

While many of the featured authors had perished in the Holocaust, a talented group of surviving young Yiddish writers published their first work in the series. Among them were Rokhl Korn, Yehuda Elberg, Mordechai Strigler, and Eliezer (Elie) Wiesel, all born in the 1910s and 1920s. Strigler's output in *Dos poylishe yidntum* was breathtaking. Between 1947 and 1955 he published six memoirs about his experiences in German labour and extermination camps as well as two historical novels: *Maydanek* (vol. 20, 1947), *In di fabrikn fun toyt* ('In the Factories of Death', vol. 32, 1948), *Verk 'ce'* ('Factory "C"', vols. 64–5), *Goyroles* ('Destinies', vols. 85–6), and *Georemt mitn vint* ('Embraced by the Wind', vols. 108–9). In an introduction to the memoir *Maydanek*, dated May 1946, one of the first works about an extermination camp, Strigler presented his programme for Yiddish literature: 'What has been written about our historical period has only touched the surface. The essence has not yet been disclosed. And something must be told about the internal pain, the deep psychological struggle, and essential human sadness of a generation's terrifying death. . . . The world, even the Jewish world, doesn't know what really happened! And they must know! To the last detail.'¹² Eliezer Wiesel published his first Holocaust memoir *Un di velt hot geshvign* ('And the World Was Silent', vol. 117), which was later reworked in French and English as *Night*.¹³ The series imparted a sense of Yiddish cultural renaissance that paralleled Abraham Sutzkever's editorship of the literary journal *Di goldene keyt* ('The Golden Chain', 141 volumes, 1947–95) in Tel Aviv. *Dos poylishe yidntum* recreated the idea of a secular Yiddish culture following the destruction of its heartland in Poland. It signalled a Yiddish cultural rebirth through its consistent output over two decades, coupled with its enthusiastic reception by a worldwide readership.

Yiddish publishing after 1945 did 'continue to exert an incontrovertible force and vitality'; however, the irreversible demographic trend of ageing writers and readers, and the lack of replenishing by a new generation, led to the creation of several Yiddish publication centres 'that functioned on a far more limited scale compared to what came before, centres that emerged suddenly, flourished for a decade or two, and then rapidly declined'.¹⁴ *Dos poylishe yidntum* was a typical example of Yiddish publishing after the Holocaust in terms of its prolific output during twenty years and its implementation by one individual that took full advantage of beneficial cultural and economic conditions for Yiddish book publishing. The cost of printing, binding, and paper was, as Zachary Baker points out, 'a critical factor determining the emergence or demise of a centre'.¹⁵

¹² M. Strigler, *Maydanek* (Buenos Aires, 1947), 8 (bold in original).

¹³ See my article, 'The Original Text and Context of *Night*', in A. Rosen (ed.), *Approaches to Teaching World Literature: Elie Wiesel's Night* (New York, forthcoming).

¹⁴ Z. Baker, 'Yiddish Publishing after 1945', in J. Sherman (ed.), *Yiddish after the Holocaust* (Oxford, 2004), 60, 62.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 63.