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Looking for Yiddishland: Galicia in the Interwar Yiddish Travelogues

Introduction

In 1928, Yoel Mastboym (1882–1957), a Jewish journalist from Warsaw, traveled to former Galicia alias Lesser Poland (Malopolska), then a part of the newly established Polish state. He intended to publish short travel reportages from the region for the Warsaw Yiddish journal *Der Moment* (Shmuel Mastboym, 46). His trip included both the western and eastern part of the former Austrian province and thirty-five cities and towns all over the region, big and small. One of the places was the provincial town Tarnów in the western part. There Mastboym met mostly very acculturated Jewish families, who already spoke only Polish and called themselves "Poles of Mosaic fate" (Yoel Mastboym, 96). However, he paid attention that young people in these families were much more engaged with Jewish and Yiddish culture than the older generation, read modern Jewish scholarship, and laughed at their parents who did not know who wrote "The Golden Chain."[1] Mastboym was fascinated with this scene and Tarnów, which, being so much acculturated, finally turns to Jewish culture and "acquires contrast features of a big Yiddish center." The acculturation did not seem irreversible anymore, and the new generation of Galitzianers became interested in the Yiddish revival. This episode from Tarnów may explain the interest of numerous Jewish Yiddish-speaking journalists, writers, and travelers, such as Mastboym, Chone Gottesfeld (1890–1964), Leibush Draykurs (1894–1941), Nachman Meisel (1887–1966), or Israel Joshua Singer (1893–1944), who visited Galicia in the interwar period. Yiddishists from reunited Poland sought to understand the

[1] "The Golden Chain" or "Di goldene keyt" – a drama written by Itzhok Leibush Perez in 1909, a classic of modern Yiddish literature.

meaning and place of Yiddish culture in the modern world. Galicia, as a land of famous Hasidic tzaddikim, maskilim, Broder singers, had a unique sense for them, as the place of authentic and varied Jewish culture. They wished to know its history, but even more, they sought to see the transformations of Galicia in modern time and understand its place in the contemporary mental map of new Jewish and Yiddish culture. This search, however, often meant constructing Galicia, at least in the imagination of those authors. Reportages of Yiddish authors from Poland depict Galicia, which looks like lost and forgotten Yiddishland. Instead of opposition between western and eastern Jews, those texts show us a different perspective and reflect subtle differences within Polish Jewry.

This article analyzes how Polish Yiddish-speaking authors put Galicia on their mental map. I argue that their approach and understanding originated in perceiving Warsaw and its cultural milieus as the main center of Yiddish culture. They understood that Jewish Galicia was culturally different from other parts of Poland. It seemed more Germanized, acculturated, and less antisemitic, yet missing substantial Yiddish movement. Though they mentioned economic and social differences, cultural advance and especially Yiddish development was the main point of interest for them or the newspapers that published their reportages. The acculturation of local Jews was an obstacle that they hoped to overcome through sufficient cultural work.

Despite the richness of Yiddish travel reportages from Galicia, only a few historians focused on them in their researches of the region. Historian Larry Wolff in his book about how the construction of the concept of Galicia in literature, wrote on "Galicia after Galicia," the aftermath of this concept, which may be visible among others, in travelers' accounts from the interwar period. Wolff noticed how much the postwar landscape influenced the authors', such as Alfred Doblin's, imagination. For him, anything renovated in Galicia was nonsense that did not match the general atmosphere of decay (Wolff, 389). Literary scholar Maria Kłańska and historian Markian Prokopovych focused on German-language literature on Galicia and the issues of Orientalizing local Jewish population (Kłańska, Prokopovych). Historian Boerries Kuzmany analyzed travel reports from the nineteenth and twentieth century describing Brody, a significant Galician town on the Russian empire's border. Kuzmany explained that an encounter with Galicia was a meeting with the oriental other, even when travelers came from nearby countries (Kuzmany, 265). Researchers of the Yiddishist movement in Poland tried to explain this uneven development of Yiddish culture in Galicia and Poland. However, they mostly focused on belles-lettres and literary circles. Historian Gabriele Kohlbauer-Fritz explained that the scarcity of the Yiddish

movement of Galicia originated from Habsburg language politics and complex social structure. The languages of local Jewish culture were mostly German and Polish, and only in the interwar period, Yiddish movement became more active (Kohlbauer-Fritz, 167). However, for the other parts of the Jewish world, especially for Warsaw literary circles, Yiddish was crucially important. Historian Delphine Bechtel observed that Yiddish skipped the "official language" stage, becoming supranational, embracing cultural unity instead of territorial (Bechtel, 46). This article will show how writers from other parts of Poland tried to include Galicia in their Yiddishist world. Unlike most Yiddishism scholars in the interwar period, I will focus on reportages rather than politics or literature. The reportages provide a better understanding of the Yiddish language and culture on a mental map.

Galicia was an artificially created province, a result of the first partition of Poland in 1772. The Jews of the Polish Commonwealth became split between two countries and the borders, forming distinct cultures. In 1918 former Galicia became part of the Second Polish Republic and received a new name – Małopolska (Lesser Poland). Still, in the travelogues, the name Galicia remained very persistent. Authors even kept the division between Eastern (*mizrekh*) and Western (*mayrev*) Galicia, emphasizing the differences. For example, Mastboym wrote that cultural life in Western Galicia was much quieter than in Eastern (Yoel Mastboym, 5). The usage of old terminology for interwar Poland helped writers to comprehend the distinctions between its parts.

In the interwar period, both the Soviet Union and Poland encountered rapid development of Yiddish culture, each country in its way. Warsaw and Moscow were two metropolises, and each could deserve a title of Yiddish cultural center – until 1939 (Fishman, 84). As every metropolis, Warsaw served as a hub for intellectuals, who grew up in different places but later came to the capital. Mastboym, who came from Międzyrzec Podlaski, also did not initially belong to Warsaw but felt strongly connected to this place. Mastboym was a journalist, a left-wing activist, born in Międzyrzec Podlaski to a proletarian family, worked as a journalist in Warsaw in the 1920s, and then left for Palestine (Shmuel Mastboym, 7). Already in the 1920s, he wrote in Yiddish and Hebrew fiction and non-fiction novels. Mastboym took an active political position and was associated with Jewish socialism (Ravitch, 129).

The golden age of the Yiddish press

Yiddish press, growing numbers of publishing houses and libraries were a few of the most evident emerging Yiddishist cultures. The international profile and interest of the local press are striking. For instance, the newspaper *Der Haynt* had correspondents in eight countries, including Palestine, Germany, and the USA (Fishman, 87). *Der Haynt* was founded in 1908, and after World War I became a central press organ of Zionist organization in Poland (Cohen, Haynt). Yiddishists' belief in the Yiddish language as central to Jewish people's identity became a focal point of the folkist political movement, whose target audience was middle-class Jews. The newspaper *Der Moment*, founded in 1910 and edited by Noah Pryłucki (1882–1941), a journalist and political activist, was the central media for the folkist movement and a broader forum for Yiddish writers and speakers. It was the main competitor of *Der Haynt,* mostly not in the ideologic, but private terms (Weiser, 65). The third newspaper, *Literarishe bleter* was founded in 1924 by Warsaw writers and specialized mainly in popularizing Yiddish literature among a broader audience (Cohen, Literarishe bleter).

Though the newspaper editors could have had different political and ideological affiliations, the belief in the Yiddish language's importance was common to them. Their tools to engage the readers were similar, including travelogues as one of the most popular genres in the interwar period. That is why I prefer to look at the newspaper publications, as a part of a new travelogue trend.

The Yiddish travelogues in Galicia interested not only the Warsaw Yiddish newspapers. In 1916–1917, a writer and researcher Shmuel Hurvits (1862–1943) under the pseudonym A. Litvin published in New York several volumes with his impressions from travels in Poland, which were called *Yidishe neshomes* (Jewish souls) and included, among others, the volumes: *Lite* (Lithuania), *Poyln* (Poland), and *Galitsiyen* (Rajzen, 144). He compiled the book of his impressions from visits to Galician towns, stories, and tales collected there. Everything that could have been of any interest in Galicia was in the past, not in the present; that is why the text reminds a historic book rather than modern reportage and stands out of other texts that I mention here.

The leading Yiddish New York Newspaper *Forverts* in 1924 sent its correspondent Israel Joshua Singer, a famous Yiddish author based in Warsaw, to Galicia. Israel Singer (1893–1944) has published his impressions both under the pseudonym G. Kuper and his true name (Norich, 4). *Forverts* was the world's oldest and largest Yiddish newspaper, and it allotted much space to European matters and problems. The newspaper advertised Singer's pieces as a real testimony about "old-fashioned life in our old home" (Notitsn fun der "Forverts" redaktsiye, 4).

The interwar period was a time when Polish reportage culture rose. Warsaw became the center of the Jewish Yiddish press, the hub of the journalist network. Reporters from various exotic countries sent their relations to newspapers. Some articles later were published as a book. Newspaper editors tried to involve famous writers in providing serialized novels to the newspaper (Cohen, 2008, 162). The travelogues sometimes also came in serialized version. This reportages' style was sharp and dynamic; they included conversations with locals and the authors' impressions. Yiddish reportages focused mainly on Jewish life, including religious life, especially Hasidism and its influence. A remarkable feature common for most reportages was giving an overview of Jewish social life in different locations, embodied in Zionist organizations, self-organized communities, cultural organizations, theatres, and schools. Reporters tried to talk with local Jewish activists, and Mastboym and A. Litvin even added short essays about interesting people. Visits to Galician towns happened not only for the sake of writing a vivid and exciting story but of the desire to understand how local Jewish communities integrated into the broad Jewish and Yiddishist world. They described non-Jewish life and included Poles and Ukrainians in the story, solely for emphasizing how other nations were related to the Jews.

Galicia was a contested space for interwar Warsaw writers who tried to understand it and accommodate in their vision of a new country. They were interested in traveling there, perceiving it as slightly backward and describing it in their reportages. Nevertheless, Galicia was attractive not only for the Yiddish-speaking writers and audience. German writer Alfred Döblin (1878–1957) visited Galicia in 1924 and admired Galician similarity to Europe and the people's warm and soft character. It differed from the rest of Poland, which felt like Russia. The presence of Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews and national tension between the first two nations was another thing to be discovered and noticed (Wolff, 385). The Yiddish speaking author's distinctiveness was in thinking about Galicia as of cultural project they ought to develop.

Galicia as a Jewish land

The destinations of their travels became very diverse, as well as the themes they covered. Researcher Yury Vedenyapin in his doctoral thesis devoted to Yiddish travelogues, mentions that these travelogues' destinations fall into two categories, those which focus on specifically Jewish locations and those which do not focus on them (Vedenyapin). Yiddish reportages from Galicia fall in the first category.

Though authors paid attention to Ukrainians' or Poles' lives, they mostly described them in relation to Jewish life. For example, a traveler and reporter, Khaim Shoshkes (1891–1964), who published his reportages in the newspaper *Haynt* in 1926, mentioned Ukrainian-Jewish relations in Lviv (Lwów, Lemberg). He starts his article by observing that Ukrainians and the Ukrainian language looked underrepresented on the city streets, but Ukrainian people felt powerful and influential. He uses this introduction to speak further about complicated Jewish-Ukrainian-Polish relations in Galicia (Shoshkes, 3). Similarly, listening to Ukrainian folksongs near Ternopil (Tarnopol), Shoshkes is fascinated by singing, which reminded him about Myrhorod, Poltava, and Nizhyn in east Ukraine. However, he cannot separate those feelings from the traumatic memory of Khmelnytskyi's uprising. He feels guilty for this fascination: "Why do we forget about Kmelnytskyi and would non-stop like to hear musical sounds of Ukrainian fields?" (Shoshkes, 3). Both Shoshkes and Singer described the striking difference between the former Congress Poland and Galicia through the latter's absence of antisemitism. For Shoshkes, Galicia "lacks an instinctive [interethnic] hatred," noticeable in the former Congress Poland (Shoshkes). Singer, traveling from Warsaw to Cracow in 1924, compares the atmosphere on a train in Congress Poland and Galicia. In the former, if a Jew had to sit in one compartment with Poles, he always felt hostility and tension, observed "sour faces," and was afraid of saying or doing something wrong or disturb his neighbors. However, on the train to Galicia, the compartment mood felt different. Jews and Gentiles traveled together, smiled at each other, and there was no tension feeling anymore. *"No one looks on your face if you have a straight or hooked nose if you are dark or blond"*(Kuper, Unzer korespondent 4).

Thus, the reportages' main interest was to describe Jewish life, activities, and culture in Galicia, and they considered mentioning other neighboring cultures only if those cultures were somehow relevant to Jews. Leah Garret, a Jewish travel writing researcher, emphasized Jewish authors' tendency to create their Jewish geography, avoiding non-Jewish places (Garret, 12). Even interethnic relations occupy a relatively small part of the travelogues. The authors avoided non-Jewish locations and did not meet or did not describe the meetings with Gentiles. Their real focus was the inner life of Jewish communities.

The predominant focusing on Jewish communities helped to show their diversity. The Jewish life in the interwar period, as described by reporters, was not limited to religious congregations. Yoel Mastboym, Israel Yehoshua Singer, Nachman Meisel, and Alfred Döblin and Joseph Roth, writing in German, described in their travelogues the life of the oil-miners in Drohobych (Drohobycz) and Boryslav (Boryslaw). It helped to show the remarkable Galician industrial life and bring attention to the impoverishment of those workers. Mastboym described in his travelogue Jewish peasants in the Carpathian Mountains, the Jewish noblemen Groedels, the Chortkover Hasidim, and street musicians. He interviewed Jews who converted to Christianity and even attempted to visit a secret Frankist meeting (Yoel Mastboym, 108). The social and economic status, cultural affiliation, and range of occupations of his travelogues' heroes were as inclusive as possible. This diversity is striking since it helps to understand the complicated transformations within Jewish communities which faced modernization and geopolitical changes. However, it contrasts a stereotypical image of an Eastern Jew, who was poor, profoundly religious, and backward.

Galicia after the Great War

The Galicia in the interwar period bore visible traces of World War I. Thousands of Jews left Galicia as refugees during the war, and after its ending, when the Austrian-Hungarian Empire ceased to exist, they struggled with the loss of identity. They felt deeply attached to the empire as loyal citizens, and the destruction of an old life and old-world deeply traumatized them. A return home for many refugees meant disorientation in a new state (Rozenblit, 136). In those years, Jews faced violence or even pogroms, as in Lviv in 1918. Like the rebbe of Belz, some Hasidic leaders fled from Galicia and had to reestablish their courts in 1925 (Assaf, Belz Hasidic dynasty). The most famous travelogue which tried to describe the war devastations was S. Ans-ky's 1915 diary. An-sky intended to facilitate humanitarian aid to Galician Jews, and his diary notes were short and rather laconic, perhaps not intended for publication initially (An-sky). The later texts, written in the 1920s, reveal some detachment from the war's violent events and provide a reflection space. Mastboym sought to explain the poverty of Galicia by its war experiences, which cut short many economic opportunities. For example, during his visit to Zalishchyky (Zaleszczyki), local people describe how the wine trade had flourished before the war and how after the war, former big merchants who sold wine to Russian Empire turned into petty traders (Yoel Mastboym, 9). He visits baron von Hammer in Skole, who lost his money and status during the war. He also suffered from the brutality of the Russian soldiery that even whipped the baron (Yoel Mastboym, 39). Mastboym noticed traces of war here and there, and it became a demarcation line that divided the old Galicia from the new one. In the town Nowy Sącz, he visited a local Jewish intellectuals' home and said that the atmosphere there was different from usual simpleton climate of such postwar houses.The prewar Galicia

for Mastboym seemed too old-fashioned, the postwar too vulgar. Though he pitied noblemen who lost property during the war, he believed that the region should look into the future. Similarly, M. Alin[2] in his travel reportage for the newspaper *Der Moment* in 1926, noticed how strongly war consequences were visible in Galicia. He saw ruins of old buildings here and there, and newly built houses cast a strong contrast to them (Alin, 4).

The Weakness of Yiddish Galicia

For Mastboym, Galicia was a Jewish space, but not a space of Jewish, especially Yiddish culture. In every small town, he struggles to find Jewish cultural organizations.

The Introduction which Mastboym has written to his collection of essays resembles political program. He observed that Galicia is slow and people are slow following progressive, for him, Yiddish trends. Still, he wants to organize them: "Give us your hand, and we will give you our will – tells me my friend from Galicia. It should be high time to start one big construction work. Moreover, we can do much more; we would have become one big power" (Yoel Mastboym, 6). From his perspective, Galicia was not capable of such activism by itself; it needed the Warsaw activist's and intellectual's help. Yiddish intellectuals from Galicia shared the idea of Galicia's cultural backwardness not only in Mastboym's imagination.

Leybush Draykurs a Yiddish poet and writer, was engaged in various activities, especially Yiddish theatre. He worked in Czechoslovakia, Latvia, and Warsaw. In 1924, he published few articles entitled "A Letter from Galicia" in the Warsaw newspaper *Literarishe bleter*. There he observed that only several Yiddish newspapers one could find in Galicia. *Lemberger togblat* was the only prominent Yiddish newspaper.[3] Other major newspapers write about Jewish issues but not in Jewish languages. He saw this phenomenon as a product of the postwar period and a particular feature of Lesser Poland, former Galicia, irrelevant in Poland's other parts (Draykurs, Briv fun galitsiye III 6). Draykurs concludes one of his articles with the call, surprisingly similar to the one of Mastboym: "The first and the most important thing should happen: the distinction between "you" and

[2] Unidentified author, probably a pseudonym.

[3] *Lemberger togblat* was founded by Gershom Bader (1868–1953) and published from 1904 until the 1930s.

"us" should disappear. Jewish Poland should come to help the former Austrian Crownland Galicia" (Draykurs, Briv fun galitsiye I 5).

Decay and backwardness were essential also for Mastboym, who, however, was somewhat resentful. He notices the traces of war, for example, in a military cemetery in the story of barons Groedels from Skole, who lost their money during 1914, or in the center of Hasidic pilgrimage Chortkiv, whose Hasidic dynasty abandoned the town (Yoel Mastboym, 35, 134). However, for Mastboym contemplating decay was not sufficient. He tried to present his active position. During one of his trips, Mastboym comes to Tluste, to the Jewish cemetery. He is looking for a tombstone, a *matseyve* of the Baal Shem Tov's mother. When he finally sees it, he is disappointed to find no Hasidim; the Jewish cemetery in Tluste is half-destroyed. That is why the writer mentions that the local community will fix the *matseyve* of the Baal Shem Tov's mother due to his help.

Israel Joshua Singer had similar impressions when he visited beys hamidresh in Przemyśl. Before his visit, he interviewed locals, who complained that after Galicia became part of the Polish republic, there is no *parnuse* (livelihood), no job for Jews in Przemysl, a Polish soldiers' location. Beys hamidreshlooked like a shelter for all kinds of marginals, beggars, mentally and physically disabled people staying there (Kuper, Unzer rayzender, 1925, 2).

The word "Galicia" for Mastboym has no connotations with anything progressive, not for what he calls "the old Galicia." In the introduction to travel reportages, he claims that old Jewish intelligentsia with German manners is backward, opposed to any changes, and juxtaposes it to the new Jewish generation. This generation, in turn, lacks organization (Mastboym, 5). Mastboym perceives the German language and culture in Galicia as Austrian influence, preventing Jews from understanding and promoting Yiddish culture. For example, in the Carpathians, Mastboym visited the town Kuty (Yiddish: Kitev), famous for its connection to Hasidism's founder the Baal Shem Tov. However, he did not meet devoted Hasidim, only German-speaking people of "Vienna type" and girls with a cane in hand who love Vienna schnitzels and Romanian wine (Mastboym, 29). "Germanness" of Galicia contrasted with the Yiddish and Hasidic vibrant and open culture and the progressive new Yiddish culture of large centers like Warsaw.

Similarly, Leybush Draykurs, originally from Lviv, wrote in his reportage "Letter from Galicia" in 1924 that Lviv is more Austrian than Polish, Ukrainian, or Jewish. The germanization lasted even after the Austrian-Hungarian Empire's fall because young people decided to study in Vienna and brought Austrian culture and styles from there. Moreover, all Yiddish culture developments were late, compared to other parts of Poland (Draykurs, Briv fun galitsiyen I, 5).

Hasidic centers in Chortkiv and Belz were popular destinations for traveling reporters. Litvin describes Chortkiv, which, for him, can be a *matseve* (monument) to Jewish life and proof that Jewish life in Galicia is impossible (Litvin, 94). Like Mastboym, Litvin saw Galicia as a place belonging to the past, with unclear prospects for the Jewish future.

Eastern and Western Jews

Researchers dealing with Galicia have elaborated a theory of Eastern-Western Jews, according to which German Jews created an "Eastern" Jew, who is on the one hand backward, but on the other hand more "authentic," pious, and traditional (Casteel, 394). Such a dichotomic approach as a tool of building a new German Jewish identity, though it is stereotyping and simplifying processes in the Polish Jewish communities. Some of the Galician Jews internalized this vision, as happened to a Galicia-born author Joseph Roth (1894–1939) , who visited his homeland in 1924. Despite his sentiment to its peculiar and individual culture, the writer orientalizes Galicia and notices its distinction from Western Europe (Wolff, 389). Writers from Germany and Austria who were visiting Galicia notice mainly the dirt on its streets, overwhelming poverty and chaos, and tend to support a thesis of another famous Galician, Carl Emil Franzos (1848–1904) , who called it "Half-Asian."

Reading travelogues from Galicia is a way to understand how the Warsaw Jews saw themselves. Did they consider themselves Eastern or Western? For the Warsaw Jewish authors Galicia and Galician Jews were not authentic enough. Mastboym called various cities, such as Stanisławów, "a nest of Jewish assimilation" and perceived an old Jewish intelligentsia as a problem (Yoel Mastboym, 72). He blamed the Jewish intellectuals, not only the Austrian-Hungarian legacy, for the assimilationist tendencies.

Travelogue was a useful tool to speak about the problems of Galicia. A traveler always comes to another country with biases and his vision. Mastboym came from Warsaw, and by his speech or ignorance about local life is recognized as a "varshever," people either laugh at him or offer him a drink (Yoel Mastboym, 27). In his book's introduction, Mastboym explains his intentions to speak about Yiddish cultural life. Mastboym's, Shoshkes's, or Mayzel's trips were journies to the lost Yiddishland, which they hoped to wake up and revive. Mastboym is not local, and the genre and the traveler's perspective gives him a possibility to describe and say aloud things obvious for the locals.

Still, the writers admired the efforts that Galicia made on its way to Yiddishism. During his visit to Przemyśl, Israel Yehoshua Singer met traveling actors from Jewish theatre who staged one of Izchok Leibush Peretz's plays. In his dialogue with the actors, he is surprised that they decided to stage such a complicated play, and they reply: "If no one in Warsaw or New York plays Peretz, let us at least do it in Przemyśl!" However, no one comes to their next plays, and actors should leave the city (Kuper 17 January 1925: 2). The initiatives of the locals seem to be desperate efforts in the decaying environment.

Similarly, Nachman Meisel (1887–1966) juxtaposed economic decay in industrial oil city Boryslav and its Jewish workers' cultural strivings in his article for *Literarishe bleter* (1934). Galician oil industry lost its prominence in the interwar period since most of the big oil wells were exhausted, and Jewish workers often were among the victims of its decay. Meisel observed unemployment, terrible work conditions, and a lack of Jewish education. However, he visited a local theatre where a dramatic studio from Lviv staged a play *Di takse* (The [meat] tax, 1896) by Mendele Moykher Sforim. Meisel compared the troup and a crowd of local Jewish workers to the Warsaw Jewish Theatre (Meisel, 7). Despite all the poverty and neglect, there was a Yiddish-speaking audience in Galicia, and this audience could be interested in the development of culture.

Larry Wolff mentions that the term "Galitzianer" came from Russian Jews and had pejorative connotations; however, it became a positive one when Galician Jews appropriated it (Wolff, 402). This alienation was undeniable in New York, where Jewish immigrants from varied countries met. However, we can see from the Warsaw Jewish writers' travelogues that interest in Galicia could have existed not only as stereotyping and orientalizing attitude. For authors, Galicia was a complex entity, distinctive but attractive.

Mastboym juxtaposed two generations of Jews in Galicia: "Here is an old Galicia – with its molded, pale Jewish intelligentsia with German crawling manners. This intelligentsia is lazy and backward, detached from yesterday and estranged from today. However, there is the youth, which feverishly tries to get out of a dark assimilationist fog and thinks with all its efforts about Jewish cultural life" (Mastboym, 5). Thus, he did not direct his criticism of Galicia toward some immanent features of "galitzianers," but instead toward German acculturation option and Jews of Austro-Hungarian Empire. New Jews who fascinated him were Yiddish speaking and aware of the need to develop Galicia. Draykurs also emphasized the cultural separateness and distinctiveness of "galitzianers" and their "Galician" environment. He explained these features by Austrian cultural influence (Draykurs, Briv fun galitsiyen I, 5).

Conclusions

After World War I, Galicia remained a fresh wound on the European map and a *terra incognita* for many observers, among them Yiddish writers from Poland. They mostly lived and were socialized in the Yiddishist literary milieu in Warsaw, which influenced their perception of Poland's other parts. Yiddish travel records from the interwar period resemble a discovery of new land. The travel reportage format allowed them to explore previously neglected spheres of life and meet people from diverse social strata. For most of the writers, Galicia seemed backward because of the lack of significant Yiddish movement and at the same time promising, since its various social structure could provide new audiences for their cultural projects. If German-speaking reporters often complained about the "Asiatic character" of Galicia, its Jewry seemed to be too Germanized and assimilated for the Yiddish speaking writers. From the Warsaw intellectuals' perspective, the Galician locals were not interested in developing Jewish culture or preserving Jewish material heritage. Authors noticed the difference between the older, assimilated, and newer, more interested in Yiddish culture generation. Simultaneously, the nostalgia for prewar Galicia, more economically prosperous and cherishing authentic Jewish culture, already appeared in those 1920s texts. On the other hand, the multicultural character and parliamentary experience of Galicia made it less antisemitic than the other parts of Poland. Joint work of Jewish intellectuals from the former Kingdom of Poland and Galicia could help the latter overcome acculturation tendencies.

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