

Zeitlin, Hillel

(1871-1942), Religious thinker, scholar, and writer who forecast the extermination of European Jewry in his writings. Born in Belorussia, Zeitlin settled in Warsaw, where he founded and wrote for two major Yiddish newspapers. He was a student of Jewish mysticism who tried to interest other thinkers of his time in the classical Jewish sources.

As early as 1917, Zeitlin began writing about dreams and visions in which he clearly saw the impending annihilation of Europe's Jews. In one dream he saw his own death, while in another he saw a ship sinking, the Jews on it dying as martyrs. In a later dream Zeitlin envisioned a deportation train carrying Jews to their deaths. In July 1939, less than two months before World War II broke out, Zeitlin described, in great detail, a vision he had had that included the total liquidation of the European Jewish community. He told a group of friends and students about his vision, and published a description of it in a Jewish periodical.

After the war did indeed break out, Zeitlin was moved to the Warsaw Ghetto, where he worked feverishly, and took no part in public life. He was probably shot to death on the *Umschlagplatz* in 1942.