



BRILLIANTLY ECLECTIC
NATAN ALTMAN
BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY, 1910-1935

A MONOGRAPH WITH PLATES FROM THE MERRILL C. BERMAN COLLECTION

“Brilliantly Eclectic”: Natan Altman between Tradition and Modernity, 1910–1935

A Monograph with Plates from the Merrill C. Berman Collection

Published by the Merrill C. Berman Collection

Series Editor: Adrian Sudhalter

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Content editing by Karen Kettering, Ph.D., Independent Scholar, Seattle, Washington.

Design, typesetting, production, and photography by Jolie Simpson

Copy editing by Madeline Collins

Printed and bound by www.blurb.com

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Cover:

Book cover (in Russian): Max Osborn, *Evreiskaia grafika Natana Al'tmana*
(The Jewish Graphic Art of Nathan Altman)

Berlin: Petropolis, 1923

Lithograph and letterpress

19 1/8 x 14 1/2" (48.6 x 36.8 cm)

No. 79 of an edition of 250 numbered copies

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Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the Altman family in St. Petersburg for their support of this project at every stage. Natan Altman's great-granddaughter, Stanislava Malakhovskaya, not only contributed to this publication but gave generously of her knowledge on all aspects of the project, as did Vasily Dmitrievich Malakhovsky, the artist's grandson.

We would also like to acknowledge Ksenia Remezova, Curator at KGallery, St. Petersburg, and Vladimir Berezovsky's family who, in 2021, organized a major exhibition of Natan Altman's work at the KGallery and published an important catalogue in conjunction with the exhibition.

Further, we are grateful to Mikhail Kamensky, Ph.D. for his advice in the development stage of the project and to Vladimir Berezovsky for generously sharing his extensive expertise.

Our sincere thanks to the staffs of The New York Public Library (Art and Architecture Division) and the Frick Collection Library for their research assistance.

Contributors

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Stanislava Malakhovskaya is Natan Altman's great-granddaughter. An independent artist and musician, Ms. Malakhovskaya wrote her MA thesis on Altman's book design. She is currently enrolled in a Ph.D. program in Art History at St. Petersburg Academy of Fine Arts.

Headnote

Transliteration of Cyrillic (Russian and Ukrainian)

For this catalogue, we have adopted the system of transliteration employed by the Library of Congress. For artists and writers who were chiefly active in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, we have transliterated their names according to the Library of Congress system even when more conventional English versions exist (e.g. Aleksei Kruchenykh rather than Alexey Kruchenykh).

Surnames with an “-ii” ending are rendered with an ending of “-y” (e.g. Vladimir Mayakovsky; Victor Shklovsky). Soft signs are not used in artists’ names but are retained elsewhere (e.g. Natan Altman, not Natan Al'tman). For brevity, in the text of the essay we have used only first and last names of the artists and omitted patronymic names.

We have retained the distinction in spelling between Russian and Ukrainian names, e.g Aleksandr (Russian) and Oleksandr (Ukrainian), except when they are well known in the West (e.g. Alexander Archipenko).

Transliteration of Hebrew Alphabet

This publication relies almost exclusively on the YIVO (Yidisher visnshaftlekher institute; Yiddish Scientific Institute) system of transliteration from the Hebrew alphabet. For words of Hebrew/Aramaic origin, we have transliterated the Yiddishized pronunciation in accordance with the YIVO system. Many Hebrew-origin or Hebrew-related names are routinely transliterated in various ways (e.g. Jacob, Yakov, and Yankev). In such cases, we have tried to discern how that particular person’s name was pronounced and to reflect that in the spelling, or have simply defaulted to the most common Yiddishized spelling.

Preferred Spelling and Nomenclature

St. Petersburg/Petrograd/Leningrad: In the text, we respect the historical naming of the city originally named St. Petersburg which was known as Petrograd between August 1914 and January 1924 and as Leningrad between January 1924 and September 1991.

Kiev/Kyiv: Before the fall of the Soviet Union, the name of the capital of Ukraine was often written in English as “Kiev,” following the Russian transliteration. In this publication, we use the spelling “Kyiv,” following the Ukrainian transliteration of the name. Following the same, we use Chernihiv (rather than the Russian Chernigov), Hrytsiv (rather than the Russian Gritsev), Odesa (rather than the Russian Odessa), Podillya (rather than the Russian Podolia), Shepetivka (rather than the Russian Shepetovka), Vinnytsia (rather than the Russian Vinnitsa), and Volyn’ (rather than the Russian Volhynia).

PLATES

WORKS IN THE MERRILL C. BERMAN COLLECTION

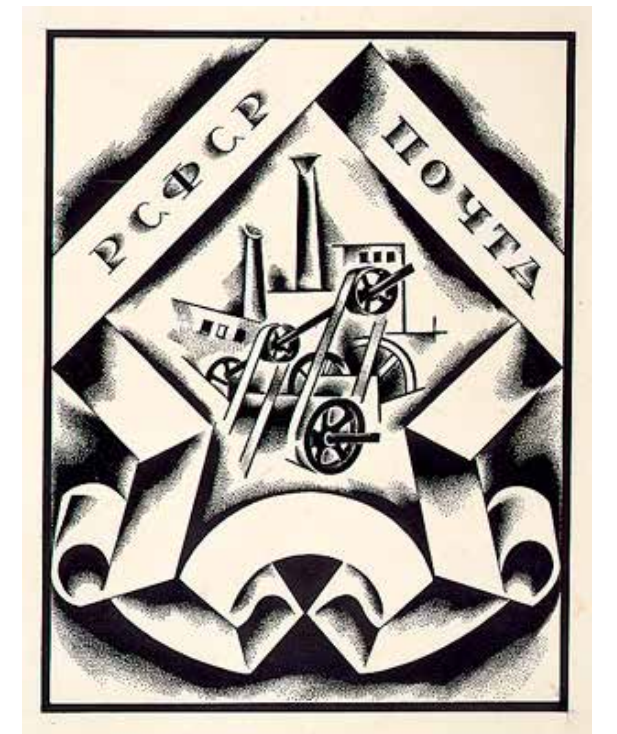
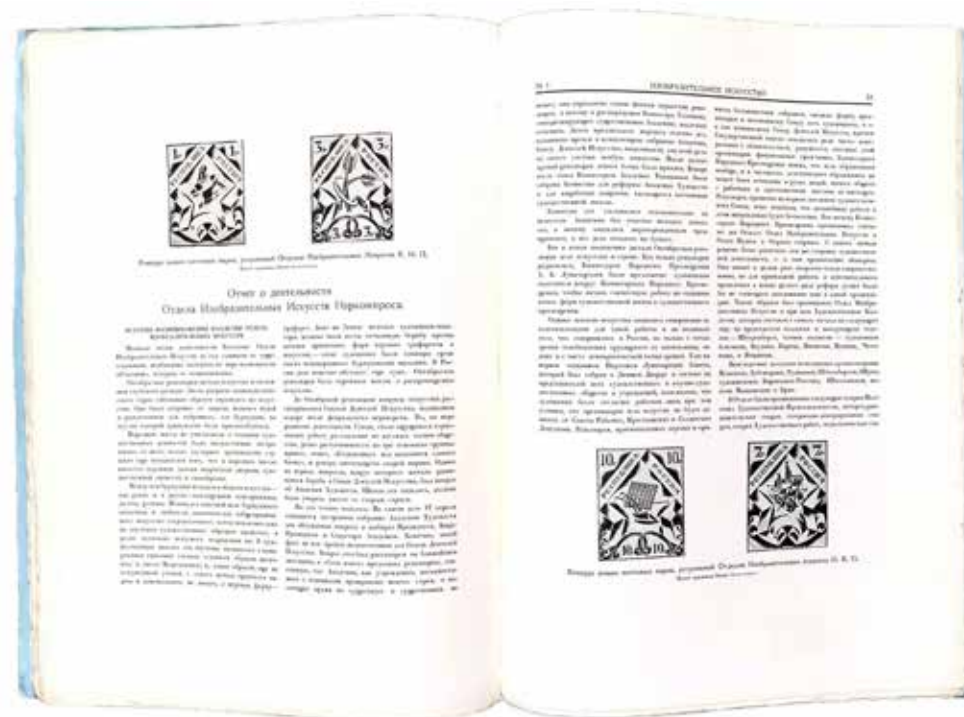
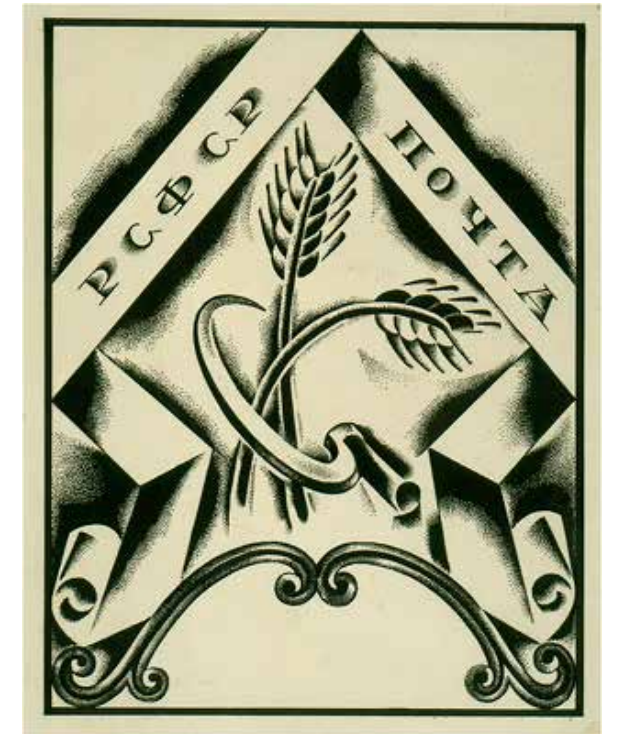
Four postage stamp designs (in Russian):
 POCHTA (Mail) [of the] RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic), 1918
 Each: ink on paper

Clockwise from upper left:
 9 x 7 1/8" (22.9 x 18.1 cm)
 10 3/8 x 7 1/16" (26.3 x 17.9 cm)
 8 7/8 x 7" (22.5 x 17.8 cm)
 9 x 7 1/8" (22.9 x 18.1 cm)

Merrill C. Berman Collection

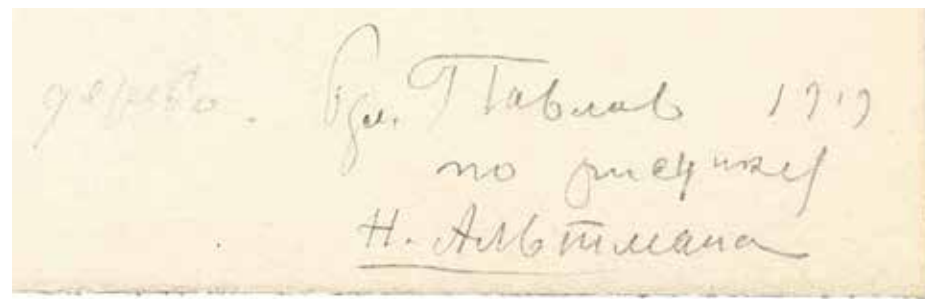
Note: Altman's designs won first prize at the first competition for a new Soviet postage stamp, but were never issued.

Fig. 1. D. V. Shterenberg (Head of IZO Narkompros), "Otchet o deiatel'nosti Otdela Izobrazitel'nykh Iskusstv Narkomprosa" (Report on the Activities of the IZO Narkompros; April 1919), Izobrazitel'noe iskusstvo (Fine Arts), no. 1 (1919): 50-51.
 Caption: "Konkurs novykh pochtovykh marok, ustroennyi Otdelom Izobrazitel'nykh Iskusstv NKP.. Proekt khudozhnika Natana Altmana" (Competition for the design of the new postage stamps, organized by the IZO Narkompros. Project of the artist Natan Altman). **Merrill C. Berman Collection.**



Print (in Russian):
Klub khudozhnikov (The Artists' Club), 1919
Wood engraving
11 1/8 x 7 7/16" (28.2 x 18.8 cm)
Merrill C. Berman Collection

Fig. 1. Detail. Inscribed, lower right, unidentified hand: derevo. Gr.[?] Pavlov 1919 (Wood engraving by Pavlov 1919 after the drawing of N. Altman)



Book cover *Lenin: Risunki i oblozhka Natana Altmana* (Lenin: Drawings and cover by Natan Altman)
St. Peterburg: Izo Narkompros, [1921]
Letterpress
9 x 7 1/2" (23 x 19 cm)
Merrill C. Berman Collection

Note: This portfolio of ten loose plates was originally published in 1921 in an edition of 5,000 (23 x 19 cm), plus a deluxe edition of 100 numbered copies, in which the same-sized plates were tipped-in on larger paper (42 x 32.5 cm). The book was reprinted frequently, so dating of this copy remains uncertain.



Yehezkiel Dobrushin, *Got der fayer* (God the Fire)
Moscow: Yungwald, 1922.

Above:
Book cover design (in Yiddish)
Pencil on paper
8 11/16 x 6 3/8" (22.1 x 16.2 cm)
Merrill C. Berman Collection

Below:
Book cover (front and back; in Yiddish)
Lithograph (32 leaves)
7 1/8 x 4 1/2" (18.1 x 11.4 cm)
Merrill C. Berman Collection



Book cover design (in Yiddish):
David Hofsteyn (Hofstein; Gofstein) and Arn Kushnirov (Aaron Kushnirov), *Shtam: Azkore* (Stem: Memorial)
Moscow: Farlag "Shtrom," 1922
Pencil, ink, and gouache on paper, mounted on board with glassine
9 3/16 x 6 1/4" (23.3 x 15.9 cm)
Merrill C. Berman Collection



Erste Russische Kunstausstellung (First Russian Art Exhibition). Galerie van Diemen, Berlin (October 15–December 1922), 1922

Altman served on the organizing committee for this landmark exhibition, which was on view at the Galerie van Diemen in Berlin from October 15 to the end of December 1922. Although the organizers hoped that it would travel to other European capitals and even to New York, the exhibition traveled only to the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (April 28–May 28, 1923).

Overleaf:

Cover (by El Lissitzky) and pages pertaining to Altman in the German-language exhibition catalogue for the *Erste Russische Kunstausstellung* (First Russian Art Exhibition).

Berlin: Verlag Internationale Arbeiterhilfe, 1922

Letterpress on paper

8 7/8 x 5 3/4" (22.5 x 14.6 cm), closed

Merrill C. Berman Collection



**AQUARELLE - ZEICHNUNGEN
HOLZ- UND IRROLEUM-SCHNITTE
KUPFERDRUCKE - PLAKATE
ARCHITEKTUR- UND THEATER-ENTWÜRFE**

ALTMANN, N. 28 Baum, E.-B. 29 6 Blatt Less, B. 29 1 Blatt Kowd, B.-A. 30 Buchauslegung, L. 32 Antikenschriftarten T. 23 Tischler, T. 24 Tischler, T. 25 Tischler, T. 26 Stempel, T. 27 9 Blatt „Jüdische Gepirke“, T.-K. 28 Der russische Teil der Aufklärung (mit Ago- wa (Mit Kompositionen, Wohnd), 4. Aufl. 29 4 Blatt Konstruktiven T. 29 Kiste / Monogram T. 28 Lack / Gegenstände	ARONSOHN 260 Dief, H. 261 Interieur, H. 262 Figurin, H.	BEJAJEW 263 Tischschönung 264 Komposition, A. 265 Auf der Straße, A. 266 Mann, B.	BENOL, A. 267 Tansendekarten, A. 268 Illustration, F. 269 Illustration, T. 270 Landschaft, T.-F.	BOGUSLAWSKAJA 271 8 Blatt Figuren (Theater), A.	BOLTSCHAKOW 272 Färber, L.	BRUN 273 Porträt, N. 274 Kinder-Akt, A. 275 Kinder-Akt, B. 276 Kinder-Akt, F. 277 Blumen, T. 278 Landschaft, K. 279 Kab., B. 280 Kater, A.	BUBNOWA 281 Komposition, Lit. 282 Komposition, Lit. 283 Weibliche Figur, Lit.	BUCROWETZKI 284 Kolonnen, Lit.	CHAGALL 285 Verwandter, T. 286 Logische Form, A. 287 Mann mit Zigar, T. 288 Mann, A. 289 Sitzender Mann, T. 290 Alter Mann, T. 291 2 Köpfe, T.	CHOCIRSKOW 292 Landschaft, B.	DJEGIN 293 Komposition, K. 294 Komposition, K.	DOBUJNSKI 295 Monat im Dorf (Theaterdekoration), A. 296 Weiblich, B. 297 Straße, F. 298 Mauer, T. 299 Stadt, B.	DREWIN 300 Frau, Lit.	ENGEL 301 Komposition, H.	ERHOLAJEWA 302 Dekoration 22 Figuren (Oper „Sieg über die Sonne“, Lit.	EXTER 303 11 Kompositionen (Kammertheater, Mos- kau), Tem. 304 6 Dekorationskissen, Tem. 305 Theaterdekorationen modelle („Stimme und Falle“), A. FEDOROWSKI 306 2 Kompositionen (Theater), A. 307 1 Kartennische (Theater), A. FLONOW 308 Komposition, A. GADO 309 Architektonischer Ent- wurf für ein Elektri- zitätswerk (mit Elektri- zitätsplanung (Mitschik)) GAMBARDOW 310 Landschaft, Lit. 311 Landschaft, Lit. 312 Kalligraphie, H. GERASSIMOW 313 Rosenkrantz, L. 314 Theaterstück, L. 315 Rosenkrantz, L. JAKOWITSCHENKO 316 Dorf, H. 317 Stilleben, F.Z. JAKULOW 318 Skizze f. „Ballette“ (Moskauer Kammer- theater), A. 319 Marsch, T.
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Handwritten notes in German and Russian:
 1. Arbeit 4. Jan. 1922...
 2. Arbeit 1. Feb. 1922...
 3. Arbeit 1. März 1922...
 4. Arbeit 1. April 1922...
 5. Arbeit 1. Mai 1922...
 6. Arbeit 1. Juni 1922...
 7. Arbeit 1. Juli 1922...
 8. Arbeit 1. Aug. 1922...
 9. Arbeit 1. Sept. 1922...
 10. Arbeit 1. Okt. 1922...
 11. Arbeit 1. Nov. 1922...
 12. Arbeit 1. Dez. 1922...

GEMALDE

ALTMANN, N. 1. Bildnis (D'Nychromi- scher Organist) 2. Petrokowskaja 3. Malerei ANENKOW 4. Wald ARCHIPOW 5. Markt 6. Brezennsky Dorf 7. Blätter (mit...) 8. Beim Zeitungslesen BARANOW-ROSSINE 9. Form und Farbe 10. Form und Farbe 11. Samowar 12. Rosa Farbe BOTSCHIKOW 13. Wasser 14. Bucklige BRAS 15. Stilleben 16. Stilleben BRUN 17. Neger BURLJUK 18. Kossack 19. Am Tisch 20. Porträt (Kartinski) 21. Frau mit Spiegel 22. Lantenspieler	CHAGALL 23. Strahlender 24. Verwandter 25. Die Flucht DENISSOWSKI 26. Paris DREWIN 27. Porträt 28. Komposition 29. Komposition 30. Szenenstudien EGES 31. Am Tisch EXTER 32. Still 33. Yasnaja 34. Gegenstände FALK 35. Landschaft 36. Hühner 37. Porträt 38. Stilleben 39. Junges Mädchen FAYORSKAJA 40. Land 41. Land FEDOROW 42. Landschaft 43. Stilleben FLONOW 44. Komposition 45. Komposition
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SCULPTUREN

ALTMANN, N. 537 Kopf eines jungen Juden ARCHIPENKO 538 Agrarische Motive (Pawlow) 539 Weibliche Statuen (Pawlow) 540 Figur (Horse) 541 Mann (Horse) 542 Dada 1915 (Scha- teler)	RODSCHENKO 550 Konstruktion SALIT 560 Skulptur 561 Skulptur SAWJALOW 562 Centre-Relief STENBERG, G. 563 Konstruktion 564 Raumkonstruktion 565 Raumkonstruktion STENBERG, W. 566 Konstruktion 567 Bauarchitektonische Kon- struktion STRESEMINSKY 568 Relief TATLIN 569 Centre-Relief	553 Bauarchitektonische Kon- struktion IV 554 Bauarchitektonische Kon- struktion 555 Relief 556 Raumkonstruktion 557 Konstruktion 558 Konstruktion 559 Konstruktion 560 Skulptur 561 Skulptur 562 Centre-Relief 563 Konstruktion 564 Raumkonstruktion 565 Raumkonstruktion 566 Konstruktion 567 Bauarchitektonische Kon- struktion 568 Relief 569 Centre-Relief	PORZELLANE/GLAS/DEKORATIVE ARBEITEN HALBEDELSTERE Porzellan der Peterburger Staat-Porzellanfabrik 370 15 Tassen mit Uster- sitzen 371 43 große Teller 372 5 kleine Teller 373 8 Schüsseln 374 8 Teekannen 375 Zuckerdose 376 Geschliffenes Glas 377 Tabakstübe 378 4 Dosen 379 Spielzeug 380 Pique (Kartenspiel) 381 Pique (Mittelstück) 382 Tasse als Aschebecher Porzellan der keramischen Fabrik der Moskauer Hochschule 383 15 Tassen mit Uster- sitzen 384 1 Tasse (Keramik) 385 Teller Arbeiten des dekorativen Institutes in Petersburg 386 Teeliche 387 2 irische Teller 388 9 teufelnde Teller Steinbeleg 391 20 von Kindern verfertigte Spielzeuge Halbedelsteine 392 30 Arbeiten an verschiedenen Erzkörpern, bezogen von der Peterburger Geologischen Anstalt Kontur- und Stickereien 393 35 Stickereien von Schönern 394 2 Kinder von Lina 1922
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ALTMANN: „Petrokammer“



STERENBERG: Schilder (Faktor-Kontrast)



STERENBERG: Vasen (Faktor-Kontrast)



N. ALTMANN: „Rollend“ (Psychonischer Gegensatz)



BRUNEL: Kind



ERMOLAJEWA: Theaterdekoration („Sieg über die Sonne“)



JAKULOW: Skizze für Maksum Kammerlatter („Brachid“)



N. ALTMANN: Theaterdekoration-Modell (Maksum Jidische-Kammerlatter)



Porzellan aus der Staatsschuldtube von Petersburg (1918-22)



Porzellan aus der Staatsschuldtube von Petersburg (1918-22)

Detached periodical cover (in Russian):
Zavtra: literaturno-kriticheskii sbornik (Tomorrow: Literary-Critical Collection), no. 1
Evgenii Zamiatin, Mikhail Kuzmin, and M. Lozinsky, eds.
Berlin: Petropolis, 1923
Letterpress
8 3/4 x 6 7/16" (22.2 x 16.3 cm)
Merrill C. Berman Collection



Mikhail Kuzmin, *Kryl'ia: Povest' v trekh chastiakh* (Wings: A Novel in Three Parts)
Berlin: Petropolis, 1923

Left and right:
Two detached book covers on different-colored papers (in Russian)

Both: **Merrill C. Berman Collection**

Both: Lithograph

Both: 9 3/4 x 7 1/16" (24.8 x 17.9 cm)

Fig. 2. Covers by Altman of the second and third books by Mikhail Kuzmin from the same series: *Seti: pervaiia kniga stikhov* (Nets: First Book of Poems), 3rd edition (St. Petersburg-Berlin: Petropolis, 1923) and *Glinianye golubki: tret'ia kniga stikhov* (Clay Pigeons: Third Book of Poems), 2nd edition (Berlin: Petropolis, 1923). **Both Private Collection.**



Alternate designs for periodical cover (in Russian):
Krasnyi Student (Red Student), no. 8 (1923)

Left:
Ink and crayon on paper
15 3/8 x 11 1/2" (39 x 29.2 cm)

Right:
Ink and gouache on paper
15 3/8 x 11" (39.2 x 29 cm)

Both: Merrill C. Berman Collection

Fig. 1 Final printed cover, *Krasnyi Student* (Red Student), nos. 7-8 (1923). Possibly by Altman. Private Collection



David Hofstein (Gofstein), *In Tavel fun Vent* (On the Tablet on the Wall). Berlin: Farlag "Funken," 1923

Above:
Book cover design (in Yiddish)
Gouache, ink, and cut paper on paper
10 1/8 x 7 7/16" (25.7 x 18.9 cm)

Below:
Detached book cover (front and back; in Yiddish)
Lithograph
12 3/8 x 7 3/4" (31.4 x 19.7 cm)

Both: Merrill C. Berman Collection

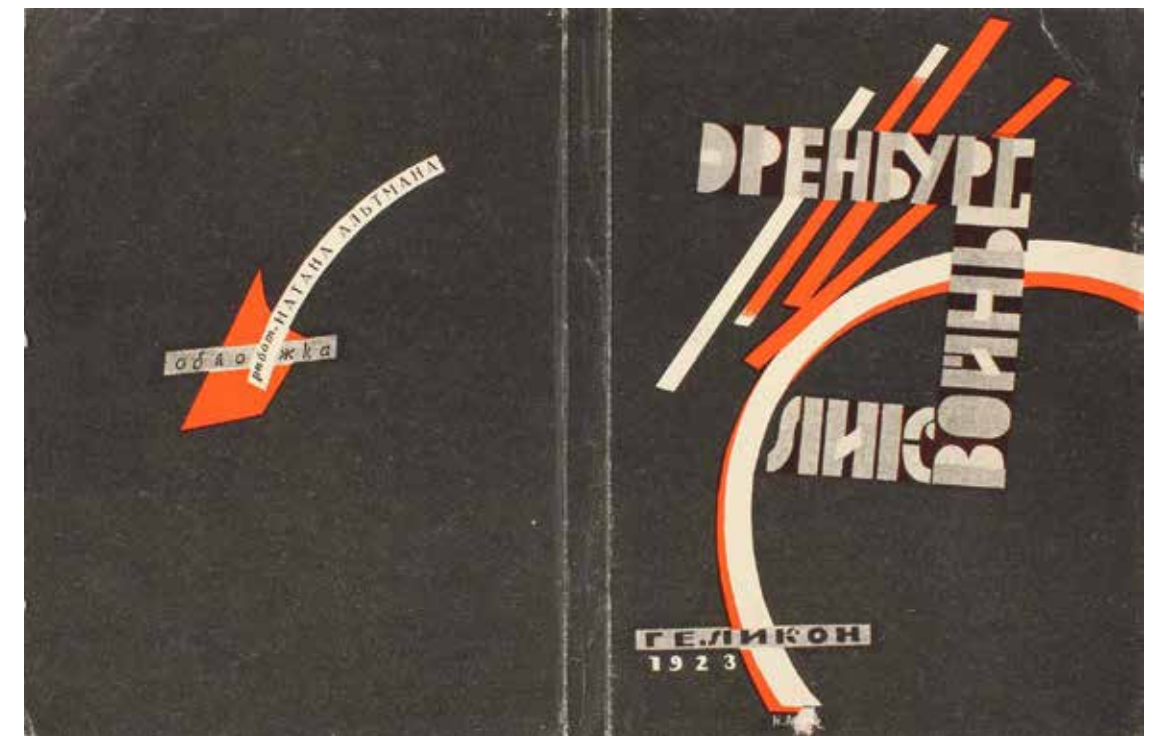
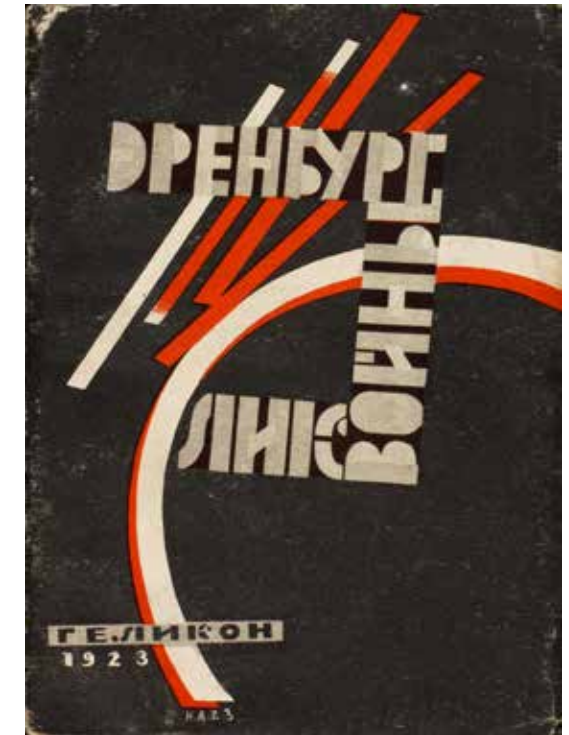


Ilya Ehrenburg, *Lik voiny* (The Face of War)
Berlin: Gelikon, 1923

Above:
Book cover (in Russian)
Lithograph
7 1/2 x 5 1/2" (19 x 14 cm)

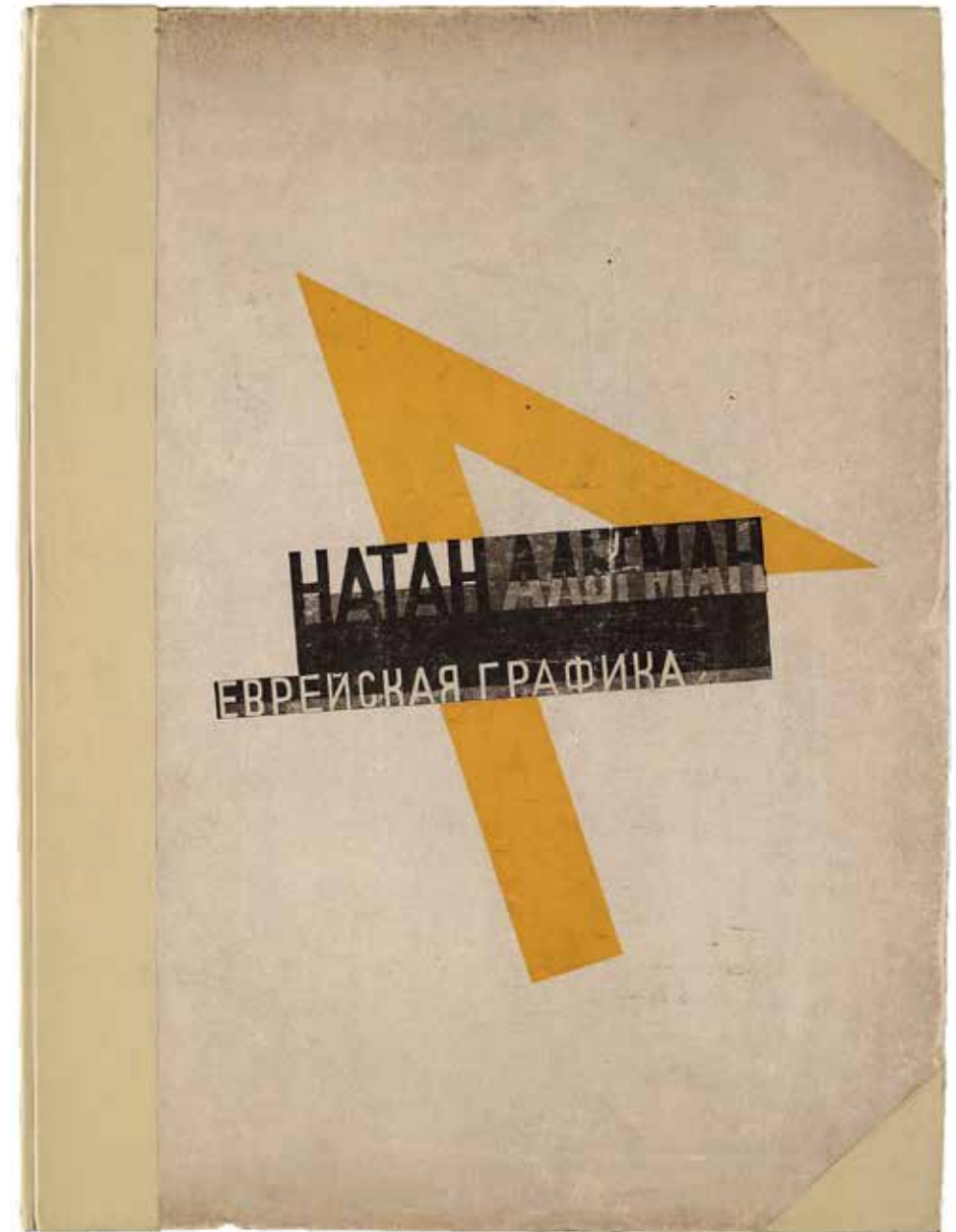
Below:
Detached book cover (front and back; in Russian)
Letterpress mounted on paper
7 1/2 x 5 1/2" (19 x 14 cm)

Both: Merrill C. Berman Collection



Book cover (in Russian):
Max Osborn, *Evreiskaia grafika Natana Al'tmana* (The Jewish Graphic Art of Nathan Altman)
Berlin: Petropolis, 1923
Lithograph and letterpress
19 1/8 x 14 1/2" (48.6 x 36.8 cm)
Merrill C. Berman Collection
No. 79 of an edition of 250 numbered copies
21 numbered pages; 10 plates, each of which is reproduced on the following spread

Note: The following pages show details of the plates without frames. An example of a plate with a frame is below.





Film poster (in Russian):
Evreiskoe schast'e (Yidische glikn; Jewish Luck)
Aleksandr Granovsky's silent film with Russian intertitles based on the writings of Sholem Aleichem, [1926]
Lithograph
40 3/4 x 28 15/16" (103.5 x 73.5 cm)
Merrill C. Berman Collection



Full facsimile opposite and following:

Film program (in Russian):

Evreiskoe schast'e (Yidische gl'ikn; Jewish Luck)

Aleksandr Granovsky's silent film, with Russian intertitles, based on the writings of Sholem Aleichem.

Text by Viktor Shklovsky

Moscow: Kinopechat', 1926

Lithograph and letterpress

11 15/16 x 8 15/16" (30.2 x 22.7 cm)

Merrill C. Berman Collection

Opposite: cover, with full facsimile on the following pages.

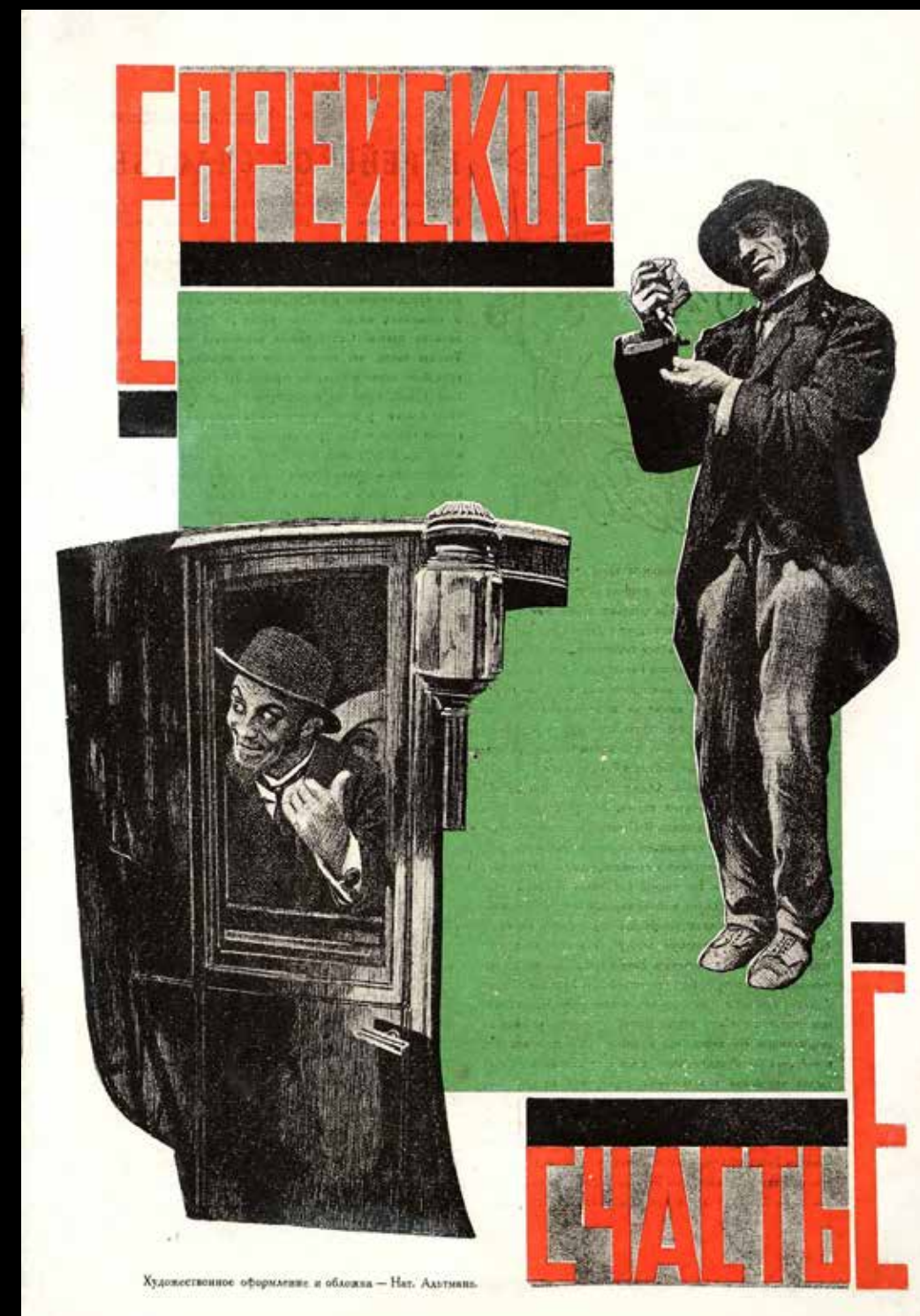


Рис. Нат. Алтман.



ЕВРЕЙСКОЕ СЧАСТЬЕ

Что делает еврей? — Вертится. — Это из «Еврейского счастья», Вертеться еврей было очень трудно. Месточка, полные домов и детей. Провалились крыши хибарок. Своя земля только на кладбище. Там и пасли вью. Жили воздухом, и тот был несвободен. Еврейство, оторванное от производительного труда, от земли и фабрик, целый народ жил в тесноте и скважинах жизни. Маленькая купля и продажа, бритье, починка платья. Самая высокая заработная плата в мире. Теснота такая, что крыши домов не строили, так как некуда было влезать на время стрейки. На старый дом наваливали землю, стена на стену, крыша свесилась. — Есть такая болезнь у евреев, когда они и подполье сростаются своими квартирами. Так сростались дома и люди в еврейских местечках. Был душный, замкнутый, и в субботу проводился вокруг всего местечка. Кружок кружок поля и чужие крадущие люди. Люди в тюрьме создают свой язык. Ужаснейшие остроумцы. Самые лучшие еврейские анекдоты созданы нашими современниками. Вот в числе этих анекдотов и находится рассказ Шолом-Алейхема о человеке воздуха, горлового общества и — вавилон — свете. О таких людях еврей гово-

рел: «он не сам ходит — его воздух несет». — Для нас сейчас «Еврейское счастье» почти историческая фантма. Такого еврейского быта уже нет. Гражданская война тяжело ударила по еврейству. Погромный прошлый по местечку. Самые места, на которых стояли славившие друг с другом деревни, были распаханы. Голод шел за погромами. В Херсоне ортодоксальными евреями, среди общей гибели бившихся, что их похоронят после смерти не по правилам — приходили и кладбища и сдвинули и отгородили на смерть. Революция была разрушительной для еврейства. Старый замкнутый мир разбит. Был вычищен. Маленькая торговля, маневрство под надзором государственного капитализма и кооперации оказались разгромлены. В новой плановой жизни не осталось места для того, чтобы вертеться. Но революция связала с еврействами все огорчения и уничтожила самую основную черту всего еврейства — черту оседлости. Фабрики и заводы открывались для еврейского рабочего. Рабочий начал снимать ремесленника. А вместо права пассти козу на кладбище еврейство получило право на землю. Сейчас в Белоруссии и Прибалтике идет грандиозная работа по отводу еврейам земель. Возвращают поля, орошают земли. Сейчас уже видно, что из сионизма, из еврейского государства в Палестину, выйдет только жилищный курорт для богатых евреев. Курорт патристический и с виллами. Под еврейские колонии в Прибалтике отводится до 600.000 десятин. В Стране Советов придается новая автономная область, может быть, новая республика. — Не нужно жалеть об изорванном войною Мемелем-Мандаля, но нужно иметь реалистичный взгляд в прошлое, в славившиеся хвосты крысиного подполья. Но старый быт опять нужно. Режиссеру Грановскому удалось в своей картине восстановить много из прошлого. Лента театральная. Грановский не хочет продать свою «театральную шпату». А в кино не нужны ноги, нужны только аппараты. Зато в ленте есть носы для кинематографа почерка. Есть настоящий быт. Художник Натан Алтман отнесся к своей задаче очень осторожно. Натан Алтман — человек большой национальной культуры, человек со своим даром. Но лента, как и уже писал, — историческая, а всё «так было» — важно того «и так доу». Алтман хорошо сделал еврейские кожанки — не перегружая их деталями, спрятал свою работу и ленту так, как прочел свою работу осветитель. Свет в картине ее должен освещать, и не быть выдающимся номером программы. Надписи в фильме сделали Норманом Бибелем. Они хорошо используют материал картины и тесно связаны с актерами. Это не надписи, а разговоры. Это видео. Это дает ленте прелесть человеческого голоса.



Рис. Нат. Алтман.

ВИКТОР ШКЛОВСКИЙ



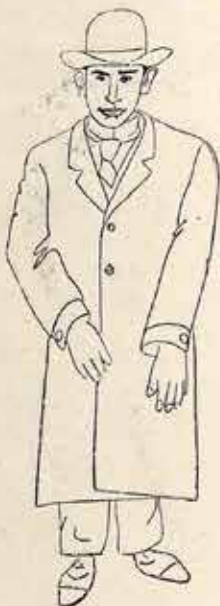
МЕНАХЕН И УШЕР

Рис. А. Шиман.



Кимбах

Рис. А. Шиман.



Жених

МЕНАХЕМ-МЕНДЕЛЬ

В Бердичеве живет Менахем-Мендель, человек без профессии — «человек воздуха». В поисках заработка он беретен на всякое дело. Но Менахем-Менделю не везет. В Бердичеве есть богатый — Кимбах. — Застряните свою жизнь, — предлагает ему Менахем-Мендель, мечтая заработать. Но оказывается, что Кимбах застрянул в оспе и холере. Новый план. В компании с Залманом Менахем-Мендель решает торговать. Но полиция отбирает у них товар и все деньги. Тогда Менахем-Мендель идет за счетом. В итоге он печально раскрывает чужую книгу. В ней список невест города Ямпольска. У Менахем-Менделя готов новый план. — Шаден (жен) — вот идеальная профессия. Он засылает. Одессе, Николаевской бульвар. Кафе. За столиком — Менахем и барон Гирш. Барон — представитель австрийского

о-ва «Все для брака». Он говорит: — Мастер Менахем, в Америке нет невест! В Америке женихи лезут из стены! — Мастер Менахем, спешите Америку! Менахем-Мендель немедленно начинает действовать. Он покупает целый поезд бердичевскими невестами и доставляет их в Одессу. Здесь он грузит невест под чужими именами на океанский корабль — в Америку. Забравшись на перекладку ящика, он кричит: — Король Соединенных Штатов! Я спешу Америку! Я! Он падает в морскую бездну и — просыпается. Напротив него сидит Угир из Ямпольска, лютый сват. Они заключают сделку. Обе стороны решают встретиться в Летицево, где будет свадьба. Идут приготовления. Но оказалось, что сваты все перепутали. В доме Качкина пужен жених. Менахем-Мендель с перерывом ездит. Карьера свата кончилась. Нужно искать новое дело.

ИСТОРИЯ «ЕВРЕЙСКОГО СЧАСТЬЯ»

Уже два года на территории еврейской провинции Гессет развита сценарий, кино-аппарат, пленка и оператор Гиссо. Когда в Бердичеве развернули сценарий — режиссер, художник и актер в отчаянии опустили руки. Изуродованный Шлоим-Алейхем рычал из каждого кадра. — Со сценарием не пошло с самого начала. Первым же «Вашеки Менахем-Менделю» писал Тевперман. Пленку его работы передали для проверки сценаристу Леониду. И все-таки труппе пришлось на место все делать заново. — Мы каждый день, — говорит режиссер Гравоский, — составляли план завтрашней съемки. Если раньше и не любил сценариста чужим, то теперь я не ненавижу по убеждению. Она портит авторов! И вот на площадке вчерашнего месяца началась съемка «Еврейского счастья». Актрисы, операторы, декорации — все это в Москве. Здесь только — натура. Натуру снимали два месяца подряд. Снимали щедро. Работали два аппарата. Второй снимал фильм — для Америки, которая ее заказала. Много снимали: собственная неуклюжесть, плохой сцени-

рай, невозможность провалить фильм по частям и — гастроля. Труппа каждый вечер дала спектакли. Из-за этого Митхале не мог отпустить бороду. И художник Илья Алтман приложил все искусство, чтобы прикинутые бороды выглядели не менее естественными, чем железная дорога, Черное море и базарная площадь в городе Бердичеве. Всем участникам пришлось преодолеть актерские навыки. Что они говорили, изображая говорящих людей? Обыкновенно, изображая разговор, кино-актеры не имеют никакого текста. Чаще всего они говорят, что им в голову придет в «Еврейском счастье» актерам говорили по смысловому тексту. Это — от сцены. Тем более, что съемка проходила с гастролками. Выглядело от этого только нелепо. Сильное впечатление: вечером в театре, днем на улице. — Мы думали Бердичев, — говорит Гравоский, — хроникографической достоверности. Действительно, этот город увидел сценку вярдами. Труппа жила в гостинице. На сценку и обратно актеры ходили в костюмах и гриме. По улицам





Эд. Тиссе.



Нат. Альтман.



Гричер.



А.А. Грановский.

ЕВРЕЙСКОЕ СЧАСТЬЕ

(Менахем-Мендель)

Производство Первой Госкино-фабрики
Кино-комедия в 7 частях

Постановка А.А. Грановского.

Оператор Эд. Тиссе. Художник Н. Альтман.

Музыка Льва Пульвера. Надписи И. Бабеля.

Режиссер-ассистент Гричер-Чериковер.

Пом. режиссера Ингстер и Круль.

Менахем-Мендель	Михоэль.
Сын его, Иселе	Эштейн.
Кимбак	Хазак.
Жена его	Абрагам.
Дочь его, Бейла	Адельгейн.
Заламан	Гольдблат.
Кавчикн	Шидло.
Жена его	Иценитова.
Ушер-сват	Рагалер.
Прислуга Кимбаков	Эштейн.



Н. Бобель.



А. Вульер.





Бердичев бродил герой Шолом-Алейхем, и жителям ординались с ними. — Ну, что, — говорили они, встречая Менахем-Мендела, — Каббук застрахует? Менахем начал головой и смеяться. В базарный день все население помещалось на площади, чтобы увидеть, как выходящий Залман лачнет торговать галантерейными товарами. Пришлось звать конную милицию. Она очистила площадь и накрыла лавки и магазин со всех окружающих в этот народом. После этого только галантерейная торговля Залмана могла поехать на площадь. — В Бердичеве, Гомеле, в Вишневе, в Бресте, в Полтаве, — тысячами толпами с неизменными ускорениями стремилась под объектив. Миллионы боролись героически. И все же много народу пришлось вырваться из-за того, что на них по-

шла посторонняя публика. — Далеко изувеченная Одесса, где каждый третий играет в кино, по-прежнему в порту, чтобы увидеть погрузку бердичевских мешков на оккупированный паром. Морские с особенными радужными разводами паров и сверкающими поднимая краны. Рядом служить кино. Паникующие сценки снимаются на Первой кино-фабрике. От старое судно еще откладывать вдали. Лихорадка его наследств погубила Бабелю. Наволок, все время метром была за-

легли на стох по-также. Он даго рожа, кланя, пере-стывали. Большин-ство кузов при-налось выкинуть. Восполнение пе-реложившие кузовы были савпанным инстажером в ко-ную картину. Она имеет две части, совершенно скво-стойтальной от „Еврейского сча-стья“ сюжет, те-



ривая, интрига, пейзаж и календарь. Уже после окончении съемки „Еврейского счастья“ наста-новился Грошевский много снимка на 1-й фео-риале — в порядке чисто режиссерско-лаборо-торной работы. Ибо, несмотря на свое название: — Я не придем снимать драматического режиссера на все события кинематографа, — он уже во власти непреодолимого обаяния кино. Опыт „Еврейского счастья“ привел режис-сера к новому ряду выводов. Во-первых. На-туру снимать только по необходимости. Не за-мыслив от природы, а создавая ее в стенах ители. Во-вторых. Избегать избытка крупного и среднего планов и показывать. Это — линия минимального сопротивления. Гораздо более трудная и историческая задача — работать абри-ни планом. Возможно, что эти идеи суж-дено будет воплотиться в последующих сериях „Еврейского счастья“. Вопрос о постановке даль-нейших серий Менахем-Мендел еще не решен. Если это осуществится, то им увидим „Менахем в Америке“ и „Менахем в Советской России“. Для Менахема в Америке у писателя Шолом-Алейхема материал найдется. А Менахем в Советской России должен написать И. Бабелю. Тогда будут остроумны и интересны по телам надписи, же и всех сценарий. Можно будет пока-



здесь — выходящий ла-нее (Вугорские по-борские) и на фон-не самого Менахем-Мендела, отделе-ваться от всех „вд-дущими“ профес-сий и своего на-имена. Это будет не только волею кар-тина, но и науче-тельная. Кроме Гос-тина изначальном писателе еще свои ре-квизиционные вещи.

15

Нат. Альтман

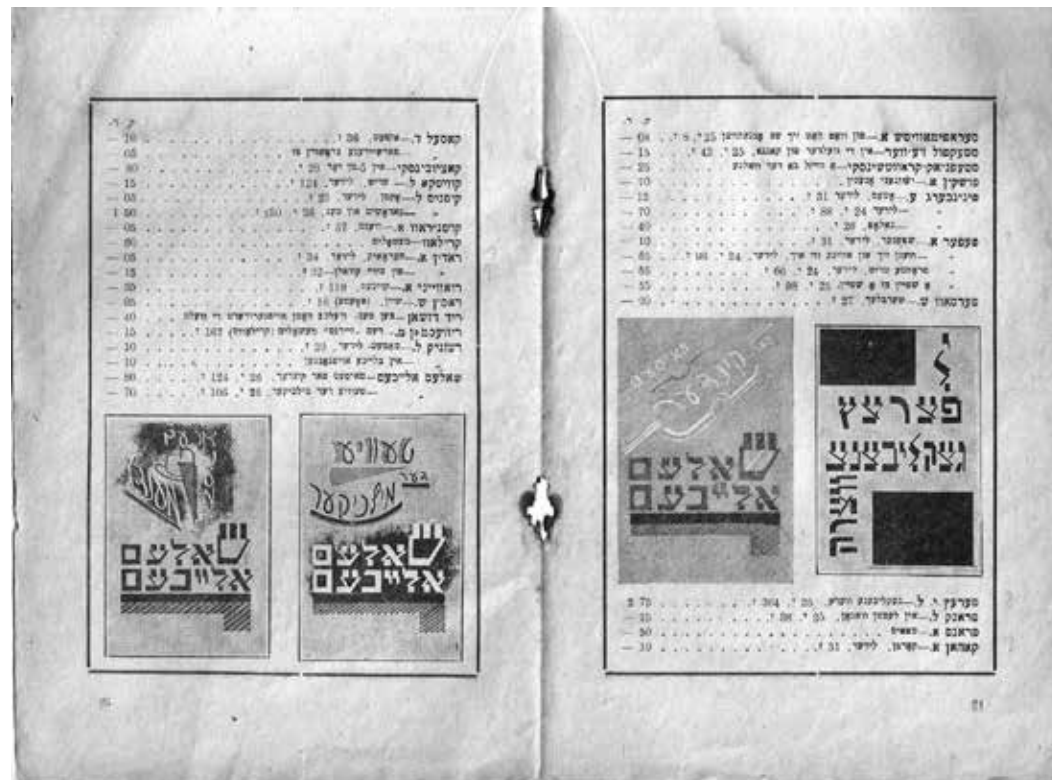


МЕНАХЕМ - МЕНДЕЛЬ — МИХОЭЛЬС

Book cover design (in Yiddish)
 Sholem Aleichem (Eleykhem), *Mayses far Kinder* (Stories for Children)
 Moscow: Shul un Lebn, 1927
 Ink and gouache on paper
 9 x 6" (22.9 x 15.2 cm)
Merrill C. Berman Collection

Note: The network of Yiddish schools in Poland known as TSYSHO (Central Yiddish School Organization) established a publishing house called Shul un Lebn (School and Life). It printed books for teachers and children and, in 1925, united with Kultur-Lige.

Fig. 1. Page from catalogue no. 5 of the publisher Shul un Lebn (School and Life) (Moscow, 1927). **Private Collection**



Description of the publisher's mandate quoted from: *Aktsionernoe izdatel'skoe obshchestvo khudozhestvennoi literatury "Zemlia i fabrika." Polnyi ukazatel' izdanii (1922–1927)* [Joint-Stock Publishing Society of Fiction "Land and Factory." Complete Index of Publications (1922–1927)]. Moscow-Leningrad, 1927, pp. 3–4:

All the attention of the publishing house *Zemlia i fabrika* [ZIF] is focused on the widest acquaintance of the Soviet reader with the new type of Russian writer who creates proletarian and peasant literature. [...] All ZIF publications on Russian and foreign fiction undergo strict Marxist editing and are supplied with prefaces, introductory articles and notes by the best workers of Bolshevik critical thought.

Hereafter, this index is referred to by the abbreviation: "Zemlia i fabrika" 1927.

Book cover designs for the publisher *Zemlia i fabrika* (ZIF; Land and Factory; 1922–1930), Moscow-Leningrad.

Established in 1922 under the *Soiuz trudiashchikhsia bumazhnoi promyshlennosti* (Central Committee of the Paper Trade Union), ZIF targeted the worker-peasant reader. While the main focus of ZIF was modern literature (prose and poetry), it also published books on natural science, medicine, and sociology. By the end of the 1920s, the total number of titles released by this publishing house was about 1,500.

Vladimir Narbut (1888–1938), a poet and a prominent functionary of the People's Commissariat for Education, was the founder and Chairman of the board of ZIF. In 1924, Narbut was appointed Deputy Head of the Press department at the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (of the Bolsheviks). Narbut attracted prominent writers and graphic artists of the time to publish with ZIF. Alongside Altman, these artists included Galina and Olga Chichagovs, Vasily Elkin, Aleksandr Rodchenko, Solomon Telingater, and Boris Titov.

In 1928, Narbut fell into disgrace with the Soviet authorities and was replaced by the poet Ilya Ionov (1887–1942). In the late 1920s, Anatoly Lunacharsky, People's Commissar for Education, also took an active part in the editorial work of ZIF.

Source: D. V. Fomin, "Graficheskoe oformlenie knig izdatel'stva 'Zemlia i fabrika'" (Graphic design of Books Published by Land and Factory), in *Bibliotekovedenie* (Library Science), vol. 66, no. 2 (2017): 166-173.

Detached book cover (in Russian):

Isaac Babel, *Istoriia moei golubiatni: Rasskazy* (The Story of My Dovecote: Stories)

Moscow-Leningrad: ZIF (Zemlia i fabrika), 1926 or 1927

Letterpress

7 1/2 x 5 3/4" (19 x 14.6 cm)

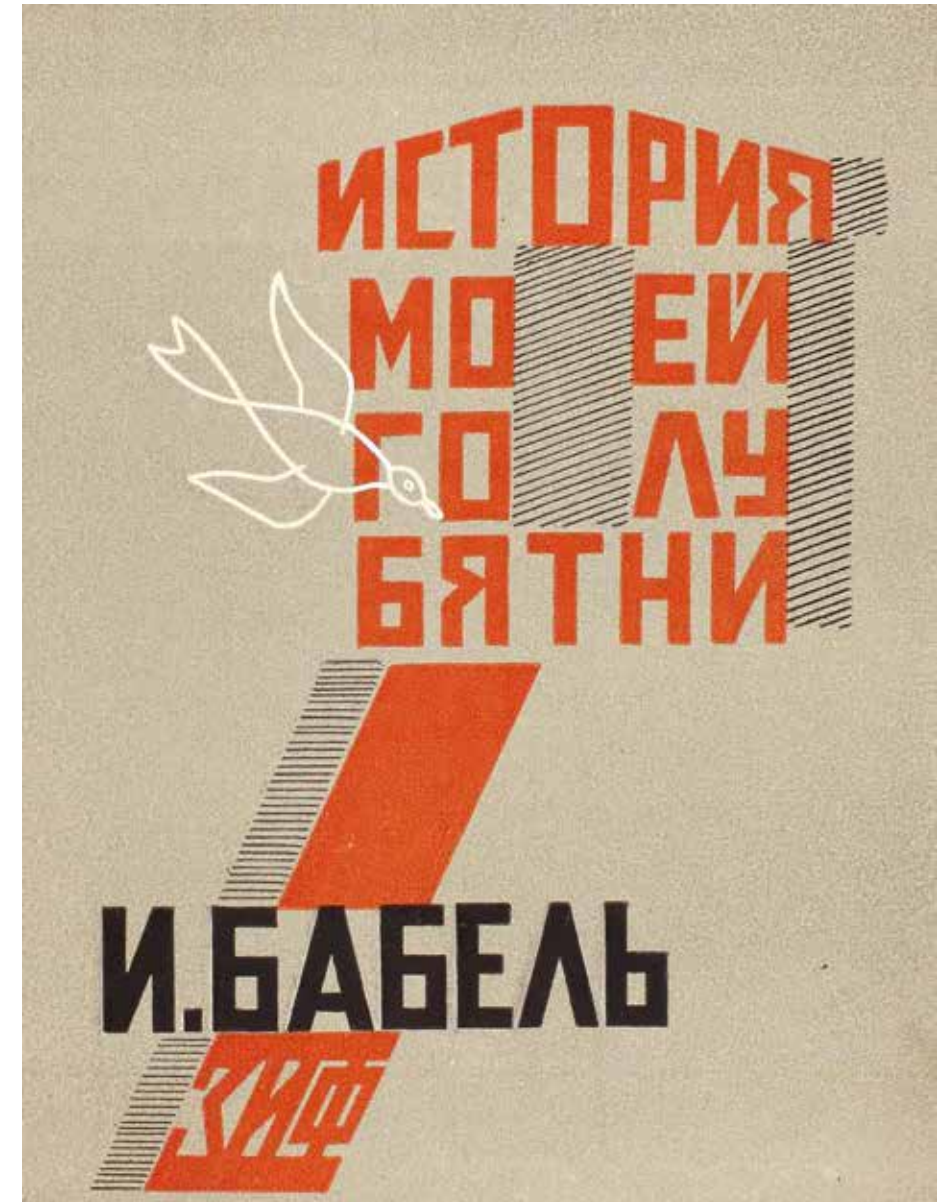
Merrill C. Berman Collection

"Zemlia i fabrika" 1927, p. 12:

"*The Selected Works* present the main cycles of Babel's stories – *voennyi* ("Red Cavalry") and *odesskii* ("Odessa Stories"). *The Story of My Dovecote* and *First Love* are Babel's autobiographical fiction stories depicting experiences of the author [as a Jewish boy growing up] during the "pogroms" in the city of Nikolaev in 1905."

From the press reviews, quoted in "Zemlia i fabrika" 1927, p. 12:

"Babel, a merciless realist and at the same time a romantic, a cruel writer in reference to his themes and a subtle master in the chased forms of his skill. He is presented in this book by the best examples of his work. The ZIF publishing house, which specializes in European-quality editions, has published Babel's book on excellent paper, well printed and with a superbly executed cover by N. Altman." (*Izvestiia*, Odessa, April 10, 1926)



Detached book cover (in Russian):

A. Novikov-Priboi, *More zovet* (The Sea Beckons). Complete Writings of Novikov-Priboi, book II.

Moscow-Leningrad: ZIF (Zemlia i fabrika), 1927

Letterpress

8 3/8 x 6" (21.3 x 15.2 cm)

Merrill C. Berman Collection

"Zemlia i fabrika" 1927, p. 68: "Novikov-Priboi, who came from a peasant milieu, belonged to the group of writers who joined the proletariat after the 1905 revolution...He entered the fleet as a sailor. During the Tsushima defeat, he was captured by the Japanese; for distribution of illegal literature he was persecuted and from 1907 to 1913 he was forced to live in exile abroad. The writer reveals the harsh...life at sea, which requires a lot of hard work from a person; he shows the life of sailors as a friendly family, soldered by the sea, in an atmosphere of work and rest, and describes the peculiar life of the port and coast."

Fig. 1.

Label from the verso of this mounted book cover indicating its inclusion in the landmark Internationale Presse Ausstellung (International Press Exhibition), Cologne (May–October 1928).

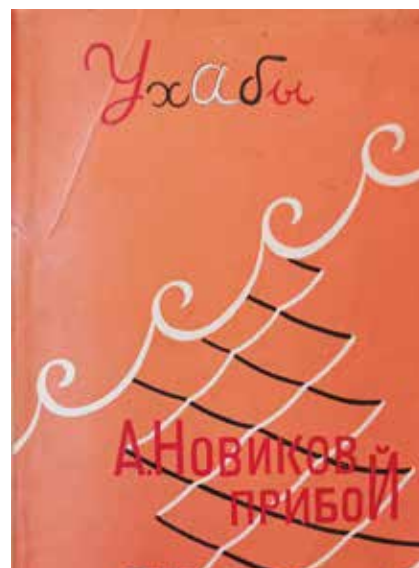


Fig. 2.

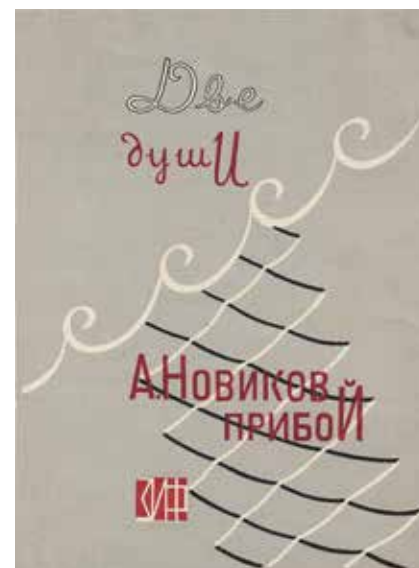
Note: This cover belongs to a series a series of five volumes, all with covers by Altman: Alexey (Aleksei) Novikov-Priboi, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Complete Writings), Moscow: Zemlia i fabrika, 1927–1928 (image of IV. *Zhenshchina v more* [Woman in the Sea], 1927 not shown here):



I. *Morskie rasskazy* (Sea Stories), 1928
Private Collection



III. *Ukhaby* (Potholes), 1927
Private Collection



V. *Dve dushi* (Two Souls), 1927
The Malakhovskiy Family
Collection, St. Petersburg

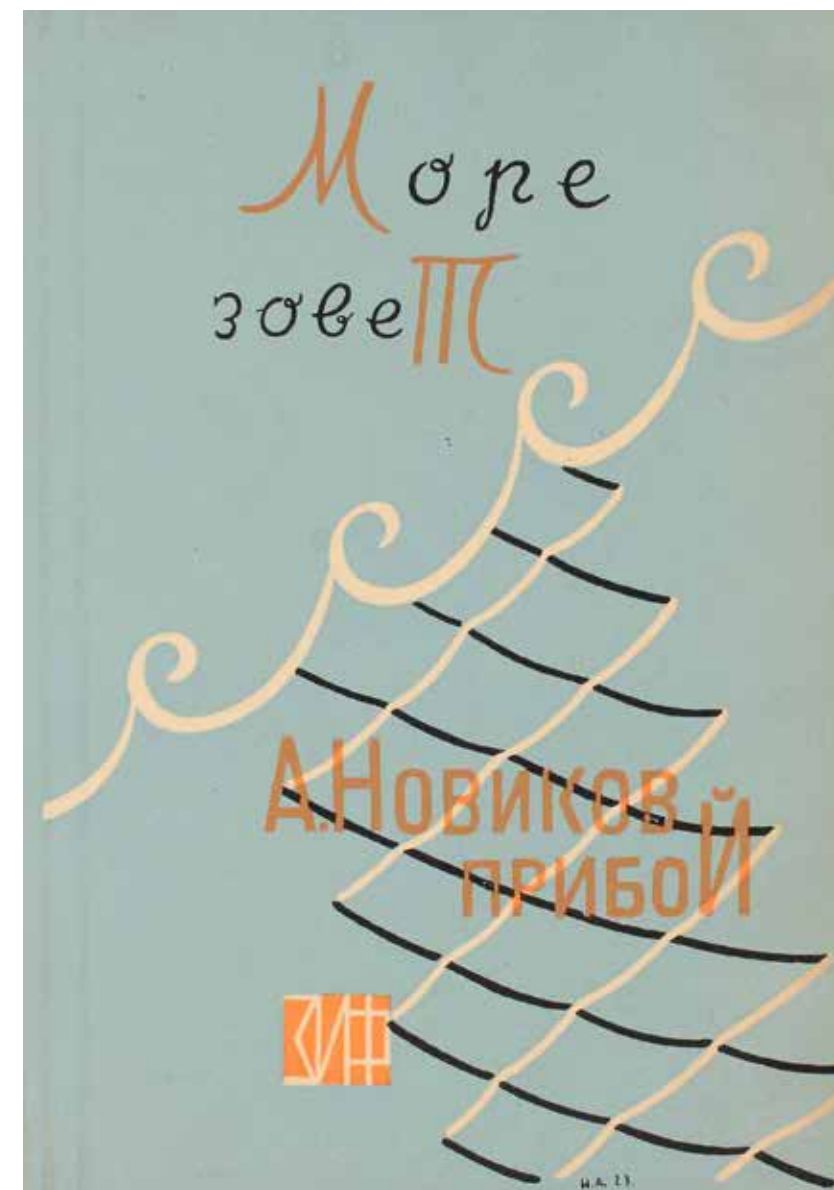


Fig. 1.



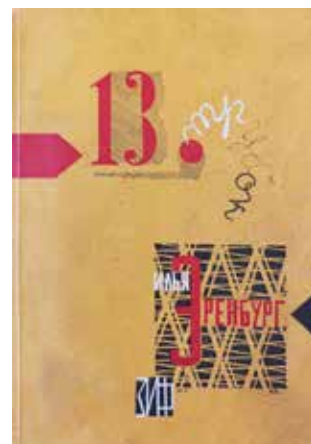
I. *Khulio Khurenito* (The Extraordinary Adventures of Julio Jurenito), 1928



II. *Trest D. E. Istoriia gibeli Evropy* (Trust D. E. A History of the Demise of Europe), 1928.



III. *Liubov' Zhanny Ney* (Love of Jeanne Ney), 1928. [For detached book cover, see p. 131]



IV. *Trinadtsat' trubok* (Thirteen Pipes), 1928



VI. *Zhizn' i gibel' Nikolaia Kurbova* (Life and Death of Nikolai Kurbov), 1928



VII. *V Protochnom pereulke* (At Protochnyi Lane), 1929. [For detached book cover, see p. 133]



VIII. *Lik voiny* (The Face of War), 1928. [For detached book cover, see p. 135]

Ilya Ehrenburg, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Complete writings), in eight volumes with cover designs by Natan Altman. Moscow-Leningrad: Zemlya i Fabrika, 1927–1929. All seven full books shown here: **Private collection**. Despite numbering, only seven seem to have been published.

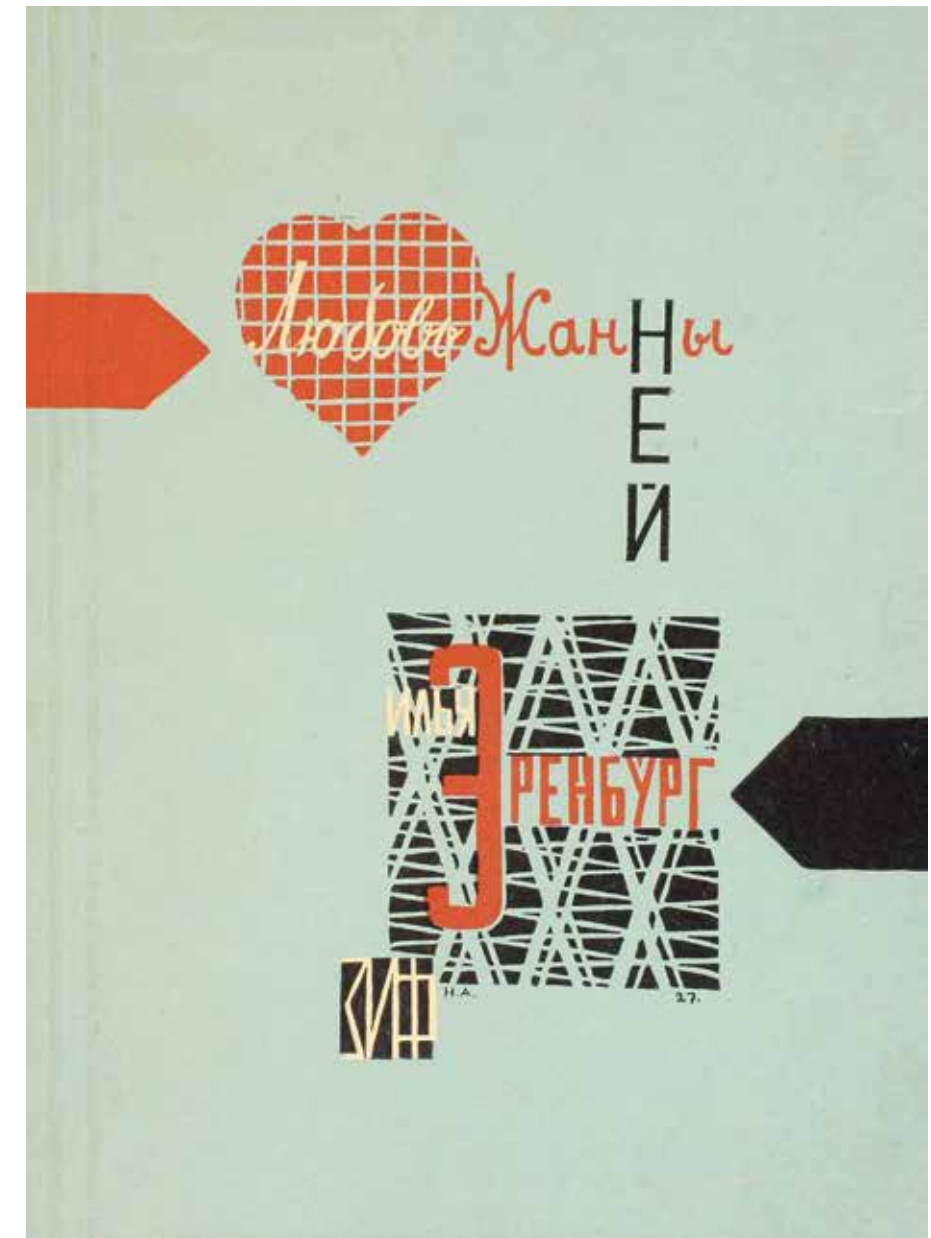
“Zemlia i fabrika” 1927, p. 4:

“The *Zemlia i fabrika* (ZIF) brand can serve a sure guarantee for both the librarian and the regular reader...that there is no decadence or pornography in the books [it publishes]. Only in one case did the publishing house ZIF make a deviation by undertaking the publication of the Collected Works of [Ilya] Ehrenburg. The publishing house took this step based on the fact that Ehrenburg brilliantly depicts the negative aspects of the capitalist society.”

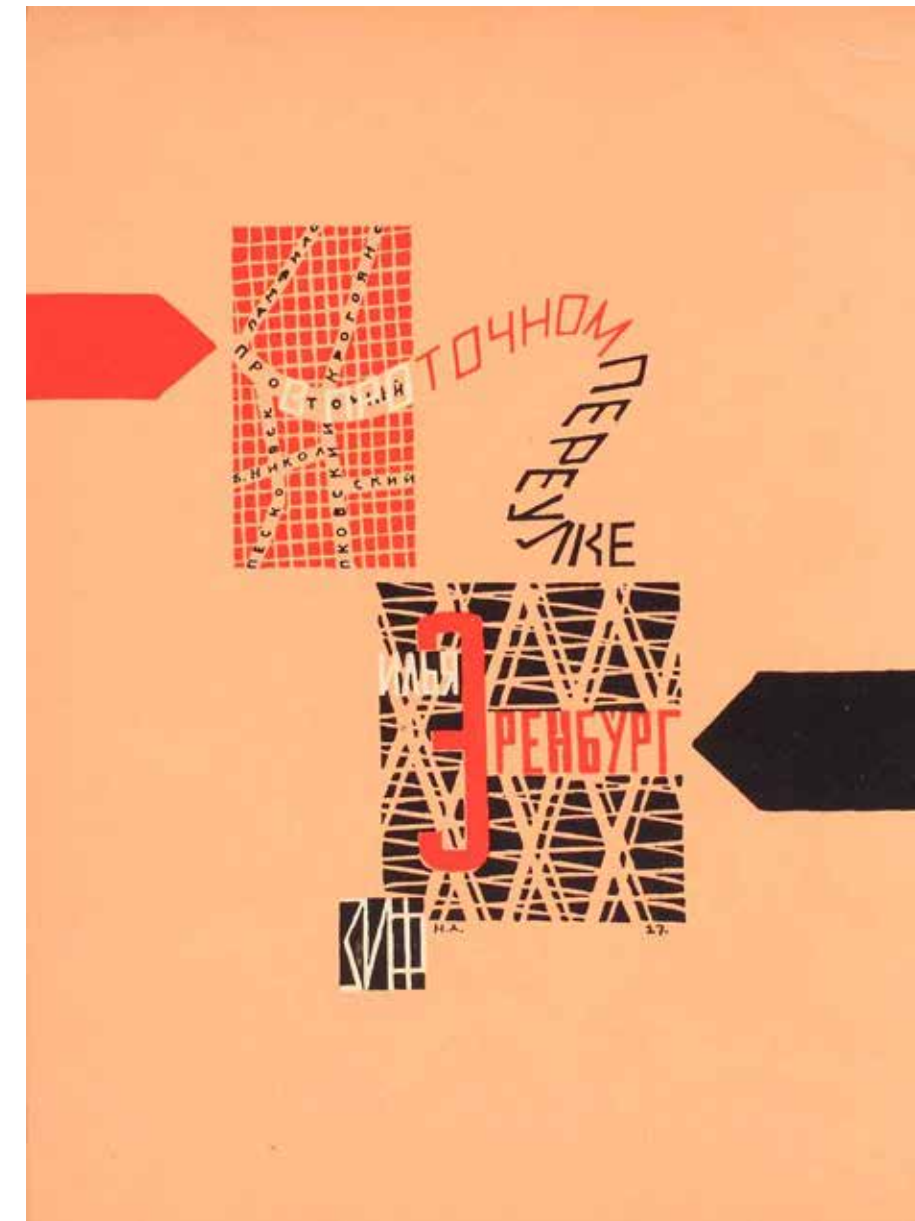
“Zemlia i fabrika” 1927, p. 86:

“Currently, the writer [Ehrenburg] lives in Paris, visiting the U.S.S.R. only occasionally. Ehrenburg's novels and stories are a resounding success with us. In them, the writer applies with great skill the achievements of modern Western fiction writing. Moreover, often he directs his literary works against the capitalist culture of the West. Ehrenburg's works are brilliantly executed, fierce pamphlets on...the soul-less, ostentatious ‘culture’ of the West. It was from this angle that the modern Soviet reader perceived them.”

Detached book cover (in Russian):
Ilya Ehrenburg, *Liubov Zhanny Ney* (Love of Jeanne Ney)
Complete writings of Ehrenburg, book 3 (of 8)
Moscow-Leningrad: ZIF (Zemlia i fabrika), 1928
Letterpress
8 3/8 x 6 1/8" (21.3 x 15.6 cm)
Merrill C. Berman Collection



Detached book cover (in Russian):
Ilya Ehrenburg, *V Protochnom pereulke* (At Protochnyi Lane)
Complete writings of Ehrenburg, book 7 (of 8)
Moscow-Leningrad: ZIF (Zemlia i fabrika), 1927 or 1929
Letterpress
9 1/16 x 6 5/8" (23 x 16.8 cm)
Merrill C. Berman Collection



Detached book cover (in Russian):
Ilya Ehrenburg, *Lik voiny* (The Face of War)
Complete writings of Ehrenburg, book 8 (of 8)
Moscow-Leningrad: ZIF (Zemlia i fabrika), 1928
Letterpress
8 3/8 x 5 3/4" (18.2 x 14.6 cm)
Merrill C. Berman Collection

Fig. 1. Front and back cover of Ilya Ehrenburg's *Lik voiny* (The Face of War). Private collection



Detached book cover (in Russian):

Yu. Lebedinsky, *Kommunisty (Nedelia. Zavtra. Komissary)* (Communists [Week. Tomorrow. Commissars]). Volume 1 of the set: *Sobranie sochinenii (pod nabludeniem avtora) s portretom avtora* (Collected works [under the supervision of the author] with a portrait of the author).

Moscow-Leningrad: ZIF (Zemlia i fabrika), 1928

Letterpress

8 1/2 x 5 13/16" (21.6 x 14.8 cm)

Merrill C. Berman Collection

"Zemlia i fabrika" 1927, pp. 54–55:

"For a long time—until about 1924—Libedinsky worked in the Red Army, in various positions, starting with the political instructor of the 26th division and ending with the Assistant Commander of Education at the *Vysshaia Voennaia Shkola Sviazi* (The Higher Military School of Communications). Carried mainly political, propaganda and pedagogical work. In his literary works, Libedinsky was one of the first to give a clear, ideologically consistent and vivid image of the way of life and psychology of Communist Party workers both in the context of the Russian Civil War and in the conditions of peaceful Communist construction."

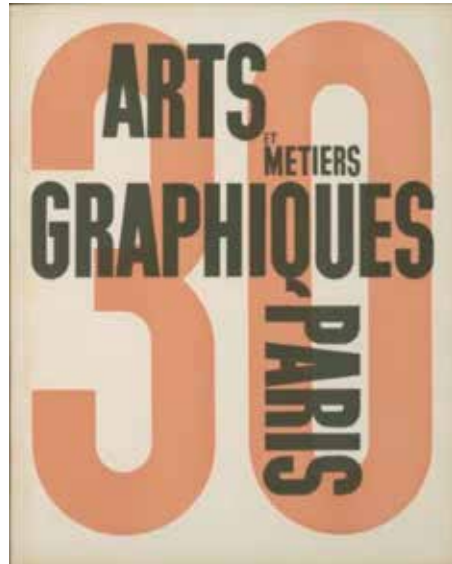


Proof or journal announcement (in French):
Arts et Métiers Graphiques, no. 30 (1932)
Lithograph
12 1/8 x 9 3/8" (30.8 x 23.8 cm)

Merrill C. Berman Collection

Note: Altman's realized cover of this issue of *Arts et Métiers Graphiques*, reproduced below, differs from this design.

Fig. 1. Altman's realized cover for *Arts et Métiers Graphiques*, no. 30 (1932). **Merrill C. Berman Collection**



Appendix

Henryk Berlewi, "Jewish Artists in Russia (with Reproductions of works by Chagall, Altman, Sterenberg, and Lissitzky)" / "Jewish Artists in Contemporary Russian Art (Upon the opening of the Russian art exhibit in Berlin, 1922)," *Rimon* [Pomegranate]: *A Hebrew Magazine of Art and Letters*, no. 2 (1923): 13–18. **Merrill C. Berman Collection**

This translation by Rachel Field appeared *In geveb: A Journal of Yiddish Studies* (January 2018), where it includes footnotes (eliminated here). Accessed July 2022: <https://ingeveb.org/texts-and-translations/jewish-artists-in-contemporary-russian-art>



ה'כ"ה

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Photograph caption in Hebrew.

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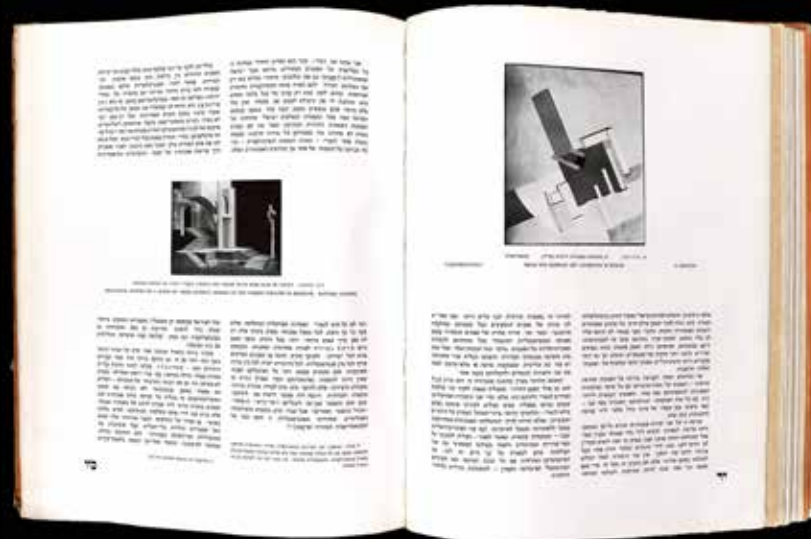
Photograph caption in Hebrew.

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Sculpture caption in Hebrew.

Text on the right page, including a caption and several paragraphs of Hebrew text.



Photograph caption in Hebrew.

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Photograph caption in Hebrew.

Text on the right page, including a caption and several paragraphs of Hebrew text.



Photograph caption in Hebrew.

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Illustration caption in Hebrew.

Text on the right page, including a caption and several paragraphs of Hebrew text.



חברת שלישית רמון שנת הרפ"ג מאסף עת' לאקטנה ולספרות

תוכן

Table of contents in Hebrew, listing articles and their authors.

RIMON A HEBREW MAGAZINE OF ART AND LETTERS

CONTENTS

Table of contents in English, listing articles and their authors.



חברת 2 שנת הרפ"ג

“Jewish Artists in Contemporary Russian Art”

(Upon the opening of the Russian art exhibit in Berlin, 1922)

Henryk Berlewi

The issues that have emerged in the world of art over the last several decades have perhaps nowhere reached such a level of tension as in Russia. The new artistic ideas, which since the downfall of the so-called “Peredvizhniki” have begun to migrate here from Western Europe, particularly France (with a considerable delay), have not only acclimated rapidly but continue to develop and expand. So it was with Cézannism, Cubism, Futurism and so on; with the entire breadth and depth of the Russian soul, these new artistic ideas, or artistic philosophies, were adopted and led to their final, logical consequences. That, which in the West was a product of harmless experimentalism, by virtue of its entirely free, non-obligatory, creative objective, has here in Russia effectively developed into a theory—a canon.

These vicissitudes and the disintegration of currents have occurred here more radically and sharply than anywhere else. Thanks to that uniquely Russian openness to new ideas and forms, Russia has reached exemplary heights in the past fifteen to twenty years, the likes of which none of the European countries, despite having served Russia as a model of artistic progress, have achieved. Yet, to suggest that the new Russian art drew its strengths solely from elsewhere would be a mistake. Icons, *lubki* and hand-painted shop signs were to no lesser degree the inspirations for new artistic quests.

Lubki [popular prints] and shop signs played a particularly significant role in the development of these artistic forms. Through them, a new world of high ideals and possibilities revealed itself before the eyes of the artist. Forms that were previously ignored and deemed worthless were raised to an apotheosis. In their primitivism and awkwardness the artist discovered hidden strengths that were much more potent and direct

and therefore more persuasive and emotional than the most refined delicacy of the “official salon art.”

The two main forces behind the new artistic form in Russia—Western European art with its entire wealth of interesting experiments and results and the familiar folk art with all the splendor of exoticism, grotesqueness and enchantment—came together through a wonderful fate. The joining of these two forces, according to the nature of disparate artistic elements, should have brought about an especially interesting artistic perspective. But the reality was somewhat disappointing, demonstrating that a synthesis (except for a unique case that I will recall later) was not achieved and that the two elements could not unite organically. They constantly repelled each other, then retreated in opposite directions, into their own worlds.

To this day, we are witnessing such a division in Russian art. On the one hand, we have a group of artists who hail from a tradition of romantic folklore. On the other hand, we have a group of artists who have rejected every type of sentimentalism and fully devoted themselves to universal artistic tasks. In addition to these two groups, which represent entirely different standards, there is a third group that seeks, consciously or unconsciously, to unite these distinct elements.

Marc Chagall is the most important and characteristic representative of such a vision. He is perhaps the only artist who has successfully brought together two entirely different artistic worlds. The formal elements that compose his works emerge clearly: Russian *lubki*, old Jewish murals and Cubism. But due to his transnationalism and collectivism (except for

his strong individuality), which I will refer to as a cosmic position of artistic intuition, he has succeeded in raising himself above formal particularism. In his own metaphysical universe, he has transformed two supposedly disparate worlds into a powerful, harmonious, ringing chorus—oriental exoticism with all its mystical content and strict European monumental Cubism. I reiterate: Chagall is unique in this respect. The whole cluster of young, mostly Jewish artists who strive to Europeanize the Jewish *lubok* demonstrate a great helplessness. They lack the distinct intellectual structure that is unique to Chagall, that allows him to create his work. It is no surprise that they find themselves in such a dilemma. At a time when their entire soul is captivated both by the wonderful magic of old Jewish folk art and mysticism and by new artistic forms that stem from an entirely different source, namely, that of machines and industry, any decision at the expense of one of these two artistic forces is no small task.

The strict, formal uniformity that serves as such an important basis for all art has received particular significance today. Now, more than ever, the artist strives wholeheartedly for a uniform and consistent form that gives a certain physiognomy to his entire creation. For this reason, so many modern artists have renounced such sentimentalism, emotional excess and spontaneity. They rely more on unemotional intellect, which is not as misleading as blind instinct (it may even be creative). On the contrary, it guarantees an exact, coherent and conscious form. An example of this can be found in the work of Lissitzki, who for a long time devoted himself to Chagallism (his *Had Gadya*, *Yingl Tsingl Khvat*, etc.). But thanks to his analytical abilities, he quickly freed himself from that sentimentalism and transitioned to a pure structure (“proun”).

In general, it is impossible to speak of a fixed physiognomy in the work of Jewish artists, both in Russia and abroad. Their versatility—let’s call it the “encyclopedic nature” of their art—which probably draws as much from a specific Jewish spirit as from the lack of a well-established artistic tradition is immensely great. Nathan Altman is an “encyclopedist” in that sense of the word. His work exhibits the sum of all the forms that have been achieved in recent years. Everything is there; nothing has been left out: abstraction, Picasso, realistic drawings, the portrait “Lenin,” Jewish folk ornamentation and so on. Brilliantly eclectic, he wholeheartedly experiences these already existing forms, passing them through his own artistic prism. Of the works I have been able to see, his theater sets for *Accosta*, strictly faithful to structure and tone (the third act with the synagogue is weaker), are among the most autonomous and powerful.

The artist who is most representative of the specific character of contemporary Russian painting and who is at the same time the most mature of all Jewish painters is Shterenberg. Having absorbed the pure, pictorial culture of Cézanne, Henri Rousseau, etc. and the achievements of Cubism, he has developed his work, not as the Suprematists did, toward the boundaries of artistic representation (which logically leads to the suicide of the art itself) but toward perfect restraint. The shop signs that I mentioned above as possessing unlimited, vivid possibilities was the most significant inspiration for Shterenberg’s images. He used shop signs as his raw material, developing and transforming them into fine, elegant and self-contained works.

The word “image” has of late been largely

ignored by the Leftists. This has resulted from the fact that these new artistic forms are primarily based on pure experimentation. Shterenberg is now perhaps the only Leftist artist who, using his cult of pure form and material, has solved the tasks of articulation, rhythm, texture and tone, just as the extreme Neo-Cubists and Suprematists have torn apart and liberated them from their subjects. Yet, unbound by abstract experimentalism, he returns to concrete forms without losing his power for abstraction. From subject to abstraction back to subject—in this lies the paradox of Shterenberg's painting.

Shterenberg and Chagall are the only two artists in Russia who have uniquely and constructively solved the latest issues that have arisen in painting. They have demonstrated that art is a living thing that cannot be violently detached from life itself, as some of the theoreticians of Constructivism would have us believe.



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