

LETTERS

TO THE EDITORS:

Bernard Choseed in his "Categorizing Soviet Yiddish Writers" (*Slavic Review*, March 1968) states that "*Sovetish Heimland* gave material proof that the overwhelming majority of established Soviet Yiddish writers who had flourished through 1948 had survived the holocaust" (p. 104). Unfortunately it is not true. Mr. Choseed quotes correctly that *Sovetish Heimland* in its very first issue published a list of 111 writers who would regularly participate in the journal. However, there were in the Soviet Union in 1941, before the outbreak of the Soviet-German war, nearly 800 Yiddish writers, journalists, researchers, scholars, and translators. About fifty writers fell on the various battlefields or died from war wounds. We will assume that one hundred died a natural death during the war years, and the years following the war. Still there were about 650 Yiddish writers at the end of 1948 when the liquidation of Yiddish culture began. At that time most of these writers were arrested. About thirty writers, the most creative and most prominent, were executed in August 1952.

Since about 111 writers were listed in the Moscow Yiddish journal, we assume that only these survived the holocaust, although they were in the concentration camps. Subtracting from the original figure of 800 (I have all their names) those who died a natural death (maximum 100), those who were executed in August 1952 (30), those who are listed in *Sovetish Heimland* (111), there are still missing more than 500 writers. We can therefore assume that they died in various camps.

As for Tsodek Dolgopolski—he was arrested during the purges of 1936–38, but evidently he was released. Since his books appeared in Russian during the holocaust, it is clear that he was not among those arrested during 1948–52. In *Sovetish Heimland*, No. 4, 1964, there is a note that he died on July 16, 1959.

Since he could not publish anything in Yiddish during the "dark period," he published in Russian. The note in *Sovetish Heimland* lists his Yiddish books, but does not mention any Russian works. Apparently the two books that Bernard Choseed lists by Dolgopolski that were published in Russian in 1955 and 1959 were translated from the Yiddish, either from the manuscript or from a book previously published in Yiddish. The book that Choseed mentions, *Na beregakh Sylvy*, is apparently a translation from his Yiddish book *Af Der Linker Zeit*.

As for Emmanuil Kazakevitch—it is clear that since he knew Russian very well, he drifted into Russian literature because it provided greater opportunities than Yiddish literature. But the fact that he himself translated his novel *Zvezda* into Yiddish shows that he did not abandon Yiddish literature.

April 16, 1968

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TO THE EDITORS:

Permit me to comment on that part of William W. Brickman's review of *Religion and the Search for New Ideals in the USSR* that discusses the article by Hans Lamm on Soviet Jews and Judaism (*Slavic Review*, March 1968, pages 172–73). Though at first I shared Mr. Brickman's feeling that it "has little to offer on religion and is but vaguely related to the theme of the book," I have since had reason to change my mind. Lamm's first paragraph begins, "It seems necessary to begin by clarifying the