.
 83. *Ibid.*, 16.
 84. Marten-Finnis, *Vilna as the Centre*, 41–44.
 85. Alt, "The Berlin *Milgroym* Group."
 86. *Literarische monatsschriftn* (Vilna) 1 (1908), cols 5–10, cited in: Alt, "Ambivalence toward Modernism."

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