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My parents
My grandparents
Growing up
Religious life in Kovel
Jewish history in Kovel
My school years
University
During the war
The liberation of Warsaw
My wife Teresa
Working as a translator and teaching Jewish languages
Glossary

My parents

I come from the town of Kovel, while my father was a native of Brest. He went to a Russian vocational school and became a master metalworker; he built, among other things, one of the largest and most beautiful railway stations in the Eastern borderlands [Polish name for the prewar Eastern provinces lost by Poland in 1945 for the sake of the Soviet Union]. In Kovel he met my mother, who was a very pretty woman. The fruits of their marriage were two girls and myself, the only boy.

Mom was five years younger than Father; both of them were born in the 1880s. My mother's given names were Sosze Henia, in her identity documents she was called Gienia, maiden name Bokser. My father's name was Aron Samuel Friedman. Mother was a milliner. She made dresses, especially sophisticated and elegant dresses; her work was Warsaw [top] quality and fashionable. Wealthier ladies used to come to her, among them the wife of a flourmill owner, the wife of an oil mill owner, and so on. Occasionally, she employed up to three assistants, while two were kept on a regular basis. Her workshop was in our apartment - we had three Singer machines. Mother had a more regular income than Father. She was an incredibly good woman. After Father's death in the mid-1930s, she worked to support the entire household. Mother had four sisters, but I don't remember their names, and one brother, Jidl, in America. Now and then they would send us a few dollars.

Father was an educated man for that time, since he had graduated from the local vocational school. He had worked on the construction of the railway station, and after the station was opened he started a metalwork shop in partnership with another Jew. They employed two apprentices. But they were getting fewer orders, and at the end of the 1920s Father went to work for Red Star Line,

an English company. There was also another firm called White Star Line. Both companies were in the business of arranging transportation for emigrants to America. After World War I ended, there was immense emigration from the East [Polish name for the prewar Eastern provinces lost by Poland in 1945 for the sake of the Soviet Union] to the United States. Mostly Jews took advantage of it, but not only.

Father came back from World War I with a medal for valor. He had fought against the Germans, on the Russian side. In his political views he was at first a supporter of the so-called Territorialist party; this was a Jewish party that adopted in part the ideology of the Bund 1, but believed that the only option for the Jews was a territory of their own, not necessarily Palestine. Afterwards, I think that party ceased to exist and my father became a supporter of the Bund. My parents subscribed to Folkszeitung 2 and Moment 3, because my mother had Zionist views. I started to read Moment when I was seven.

There were three children in our family: Regina, Rywka, and I. I was born in 1913. Regina was two years older than I, and Rywka was ten years younger. [Rywka was born in 1923, and the elder sister in 1911.] Rywka was a fantastically gifted girl and I had a friendlier relationship with her than with my elder sister, with whom I had frequent quarrels. Regina and Rywka were killed in August 1942 in the Kovel ghetto. Mom too. Father was lucky, as he died several years before the war.

My grandparents

I know not a thing about my grandpa, my mother's father. I only found his long pipe in a drawer. And I bear his name: Mojsze Pinchos Bokser. But I am Michal; after all, I couldn't be called Mojsze Pinchos in the Soviet army, could I? On the other hand, I knew my grandma, my mom's mom, well. Grandma Chana Bokser emigrated along with my mother's brother, Jidl, to the United States, in 1923, I think. Grandma was also a native of Kovel. She lived a long life and died when she was quite old. We kept in touch with them. And it even went as far that when we had moved to Warsaw after the war, there once was a phone call from the United States. Someone asked for me. We had a maid who knew that contacts with abroad weren't allowed [under communism any contacts with the western world were suspicious and checked by the secret police agents]; she said that there was nobody of that name there. And we lost touch. So "Jidl was without his fidl" [Reference to a Yiddish song.] and later his last name was no longer Bokser but Baxter.

Grandma Chana kept a traditional home. The kashrut and all the holidays were observed there. I want to add something here that I have just remembered - I haven't thought about it for years. I liked my melamed very much, though he was generally a bore. But on Friday mornings he told us midrashes. That took place in a shtibl [Yiddish, for a small prayer house] for some sort of craftsmen: Jews would sit there and study the Talmud and midrashes. I would just sit down to listen at first, but later I would explain holy texts to them myself. I remember that the name of one of those men was Szpak. He had a license to transport cargo by rail; he was allowed to load different packages onto railroad cars. The Jews who sat there would say 'What a boy, what a story-teller!' But Szpak would say: 'why be surprised? After all, the tzaddik from Chernobyl himself danced at the wedding of his grandma Chana.' And after the midrashes, the melamed would take us to the river to teach us to swim since parents are commanded to educate their children and to teach them to swim.

My grandpa on my father's side was from Brest. I didn't have any contact with my family in Brest. Grandma on my father's side was already dead; I don't even remember her name. I had a cousin who left for Palestine before the war. In Kovel he was a Betar 4 supporter and later played an important role in the revolt against the English [he was a member of the revisionist underground in Palestine of the 1920s.] He belonged to the group led by Begin 5 and Sztern 6, spent time in jail. He was from my father's side of the family. He had an unusual last name - Jundow. Janusz and his brother Matys were the sons of my father's sister, whose name I don't know either.

I had another cousin too, the daughter of my father's sister Irena Rajnberg, nee Friedman. She married a lawyer who was well known before the war; Rajnberg was his name. He was assaulted by ONR 7 members on several occasions. She survived as an Aryan. She got caught in a roundup, put in jail and then someone denounced her as a Jewess. She was even checked by an anthropologist, if she conformed to Aryan standards, and it turned out that she was 100 percent Aryan. After the war she went to Israel. Irena died in Israel.

Growing up

We lived in the center of Kovel in a rented apartment, in three rooms on Warszawska Street. Eppelbaum was the owner of a lot of apartment houses. And we rented from him a three-bedroom apartment in a wooden, one-story house. There was another family living in that house, and for a while, the municipal library was also located there.

We had a separate entrance to the raised first floor. Our apartment had a glassed-in verandah, which in summertime was very often used as a room where we had our meals and received guests. One room was used for my mother's workshop. There were beds in all the rooms. The bedroom was furnished in a traditional style: a double bed, a wardrobe, a glassed-in cupboard, and a bookshelf for my ever-growing book collection. All of us read a lot, my sisters included. My reading very often prevented others from sleeping, so my mom would stop me, because she was very fatigued.

There was this large hall, where a water barrel was kept, for only some, very few homes had running water at the time. And the toilet was in the courtyard. For the conditions of the time we were not that poor. Mother earned good money, and even when my father didn't work, we always had a maid in the house.

In the kitchen there was a stove plate, with a stove, in which on Thursdays bread was baked for Saturdays, challah and pancakes made from wheat flour, sprinkled with poppy-seed and bits of onion, and called 'cebulaki'. 'Kuchen' was sometimes prepared for holidays, a sort of large yeast cake studded with raisins. On Saturdays we had tsimes made from carrots, which was made in this large saucepan. We had cholent very frequently; we would take the pot to the bakery on Friday and pick it up on Saturday. It was taken to the bakery because nobody cooked on Fridays; the bakery wasn't open either, but the stove at the bakery retained its warmth. In cholent there was beef, kishke, potatoes roasted brown, and often also large [butter] beans. I remember a joke: What's cholent? - You put it in on Friday and take it out on Saturday.

Later, sometime in the 1930s, we moved to a place that belonged to another rich man, to the Bokser family. We were distantly related. We rented three rooms, also in the center, on Pilsudski Street, which was an extension of Warszawska Street. It was a sort of promenade with benches. The Boksers had a large construction materials business. One of their sons was a friend of mine

and he and I went away together to university in France in 1930. He graduated in commerce and didn't go back to Kovel but went directly to Palestine.

Religious life in Kovel

Holidays were very important in our little town. Everyone celebrated them. For Passover, the house was cleaned from top to bottom, every nook and cranny; all the dishes were koshered in hot water in the courtyard. People delivered flour to the bakery where matzot were made. Those were little round loaves, not the rectangles of today. The Jewish community allocated flour and matzah to poor families. There were charitable institutions that distributed matzah, raised money for dowries for dowry-less girls so that they wouldn't get left until their braids turned gray, as the Yiddish saying went. Raisin wine was prepared for holidays. Back then we considered that wine heavenly.

The table was covered with a white tablecloth. On the table there were three matzot covered with a napkin. A piece of matzah would be broken off and hidden so that the children could look for it. That is called afikoman. During the reading of the Haggadah four goblets had to be raised. Plus one special goblet, carved for the prophet Elijah. The door was opened at a specified time for Elijah to come in. When I was a small kid, I believed that Elijah would come, of course. We celebrate the Passover to remember that we were once slaves in a foreign land. That's why we open the door to let in Elijah or anyone else who is hungry and thirsty. The youngest children then ask four traditional questions; once upon a time it used to be said about a fool: he is a philosopher of the four questions.

So the Passover holiday was celebrated very solemnly; it was related to the beginning of spring. Parents were under obligation to give their children new clothes or something else new. When boys and girls came together in the courtyard they would all seem so new. Greeting each other, the ones wearing new clothes would say 'titchadesh', which means: May you renew yourself. One of the traditional customs was the walnut game. That game resembled the tipcat: some walnuts were first tossed on the ground, and then you had to hit them with another walnut. And whoever managed to hit the larger heap took them all. Just like during Chanukkah you play with the dreidel, the spinner, the top.

Later, after father's death, those holidays didn't have the same character. I would come home for a few days; I had my own friends and we would go on walks or meet at a club that the Jewish intelligentsia used to go to. That club was an interesting place. We had various sections: for mandolin players, a sports section, a chess section; there was a ping-pong table, too. Danziger, the flourmill owner, financed the club. We talked mostly in Yiddish, while Polish had largely eradicated the Russian language.

I remember that for Sukkot the sukkot were made from broken doors, wooden railings, there was a sukkah next to each house. Shavuot was a very colorful holiday in our town. Not far from the town there was a lake where sweet flag grew. The path leading to the house would be sprinkled with white sand and the entire house decorated with sweet flag. Most houses looked as if they were growing in the jungle. That custom began to fade in the thirties. Young people, more and more secular, began to depart from the tradition. There were a lot of students in our town. The two gymnasia [general secondary schools] produced 45 graduates each year.

Chanukkah was a social holiday. My girlfriends and boyfriends - sometimes twenty, sometimes thirty people - would come to our house. Mom and my younger and elder sisters would make potato pancakes. And of course candles were lit and placed on the windowsills.

I remember that at Purim - at the time I was a first grader in the Tarbut 8 gymnasium we collected money for Keren Kayemet Leisrael 9. We would dress up as Achasuerus, Esther, etc., and in groups of five went from house to house. That could have been 1925. We acted out the entire story. There was Ahasuerus, Haman who comes with accusations against the Jews, then Mordecai who goes to the King and explains everything, and in the end Ahasuerus kills him with a saber. We put the money given to us into a collection-box for Palestine.

In our town tradition was kept up even by the few assimilated. On Yom Kippur there wasn't one case of anyone failing to come to the synagogue. On the other hand, in all the homes I knew, it was mostly the women that kept kosher. Because the communists, for instance, flaunted the fact that they didn't observe tradition. Kovel was a Jewish town whose outskirts, where the Ukrainians and Poles lived, formed a separate town. The river Turia flowed through the town. Kovel was divided into three quarters. On one side of the river there was the Old Town, called Zand [in Yiddish], or Sand, as it had been built on sandy ground. In the new part, on the other bank of the Turia, there was Kovel where the Poles lived, most of whom were employees of a railroad company, Depo; they repaired railroad cars and engines. That was a separate town. There were fewer Ukrainians than Poles there. Their farms began just behind the main street. Those three worlds lived side by side.

Kovel was the largest railway hub in the East and the direct rail connection Warsaw - Kovel was faster than today. The trip took less than five hours, and trains ran so precisely on time that you could set your watch by them. They were clean and there were three classes of cars, the first class being the most expensive. They even used to say: Why do Jews travel third class? Because there is no fourth class. Fares were not so expensive. The third class had wooden benches, while in the first and second they were upholstered. There were compartments in the cars, and there was a restaurant car on fast trains, but I used to travel by slow train when I lived in Warsaw. I would always come home from Warsaw for Passover, Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur.

Jewish history in Kovel

That small county town was something more than a shtetl. It was a bastion of the Jewish Hebrew-speaking intelligentsia. The older people still spoke Russian, but the new generation had already adopted the Polish language. The Jewish population in my town wasn't rich. There were a few rich men. One of them was called Armarnik. He had a flourmill. There was Danziger, and then there was Cuperfein, the owner of an oil mill. Sztern was a very stingy man. When a delegation from the community would come to him to ask for a contribution toward the dowry of a gifted but poor girl, he, that is Sztern, used to say: 'I like the idea; the girl ought to be helped.' Then he would turn to his wife: 'Genia, give me my coat, I'm going out with them to collect donations.'

There were two large synagogues in our town. In addition to the so-called shtiblech, or prayer houses, which belonged to specific trades. Porters, painters, and shoemakers - they all had their prayer houses on the streets where they lived. In Zand there was a large, beautiful synagogue, a bit in a fortified style. The best Jewish cantors used to perform there on holidays: Kusowicki, Rozenblatt etc. There was also a choir, which several of my classmates were members of. And there was one more synagogue in the town, a private synagogue, built by a local rich man,

Eppelbaum. He lived in what is called a sinful union with a Ukrainian woman; I remember that the town always held it against him. The story was that he had built the synagogue in order to wipe out that sin in the next life. We used to go there to pray on the important holidays: Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot, during the three pilgrim holidays and on the Days of Awe [Yamim Noraim]. That synagogue has remained in my memory as a tragic place. I will talk about that later.

One Kovel family was descendants of the Maggid of Turzysk 10 and the Turzysk Hasidim 11. Turzysk, near Kovel, is on the Turia River, five kilometers from my town. Thus, a descendant of that family had a Hasidic court on a small island in the Turia River in Kovel. Hasidim came to see him on the important holidays. I remember that we, the boys who, as they say, had already strayed a bit from religion, used to paddle up there in our canoes and play silly pranks on the Hasidim celebrating around the tables. For example, we would set a cat or a dog loose on them, and they screamed terribly because they were afraid of an unclean animal. I remember such silly pranks.

There was a Jewish hospital in Kovel, supported by the Jewish community. The director of that hospital was a Ukrainian who knew Yiddish and even read the Moment newspaper, but during the occupation [see German occupation of Poland] 12 he proved to be a nationalist and collaborated with the Germans.

In a town with twenty-something thousand residents, there were two coeducational gymnasia, a newspaper, Kovler Sztymer, and two Jewish clubs: the Sholem Aleichem 13 club and the Peretz club 14. The Zionist organizations had their own clubs and libraries, too. And on the Jewish street a struggle pitting Yiddish against Hebrew raged. The town was relatively secular. Among its important institutions was a Tarbut Hebrew gymnasium and a local Poalei Zion 15 organization, which, just like the Bund, stood for cultural autonomy for the Jews.

Both the Bund and the Poalei Zion carried out well-organized cultural work in their clubs. For example, they held mock trials of books. What were they like? To begin with, the audience gathered in the hall listened to a short story or a novella. Next, a panel of judges was selected, and the prosecutor prepared his speech; there was also a defense counsel. And the debate among the young people would frequently continue until dawn. I took part in such mock trials, including one about Bontshe Shvayg [character and title of a short story by Isaac Leib Peretz]. Did he do the right thing? Should he be rewarded with the ultimate prize for his life? Very many such debates took place, and we grew up on them. Both clubs ran libraries. Their book collections weren't particularly big; but we could find practically all the books being published in Yiddish, not only those written by Jewish authors, but also those translated into Yiddish. Books in Hebrew were available in the libraries of Zionist organizations.

Not far from our house on Warszawska Street was a Landowners Association House, to which landowners from all over Volhynia came. And we, Poles and Jews alike, went to tea dances that were held there. We went there to pick up girls. We would order half a cutlet each, a non-kosher cutlet, though made not from pork but from veal, and dance the Argentine tango, for example.

After 1918, a Jewish theater existed in our town, something that would have been impossible under the Tsars. It was an amateur theater; its actors were workers, teachers and students. The entire repertoire of Jewish classics was performed in that theater. It existed until 1st September 1939. Theaters from the capital visited us frequently too. Even [Alexander] Granach, the great actor,

came to Kovel. And of course the Jozef Kaminski Theater. I didn't see The Dybbuk 16, but I did see Sholem Aleichem's 'The Grand Prize' and 'Two Hundred Thousand Silver Coins'; it was the same play produced under different titles. And 'The God of Vengeance', a play by Sholem Asch.

Kovel was visited not only by eminent actors but also by fiery reportage writers, who quite often described a world they hadn't seen themselves. My father always took me to those lectures. I remember how enchanted I was by those invented tales. It was then that I began to look for books in the library.

Two outstanding poets were natives of Kovel. One of them had been admitted into the pantheon of Jewish literature already before the war: Kalman Lis. Lis appeared in all CiSzO 17 school handbooks. And Eliasz Rajzman, who lived in Szczecin after the war and has been translated by some Polish poetess. Rajzman died more than a decade ago. He was an outstanding poet. Both were also actors in our Jewish theater. I got to know Rajzman thanks to his memoirs, featured in Folksztyme 18. One day - it was in the middle of the sixties - I noticed that they were publishing a novel about Kovel in installments. 'On the Roads of My Yesterday,' was the title, or 'Oyf di vegn fun mayn nechtn'. And then I remembered that there had been this actor Rajzman, who we once pelted with rotten tomatoes because his acting was poor. He was an excellent poet, though. Before the war Kalman Lis had been a counselor in the Jewish Children's Home in Otwock. And then he died - just like that - was killed by the Germans. There were also three brothers, poets from Turzysk: Lejb, Matys, and a third one whose name I don't recall. After the war Lejb was still in Poland, he left only in 1957. He did excellent translations of Pushkin 19 and Tuwim 20. Once he presented me with a book in which I found his inscription for my younger sister, Rywka, with whom he had been very much in love. Matys Olicki now lives in the U.S. and publishes in Forwerts 21.

Kovler Sztime was a newspaper for everyone; it was a general Jewish newspaper. It had one editor, one owner, and one proofreader - and it was the same man. His name was Jakub Burak. I met his brother in Holon many years after the war. Burak Jakub was killed. From time to time I published a sports column in Kovler Sztime, in Yiddish of course, and sometimes also reviews of theater shows.

When in 1918 we were suddenly transferred from the Russian Empire to the Polish rule, the Polish language was basically foreign to the entire Jewish intelligentsia. The year 1918 was filled with events [see Civil War] 22. Bulak Balachowicz's brigade or division from the Russian White Army was operating in Northern Volhynia. At the time they were cooperating with our Polish army against the Bolsheviks, but along their way they murdered local residents for practice. I remember that my mother's brother was in the so- called Citizens' Militia that was getting ready to defend us in case of an assault by Bulak Balachowicz. A majority of that militia were Jews; it also included some Ukrainians and Poles. My mother's brother even got a rifle from the provisional municipal authorities. They had sawn-offs, rifles with half of their barrels sawn off that were often used by poachers. Because the war had such an alternating pattern - once these forces were in town, then the other side would come back - arms were abundant as hell; soldiers would often abandon their arms and run away.

At first, our attitude towards Poland was primarily one of high hope since the tsarist regime hadn't registered particularly well in the history of the Jews, especially in these areas. I know that a lot of store was placed on Pilsudski 23, who besides was a legend. His luster faded somewhat after he teamed up with Petliura 24 and the Petliurites started to organize pogroms also in Volhynia.

There were no pogroms in Kovel. Even though in 1918 when Haller's troops 25 rushed into the town and pushed the Bolsheviks out, some public cutting off of Jewish beards by saber took place; those were spontaneous actions. I remember one scene, which later recurred in my dreams for decades. The year was 1920 and I was seven. We lived near the railroad station, and one night soldiers started to bang on our door. Father took an ax. The door was bolted with a bar; I was standing next to my father and holding on to his legs while he was ready to defend us to the end. Then one of the soldiers shouted something and they left - there were whorehouses in a side street - and everything went quiet again.

During the twenties, Jews and Poles coexisted well. In Kovel there was one monsignor Feliks Sznarbachowski, who built a beautiful church. He was a friend of the Jews and extinguished bad feelings from the height of his pulpit. When he died, nearly all the Jews accompanied him on his way to the cemetery. I attended that funeral, too. A nephew of the prelate had been a staunch hit-squad member before the war; after the war he worked for Radio Free Europe 26 and repented of his anti-Semitic sins. When Hitler came to power, there began to appear in Poland ONR supporters among university students, who spread the poison of hatred. The slogan 'Buy from your own, not from Jews' was heard frequently.

At the beginning of the 1930s, a rally was held inside one of the cinemas - it was either 'Odeon' or 'Ekspres', since there were two movie houses in Kovel - at which Jabotinsky 27 spoke. I was there. Jabotinsky was an excellent speaker. I remember that he was a man endowed with great oratorical talent. I aspired to become an orator and envied him. Jabotinsky encouraged his audience to go to Palestine; the rally took place probably after 1933, after Hitler's rise to power, and Jabotinsky talked about the danger that might befall the Jews. The Polish government was very accommodating to the Jabotinskites - which was not the case with the hahalutz 28 movement - and even allowed them to conduct paramilitary training of their people. That right-wing organization was forgotten after the war because it was unfairly identified with the Fascist movement. Before 1918 in Kovel there had been a Russian gymnasium, which was attended by few Jews. When Poland burst into existence in 1918 [see Polish Independence] 29, a Polish public gymnasium named after Slowacki was established on the site of that Russian gymnasium, where Jews were not admitted as a rule. If my memory doesn't fail me, I have counted seven Jewish students of both sexes who attended that gymnasium. In Kovel there were three gymnasiums and a school of commerce. All of the gymnasiums were coeducational. A private Polish-Jewish gymnasium, run by Klara Erlich, was established, with Polish as the language of instruction. Klara Erlich was a graduate of Kiev University and a very good mathematician. After the war I spoke with her again by telephone when I came to Moscow. Both of these gymnasiums were accredited to confer high-school diplomas.

My school years

There was also a third gymnasium, a Jewish one with Hebrew as the language of instruction; it was a Tarbut gymnasium, which didn't award the Polish high-school diploma. The Tarbut gymnasium had been established by Asher Frankfurt. There was no Yiddish at all, and instruction was in Hebrew. The school had two introductory grades: first and second, sort of pre-gymnasium grades, substituting for elementary school classes - that was the case in the early period, in my own time, but later children had to go to elementary school.

Initially, I attended the cheder. I mean I studied in the cheder from the age of four to seven. There I learned the Bible almost by heart. I also remember that I translated the Bible into Polish. I went to the cheder for less than a year, and then the melamed started coming to our home. He had decided that I was head and shoulders above the others in terms of knowledge, but he was probably also after more money.

I prepared for the gymnasium at home because what I had been able to gain from that melamed of mine wasn't enough. I passed the entrance exam for the introductory second grade and began to learn all the subjects in Hebrew. At first, Latin was translated into Polish but later we translated that already dead Latin into Hebrew. Instruction there was at a very high level. It was a large school; later on it had eight grades, with 40 pupils on average in each class. After 1918 the headmaster tried to polonize our Hebrew gymnasium in some sense.

There were several eminent teachers in the faculty. For a time, Dr. Feldszu, a good Hebrew feature writer, taught Latin. He wasn't particularly nice as a person. Feldszu was a member of Betar and wanted to create a Betar organization in our school. I remember that I was a Betar member for about a week, and then I switched to Hashomer Hatzair 30, which had branched out from the scouting organization. I remember that they wore Baden Powell hats and carried sticks. And I badly wanted to join them. I might have been five or six then. They were Jewish scouts, Cofim. But I remained in Hashomer Hatzair for a short while only, since by then I had completely different interests, completely down-to-earth - quite literally: I became a soccer player in the Maccabi 31 club.

While I attended the Hebrew gymnasium, my sister Regina went to the Jewish- Polish gymnasium and became fluent in Russian. She graduated with a high- school diploma but didn't go on to university because in those years we couldn't afford the costs that would have entailed. When she had finished elementary school, just before the war, my other sister, Rywka, went to the Jewish-Polish gymnasium.

I was a very good soccer player; I was often carried off the field on the shoulders of my teammates and fans. I played on the Hasmonei 32 team. That team was initially called Maccabi, but later it split. It was the principal Jewish sports team. There was also the Sztern team, and Gwiazda, affiliated with the Bund. There were several Polish teams: Sokol, which was later converted into PKS, the Police Sports Club; and WKS, or the Military Sports Club. In my soccer team, the Hasmonei, the goalkeeper was a Pole, Kola Chmielarski, who spoke Yiddish as well as I or the rest of us did.

Once I met a Polish girl, a goy, and as they say, I dated her for a while. Not for a very long time but long enough to fall into sin. She lived in the other Kovel; to get there you had to go through a tunnel. One day, I was walking her home at a late hour, and when we were near the tunnel, we saw points of light - someone was smoking cigarettes. She says to me that I shouldn't go on, because they'll give me a beating. Well, I remember that I felt I couldn't show that I was afraid, stupid as I was; so I told her: 'No, I will walk you to your very house.' We're walking on boldly, they challenge me at first, but after a moment they say: 'oh, it's you! The soccer player!' They slapped me on the back; we talked a bit, I was offered a cigarette, and took it, even though I didn't smoke.

A yeshivah graduate headed one such group in Kovel's underworld; Zajdel was his name. He was a very romantic figure; he had great success with women. I remember him as a smart, well-educated

man. Whenever there was a major robbery, the victims would turn to him rather than to the police, and after he was paid a considerable fee, the lost property would materialize. He must have been 40 when the war broke out. Naturally, he was killed during it. And there was another one, Sieroszewski. And for a time I was a hero among those petty criminals when we played in the district soccer league and kept beating Polish clubs, such as the WKS (Military Sports Club) or Sokol. On one occasion I scored three goals against the hated military club, Halerczyk; that is called a hat trick in soccer jargon. Those guys from the underworld always attended our matches. So after that hat trick they came to me right away: brought some beer, of course; tossed me in the air and yelled: Molodets! Attaboy!

Turzysk, a small town 25 kilometers from Kovel, was a Yiddish 'festung' - a bastion of the Yiddish language. A lot of people went to Vilnius to a gymnasium, and later to a seminarium, where instruction was in Yiddish. At home, in the family, we spoke by and large in Yiddish. I remember that Regina's boyfriends and girlfriends met in our apartment and they spoke Russian. I was familiar with the sound of Russian but couldn't speak it. Later Regina had contacts with Poles, and we learned Polish very quickly. I might have been one of the first who completely discarded the Russian language and absorbed Polish. How did I do it? At that time, there were these pulp detective stories, printed on newspaper, which were very cheap; you could get one for a few dozen groszy. I recall whole series of them: Henryk Lerman's 'The Invincible Detective', 'Sittingbull' - that one was about the redskins [sic]; I would read them for days on end. I was an impassioned reader and my Polish reached a sky-high level then. I translated those pamphlets for my friends. If Yiddish was my first language, Hebrew was the second but it has always competed with Polish.

Hebrew was the everyday language for my friends and me. In Hebrew, I could write quite well, in a fine literary style. It was mostly girls who insisted that we spoke Hebrew. When at a certain age we started to go out with them, court them, they would set one condition. We will speak only in Hebrew. I remember one such pretty girl, Szewa Werba. I had to court her in Hebrew. After all, we have the greatest erotic poem in the world - the 'Song of Songs'. And I knew the 'Song of Songs' almost by heart.

My teacher of Hebrew, whom I admire to this day, frequently used to give us very difficult class tests. Rotman was his name, Jakub Nataneli Rotman. At that time we didn't have any real handbooks yet, only these things put together on an ad hoc basis. Rotman used an ink duplicator to copy texts for us. I remember when the discovery at Tel el Amarna 33 had been made, he duplicated source materials and distributed them to each student, and then we discussed them during his seminar. I was very poor in math, but very good at the humanities. When I was in the eight grade of the gymnasium, we published a periodical. It had this silly title "Our Cadres Heading Toward High School Diploma." I was its editor, and we paid for the publication of each month's issue out of our own pockets. I recall that the printing shop was run by a man by the name of Brandys.

There was a Polish literature club in our Tarbut gymnasium. When its first chairman got his high school diploma, he passed his office to me. I remember my first paper "Byron and Byronism in Polish Literature." I also translated several sonnets by Shaul Tchernichovsky 34, who wrote Crimean sonnets just like Mickiewicz 35. Tchernichovsky later immigrated to Israel, just like Bialik 36. When I was probably in the eighth grade, an excellent Hebrew poet, a native Russian, Eliszeva, came to our school. She hadn't been born a Jewess, but had married a Jew and converted to

Judaism.

The Tarbut gymnasium focused on preparing young people to move to Palestine. I remember a moving scene. One day, the director assembled all the classes. The year was probably 1925. He announced to us that at the very moment that we were speaking there, the opening of the Hebrew University was taking place in Jerusalem. That was a very stirring experience for us. 'For out of Zion shall come the Torah and God's Word,' said the director. All of us present there resolved at that moment that, after acquiring a profession, we would go to Palestine. Some went to university in France and when the war broke out, they made their way to Palestine. As teachers of Hebrew, they were worth their weight in gold. Unfortunately, I waited too long. I can't say that I regret it. But at times I am visited by a tormenting thought that things might have been different.

I graduated from the gymnasium at the age of 17; it was 1930. I remember the subject of my written thesis: 'For there is something of Piast in the peasant, the peasant is mighty, say we!' Afterwards I became a private tutor in Kovel. I taught Polish, History, and Hebrew. At that time, Hebrew was a gold mine since in order to get into Palestine, some sum of money stipulated by the English had to be paid and the prospective emigre needed to demonstrate his command of Hebrew. Hebrew examinations took place in Brest, where students from throughout Poland came. I had a friend; Josele Szpak was his name. I already told you about his father. But Szpak didn't know Hebrew. So I went to Brest pretending to be Szpak and naturally wrote a composition there, on the basis of which he got his certificate, his departure paper. In the 1980s I called on him in Israel. Perhaps he is still alive? Szpak was the owner of a bakery then. I had dinner at his place. Introducing me to his wife, he said: 'This is the man who saved my life.'

Each year, the two Jewish gymnasiums in Kovel produced several dozen graduates who couldn't get accepted to the university departments of their choice. In Kovel there was only a surveyors' school and a road-construction school. Many Jews couldn't get into a university in Poland; to gain admittance to a medical school or a technical university was the most difficult as there was the numerus clauses [see Anti-Jewish Legislation in Poland] 37. If you wanted to study medicine, you had to go to Lwow, to Warsaw, Prague or Vilnius. Dozens of medicine graduates returned after their graduation to Kovel, where they were unable to have their diploma recognized since the attitude of the chambers of physicians was such that Jews found it very difficult to get through the recognition process. So what is the Jewish intelligentsia supposed to do?

University

My parents pondered over what field of study I should choose. I wanted to study French literature, but my father said: 'that's not a trade; you can't make a living out of that. You will go to a technical university!' But I was very poor in maths. Well, I didn't want to oppose my father too much. I thought of going to Palestine subsequently, to the university in Jerusalem. I had studied for three months with one Mrs. Chodorow, whose son was later to become a famous sea-dog in Israel. And I went to Grenoble; in Grenoble I didn't need a high-school diploma. That was in November 1930.

It was my first encounter with the West. We arrived at the Northern Station in Paris, and then I had to go over to the Lyon Station and from that station to Grenoble. Traveling with us was a friend from Poland; her name as written in her documents was Chaja Leja Minc. I remember that when we completed a questionnaire to obtain our 'cartes d'identite', they called her 'Hazha Lezha Menk'. We arrived in Grenoble just as a carnival, somewhat in the style of Brazilian carnival, was in full swing.

And I, a boy from deep in the provinces, was suddenly caught up in a circle of dancing women who weren't fully clad. That was quite a shock... But I got used to it and even came to like it.

In Grenoble I roomed with a friend; right across the corridor was the room rented by Stefan Grinbaum, son of Icchak Grinbaum 38, a deputy to the Polish Parliament. Probably early in 1931, Icchak Grinbaum arrived in France on some Zionist congress business, and called on his son. On that occasion, the entire Jewish academic community from Poland assembled in one of the halls of the university to hear Grinbaum speak; Grinbaum was an excellent speaker. And I remember that he spoke like a true Zionist, telling the students about their future in Palestine, while communist students made 'tsvishenrufn' [Yiddish, lots of noise], interrupting him. One of them was Grinbaum's own son. Grinbaum said that we shouldn't wait for the coming of Messiah, that the Zionist ideal was the Messiah, and that we would return to the land from which we had been driven out 2,000 years ago. His son raised his voice on behalf of the proletariat. And his father answered him: 'The Jewish nation is the most deprived and oppressed proletariat.' That met with a storm of applause. By the way, during the occupation Grinbaum's son behaved very badly; he was in the Jewish police force in the Warsaw ghetto 39 and showed great cruelty. He survived and went to Israel, where he was shot dead by a Zionist hit-squad.

For the summer vacation, all of us would return home; there we published a sort of occasional periodical, which was quite thick, contained 40 pages, and was in Polish. I remember that one of the editors was Rusia Daszewska. Why I remember specifically her? Because her father had been involved in an attempt to assassinate Lenin, and was later executed. Unfortunately, not a single copy of our periodical has survived; perhaps there are some in the National Library?

I spent about a year in Grenoble. Chemistry and physics classes, lab sessions. I believe I took just one exam there. The whole thing wasn't so much beyond my abilities as against my inclinations. To raise money for the return trip, I worked for a while packing chocolate and on the construction of a road. It was 1931 when I returned to Kovel.

In Kovel I made my living again as a private tutor. I taught mostly Polish literature and Latin, sometimes also German. I was preparing Jewish gymnasium graduates for the high-school diploma exam at a school in Luck. I was swamped with classes. I also enrolled in a Jewish-Polish gymnasium, once again in the eighth grade, in order to obtain a Polish high-school diploma.

My first visit to Warsaw was in the 1920s. Father took me there when he started work for Red Star Line [Red Star Line, an English company. There was also another firm called White Star Line. Both companies were in the business of arranging transportation for emigrants to America.]; their head office was in Warsaw. I was in time to see the Orthodox church on Pilsudski Square. For my university studies, I came to Warsaw in 1933. I enrolled in the Polish Department. During my first year I lived on 2 Nowolipie Street, and afterwards on Dluga Street. On Nowolipie Street there was a bankrupt store and some Jew got an idea how to make money out of it. He stood in front of the closed door of the store and shouted out to passers-by to have a look inside -a wonder of nature, a freak of nature, a bearded woman, everyone can check it out for only 20 groszy. And inside, in that dark, empty store, there was indeed a hairy woman standing. I remember that I couldn't study on Dluga Street because the landlady had rented me an alcove without a window or light. She used to turn the lights off at 10 already. So what did I do then? I went over to the other side of the street, to 13 Tlomackie 40! And there I came across individuals who became part of history. I met Izrael

Sztern 41, an excellent poet, who generally didn't get the recognition he deserved, and many other wonderful people.

Izrael Sztern was a devout man, and for that reason very skinny: he would fast, pray and fast again; he recited the psalms very frequently. He died of hunger during the occupation, for he wasn't made for this life. He had this God-given gift of poetry, in which he had few equals. Many years after the war, I translated Izrael Sztern's extended poem 'Ostroleka', at the request of some young people from Ostroleka, passionate fans of his poetry. Thus, Izrael Sztern got a place in the Polish language; he has been rescued for some future reader.

At 13 Tlomackie I wasn't as bold as to strike up a conversation with everybody. When by chance I sat down next to Sztern and he encouraged me to talk, then - yes. At Tlomackie I used to see also Itzik Manger 42. I soaked up everything that happened there and relished the presence of great Jewish poets and writers. Something interesting was always going on there. There I saw Sholem Asch 43, who came rarely but come he did. I saw a great many writers, like Perle 44. They mostly sat by the bar. Every week, there was a meeting with some author or actor, and interesting discussions would go on forever. My knowledge of Yiddish comes actually from there since earlier I had been a militant Hebraist.

Manger once caused a huge scandal. Namely, some literature night was underway when he arrived intoxicated as usual. He had no place to sleep, as he spent the money he earned on liquor. He ordered people sitting at the head table to leave because he wanted to sleep on it. Well, they naturally took him out of there with him yelling very rudely. 'Ir zolt vi a foyer brenen' - may you burn like a fire, 'Ir zolt nisht kanen trinken' - may you be unable to drink, 'Ir zolt nisht kanen trenen' - may you be unable to copulate. So yelled Manger at 13 Tlomackie. I must have seen Izaak Singer 45 several times, but talk with him - that I didn't.

Perhaps in 1935 I moved to the Jewish Student Dormitory in Praga [district in Warsaw]. The residents included many communists, a few Betarists, and quite a few freeloaders. At first I installed myself in a four-person room, but when I began to make money from private teaching I moved to a two- person room. As it happened, my neighbors were two eminent Jewish painters, the Seidenbeutel 46 brothers. It was from them that I learned how to play bridge. They lived in that dormitory because they were poor and it didn't cost them much. They painted in tandem: one did one part of the picture, and the other the second part. On the whole they painted in the open air. In summer they would go to Kazimierz [Kazimierz Dolny - Jewish resort upon Vistula close to Lublin].

The following anecdote was told about the Seidenbeutel brothers: There was a barber's shop in the vicinity. Once Efraim comes in and right away warns the barber: Please give me a good shave; otherwise my beard will grow back in an hour. The barber says: Rest assured, sir, when I give you a shave there won't be any sign of a beard for a month. He shaved Seidenbeutl, who thanked the barber and left. An hour later his brother comes in and says: Well, you can see what my stubble looks like. I warned you that I have to be shaved closely! The barber naturally had a fit. Such a story was told about them. Twins, identical twins. By the way, Begin lived in that house, too.

It was the only Jewish student dormitory in Warsaw, for men. It was built at the end of the 1920s. In terms of architectural design - a splendid building. There were four-, three-, and two-person rooms. There was a canteen downstairs, where lunch coupons were available from the self-help organization. On each floor, there were kitchenettes where coffee, tea or even food could be

prepared. There was also a cheap little store where basic necessities could be purchased. The director and manager of the 'Auxilium Academicum Judaicum' [Latin, Support for Jewish Academia] - the building is still standing there today - was first, the infamous member of the 13 47 that collaborated with the Gestapo in the [Warsaw] ghetto.

The ZASS, or Jewish Academic Sports Association, had its headquarters in that dormitory. I used to play soccer and volleyball, and went to the swimming pool there. Now and then, there were 'five o'clock', or tea dances, in the dormitory. And the entire female population of Praga came there looking for romance.

At that time I was also attending the Institute of Judaic Studies 48. I went to Balaban's 49 class on the history of the Jews, to the Aramaic language class taught by Schorr 50. Students at the Institute of Judaic Studies mainly came from Jewish-Polish and Hebrew gymnasiums. Most subjects were taught in Hebrew. The course of studies took four years and led to a master's degree. Institute graduates could become teachers of the religion and history of the Jews in secondary schools. But they had to graduate from Warsaw University as well, for the institute didn't provide a state-recognized certificate.

All that time I supported myself by teaching, by giving private classes. I taught Polish, Latin, and sometimes also German. The more softheaded I taught almost all subjects, bar maths. I gave private classes to girls from the Jehudyja gymnasium on Dluga Street, to the son of Artur Gold 51, the well-known composer; he gave me all the volumes of Schiller 52 in German in gratitude for his son's good grades. The manufacturer of Polonia shaving razors, whose name was, by the way, Friedman, paid me 5 zloty an hour. At 7 Lwowska Street I charged 2.50 zloty.

I gave up my Polish literature course because it was boring. I began to attend the Higher School of Journalism. It was located in the Rey gymnasium on Rozbrat Street, where the SLD 53 headquarters is now. I learnt reportage writing from Wankowicz 54 himself. I started to study journalism in 1934, and finished it in 1938, as I took some breaks in the course. The program consisted of three summer semesters, but it didn't give a master's degree. I got my master's just after the war, at the Journalism Department of Warsaw University.

Each year after the beginning of the academic year, some anti-Semitic row took place. I remember that in the Higher School of Journalism somebody once wrote on a huge board: Professor of Polish Studies Bolewski - Baumfeld, Professor of Political Economy Zelazowski - Eisenbaum, Professor Wasowski - Waserzug. That's when the shoving of Jews to the left side [of the lecture hall] started. The Jews wouldn't take seats on the left side; instead they listened to the lectures standing in protest. Brawls broke out frequently. It happened year after year, and with each year it got worse. In the student dormitory in Praga meetings with lecturers were held: Professor Michalowski 55 from the Democratic Club came after anti-Semitic brawls broke out on the university campus, Dubois 56 of the PPS 57 came to show his solidarity with Jewish students.

On 1st September 1939 I was still in the student dormitory. Afterwards I moved to Nalewki Street, I think. I left Warsaw before the year's end. Then I went back to Kovel. My older sister Regina was working for the Jewish community as typist. My younger sister was attending a Russian-language ten- year school. Mom was working as usual. I went back to giving private lessons. For a short time, I was a teacher of Polish and History; next I became a coach and one of the bosses in the Lokomotif sports club. I earned quite good money for that time.

With a regular population of more than twenty thousand, in the initial period of the Soviet rule Kovel must have had over sixty thousand inhabitants, if not more. A majority of them were 'byezhentsy' or fugitives [from the German-occupied part of Poland]: from Warsaw, from Krakow, from Lodz. When Russians started to deport the 'byezhentsy' to Siberia, that triggered off a scramble to go back to Central Poland, since the Germans had not yet embarked on mass killings; that was in 1940. A commission was established, and people stood in lines overnight in order to register to return under German occupation.

I didn't serve in the Polish Army because they had stopped admitting Jews to officer training schools in perhaps 1934 in order not to train Jews as officers. Poles with high-school diplomas did a year of military service in officer training schools, but not the Jews.

During the war

I was in the Red Army from 1941. I was called up for three months' training right after the outbreak of the war [the so-called Great Patriotic War] 58. On the Monday I was to be given the rank of sergeant and go home, but the war started on the Sunday, 22nd June. And I was doing my military service 12 kilometers from Kovel. It was five in the morning when German planes appeared in the sky and began to mow everything down.

They destroyed the planes of the air-force division in which we were serving, fired on our wooden barracks, and killed dozens of men in the process. A horrible mess ensued; we went into retreat. We had several automobiles; while we drove on, we were constantly under fire from German planes. We were heading eastwards through forests, being attacked by Ukrainians. About 100 of us managed to reach Kiev.

Stalin issued an order that all 'kresowiacy' [Poles living in Soviet- occupied Eastern Poland, today the Western part of the Ukraine and Belarus, as well as some parts of Lithuania] were to be transferred to labor battalions. They were to be stripped of their arms since they were unreliable. The Commissar of my battalion, a construction battalion, was an old Bolshevik, Izaac Yakovlevitch Limanov. He claimed to be a Ukrainian, but whenever he uttered a word, I knew that it had come from the depths of the Talmud. He was an intelligent, well-educated man.

What did we build, then? Well, anti-tank ditches, 'maskirovki', or embankments designed to camouflage airplanes. We didn't have any arms. We were given 800 grams of bread per day, when other battalions, labor battalions, got 400 grams of bread. From Kiev we began to retreat in order to carry out projects in the hinterland. The road got muddy before Kharkov; our automobiles couldn't get through. We got bogged down in one place called Bogodukhov. The Germans had already come as far as Kharkov and we could have fallen into their hands any day. A miracle happened overnight: the temperature fell below freezing and the ground froze; we were able to drive on.

Civilian fugitives started coming through Bogodukhov. Among the refugees I met an acquaintance from my native town. Zelcer is his name. To this day he lives in Jerusalem. In fact, it is thanks to me that he is alive. Along with the rest, he was escaping eastwards; when he saw me, he leapt towards me and said: 'Do something, I can't walk any more.' So I approached Limanov, the commander, and told him: 'This is a friend of mine; he is a dentist.' It just so happened that the battalion commander was suffering from toothache just then, and his mug was swollen. And Zelcer

was a dental technician. Limanov gave the order to immediately provide Zelcer with a uniform, and he stayed with us in the capacity of doctor.

With the Germans already hot on our heels, we started off northwards, toward Voronezh, where the Don begins. Moving downstream along the Don, we would march to Cossack 59 'stanitzas'; that's what Cossack villages are called. The Cossacks still had their uniforms and their arms from the tsarist times at home. Their houses were nicer and better built; had brick fundaments. Through snow, across the frozen river, we arrived in one 'stanitza', Nizhnichirskaya. There I assigned my people to quarters; I found a house for myself with a clean cowshed where I saw two cows. I figured that I would get some food there.

And indeed, they received me with great hospitality. There were hardly any men around, just one crippled man, a veteran of the Japanese war; the rest of the men were at the front, and only women remained in the village. I was covered in lice. When they had made my bed and given me very nice, clean sheets, I undressed and hung my shirt outdoors so that the cold would kill the lice. Not once did I get sick there. In the evening the neighbors gathered, and then I hear the question: 'Kto to takoy?' [Who is he?]; so I told them where I was from and that I was a Jew. They say: That can't be! They hadn't seen a Jew in their life but their attitude was, of course, negative. For Russian standards, they lived quite comfortably and were very well provided for winter. They had excellent milk, very fat, and fried 'bliny' - potato pancakes topped with cream. I obviously had a field kitchen, on which we cooked millet groats. In the evenings the neighbors would gather to listen to the news from Poland. 'How many suits, costumes did you have?' they asked. 'Did you throw away your shoes twice a year, or perhaps three times a year?'

The rest of the battalion was staying in various homes. In the mornings there would be a roll call and then we would leave for work. In that freezing cold we would begin to hack the ground with crowbars in order to build a railroad embankment. The temperature got as low as -30 degrees Celsius. When the morning groats were issued, the groats were frozen before you could reach for your wooden spoon. The spoon was important: whoever didn't have one could die of hunger. We carved them from wood and kept them inside our shoes. Frequently, we would leave for work at night because during the day the planes took off and the snow had to be scraped off the tarmac with plows. After that, we were building a railroad track between Stalingrad and Saratov when the Germans were about to approach. That was in 1942.

Later on, we were stationed in Kamishin, not far from Peza in Martwota Bezsenna county I stayed in the house of a teacher; she had a three-year- old boy who constantly sucked at her breast from hunger. But: in that house there were books I could read. While living in Kamishin, I used to go by sleigh to get provisions and on the way we would be often chased by packs of wolves. Then you would set fire to some hay and throw it at the wolves; that would frighten them away.

It must have been in 1943 that our battalion was moved southwards, to the coast of the Caspian Sea. The river Ural flows into the Caspian Sea and it has an arm - the Emba; there were some petroleum deposits there. Since the German forces were approaching the Caucasus and had got close to Baku where the main oil fields were located, the Russians were forced to begin extracting oil from the Emba. In the past it hadn't been cost-effective, for the petroleum deposits were located at a great depth and were limited. But then the Russians had embarked on the construction of an oil refinery. Transports began to arrive with American equipment; in American crates with cargo

lists. So they called me to the commanding post and ordered me to translate the lists. I said: 'I don't know English.' 'Hm hm, you don't know English? Now, what is the Polish alphabet like?' I said: 'Latin.' 'And the English alphabet?' 'Latin,' I say. 'Well, then you know English! If you don't know a word, we will help you.' And that is how I became the battalion's English language expert.

In 1943 we encountered a transport of Poles who were going to join the First Division of the Polish Army [1st Kosciuszko Infantry Division] 60. There were also other people from my town in my battalion; one of them was Mojsze Szajewicz Szojb, a very good tailor. And one day he says to me: 'you know what? I'm fed up with all this. I'm going to volunteer for the Polish Army.' He and another man, Baumgart, went to the 'wojenkomat' [wartime recruiting board], saying that they wanted to join the armed forces of the Union of Polish Patriots, which was being organized. Well, they sent them right away to the commanders for punishment. But Szojb got lucky, and he wrote me a letter after some time. 'Imagine - they have ordered a suit for Stalin from me.' And he made clothes for Stalin, that Mojsze Szajewicz Szojb from Kovel.

Later on, when we were stationed in Goriev [a Kazakh town situated at the point where the Ural river enters the Caspian Sea], I became a sort of business sergeant. Several dozen battalions worked there. My battalion included about one hundred people, a majority of whom were Ukrainians, with some Poles and Jews. Later on, they conscripted people whose families were subjected to repression, and 'nacmen' [people of different than Russian nationality], as they called them, or ethnic minorities: Kazakhs, Uzbeks or Chechens, and other such 'unreliables'. I remember one engineer named Usov, a very intelligent man who hadn't been accepted into the regular army because a relative of his had been jailed for political propaganda.

I told them in Goriev that I wanted to be sent to the Polish army. It was early in 1944; I got the referral order and set off for the liberated part of Ukraine, to the town of Sumy. The trains didn't run regularly. In accordance with military needs, engines were stopped and requisitioned to be attached to another train. Railroad stations were crammed with people. Just having a ticket wasn't enough; each ticket had to be approved, which meant it that required a special stamp. Then the person in charge of the train, a woman in most cases, would let you into a car. At this point a terrible tumult and yelling always began, as there wasn't enough room for everybody - at that time all Russia was on the move. My travel companion was a Ukrainian; Zacharchuk was his name, who clung to me with terrible persistence. We had to stay at railroad stations for days on end and slept there at night. Zacharchuk and I took turns sleeping because of the dreadful stealing that went on there. I had shoes and some food in my small sack. I kept waking up anxiously and asking him: 'Listen, are you holding that sack?' 'I am.' And in fact, he had been holding it. Except that someone had cut open the bottom and taken the shoes and the cans.

At Sumy station, a Polish officer met us; I hadn't seen a Polish military uniform for many years then. It was February 1944. People were arriving from various directions, also from Poland; among them officers from the headquarters of the army that was being organized. Selection was being made for different military formations. Someone who was a carpenter or a joiner would be sent to the sappers. Those who had a smattering of education would go on a sort of short officer training course, which lasted a few months. People with, let's say, a business background would be assigned to the quartermaster's staff. It was a kind of market for soldiers. General Swierczewski, the chief commander, came; his deputy at that time was Major Grosz. Grosz, later on a well-known essayist, had translated Lejzorek Rojtszwanc before the war. I was offered the position of instructor

with the First Regiment. I gave lectures on the political situation, history, Polish literature, etc. At the time people were being brought from all over to join the Polish army, including Jews who had volunteered for Anders' army 61 and had been rejected. My own commanding officer was a Soviet Pole, or a Pole born in the Soviet Union and Russified. Since I had university-level education, I was sent as instructor to the political officers' school in Sumy.

When I was returning from Russia on a troop train that passed through Kovel, I asked my commanding officer for leave of absence and went down to the town to look for the remains of our home. It was 1944. I hadn't had any contact with home during that entire time. I had sent letters to my family from several localities, but I don't know if they arrived. And now I was on my way to Lublin. I walked through a ruined town; the house in which I used to live no longer existed.

I found one acquaintance, a Jewish woman who had gone out of her mind. She was walking round talking nonsense. She had had a little child who had started crying terribly when they were hiding in some bunker; several dozen other people were hiding there as well, and they suffocated the child. Nine people survived from the entire town; out of 18,000 Jews. I came across a girlfriend of my sister's, a Pole; she gave me several photographs. She told me in detail how it had been done. I learnt about the torments the Jews had gone through, how they had been put behind barbed wire. During all that time, Marysia, that Polish girl, had been meeting with my sister in secret.

My elder sister, Regina, married a 'byezhenets', a laryngologist from Warsaw, his name was Fryde. She was pregnant, about to give birth. My younger sister was in hiding outside the ghetto; she was at a very good place, somewhere with a Polish family in Kovel. But when she heard that the Germans had surrounded the ghetto and taken away everyone to be shot, she left her hiding place and went to join her mother and sister. Mom and both my sisters were killed.

Some seven kilometers outside the town there is a huge grave, a very long ditch - I didn't want to go there. The place is called Koszary. As they had been surrounded prior to the execution, my history teacher, Josef Abruch, made a speech. He said that the Jewish nation lived, lives, and shall live. They were forced to undress from the waist up, and then shot dead. I only went to the synagogue, as people said that there were inscriptions on the walls there made by those condemned to death.

It was the Eppelbaum synagogue. And there were inscriptions on the walls. Someone had written this: It is a beautiful summer day - it was August, I think - and I am to die tomorrow, yet I want so much to live. And the name: Wydra. Wydra was a girl I used to know and we had been very close friends. She was one of the few [Jewish] graduates of the Slowacki gymnasium. Her father was a physician and I had been a frequent visitor at their place. There must have been several dozen such inscriptions. How did they come to be there? The Germans took all the Jews out of the town, to Koszary, made them dig a grave, and then shot them all, one after another. That took several days. Some managed to escape from the Germans, who couldn't catch them. And then all of them, those caught who hadn't been killed in Koszary were assembled in one place so that they could be executed en masse. Before their death, they wrote on that wall in the synagogue. One woman, Gips was her name, a stunning, beautiful girl, had two children, and her husband was in Russia; she wrote him a letter on that wall: May you avenge the innocent death of your wife and your children.

The liberation of Warsaw

I reached Lublin after 22nd July 1944 and remained there until the liberation of Warsaw. I taught at the Political and Educational Officers' School. The day after Warsaw was liberated, I went there to see if I could find anyone. I saw ruins and a great emptiness; there was no way to figure out which street you were on. The Jewish district had been wiped out; other streets, too. I came back very quickly. Afterwards, the officers' school was transferred to Lodz. It was there that all the important institutions were based. At the time, much publicity was being given to a proposal to make Lodz the capital of Poland, instead of Warsaw. I remained in Lodz until 1946. In 1946 they sent me to the Infantry Officers School in Inowroclaw as deputy commander. I became a major. From there they sent me to Krakow, to the Infantry Officers' School. From 1947 on I was in Wroclaw. I organized an evening high school for cadets, since they didn't have high school diplomas. There was a slogan then: Not a high school diploma, but honest intentions will make an officer out of you. I hired there a whole galaxy of teachers, and everyone got his diploma in three years.

In Lublin a Jewish club was established for all the survivors who registered there. It was named after Peretz and located on Lubartowska Street. The Sukkot holiday came around. I was on duty and I thought to myself: 'Let's go and see. Perhaps I'll run into someone.' Dinner was served; I was sitting there in my uniform - I don't recall now whether I was a lieutenant or second lieutenant then - and right across the table from me a man was sitting, and it seemed to me that I knew his face. All of a sudden, he speaks to me: 'Friedman?' And I say: 'Feldszu!' It was my last teacher from Kovel! We embraced each other over the table; he delivered a toast, then I did. He had obviously realized that it wouldn't be smart for him to remain in Poland since they would get at him for being a Zionist and a right-winger. And he left for Israel.

In Lublin and in Lodz I kept in touch with Jews. In Lublin I used to drop by the Peretz house. When in 1946 in Lodz I came across an acquaintance of my cousin, he said: 'Do you know that Regina is alive?' That was Regina Zonenszajn, her mother was my father's elder sister, who was Rybicka by marriage; her husband was a lawyer in Warsaw. She survived even though she had spent time at the Pawiak [the central prison of Warsaw under the German occupation]. It was her head that was measured by a German anthropologist, who concluded that she was an Aryan. Regina had been hiding her husband, a well-known lawyer whose name was Rainberger. Once she stepped outside to fetch water from the well, and at that very moment a bomb hit the house and killed her husband.

Jozef Kermisz, a doctor of history, joined our school while we were still in Zytomierz. And later, in 1947 in Lodz, a Jewish historical committee was established to document the history of the Holocaust. Its members included a Bund activist, Szuldenfrei, Adolf Berman, Rachela Auerbach, and Kermisz. I kept in contact with them. I trusted them and they trusted me; besides, for me the committee was a source of all kinds of information. In Wroclaw I attended all the theater productions of the Jewish Theater in civilian clothes. Now and then I would read Jewish newspapers. At the time, several newspapers, including some in Polish language, were published.

I remember that once in Wroclaw, it was in May, perhaps on the 15th, in 1948, I met an officer, a Jew, who started to congratulate me. I said to him: 'What are you congratulating me on?' 'We've got Palestine. Israel has been established.' I was flabbergasted. I hadn't thought of leaving. Well, there was a measure of opportunism, some vanity behind it. I held an important post, the rank of lieutenant colonel, and was unswervingly loyal. I believed that some time in the future there would come a day when I would go.

My wife Teresa

I met a female medical student. That was in Wroclaw in 1949. I was walking her home when she started an interrogation: 'Do you have family here? Are you married?' I said: 'No, I am not married, but I am going to get married soon.' 'To whom, if I may ask?' 'To you.' Teresa is from Przemysl; her maiden name was Lichota. She comes from quite a wealthy Jewish family. She had spent the war years in Hungary. Her father was a physician, and had been mobilized for the war. And his entire regiment crossed the border and got interned. The Hungarians were unbelievably well disposed toward Poles. My wife's family had remained there the entire time as a Polish family. Teresa returned to Poland in 1945. So we got married, and finally settled in Warsaw. Andrzej was born in Lodz in 1951. At present Andrzej, our only child, is a professor of neurology in Warsaw.

I was soon transferred to Warsaw as head of the defense ministry's publishing house, which was related to a trend to polonize the military - there were too many Jewish soldiers in the army at that time, they thought. It was January 1952. Adolf Bromberg, head of that publishing house, had been promoted to deputy minister and someone had to take over his job. For me, it was a demotion in some ways.

I became director of the Board of publishing houses. That was my job for ten or eleven years, until 60. Next, I was suddenly sent on a so-called academic course at the Academy of General Staff, where during one year I went through basically the entire curriculum of the Academy of General Staff. I completed the course, but they didn't have a job for me. I would pick up my salary at the personnel department and go home. Later I got an assignment as deputy director of the Military Institute for Aviation Medicine. I spent four years there. The year 1967 came [the year of the anti-Semitic purges] and all the Jews, myself included, were discharged from the military with great brouhaha. Not that there had been many of us, perhaps 200. I was expelled from the Party and sent home. At first, I nursed a sense of personal grievance, next I felt that an injustice was being done to the entire nation that had survived, but in the end I realized that I had made a wrong-headed choice. And then I found myself, as they say, on the street and in a void; it was only in that void that I found proper meaning for myself. As translator and teacher of Jewish languages!

Working as a translator and teaching Jewish languages

How did it really begin, what made me decide to take up translation? It came out of the fury that would overcome me when reading 'Literatura na Swiecie' [a quarterly], an excellent periodical that published literature of even the tiniest of nations, but failed to notice the great Jewish literature, which was quite literally at hand. Thus, driven actually by rage, especially that this was happening after the expulsion of the last remaining Jews [reference to 1968 and the final wave of emigration of Polish Jews], after I found myself on the street [Michal Friedman had been forced to take early retirement], I proposed to the editor-in-chief of 'Literatura na Swiecie', that I would prepare an issue devoted to Jewish literature. I presented to him fragments of the most famous books by eminent Jewish writers: Sholem Aleichem, Peretz, Mendel Moicher Sforim 62, Itzik Manger and Kacyzyna 63. And he accepted.

Previously, I had translated Jewish short stories for Folksztyme and some plays for the Jewish Theater. I interpreted from Yiddish into Polish for audiences who listened to the lines on headphones. I enjoyed the thought that through 'Literatura na Swiecie' I would reach the intelligent reader who had no idea what kind of literature the Jews had created in such a short span of time.

For indeed, literary Yiddish had just emerged and begun to attain the height of its potential when it was killed. That issue of 'Literatura na Swiecie' [an entire issue in 1984 was devoted to Yiddish literature] was a great success, and right away I was commissioned by the PIW [State Publishing Institute] to translate 'The Book of Paradise': a very witty story, which became a bestseller.

Later Wojdowski 64 who had been familiar with my translations published in 'Literatura na Swiecie' contacted me and asked for more translations. I translated for him several short stories by Sutzkever 65 from his volume 'Green Aquarium'. They were published in 'Massada', a periodical edited by Wojdowski.

At the beginning of the 1980s, I had a visit from representatives of Wydawnictwo Dolnoslaskie [Lower Silesia Publishing House] who wanted to know if I could prepare them a plan for the publication of a serial edition of Jewish classics. That suited me very well. I made up such a plan, comprising more than 20 titles, and these translations of mine began to appear in large editions. There isn't a single Jewish classic writer who hasn't been translated by me. The series has been published since 1983, and so far 15 volumes have come out, 13 of which were translated by me. Nowhere else in the world is an entire series of Jewish literature published the way it is done by Wydawnictwo Dolnoslaskie in Poland!

I visited Sutzkever in Tel Aviv in the middle of the 1990s. He spoke excellent Polish. Sutzkever's house in Tel Aviv is really an art gallery. Chagall 66 and he were friends, and Chagall gave him a number of beautiful items. So we talked about my translations of his short stories. I have preserved a letter Sutzkever wrote to me, about how delighted he was with the transposition of the meaning that is hidden behind the words of Yiddish into Polish. Those short stories sold out very quickly and received very good reviews.

Though he has written pretty good short stories, Sutzkever is above all a poet. In my opinion: one of the greatest poets in the world. A man who made Yiddish into something of an instrument for verbalizing the most tender and most subtle shades of meaning that can come from the heart and mind. He is the inventor of the most brilliant neologisms. It is very hard to translate him, to find adequate terms in Polish. I believe that he is the most outstanding Jewish poet in the world, who had bad luck. He has been put forward for the Nobel Prize several times; recently, it was Isaac Bashevis Singer - whom Sutzkever couldn't stand - who snatched the Nobel from him.

In my opinion, Singer is a very good writer and worthy recipient of the [Nobel] prize. Many critics believe that he was no match for his brother, Joshua Singer 67. There is one reason why I claim that he grew to equal standards and, at certain moments, even surpassed his brother. Because Joshua is eminently shut in the Jewish world while Bashevis Singer has introduced themes, elements that can be easily transposed into world literature. Bellow [Saul Bellow, b. 1915, Canadian-born American novelist] translated him into English and those translations caught on splendidly. My own translations of Singer's short stories have been published in various periodicals. When Singer was given the Nobel in 1978, I translated his short story 'Mendel the Gravedigger' for 'Przekroj' [an illustrated weekly]. Muza [a Polish publisher of Singer] was always in a hurry with Singer and published him in translations from English, and very often they are lousy.

Singer has led his reader to exotic Jewish literature, shown him fragments of the Hasidic world, saturated with mysticism and with some new eroticism not previously seen in literature. Singer is an eminent writer who found his moment of time. Peretz, the greatest Jewish writer, didn't find his

way into world literature, at all, you see, whereas Sholem Asch did. It is largely a matter of luck, chance.

Asch had the luck of marrying a very pretty, very progressive, and very energetic woman, who introduced him into the world of the intelligentsia, the world of Polish writers. Her father was an excellent expert on Polish language and a teacher of Hebrew. His contemporary, Icie Meir Weisenberg, a writer endowed with huge talent, made his debut with a short story bearing the same title as Asch's own story - 'A Shtetl'; he proved to have a great talent but married a virago, an infernal woman who didn't let him work, bullied him, and as a result he never left the confines of the Jewish world. Asch was the only writer who made his living by writing. I have translated three of his works: 'The Man from Nazareth,' 'The Witch of Castile' which are eight short stories, a beautiful book, and 'Kiddush Ha- Shem.'

Asch was bewitched by the subject of those traces of Christianity that developed from Jewish roots. They didn't want to print him in 'Forwerts'; they stopped the printing of 'Man from Nazareth,' didn't they? Censorship of sorts. The editor, I don't recall his name, could have been Rozenberg, organized a boycott of him as a traitor and a renegade. In Palestine, where Asch lived at that time, they held a demonstration against him. It must have been 1940. The Committee for the Defense of Asch was formed, headed by Mordechai Canim, an immigrant from Poland and an excellent journalist, and they published Asch in Hebrew. Asch's widow had his entire output. She lived in London. I asked her to make it available for me. But she didn't want to hand it over as she bore a huge grudge against the Jews. No more than seven people came to Asch's funeral in London; the Jews boycotted him. And he was a brilliant writer.

I also consider Peretz an eminent writer, who, as I say, wasn't lucky. His is a different type of literature; it comes from a different world. Peretz's background wasn't that of Jewish Orthodoxy, shut in within the Talmud, since he'd had a secular education. He corresponded with his fiancée in Polish. Wrote his first poems in Polish. There is a beautiful Yiddish short story of his called 'What is the Soul?,' which he translated into Polish himself. Later, I translated it into Polish, too, and published it in the collection 'Hasidic and Folk Stories.' On that issue I even had a dispute with Szmeruk [a yiddishist and a historian], who wanted to do the series together with me. Szemruk proposed that we publish the original translation. But it was so poor in Polish that I wouldn't agree. I have translated a number of short stories by Peretz.

Once I translated 'Everyday Jews' by Perle. It was one part of the trilogy he had been working on in the [Warsaw] ghetto. The second and third volumes he always kept in a suitcase that he lugged along wherever he went. One day there was a roundup in the street and he got caught in it, and the suitcase got left behind somewhere. Rachela Auerbach 68, who had been looking after him, ran to get the suitcase but it was already gone. Perle was killed in the ghetto.

Nowadays I plan my workweeks in advance, but I work every day and this keeps me in shape. I used to be incredibly productive. I used to translate, as I might say, off the top of my head, but now I have to think very hard. Awaiting publication in the Wydawnictwo Dolnoslaskie are my Bashevis - ten short stories translated from the original - and my crowning achievement, 'Talmudic Haggadah.' They have already published my 'Midrashes', and now it should be the turn of the Haggadah, which is some 600 or 700 pages.

I have just finished translating Kacyzne. The title is 'The Strong and the Famous'. It is about the period covering the beginning of World War I, the birth of Poland, and the Soviet revolution, a time of increasing stratification in the Jewish community, the crisis of various ideologies, and the birth of new ideologies, and includes a great deal of historical facts. It is a very interesting work but sometimes the writing is so terribly third-rate that it sets your teeth on edge. There are also numerous repetitions, such simple editing errors. So in order to circumvent some things I have cut out fragments of text at times. Unfortunately, I lost two large chapters, for my translation had been typed up for me by a secretary from the Jewish commune, a Polish woman, who had been doing this for me for 20 years. She could read my handwriting better than I can, and she suddenly died on the job. She had stashed these texts away somewhere in such a way that they couldn't be found. But somehow I have managed to finish this translation after almost two years of work.

I translated from Hebrew eight short stories by Agnon 69; they have also been published by the Wydawnictwo Dolnoslaskie. I find it harder to translate from Hebrew than from Yiddish. The translation of Agnon went pretty well, since he was a native of Buczacz, and his Hebrew, like mine, is the Hebrew of the Diaspora. In contrast, Amos Oz's 70 prose, for example, includes a number of words or expressions that are unfamiliar to me. My experience with translations has led me to the conclusion that the Polish language is idiomatically closer to Yiddish than to Hebrew, despite the fact that Yiddish contains a huge number of Hebrew words, about 20 percent. In my opinion, Yiddish literature has left a richer legacy of first-rate works than the literature produced in Hebrew. It is a more world- class, universal, and less hermetic literature. As a matter of fact, I am an unfulfilled writer; intentionally unfulfilled, as I have decided that whatever I could write myself would be unworthy of the writing I translate.

I taught Hebrew at the University for several years, in parallel with taking the Yiddish language class. I have taught Hebrew and Yiddish at TSKZ 71 for many years - about 700 students of both languages have passed through my classes. I still teach Yiddish in the Jewish Theater, twice a week.

Most of my students are Poles, not Jews. But I must be hardened, because I don't care about it in the least while I'm teaching them. These young Jews of today are from a different world. And these Poles are also a bit not from this world. They meet somewhere. There is a group that learnt Yiddish with me for years, all of them Poles. We studied Yiddish literature and discussed it in Yiddish. Now they have decided to meet in a private apartment to talk in Yiddish. And they are doing it. A sort of club of Polish Yiddishists, Poles-Yiddishists in fact.

Which was my first language: Yiddish or Hebrew? This is a dilemma that Jews have had since the birth of their national consciousness. Jews have always used several languages. It was either Hebrew and Aramaic, or Hebrew and Greek for the elite; during the Babylonian rule Aramaic had the upper hand relative to Hebrew. Afterwards, in the Persian times, the elite wrote in Persian and in Aramaic. Next came Arabic; after all, Maimonides wrote in Arabic; later he translated Arabic into Hebrew. After that, there was Spanish and the Jewish language Ladino, then German and Alt Yiddish. While speaking in all those other languages, in their writing the Jews have always used the Hebrew script. When the Crusades began, Jews were locked up in ghettos and their German started to deteriorate, turning into a jargon, since it had been cut off from its German root. Contemporary Yiddish evolved out of Alt Yiddish at the beginning of the 20th century. In the Talmud it is written that Greek is the best language to sing in, Latin to command an army in, Hebrew to tell a story in,

and Aramaic to talk in. And I am going to add to this by saying that the best in all these languages can be found in Yiddish.

In my own life, there was a period when Hebrew gained the upper hand over Yiddish. It was an ideology, Zionism. I have never mastered Hebrew completely, however. I absorbed Yiddish in a natural way. For me, Yiddish is more emotional. You curse in it, you bless in it, and your first feelings are expressed in it. Myself, I count in Yiddish, not in Polish, to this very day. I have developed a close relationship with Polish. There was a time when I knew 'Bieniowski', Kochanowski, Asnyk [famous pieces of Polish literature] by heart. And today? I speak occasionally in Yiddish with those who come to visit this country. Here in Warsaw there is in fact nobody I could speak Yiddish with. Only with Kac [Daniel Kac, one of the last living Yiddishists, a writer], who calls me very often to ask the question: 'What is it in Polish?' and with whom I then speak not in Polish but in Yiddish.

There are many whom I have taught Yiddish. Some of them translate, others teach Yiddish at universities. There was one boy who studied with me for several years. He came by an overnight train from Poznan and I taught him for free because I realized that he was a very gifted boy. He translated Rabon's 'Street'. He did it rather well. So there will be someone to continue this work. For me, it is important that this series of translations is continued. Before 1968, I used to go regularly to the Jewish Theater, naturally in civilian clothes. In Wroclaw, where I taught at the Infantry School, I also went to all the plays. The theater in Warsaw used to be located in a barrack on Krolewska Street, in the place where the Victoria hotel stands today. It had been the building of the Polish Army Theater, later handed over to the Jewish Theater. After the war there were two Jewish theaters in Poland: Ida Kaminska's 72 theater in Lodz - that theater used to be housed in the building of the current Teatr Nowy - and the one in Wroclaw. Then in the 1950s the two theaters were merged into a single, state-owned theater with its home in Warsaw; it was a traveling theater. I remember a production of 'Meir Ezofovich', in which Ida Kaminska had a beautiful silent role and Juliusz Berger made his mark as the young Ezofovich.

My personal relationship with the Jewish Theater in postwar Poland really began in 1969. I had already been pensioned-off; it happened after the 'de- jewification' of the Polish army. One day someone from the post-Kaminska Jewish Theater came to see me. Ida Kaminska had emigrated in 1968, and the theater was taken over by Juliusz Berger, I think, who was its first director, before Szurmiej. Szurmiej [Szymon, the current director of the Jewish Theater] is a native of Luck and was aware that I knew Yiddish and Hebrew. And my visitor wanted to know if I would agree to teach Yiddish to a new generation of actors. After Ida Kaminska's departure there were only seven actors left. Well, you couldn't stage a play with seven actors. I readily agreed because I suddenly discovered here a purpose, a task I could accomplish. There was a recruitment drive among young Jews who hadn't left in 1968 or 1969, and I began to teach them Yiddish. After the first two years, more groups, young people from mixed marriages, came, and then still more groups - those included hardly any Jews. And all this time I have served the theater as consultant, and translated the lines into the headphones [simultaneous interpretation into Polish].

I also acted in two plays. Szurmiej came up with this idea in order to save money. In Israel I had to appear in a play, which I had translated, from Russian into Yiddish. It was Babel's 73 'Dusk'. I remember that after the performance in Israel some Jews came backstage to express their indignation that we had staged that play; the action takes place on Moldawianka, inside the Jewish

underworld, where Antek is a thief and Manka is a whore - and how can a Jewish theater show such things? I translated 'The Dybbuk' into Polish and I played the shammash in the production. That was in the 1980s, already after our guest tour in Israel.

I met Ida Kaminska for the first time when she came to Poland on some important anniversary of the death of her mother, Estera Rachela Kaminska [one of the greatest actresses of the Jewish Theatre acting in Europe before WW II], who is buried in the Jewish cemetery in Warsaw. In the West, Ida hadn't had a spectacular career; she felt deeply embittered. She was staying at the Bristol hotel and expressed a wish to meet with the actors of the Jewish theater. We all went to dinner. I remember an unending line of Polish actors and actresses who came to the theater to bow down before Ida Kaminska and express their regret over her emigration. In America she wrote a book of memoirs, had several appearances on television, and that was it. She went to Israel to create Yiddish theater there, but the atmosphere was unfavorable, and she returned embittered to America.

The difference in quality between the theater under Ida Kaminska and the theater in the subsequent period is enormous. During her times, each production was a major artistic event; all that came to an end with her departure. Not a word is said about contemporary theater because there is nothing to talk about. The gap is enormous. The reason is that there are neither good directors nor good actors. However, all is perhaps not irretrievably lost, as a new and quite active generation is growing, so who knows?

The creation of the state of Israel represented the fulfillment of a dream that had grown more intensive with the course of history. The state of Israel is one of the main guarantors of the continuing existence of the Jewish nation. In the past, religion provided the link that united all the dispersed Jews. I think that all the centers of the Diaspora should be guarantors of the existence of the state of Israel. The Diaspora has enormous significance for Israel. I am not sure that Israel realizes this.

I went to Israel for the first time in 1980. I hadn't had any contact with my cousin's family. One day I went to Yad Vashem 74 on the business of the Ringelblum Archive 75 - they wanted us to give them the archive, but we opposed that idea, since without the archive our entire Institute [the Jewish Historical Institute] 76 serves no purpose. However, given that the most valuable documents in the Ringelblum Archive were typed or handwritten with carbon copies, as many as five in some cases, and the first copy is almost as legible as the original, I could discuss with them the handing over of the copies. And a deal was reached. On that occasion I met a man there who invited me to dinner. So we are sitting in his home and it turns out that he is a Chelm native, and I used to tutor girls from Chelm, for in Chelm there was a Jewish gymnasium without accreditation, so its students did the eighth grade in town, in Kovel. I taught one young girl whose last name was Duniec. She was from the richest family in Chelm.

My host begins to brag about his close relations with Begin, keeps dropping names of generals, and so on. So I say to him: 'Listen, did you know Jundow?' 'But of course I did. And how come you know him?' 'He is,' I say, 'my closest cousin.' He responds: 'OK, but Jundow is dead.' 'I know that,' I say, 'but his wife is still alive and I don't have her address; she isn't listed in any telephone book, I haven't been able to find her.' 'Wait a minute,' he says, 'she works for the General Staff.' He calls the secretariat on the spot and a moment later he gives me her phone number and address. When

I called, Janusz's widow answered the phone. Naturally, he drove me there immediately. When we arrived at her place, everybody was already there, the entire family. I was very moved.

When we came with the Jewish Theater in the 80s, it was a huge event for Israel, for the gates of captivity had suddenly been flung open. We couldn't go directly to Israel since there were no diplomatic relations, so we traveled first to Belgrade - where our actors took part in an American series called 'The Winds of War' - and from there we went to Israel. At the airport we were met by a swarm of journalists. They didn't speak Yiddish. And the director of the theater says at a certain point: 'You are having such a hard time, but we have Friedman here; he speaks Hebrew.' So they descended on me like the proverbial bees. And the dialogue began. I hadn't used the language for sixty years but during that conversation I felt as if I had just left my classroom. My schoolmates, who had left in the 1930s, saw our arrival on television and began to call the hotel. That reception at the airport cost me a sleepless night because everybody called. My most recent visit to Israel was for a meeting of the World Council for Yiddish, some eight years ago.

In Poland we have a small Jewish community split into a number of organizations and associations. We have two Jewish periodicals. In principle, we have all the attributes of a great community, except that we don't have the people. When I am asked: 'What do Polish Jews need?' I say: 'Jews.' There are always two points of view: one pessimistic and one optimistic. Some see hope in the young people who are attracted to Jewish causes, even though they have frequently Catholic backgrounds. A sort of new type of Jewish community may develop here, but it would be very different from the historic Polish Jewry.

In 1991, Miles Lerman, the first director of the Holocaust Museum, came to Warsaw. They didn't have too much material for the museum, though they had been collecting it around the world. And he says: 'I will help you with the archives, but lend us one of Ringelblum's two milk cans.' We did it, lending, as they say, for eternity, being aware that they would never return it. Nevertheless, we insisted that it be a loan. [The milk can was lent for an exhibition to the Holocaust Museum in 1991. The deposit agreement is renewed every five years.]

That was probably in 1991, during one of the Pope's [John Paul II] visits to Warsaw. The Pope expressed his wish to meet with the Jewish community. At the time, a so-called Coordination Committee uniting several Jewish organizations was in existence. I was then the acting chairman of the Jewish Historical Institute Association and was chairing, under a rotation system, the Committee, which also included the JSCS and the Jewish religious community. I was tremendously impressed by his kindness of heart and direct manner. We felt that we were dealing with an individual of outstanding importance in the history of the papacy. He greeted us as if we had known each other. He even invited me to take a seat next to him. The main substance of my speech, besides words of recognition for the Pope, who had taken a positive stance toward the Jews, included a request to undertake an effort for the diplomatic recognition of Israel.

The Pope is a just man, like a tzaddik. And in the view of the sages of the Talmud and the cabalists, a just man stands higher than angels in the hierarchy of saintliness and importance. Angels only sing songs of praise and carry out directives, while a tzaddik, Hasid, or a just man, at times gets even a chance to change God's judgment, for his pleas, made in direct dialogue, may be granted. An angel gets the order to come down to earth to protect that man, whereas the tzaddik does it by his own will and his own inclination, and for this reason he stands higher than the angel in the

hierarchy of importance.

Since the Pope's visit, this Judeo-Christian dialogue has become more visible in Poland, and there is an extraordinary need for it. The accumulation of stereotypes has been far greater in Poland than elsewhere. For example, the issue of the involvement of Poles in saving Jews has surfaced recently. And in fact, there used to be a stereotype that during the wartime the Poles were blackmailers and anti-Semites, and no mention was made of just Poles. Even the just among the Poles did not flaunt what they had done.

Is Poland an anti-Semitic country? No. Poland is a country where there also are anti-Semites. There is a lot of this ludic brand of anti-Semitism, which is a bit ridiculous. But Poland is also a country in which there is an enormous number of centers that oppose anti-Semitism. I must say that, with the exception of the policy carried out in the military, I haven't experienced anti-Semitism. I have had the fortune of finding myself always in very progressive company.

Glossary

1 Bund
The short name of the General Jewish Union of Working People in Lithuania, Poland and Russia, Bund means Union in Yiddish). The Bund was a social democratic organization representing Jewish craftsmen from the Western areas of the Russian Empire. It was founded in Vilnius in 1897. In 1906 it joined the autonomous fraction of the Russian Social Democratic Working Party and took up a Menshevist position. After the Revolution of 1917 the organization split: one part was anti-Soviet power, while the other remained in the Bolsheviks' Russian Communist Party. In 1921 the Bund dissolved itself in the USSR, but continued to exist in other countries.

2 Folkszeitung
one of the Yiddish dailies published in Warsaw between the wars.

3 Der Moment
daily newspaper published in Warsaw from 1910-39 by Yidishe Folkspartei in Poyln. It was one of the most widely read Jewish daily papers in Poland, published in Yiddish with a circulation of 100,000 copies.

4 Betar
Brith Trumpledor (Hebrew) meaning the Trumpledor Society. Right- wing Revisionist Jewish youth movement. It was founded in 1923 in Riga by Vladimir Jabotinsky, in memory of J. Trumpledor, one of the first fighters to be killed in Palestine, and the fortress Betar, which was heroically defended for many months during the Bar Kohba uprising. In Poland the name 'The J. Trumpledor Jewish Youth Association' was also used. Betar was a worldwide organization, but in 1936, of its 52,000 members, 75 % lived in Poland. Its aim was to propagate the program of the revisionists in Poland and prepare young people to fight and live in Palestine. It organized emigration, through both legal and illegal channels. It was a paramilitary organization; its members wore uniforms. From 1936-39 the popularity of Betar diminished. During the war many of its members formed guerrilla groups.

5 Begin Menahem (1913-1992)
Israeli politician, activist in right-wing Zionist parties. Born in Brest-Litovsk, he graduated in law from Warsaw University. He was a Betar activist (and in 1938 became commander of the movement). He spent World War II in Soviet occupied territory, and was sent to the camps. In 1941 he joined Anders' Army, with which he reached Palestine in 1942, and stayed there. In Palestine he was a member of the armed organization Irgun Zeva'i Le'ummi [Hebr. name of the National Military Organization]. In 1973 he took over the leadership of the right- wing party Likud, and from 1977-83 he was prime minister of Israel. His greatest achievement was the signing of the Camp David Agreement with Egypt in 1978, for which he (and the president of Egypt, Anwar Sadat) was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

6 Stern Avraham (pseudonym Ya'ir; 1907-1942)
leader of an underground organization fighting in Palestine, founder of an organization later named Lohamei Herut Israel (Lehi, also known as the 'Sztern group'). Known for his extremist views, he fought for Israeli independence. Born in Suwalki (then Russia, now Poland), he arrived in Palestine in 1925, where he studied at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He also traveled to Europe to raise arms and seek agreement with the Polish authorities on the organization of training for instructors of the Jewish combat group Irgun Zeva'i Le'ummi, of which he was also a member. His protest at the cessation of anti-British attacks during World War II split Irgun Zeva'i Le'ummi, leading to the creation of a new grouping, Lohamei Herut Israel. In early 1942 the Palestinian authorities sentenced him to death, and he was killed in the house where he was in hiding.

7 ONR - Oboz Narodowo-Radykalny (Radical Nationalist Camp)
a Polish nationalist organization with extreme anti-Semitic views. Founded in April 1934, its members were drawn from the Nationalist Democratic Party. It supported fascism, its program advocated the full assimilation of Slavic minorities in Poland, and forced Jews to leave the country by curbing their civic rights and implementing an economic boycott that would prevent them from making a living. The ONR exploited calls for an economic boycott during the severe economic crisis of the 1930s to drum up support among the masses and develop opposition to Pilsudski's government. The ONR drew most of its support from young urban people and students. Following a series of anti-Semitic attacks, the ONR was dissolved by the government (July 1940), but the group continued its activities illegally with the support of extremist nationalist groups.

8 Tarbut
Zionist educational organization. Founded in the Soviet Union in 1917, it was soon dissolved by the Soviet authorities. It continued its activity in Central and Eastern European countries; in Poland from 1922. The language of instruction in Tarbut schools was Hebrew; the curriculum included biblical and contemporary Hebrew literature, sciences, Polish, and technical and vocational subjects.

9 Keren Kayemet Leisrael (K

K.L.): Jewish National Fund (JNF) founded in 1901 at the Fifth Zionist Congress in Basel. From its inception, the JNF was charged with the task of fundraising in Jewish communities for the purpose of purchasing land in the Land of Israel to create a homeland for the Jewish people. After 1948 the fund was used to improve and afforest the territories gained. Every Jewish family that wished to help the cause had a JNF money box, called the 'blue box'. In Poland the JNF was active in two periods, 1919-1939 and 1945-1950. In preparing its colonization campaign, Keren Kayemet le-Israel collaborated with the Jewish Agency and Keren Hayesod.

10 Maggid of Turzysk

Abraham (1806-1889), tzaddik and rebe, one of the eight sons of the tzaddik Rebe Mordechaj (1770-1837), the founder of the Hasidic court in Chernobyl. He attracted many followers, chiefly scholars and people of standing (including some rabbis and tzaddiks). He published a commentary to the Torah, 'Magen Avraham' (1887), and 'Shalosh Hadrakhot Yesharot li-Zemannim Shonim'. He combined Hasidic teachings with kabbalah, and gematria and other numerological techniques. The courts of the sons of Rebe Mordechaj were scattered throughout the southern part of the Pale of Settlement in 19th-century Russia. After the 1917 Revolution most of the heirs of the dynasty left Russia and moved to Poland, the US and Erez Israel.

11 Hasid

The follower of the Hasidic movement, a Jewish mystic movement founded in the 18th century that reacted against Talmudic learning and maintained that God's presence was in all of one's surroundings and that one should serve God in one's every deed and word. The movement provided spiritual hope and uplifted the common people. There were large branches of Hasidic movements and schools throughout Eastern Europe before World War II, each following the teachings of famous scholars and thinkers. Most had their own customs, rituals and life styles. Today there are substantial Hasidic communities in New York, London, Israel and Antwerp.

12 German occupation of Poland (1939-45)

World War II began with the German attack on Poland on 1st September 1939. On 17th September 1939 Russia occupied the eastern part of Poland (on the basis of the Molotov- Ribbentrop Pact). The east of Poland up to the Bug river was incorporated into the USSR, while the north and west were annexed to the Third Reich. The remaining lands comprised what was called the General Governorship - a separate state administered by the German authorities. After the outbreak of war with the USSR in June 1941 Germany occupied the whole of Poland's pre-war territory. The German occupation was a system of administration by the police and military of the Third Reich on Polish soil. Poland's own administration was dismantled, along with its political parties and the majority of its social organizations and cultural and educational institutions. In the lands incorporated into the Third Reich the authorities pursued a policy of total Germanization. As regards the General Governorship the intention of the Germans was to transform it into a colony supplying Polish unskilled slave labor. The occupying powers implemented a policy of terror on the basis of collective liability. The Germans assumed ownership of Polish state property and public institutions, confiscated or brought in administrators for large private estates, and looted the economy in industry and agriculture. The inhabitants of the Polish territories were forced into slave labor for the German war economy. Altogether, over the period 1939-45 almost three million people were taken

to the Third Reich from the whole of Poland.

13 Sholem Aleichem (pen name of Shalom Rabinovich (1859-1916)

Yiddish author and humorist, a prolific writer of novels, stories, feuilletons, critical reviews, and poem in Yiddish, Hebrew and Russian. He also contributed regularly to Yiddish dailies and weeklies. In his writings he described the life of Jews in Russia, creating a gallery of bright characters. His creative work is an alloy of humor and lyricism, accurate psychological and details of everyday life. He founded a literary Yiddish annual called Di Yidishe Folksbibliotek (The Popular Jewish Library), with which he wanted to raise the despised Yiddish literature from its mean status and at the same time to fight authors of trash literature, who dragged Yiddish literature to the lowest popular level. The first volume was a turning point in the history of modern Yiddish literature. Sholem Aleichem died in New York in 1916. His popularity increased beyond the Yiddish-speaking public after his death. Some of his writings have been translated into most European languages and his plays and dramatic versions of his stories have been performed in many countries. The dramatic version of Tevye the Dairyman became an international hit as a musical (Fiddler on the Roof) in the 1960s.

14 Peretz, Isaac Leib (1852-1915)

author and poet writing in Yiddish, one of the fathers and central figures of modern Yiddish literature, researcher of Jewish folklore. Born in Zamosc, he had both a religious and a secular education (he took courses in bookkeeping and studied law in Warsaw). Initially he wrote in Polish and Hebrew. His debut [in Yiddish] is considered to be the poem Monish, (1888, Di yidishe Folksbibliotek). From 1890 he lived in Warsaw. Peretz was an advocate of Yiddishism, and attended a conference on the subject of the Yiddish language in Jewish culture held in Czernowitz (1908). His most widely read works are his novellas, which he wrote at first in the positivist style and later in the modernist vein. In his work he often used folk motifs from the culture of Eastern European Jews (Khasidish, 1908). His best known works include Hurban beit tzaddik (The Ruin of the Tzaddik's House, 1903), Di Goldene Keyt (The Golden Chain, 1906). During World War I he was involved in bringing help to the victims of war. He died of a heart attack.

15 Poalei Zion (the Jewish Social-Democratic Workers' Party Workers of Zion)

in Yiddish 'Yidishe Socialistish-Demokratishe Arbeiter Partei Poale Syon'. A political party formed in 1905 in the Kingdom of Poland, and operating throughout the Polish state from 1918. The party's main aim was to create an independent socialist Jewish state in Palestine. In the short term, Poalei Zion postulated cultural and national autonomy for the Jews in Poland, and improved labor and living conditions of Jewish hired laborers. In 1920, during a conference in Vienna, the party split, forming the Right Poalei Zion (the Jewish Socialist Workers' Party Workers of Zion), which became part of the Socialist Workers' International and the World Zionist Organization, and the Left Po'alei Zion (the Jewish Social-Democratic Workers' Party Workers of Zion), the radical minority, which sympathized with the Bolsheviks. The Left Poalei Zion placed more emphasis on socialist postulates. Key activists: I. Schiper (Right PZ), L. Holenderski, I. Lew (Left PZ); paper: Arbeiter Welt. Both fractions had their own youth organizations: Right PZ: Dror and Freiheit; Left PZ - Jugnt. Left PZ was weaker than Right PZ; only towards the end of the 1930s did it start to form coalitions with other socialist and Zionist parties. In 1937 Left PZ joined the World Zionist Organization. During World War II both fractions were active in underground politics and the resistance movement in the

ghettos, in particular the youth organizations. After 1945 both parties joined the Central Jewish Committee in Poland. In 1947 they reunited to form the strongest legally active Jewish party in Poland (with 20,000 members). In 1950 Poalei Zion was dissolved by the communist authorities.

16 Der Dibuk (The Dybbuk, 1937)

The play was written during the turbulent years of 1912-1917; Polish director Waszynski's 1937 film was made during another period of pre-war unease. It was shot on location in rural Poland, and captures a rich folk heritage. Considered by some to be the greatest of Yiddish films, it was certainly the boldest undertaking, requiring special sets and unusual lighting. In Der Dibuk, the past has a magnetic pull on the present, and the dead are as alluring as the living. Jewish mysticism links with expressionism, and as in Nosferatu, man is an insubstantial presence in the cinematic ether.

17 CiSzO - Centrale Yidishe Shul Organizatsye (Central Jewish School Organization)

An organization founded in 1921 at a congress of secular Jewish teachers with the aim of creating and maintaining a network of schools. It was influenced by the Folkists and the Bundists and was a recipient of financial aid from Joint. The language of instruction in CiShO schools was Yiddish, and the curriculum included general subjects and Jewish history and culture (but Hebrew and religious subjects were not taught). CiShO schools aimed to use modern teaching methods, and emphasis was placed on physical education. The schools were co-educational, although some two-thirds of pupils were girls. In the 1926/27 school year CiShO had 132 schools in Poland teaching 14,400 pupils. The organization also held evening classes and ran children's homes and a teacher training college in Vilnius. During World War II it educated children in secret in the Warsaw Ghetto. It did not resume its activities after the war.

18 Folksztyme /Dos Yidishe Wort

Bilingual Jewish magazine published every other week since 1992 in Warsaw in place of 'Folksshtimme', which was closed down then. Articles are devoted to the activities of the JSCS in Poland and current affairs, and there are reprints of articles from the Jewish press abroad. The magazine 'Folksshtimme' was published three times a week. In 1945 it was published in Lodz, and from 1946-1992 in Warsaw. It was the paper of the Jewish Communists. After Jewish organizations and their press organs were closed down in 1950, it became the only Jewish paper in Poland. 'Folksshtimme' was the paper of the JSCS. It published Yiddish translations of articles from the party press. In 1956, a Polish- language supplement for young people, 'Nasz Glos' [Our Voice] was launched. It was apolitical, a literary and current affairs paper. In 1968 the paper was suspended for several months, and was subsequently reinstated as a Polish-Jewish weekly, subject to rigorous censorship. The supplement 'Nasz Glos' was discontinued. Most of the contributors and editorial staff were forced to emigrate.

19 Pushkin, Alexandr (1799-1837)

Russian poet and prose writer, among the foremost figures in Russian literature. Pushkin established the modern poetic language of Russia, using Russian history for the basis of many of his works. His masterpiece is Eugene Onegin, a novel in verse about mutually rejected love. The

work also contains witty and perceptive descriptions of Russian society of the period. Pushkin died in a duel.

20 Tuwim, Julian (1894-1953)

Poet and translator; wrote in Polish. He was born in Lodz into an assimilated family from Lithuania. He studied law and philosophy at Warsaw University. He was a leading representative of the Skamander group of poets. His early work combined elements of Futurism and Expressionism (e.g. Czychanie na Boga [Lying in wait for God], 1918). In the 1920s his poetry took a turn towards lyrism (e.g. Slowa we krwi [Words in blood], 1926). In the 1930s under the influence of the rise in nationalistic tendencies in Poland his work took on the form of satire and political grotesque (Bal w operze [A ball at the opera], 1936). He also published works for children. A separate area of his writings are cabarets, libretti, sketches and monologues. He spent WWII in emigration and made public appearances in which he relayed information on the fate of the Polish population of Poland and the rest of Europe. In 1944 he published an extended poem, 'My Zydzi polscy' [We Polish Jews], which was a manifesto of his complicated Polish-Jewish identity. After the war he returned to Poland but wrote little. He was the chairman of the Society of Friends of the Hebrew University and the Committee for Polish-Israeli Friendship.

21 Forverts (Eng

Forward): Jewish newspaper published in New York. Founded in 1897, it remains the most popular Yiddish newspaper in the US and also has a loyal readership in other parts of the world. Its founders were linked to the Jewish workers' movement with its roots in socialist- democratic circles. From 1903 to 1951 the editor-in-chief of Forverts was Abraham Cahan. During World War I circulation peaked at 200,000 copies. Following Cahan's death circulation dropped to 80,000 copies, and in 1970 to 44,000. The editors that followed Cahan were Hillel Rogoff (1951-61), Lazar Fogelman (1962-68) and Morris Crystal. In addition to social and business news, Forverts also publishes excerpts of Jewish literature, and has an extensive cultural section. Forverts was initially a daily published in Yiddish only, but in 1990 was relaunched as a Yiddish-English bilingual weekly.

22 Civil War (1918-1920)

The Civil War between the Reds (the Bolsheviks) and the Whites (the anti-Bolsheviks), which broke out in early 1918, ravaged Russia until 1920. The Whites represented all shades of anti- communist groups - Russian army units from World War I, led by anti- Bolshevik officers, by anti-Bolshevik volunteers and some Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. Several of their leaders favored setting up a military dictatorship, but few were outspoken tsarists. Atrocities were committed throughout the Civil War by both sides. The Civil War ended with Bolshevik military victory, thanks to the lack of cooperation among the various White commanders and to the reorganization of the Red forces after Trotsky became commissar for war. It was won, however, only at the price of immense sacrifice; by 1920 Russia was ruined and devastated. In 1920 industrial production was reduced to 14% and agriculture to 50% as compared to 1913.

23 Pilsudski, Jozef (1867-1935)

Polish activist in the independence cause, politician, statesman, marshal. With regard to the cause

of Polish independence he represented the pro-Austrian current, which believed that the Polish state would be reconstructed with the assistance of Austria- Hungary. When Poland regained its independence in January 1919, he was elected Head of State by the Legislative Sejm. In March 1920 he was nominated marshal, and until December 1922 he held the positions of Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Army. After the murder of the president, Gabriel Narutowicz, he resigned from all his posts and withdrew from politics. He returned in 1926 in a political coup. He refused the presidency offered to him, and in the new government held the posts of war minister and general inspector of the armed forces. He was prime minister twice, from 1926-1928 and in 1930. He worked to create a system of national security by concluding bilateral non-aggression pacts with the USSR (1932) and Germany (1934). He sought opportunities to conclude firm alliances with France and Britain. In 1932 owing to his deteriorating health, Pilsudski resigned from his functions. He was buried in the Crypt of Honor in Wawel Cathedral in the Royal Castle in Cracow.

24 Petliura, Simon (1879-1926)

Ukrainian politician, member of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Working Party, one of the leaders of Centralnaya Rada (Central Council), the national government of Ukraine (1917-1918). Military units under his command killed Jews during the Civil War in Ukraine. In the Soviet-Polish war he was on the side of Poland; in 1920 he emigrated. He was killed in Paris by the Jewish nationalist Schwarzbard in revenge for the pogroms against Jews in Ukraine.

25 Jozef Haller's troops

During World War I Jozef Haller fought in Pilsudski's legions. In 1916 he was appointed commander-in-chief of the 2nd Brigade of Polish Legions, which in February 1918 broke through the Austro-Russian front and joined up with the II Polish Corpus in Ukraine. In August 1918 Haller went to Paris. The Polish National Committee operating in France appointed him commander-in-chief of the Polish Army in France (the 'Blue Army'). In April 1919 Gen. Haller led his troops back to Poland to take part in the fight for Poland's sovereignty and independence. He commanded first the Galician front, then the south-western front and finally the Pomeranian front. During the Polish-Bolshevik War, in 1920, he became a member of the National Defense Council and Inspector General of the Volunteer Army and commander-in-chief of the North-Eastern front. After the war he was nominated General Inspector of Artillery. During the chaos that ensued after Poland regained its independence and in the battles over the borders in 1918-1921, the soldiers of Haller's army were responsible for many campaigns directed against the Jews. They incited pogroms and persecution in the towns and villages they entered.

26 Radio Free Europe

Radio station launched in 1949 at the instigation of the US government with headquarters in West Germany. The radio broadcast uncensored news and features, produced by Central and Eastern European émigrés, from Munich to countries of the Soviet block. The radio station was jammed behind the Iron Curtain, team members were constantly harassed and several people were killed in terrorist attacks by the KGB. Radio Free Europe played a role in supporting dissident groups, inner resistance and will of freedom in the Eastern and Central European communist countries and thus it contributed to the downfall of the totalitarian regimes of the Soviet block. The headquarters of

the radio have been in Prague since 1994.

27 Jabotinsky, Vladimir (1880-1940)

Founder and leader of the Revisionist Zionist movement; soldier, orator and a prolific author writing in Hebrew, Russian, and English. During World War I he established and served as an officer in the Jewish Legion, which fought in the British army for the liberation of the Land of Israel from Turkish rule. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Keren Hayesod, the financial arm of the World Zionist Organization, founded in London in 1920, and was later elected to the Zionist Executive. He resigned in 1923 in protest over Chaim Weizmann's pro-British policy and founded the Revisionist Zionist movement and the Betar youth movement two years later. Jabotinsky also founded the ETZEL (National Military Organization) during the 1936-39 Arab rebellion in Palestine.

28 Hahalutz

Hebrew for pioneer, it stands for a Zionist organization that prepared young people for emigration to Palestine. It was founded at the beginning of the 20th century in Russia and began operating in Poland in 1905, later also spread to the USA and other countries. Between the two wars its aim was to unite all the Zionist youth organizations. Members of Hahalutz were sent on hakhshara, where they received vocational training. Emphasis was placed chiefly on volunteer work, the ability to live and work in harsh conditions, and military training. The organization had its own agricultural farms in Poland. On completing hakhshara young people received British certificates entitling them to emigrate to Palestine. Around 26,000 young people left Poland under this scheme in 1925-26. In 1939 Hahalutz had some 100,000 members throughout Europe. In World War II it operated as a conspiratorial organization. It was very active in culture and education after the war. The Polish arm was disbanded in 1949.

29 Poland's independence, 1918

In 1918 Poland regained its independence after over 100 years under the partitions, when it was divided up between Russia, Austria and Prussia. World War I ended with the defeat of all three partitioning powers, which made the liberation of Poland possible. On 8 January 1918 the president of the USA, Woodrow Wilson, declaimed his 14 points, the 13th of which dealt with Poland's independence. In the spring of the same year, the Triple Entente was in secret negotiations with Austria-Hungary, offering them integrity and some of Poland in exchange for parting company with their German ally, but the talks were a fiasco and in June the Entente reverted to its original demands of full independence for Poland. In the face of the defeat of the Central Powers, on 7 October 1918 the Regency Council issued a statement to the Polish nation proclaiming its independence and the reunion of Poland. Institutions representing the Polish nation on the international arena began to spring up, as did units disarming the partitioning powers' armed forces and others organizing a system of authority for the needs of the future state. In the night of 6-7 November 1918, in Lublin, a Provisional Government of the Republic of Poland was formed under Ignacy Daszynski. Its core comprised supporters of Pilsudski. On 11 November 1918 the armistice was signed on the western front, and the Regency Council entrusted Pilsudski with the supreme command of the nascent army. On 14 November the Regency Council dissolved, handing all civilian power to Pilsudski; the Lublin government also submitted to his rule. On 17 November Pilsudski appointed a government, which on 21 November issued a manifesto promising

agricultural reforms and the nationalization of certain branches of industry. It also introduced labor legislation that strongly favored the workers, and announced parliamentary elections. On 22 November Pilsudski announced himself Head of State and signed a decree on the provisional authorities in the Republic of Poland. The revolutionary left, from December 1918 united in the Communist Workers' Party of Poland, came out against the government and independence, but the program of Pilsudski's government satisfied the expectations of the majority of society and emboldened it to fight for its goals within the parliamentary democracy of the independent Polish state. In January and June 1919 the first elections to the Legislative Sejm were held. On 20 February 1919 the Legislative Sejm passed the 'small constitution'; Pilsudski remained Head of State. The first stage of establishing statehood was completed, despite the fact that the issue of Poland's borders had not yet been resolved.

30 Hashomer Hatzair in Poland

From 1918 Hashomer Hatzair operated throughout Poland, with its headquarters in Warsaw. It emphasized the ideological and vocational training of future settlers in Palestine and personal development in groups. Its main aim was the creation of a socialist Jewish state in Palestine. Initially it was under the influence of the Zionist Organization in Poland, of which it was an autonomous part. In the mid-1920s it broke away and joined the newly established World Scouting Union, Hashomer Hatzair. In 1931 it had 22,000 members in Poland organized in 262 'nests' (Heb. 'ken'). During the occupation it conducted clandestine operations in most ghettos. One of its members was Mordechaj Anielewicz, who led the rising in the Warsaw ghetto. After the war it operated legally in Poland as a party, part of the He Halutz. It was disbanded by the communist authorities in 1949.

31 Maccabi World Union

International Jewish sports organization whose origins go back to the end of the 19th century. A growing number of young Eastern European Jews involved in Zionism felt that one essential prerequisite of the establishment of a national home in Palestine was the improvement of the physical condition and training of ghetto youth. In order to achieve this, gymnastics clubs were founded in many Eastern and Central European countries, which later came to be called Maccabi. The movement soon spread to more countries in Europe and to Palestine. The World Maccabi Union was formed in 1921. In less than two decades its membership was estimated at 200,000 with branches located in most countries of Europe and in Palestine, Australia, South America, South Africa, etc.

32 Hasmonei

common name for sports clubs and youth teams organized by Poalei Zion. The name comes from the Hasmoneans (also known as the Maccabees), the Jewish heroes of the anti-Roman uprising in the second century BC.

33 Tel el-Amarna

site of archaeological excavations in present-day Egypt, 1,909 km south of Cairo. In 1887 a quantity of royal court correspondence was unearthed there, and the research, which continued

until 1936, uncovered 379 letters, most of them written in Akkadian and dated at 1385/1375-1355 BC They include letters from Palestine (a rare source for studies of the Canaanite language, which is important for the study of Biblical Hebrew). The letters also constitute a unique source for studies of the history of the ancient Middle East.

34 Tchernichovsky, Shaul (1875-1943)

poet writing in Hebrew. Born in Mikhailovka in the the Crimea-Ukraine region, he graduated from both a Hebrew and a Russian school. The environment he remembered from his childhood and youth were to be one of the leitmotifs of his work. His views were also influenced by Zionist ideology. He was inspired by both works by contemporary Yiddish and Hebrew writers and poets, and classics of European literature. When he was 14 he moved to Odessa to continue his education; subsequently he studied medicine in Heidelberg and Lausanne. In 1906 returned to Russia but had considerable problems setting up in medical practice. In 1922 he moved to Berlin, and in 1931 he emigrated to Palestine.

35 Mickiewicz, Adam (1798-1855)

Often regarded as the greatest Polish poet. As a student he was arrested for nationalist activities by the tsarist police in 1823. In 1829 he managed to emigrate to France and worked as professor of literature at different universities. During the 1848 revolution in France and the Crimean War he attempted to organize legions for the Polish cause. Mickiewicz's poetry gave international stature to Polish literature. His powerful verse expressed a romantic view of the soul and the mysteries of life, often employing Polish folk themes.

36 Bialik, Chaim Nachman (1873-1934)

One of the greatest Hebrew poets. He was also an essayist, writer, translator and editor. Born in Rady, Volhynia, Ukraine, he received a traditional education in cheder and yeshivah. His first collection of poetry appeared in 1901 in Warsaw. He established a Hebrew publishing house in Odessa, where he lived but after the Revolution of 1917 Bialik's activity for Hebrew culture was viewed by the communist authorities with suspicion and the publishing house was closed. In 1921 Bialik emigrated to Germany and in 1924 to Palestine where he became a celebrated literary figure. Bialik's poems occupy an important place in modern Israeli culture and education.

37 Anti-Jewish Legislation in Poland

After World War I nationalist groupings in Poland lobbied for the introduction of the numerus clausus (Lat. closed number - a limit on the number of people admitted to the practice of a given profession or to an institution - a university, government office or association) in relation to Jews and other ethnic minorities. The most radical groupings demanded the introduction of the numerus nullus principle, i.e. a total ban on admittance to universities and certain professions. The numerus nullus principle was violated by the Polish constitution. The battle for its introduction continued throughout the interwar period. In practice the numerus clausus was applied informally. In 1938 it was indirectly introduced at the Bar.

38 Grinbaum, Icchak (1879-1970)
barrister, politician and Zionist activist. Born in Warsaw, he studied medicine and law. In 1905 he attended the 7th Zionist Congress as a delegate. Co-founder of Tarbut. He was the leader of a radical faction of the Zionist Organization in Poland, and deputy to the Polish Sejm (Parliament) from 1919-1932. In 1933 he emigrated to Palestine. Grinbaum was a member of the governing bodies of the Jewish Agency (until 1951). During World War II he founded the Committee to Save the Polish Jews, and acting through diplomatic channels strove to have immigration restrictions on refugees in allied countries lifted. In 1948-49 he was a minister in Israel's Provisional Government.

39 Warsaw Ghetto
A separate residential district for Jews in Warsaw created over several months in 1940. On 16th November 1940 138,000 people were enclosed behind its walls. Over the following months the population of the ghetto increased as more people were relocated from the small towns surrounding the city. By March 1941 445,000 people were living in the ghetto. Subsequently, the number of the ghetto's inhabitants began to fall sharply as a result of disease, hunger, deportation, persecution and liquidation. The ghetto was also systematically reduced in size. The internal administrative body was the Jewish Council (Judenrat). The Warsaw ghetto ceased to exist on 15th May 1943, when the Germans pronounced the failure of the uprising, staged by the Jewish soldiers, and razed the area to the ground.

40 13 Tlomackie Street
between the wars, 13 Tlomackie Street was home to the Union of Jewish Writers and Translators, which brought together those writing in both Yiddish and Polish. It also housed the Library of Judaistica and the Tempel progressive synagogue.

41 Sztern, Izrael (1894-1942)
Yiddish poet and essayist. Born in Ostroleka, lived in poverty and died in the Warsaw ghetto. His poetry takes the form of lyrical, often religious reflection, and bears traits characteristic of expressionist poetry. His work was published in magazines, but he did not live to see it published in book form. Some of his works have since been published in the volume 'Lider un eseyen' (Poems and essays, New York 1955).

42 Manger, Itzik (1901-1969)
Yiddish poet, writer and dramatist. Born in Chernovits (now Ukraine). His first volume of poetry, 'Shtern Oyfn Dakh' (Stars on the Roof, 1929) included Yiddish folk motifs expressed in classic poetic form. His volume 'Khumesh Lider' (Pentateuch Songs, 1935) portrays patriarchal figures in the setting of the Jewish shtetl. His 'Megile-Lider' (Scroll Songs, 1936) were inspired by the tradition of the Purim plays. This book of poems was hugely acclaimed, and in 1967 was adapted as a musical (music: Dov Seltzer). Among Manger's best known works is 'The Book of Paradise' (1965). After the outbreak of war he emigrated to England, where he stayed until 1951. Manger moved to Israel in 1967. His works have been translated into Hebrew and many European languages.

43 Asch, Sholem (1880-1957)
novelist and dramatist, who wrote in Yiddish, Hebrew, English and German. He was born in Kutno, Poland, into an Orthodox family. He received a traditional religious education, and in other fields he was self-taught. In 1914 he emigrated to the United States. Towards the end of his life he lived in Israel. He died in London. His literary debut came in 1900 with his story 'Moyshele'. His best known plays include 'Got fun Nekomeh' (The God of Vengeance, 1906), 'Kiddush ha-Shem' (1919), and the comedies 'Yihus' (Origin, 1909), and 'Motke the Thief' (1916). He wrote a trilogy about the founders of Christianity: 'Der Man fun Netseres' (1943; The Nazarene, 1939), The Apostle (1943), and Mary (1949).

44 Perle, Joshua (1888-1943?), novelist writing in Yiddish
Born in Radom, Poland, he lived in Warsaw and made a living as a bookkeeper. His creative work was influenced by the writing of Sholem Asch. His published works include 'Unter der Zun' (1920), a collection of realistic short stories about small Polish-Jewish villages; and 'Nayn a Zeyger Inderfri' (1930), stories of Warsaw's middle-class Jews. His best known novel is 'Yidn fun a Gants Yor' (Everyday Jews, 1935). During the war he was in the Warsaw ghetto, and later in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. His fate after 1943 is unknown.

45 Singer, Isaac Bashevis (1904-1991)
Yiddish novelist, short-story writer and journalist. Born in Poland, Singer received a traditional rabbinical education but opted for the life of a writer instead. He emigrated to the US in 1935, where he wrote for the New York-based The Jewish Daily Forward. Many of his novellas, such as Satan in Goray (1935) and The Slave (1962), are set in the Poland of the past. One of his best-known works, The Family Moskat (1950), he deals with the decline of Jewish values in Warsaw before World War II. Singer was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1978.

46 Seidenbeutel, Efraim and Menasze (1903-1945)
twin brothers, painters and members of the Warsaw School artistic group. They painted mostly landscapes and still lifes. In the last years before World War II they traveled widely and exhibited their works abroad. They were both killed in Flossenburg concentration camp.

47 The 13
Jewish group of around 300-400 collaborationists operating in the Warsaw ghetto, led by Abraham Gancwajch. Its name came from its address - 13 Leszno Street, where it was based. Founded in December 1940, it was supported by the Germans, in particular by the circle based around the German SD (Sicherheitsdienst/Security Service). It remained in operation until July 1941. The fate of Gancwajch is unknown.

48 Institute of Judaistica
scientific institute founded in 1920 in Warsaw by the Society for the Propagation of Judaistica. The aim of the Institute was to train teachers in Judaism. The course of study lasted 4 years and

comprised 2 courses - rabbinical studies and historical and social studies. The institute educated over 100 teachers. It had a library of Judaica, containing more than 35,000 books and manuscripts. Most of the library's stock was destroyed in WW II; the surviving items now form part of the collections of the Jewish Historical Institute, which occupies the pre-war seat of the Institute of Judaistica on Tlomakie Street in Warsaw.

49 Balaban, Majer (1877-1942)
historian of Polish Jewry. He was born in Lvov and studied philosophy and history there. After WWI he moved to Warsaw. He wrote scores of works on the history and culture of the Jews in Cracow, Lublin and Lvov. He also wrote school textbooks. From 1936 he was a professor at Warsaw University, and also lectured at the Institute of Judaistica in Warsaw. He perished in the Warsaw ghetto.

50 Schorr, Mojzesz (1874-1941)
rabbi and scholar. Born in Przemysl (now Poland), he studied at the Juedisch-theologische Lehranstalt and Vienna University. In 1899 he became a lecturer in Judaism at the Jewish Teacher Training Institute in Lvov, and from 1904 he also lectured at Lvov University, specializing in Semitic languages and the history of the ancient Orient. In 1923 he moved to Warsaw to lead the Reform Synagogue at Tlomackie Street. Schorr was one of the founders of the Institute of Judaistica founded in 1928, and for a few years its rector. He also lectured in the Bible and Hebrew there. He was a member of the State Academy of Sciences, and from 1935-1938 he was a deputy to the Senate. After the outbreak of war he went east. He was arrested by the Russians and during a transfer from one camp to another he died in Uzbekistan.

51 Gold, Artur (1897-1943)
musician and composer, born in Warsaw, son of Michal and Helena Melodyst. He studied in London. In 1922 he set up a jazz band, along with Jerzy Petersburski, that became hugely popular. He wrote a lot of hits. In 1940 he was confined in the Warsaw ghetto, and in 1942 was deported to Treblinka. During his time in the camp he was ordered by the Germans to play in the German club Casino there. He was also in charge of the camp orchestra. He was killed in 1943.

52 Schiller Friedrich von (1759-1805)
German poet, dramatist, aesthetician and drama theoretician. Beside Goethe the greatest figure in German Weimar classicism. His plays include 'The Robbers' (1781), 'Love and Intrigue' (1784) and 'Don Carlos' (1787); and he also wrote historical treatises ('History of the Thirty Years' War', 1790-92) and essays on aesthetics ('Letters upon the aesthetic education of man', 1794), as well as large numbers of lyric poems and ballads (e.g. 'The Glove', 'The Count of Hapsburg', 'The Ring of Polycrates'). Schiller played an important role in the development of romantic nationalist literature.

53 SLD
the Left Democratic Alliance, a Polish left-wing political party; its members include many former members of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR). One of the key groups on the Polish political

scene.

54 Wankowicz, Melchior (1892-1974)
publicist and writer, soldier in WWI. From 1943-46 Wankowicz was a war correspondent for the Polish Army in the East and the 2nd Polish Corps in Italy. He was a master of reportage, linking accounts of real events with elements of fiction and a narrative ease born out of the tradition of the conversational art of the nobility. His best known works include the historical monographs 'Westerplatte' (1959) and 'Bitwa o Monte Cassino' (The Battle for Monte Cassino), Vol. 1-3 (1945-47), novels about the emigre life ('Tworzywo' [Substance], 1954), memoirs ('Ziele na kraterze' [The Herb on the Crater], 1951, 'Tedy i owedy' [This Way and That] 1961), journalism ('Karafka La Fontaine'a' [La Fontaine's Carafe], Vol. 1-2, 1972-81), and selected reportages ('Anoda i Katoda' [Anode and Cathode], Vol. 1-2, 1980-81).

55 Michalowski Kazimierz (1901-81)
archaeologist, Egyptologist, art historian. From 1933-1972 he was a professor at Warsaw University, and founder and head of the Chair of Mediterranean Archaeology. From 1952 Michalowski was member of the Polish Academy of Sciences. He was the founder (in 1959) and head of the Polish Mediterranean Architecture Station of Warsaw University in Cairo.

56 Dubois, Stanislaw (1901-42)
socialist activist and publicist. From 1931-33 and 1934-37 he was a member of the Supreme Council of the Polish Socialist Party, and from 1928-30 a deputy to the Sejm. From 1934 he advocated agreement between the socialists and communists. He was arrested during the war and died in Auschwitz.

57 Polish Socialist Party (PPS), founded in 1892, its reach extended throughout the Kingdom of Poland and abroad, and it proclaimed slogans advocating the reclamation by Poland of its sovereignty
It was a party that comprised many currents and had room for activists of varied views and from a range of social backgrounds. During the revolutionary period in 1905- 07 it was one of the key political forces; it directed strikes, organized labor unions, and conducted armed campaigns. It was also during this period that it developed into a party of mass reach (towards the end of 1906 it had some 55,000 members). After 1918 the PPS came out in support of the parliamentary system, and advocated the need to ensure that Poland guaranteed of freedom and civil rights, division of the churches (religious communities) and the state, and territorial and cultural autonomy for ethnic minorities; and it defended the rights of hired laborers. The PPS supported the policy of the head of state, Jozef Pilsudski. It had seats in the first government of the Republic, but from 1921 was in opposition. In 1918-30 the main opponents of the PPS were the National Democrats [ND] and the communist movement. In the 1930s the state authorities' repression of PPS activists and the reduced activity of working-class and intellectual political circles eroded the power of the PPS (in 1933 it numbered barely 15,000 members) and caused the radicalization of some of its leaders and party members.During World War II the PPS was formally dissolved, and some of its leaders created the Polish Socialist Party - Liberty, Equality, Independence (PPS-WRN), which was a member of the

coalition supporting the Polish government in exile and the institutions of the Polish Underground State. In 1946-48 many members of PPS-WRN left the country or were arrested and sentenced in political trials. In December 1948 PPS activists collaborating with the PPR consented to the two parties merging on the PPR's terms. In 1987 the PPS resumed its activities. The party currently numbers a few thousand members.

58 Great Patriotic War

On 22nd June 1941 at 5 o'clock in the morning Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union without declaring war. This was the beginning of the so-called Great Patriotic War. The German blitzkrieg, known as Operation Barbarossa, nearly succeeded in breaking the Soviet Union in the months that followed. Caught unprepared, the Soviet forces lost whole armies and vast quantities of equipment to the German onslaught in the first weeks of the war. By November 1941 the German army had seized the Ukrainian Republic, besieged Leningrad, the Soviet Union's second largest city, and threatened Moscow itself. The war ended for the Soviet Union on 9th May 1945.

59 Cossacks

an ethnic group that constituted something of a free estate in the 15th-17th centuries in the Polish Republic and in the 16th-18th centuries in the Muscovite state (and then Russia). The Cossacks in the Polish Republic consisted of peasants, townspeople and nobles settled along the banks of the Lower Dnieper, where they organized armed detachments initially to defend themselves against the Tatar invasions and later themselves making forays against the Tatars and the Turks. As part of the armed forces, the Cossacks played an important role in Russia's imperial wars in the 17th-20th centuries. From the 19th century onwards, Cossack troops were also used to suppress uprisings and independence movements. During the February and October Revolutions in 1917 and the Russian Civil War, some of the Cossacks (under Kaledin, Dutov and Semyonov) supported the Provisional Government, and as the core of the Volunteer Army bore the brunt of the fighting with the Red Army, while others went over to the Bolshevik side (Budenny). In 1920 the Soviet authorities disbanded all Cossack formations, and from 1925 onwards set about liquidating the Cossack identity. In 1936 Cossacks were permitted to join the Red Army, and some Cossack divisions fought under its banner in World War II. Some Cossacks served in formations collaborating with the Germans and in 1945 were handed over to the authorities of the USSR by the Western Allies.

60 The 1st Kosciuszko Infantry Division

tactical grouping formed in the USSR from May 1943. The victory at Stalingrad and the gradual assumption of the strategic initiative by the Red Army strengthened Stalin's position in the anti-fascist coalition and enabled him to exert increasing influence on the issue of Poland. In April 1943, following the public announcement by the Germans of their discovery of mass graves at Katyn, Stalin broke off diplomatic relations with the Polish government in exile and using the poles in the USSR, began openly to build up a political base (the Union of Polish Patriots) and an army: the 1st Kosciuszko Infantry Division numbered some 11,000 soldiers and was commanded first by General Zygmunt Berling (1943-44), and subsequently by the Soviet General Bewziuk (1944-45). In August 1943 the division was incorporated into the 1st Corps of the Polish Armed Forces in the USSR, and from March 1944 was part of the Polish Army in the USSR. The 1st Division fought at Lenino on 12-

13 October 1943, and in Praga in September 1944. In January 1945 it marched into Warsaw, and in April-May 1945 it took part in the capture of Berlin. After the war it became part of the Polish Army.

61 Anders' Army

The Polish Armed Forces in the USSR, subsequently the Polish Army in the East, known as Anders' Army: an operations unit of the Polish Armed Forces formed pursuant to the Polish-Soviet Pact of 30 July 1941 and the military agreement of 14 July 1941. It comprised Polish citizens who had been deported into the heart of the USSR: soldiers imprisoned in 1939-41 and civilians amnestied in 1941 (some 1.25-1.6m people, including a recruitment base of 100,000-150,000). The commander-in- chief of the Polish Armed Forces in the USSR was General Wladyslaw Anders. The army never reached its full quota (in February 1942 it numbered 48,000, and in March 1942 around 66,000). In terms of operations it was answerable to the Supreme Command of the Red Army, and in terms of organization and personnel to the Supreme Commander, General Wladyslaw Sikorski and the Polish government in exile. In March-April 1942 part of the Army (with Stalin's consent) was sent to Iran (33,000 soldiers and approx. 10,000 civilians). The final evacuation took place in August-September 1942 pursuant to Soviet-British agreements concluded in July 1942 (it was the aim of General Anders and the British powers to withdraw Polish forces from the USSR); some 114,000 people, including 25,000 civilians (over 13,000 children) left the Soviet Union. The units that had been evacuated were merged with the Polish Army in the Middle East to form the Polish Army in the East, commanded by Anders.

62 Mendele Moykher Sforim (1835-1917)

Hebrew and Yiddish writer. He was born in Belarus and studied at various yeshivot in Lithuania. Mendele wrote literary and social criticism, works of popular science in Hebrew, and Hebrew and Yiddish fiction. In his writings on social and literary problems Mendele showed lively interest in the education and public life of Jews in Russia. He was preoccupied by the question of the role of Hebrew literature in molding the Jewish community. This explains why he tried to teach the sciences to the mass of Jews and to aid the people in obtaining secular education in the spirit of the Haskalah (Hebrew enlightenment). He was instrumental in the founding of modern literary Yiddish and the new realism in Hebrew style, and left his mark on the two literatures thematically as well as stylistically.

63 Kacyzne, Alter (1885-1941)

writer, dramatist, translator, writer of film scenarios, photographer. He was born in Vilnius into an Orthodox family. He was self-taught. After WWI he moved to Warsaw. He had a photography studio and contributed photographs to Jewish newspapers. He became popular as a writer between the wars with his cycle of short stories 'Arabeskn', the novel 'Shtarke un shvakhe' (Strong and Weak, 1929). He worked with the Vilner Trupe as a dramatist, and was also the co-author of the film script for 'The Dybbuk' (1937).

64 Wojdowski, Bogdan (1930-94)

writer of short stories and novels on contemporary themes, including 'Bread Thrown to the Dead' (1971), an account of life, death and the struggle of the people confined in the Warsaw ghetto.

65 Sutzkever, Abraham (?-1913)
Poet writing in Yiddish. Born in Vilnius region, he belonged to the artistic Jung Wilne circle and was its most illustrious member. He made his literary debut in 1933. During WWII he was in the Warsaw ghetto, but escaped and joined the underground army. Subsequently moved to the USSR, but in 1946 returned to Poland. Since 1947 he has lived in Israel. He published several volumes of verse, including Di Festung (The Fortress), Yidishe Gas (Jewish Street) and In Fayer Vogn (In the Fiery Wagon).

66 Chagall, Marc (1889-1985)
Russian-born French painter. Since Marc Chagall survived two world wars and the Revolution of 1917 he increasingly introduced social and religious elements into his art.

67 Singer, Israel Joshua (1893-1944)
Yiddish novelist, dramatist and journalist. Elder brother of Isaac Bashevis Singer. Born in Bilgoraj, Poland, he lived in Warsaw and Kiev before emigrating to America in 1933. Well known as a writer of 'family sagas', foremost among them 'Di Brider Ashkenazi' (The Brothers Ashkenazi, 1936), a novel set in Jewish Lodz at the time of the expansion of the textile industry. Other works include 'Nay- Rusland' (1928), 'Yoshe Kalb' (1932), and 'Khaver Nakhman' (1938). He wrote for the New York daily 'Forward' under the pseudonym G. Kuper.

68 Auerbach, Rachela (1901-1976)
historian, translator and poet. During World War II she was in the Warsaw ghetto, where she worked with Emanuel Ringelblum writing reports on the living conditions in the ghetto for his archives. After escaping to the 'Aryan side' she wrote an extended poem entitled 'Izkor' about the extermination of Jewish youth. After the war she co-operated with the Central Jewish Historical Committee in Poland documenting the Holocaust. In 1950 she emigrated to Israel, where she worked in the Yad Vashem Institute. Her publications include 'Unzer behutsot Varsha' (Yid.: Our Warsaw backyards, 1954) and 'Mered Geto Varsha' (Hebr.: The Rising in the Warsaw Ghetto, 1963).

69 Agnon, Shmuel Yosef (1888-1970)
Shmuel Yosef Czaczkes was born in the Jewish shtetl of Buczacz, Galicia and went to Palestine in 1907. In 1913, Agnon left Palestine for Germany where he remained for 11 years. He returned to Palestine in 1924. His first short story 'Agunot' (Forsaken Wives) was published in Palestine in the same year under the pen-name Agnon, which bears a resemblance to the title of the story, and which became his official family name thereafter. 'Temol Shilshom' [Yesterday and the Day Before], considered his masterpiece, is a powerful description of Palestine in the days of the Second Aliyah, but its spirit reflects the period in which it was written, the years of the Holocaust. Agnon was the first Hebrew writer to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1966.

70 Amos Oz (1939-)
Israeli writer. At the age of 15 he went to live in the Huldah kibbutz, where he lives to this day. He

studied Hebrew literature and philosophy. His publications include: 'Arzot Hatan' (1965; Where Jackals Howl and Other Stories, 1981), 'Makom Acher' (1966; Ailleurs Peut-Etre, 1972), 'Mikhael Sheli' (1968; My Michael. 1972), 'Ad Mavet' (1971), 'Lagat Bemayim, Lagat Beruach' (1973), 'Har Haezah Harah' (1976), 'Beor Hatekhelet Hazah (1979) and 'Soumkhi' (1978; English, 1981).

71 TSKZ (Social and Cultural Society of Polish Jews)
founded in 1950 when the Central Committee of Polish Jews merged with the Jewish Society of Culture. From 1950-1991 it was the sole body representing Jews in Poland. Its statutory aim was to develop, preserve and propagate Jewish culture. During the socialist period this aim was subordinated to communist ideology. Post-1989 most young activists gravitated towards other Jewish organizations. However, the SCSPJ continues to organize a range of cultural events and has its own magazine, The Jewish Word. However, it is primarily an organization of older people, who have been involved with it for years.

72 Kaminska, Ida (1899-1980)
Jewish actress and theater director. She made her debut in 1916 on the stage of the Warsaw theater founded by her parents. In 1921-28 she and her husband, Martin Sigmund Turkow, were the directors of the Varshaver Yidisher Kunsteater. From 1933 to 1939 she ran her own theater group in Warsaw. During World War II she was in Lvov, and was evacuated to Kyrgizia (Frunze). On her return to Poland in 1947 she became director of the Jewish theaters in Lodz, Wroclaw and Warsaw (1955-68 the E.R. Kaminska Theater). In 1967 she traveled to the US with her theater and was very successful there. Following the events of March 1968 she resigned from her post as theater director and emigrated to the US, where she lived until her death. Her best known roles include the leading roles in Mirele Efros (Gordin), Hedda Gabler (Ibsen) and Mother Courage and Her Children (Brecht), and her role in the film The Shop on Main Street (Kadár and Klos, 1965). Ida Kaminska also wrote her memoirs, entitled My Life, My Theatre (1973).

73 Babel, Isaac Emmanuilovich (1894-1940)
Russian author. Born in Odessa, he received a traditional religious as well as a secular education. During the Russian Civil War, he was political commissar of the First Cavalry Army and he fought for the Bolsheviks. From 1923 Babel devoted himself to writing plays, film scripts and narrative works. He drew on his experiences in the Russian cavalry and in Jewish life in Odessa. After 1929, he fell foul of the Russian literary establishment and published little. He was arrested by the Russian secret police in 1939 and completely vanished. His works were 'rehabilitated' after Stalin's death.

74 Yad Vashem
This museum, founded in 1953 in Jerusalem, honors both Holocaust martyrs and 'the Righteous Among the Nations', non-Jewish rescuers who have been recognized for their 'compassion, courage and morality'.

75 Ringelblum Archive

archives documenting the life, struggle and death of the Jews in WWII, created by Emanuel Ringelblum (1900-44), a historian, pedagogue and social activist. The archives were compiled by underground activists in the Warsaw ghetto. In his work preparing reports for the clandestine Polish authorities on the situation of the Jewish population, Ringelblum and his many assistants gathered all types of documents (both private and official: notices, letters, reports, etc.) illustrating the reality in the ghettos and the camps. These documents were hidden in metal milk churns, unearthed after the war and deposited with the Jewish Historical Institute. The Ringelblum Archive is now the broadest source of information on the fate of the Jews in the ghettos and the camps.

76 Jewish Historical Institute [Zydowski Instytut Historyczny (ZIH)]

Warsaw-based academic institution devoted to researching the history and culture of Polish Jews. Founded in 1947 from the Central Jewish Historical Committee, an arm of the Central Committee for Polish Jews. ZIH houses an archive center and library whose stocks include the books salvaged from the libraries of the Templum Synagogue and the Institute of Judaistica, and the documents comprising the Ringelblum Archive. ZIH also has exhibition rooms where its collection of liturgical items and Jewish painting are on display, and an exhibition dedicated to the Warsaw ghetto. Initially the institute devoted its research activities solely to the Holocaust, but over the last dozen or so years it has broadened the scope of its historical and cultural work. In 1993 ZIH was brought under the auspices of the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. It publishes the Jewish Historical Institute Quarterly.