

5: Non-Zionist and Zionist responses to “In the City of Slaughter.”

Bundist (Jewish diasporist-socialist) activist, and later Communist leader Moisei Olgin:

Reading that poem was difficult – the acts of murder were portrayed so openly and clearly in it, all the inhuman acts were described so openly, and you feel as though a strong hand is leading you against your will through all of the places where the act occurred [...] it would have been difficult to read this poem had it not been for the strong and superhuman feeling of sorrow and fury that conquered the poet and conquers you to when you read it. This emotion rises above your disgust and shame at these terrible deeds, rises even above the pain [...] ‘In the City of Slaughter’ was the most powerful poem bequeathed us by that bloodsoaked era of suffering and struggle in Russia. ‘In the City of Slaughter’ is a revolutionary work, even if Bialik himself was not among the revolutionaries.