Zambrow

זאמברוב - זעמבראוו

Zambrow

זאמברוב – זעמבראוע

The Zambrow Memorial Book

ספר זאמברוב - זעמבראוע

In Memory of a Martyred Community that was Exterminated הי"ד



SIGILLUM CIVITATIS ZAMBROVIENSIS
EMBLEM OF THE TOWN OF ZAMBROW:
HEAD OF AN OX, WITH THE INSIGNIA IN LATIN
SEAL OF THE ZAMBROW TOWN-HALL.

Dr. Yom-Tov Levinsky, Editor

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The frontispiece is the Emblem of the Town of Zambrow: Head of an Ox, with the Insignia in Latin:
SIGILLIUM CIVITATIS ZAMBROVIENSIS (Seal of the Zambrow Town Hall)

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Mahwah, New Jersey
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Dedication



This English Translation of *Sefer Zambrow*, called

The Zambrow Memorial Book

Is dedicated to our Zambrow ancestors,
those who left Zambrow, and those whose lives were
mercilessly taken during the *Shoah*.

It is also dedicated to

The Members of the United Zembrower Society, Inc.

Who worked tirelessly to aid those *Holy Remnants* of Jewish Zambrow who survived the *Shoah* and to preserve its memory.

May their memory and efforts remain an eternal precious legacy.



Supporter's Honor Roll

The following members of our extended family of landsleit, friends and well-wishers, provided financial contributions to help make the publication of this book possible. Their generosity assures the preservation of this heritage for future generations, by which they have earned a large measure of our collective gratitude.

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Foreword

The United Zembrover Society is pleased to present this English translation of *Sefer Zambrow*. A *Yizkor* book, a memorial to the Jewish community of Zambrow, *Sefer Zambrow* was published in 1963 under the direction of Mr. Yom-Tov Levinsky. The book includes a wealth of information about the town, its history, its political, religious and educational organizations, personalities, folklore, and much more. Dedicated to preserving the memory of Jewish Zambrow, the book stood as a revered memorial on the bookshelf of many descendants of Zambrow.

As Mr. Levinsky wrote in his Foreword, writing and assembling *Sefer Zambrow* was no easy task. Yet he undertook it because he felt "a mysterious impulse to set down a spiritual memorial for Jewish Zambrow! Record its history, its *balebatim*, and Jews who were common working people, religious leaders, and those activist Jews in secular life, scholars and simple people who just recited Psalms, the synagogue and the houses of study, societies and institutions. And if not now – by the last generation of those personally from Zambrow – it will never come to pass. And so, I took to the creation of the book with affection and longing, but the task was a difficult one."

Sefer Zambrow appeared 20 years after the destruction of the Jews of Zambrow, and it was written by and for those who left Zambrow before the Second World War or survived the war. As such, it was written in Yiddish and Hebrew in dual columns that appeared side by side. An English summary was appended to the book, as Mr. Levinsky wrote, to "let the grandchildren of those from Zambrow come to know something about their grandfathers and grandmothers..." The summary, however, did not capture the richness of style or content of the original Yiddish and Hebrew.

Now in 2016, 53 years after *Sefer Zambrow* was published, few are Zambrow's native sons and daughters, but many are their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Through the years, the United Zembrover Society has striven to maintain the connection to our ancestral town. In 2011, the society contracted with Dr. Jacob Solomon Berger to translate the book into English, so that the descendants of Zambrow can experience the richness of the Yizkor Book. This book is the culmination of this project.

May this book serve as a memorial to our ancestors who left Zambrow and those who perished during the Holocaust as well as a living link between future generations to our ancestral roots.

SUMMER 2016

Chanan Kessler

Translator's Foreword

This is my twelfth endeavor to translate a *Yizkor Book* into English. All of my previous efforts had proceeded largely on my own initiative, driven by a personal imperative to bring Yiddish and Hebrew books of this kind across the language barrier, so that future generations of English speakers will have access to these works. In this case, however, the *United Zembrover Society, Inc.* contacted me with a "request for proposal" to translate their *Yizkor Book, Sefer Zambrow*, into English. The *landsleit* of this *landsmanschaft* wanted to ensure that descendants of Zambrow had access to the richness of the *Yizkor Book*. The resonance between the organization and myself culminated in this product.

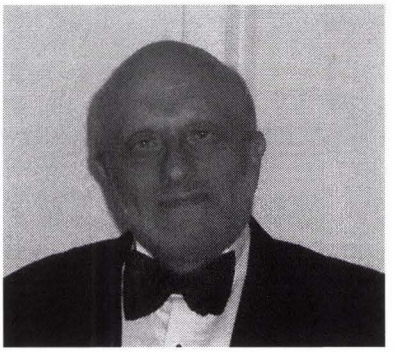
The structure of this book is noteworthy, in that it reflects a not-uncommon compromise in dealing with the language issue. Those who prepared such books were confronted with the quandary of whether to produce it in Yiddish or Hebrew. *Sefer Zambrow* reflects one of the more arduous compromises, in that almost all the text is produced in both languages. Accordingly, its size, in the original, is somewhat deceptive, since, for a translator, it is effectively only half as big as it actually seems. A certain amount of sleuthing is nevertheless necessary to read both versions and make sure to pick up – and integrate – morsels from one language that may not have made it over into the other. While the book benefits from a very good English summary, it does not contain the richness in terms of style and content of the original Yiddish and Hebrew.

The town of Zambrow traces its history to medieval times, though formal records of the Jewish community do not appear until the establishment of a Jewish cemetery in 1828. There is some evidence of Jewish presence in the 18th century, but it is principally anecdotal. In many ways the Jewish experience in Zambrow is both prototypical, and emblematic, of the experience of all Polish Jewry. For anyone who has familiarity with the structure, and the way of life of an Eastern European Jewish community, leafing through the ***Zambrow Memorial Book*** will bring the warmth of familiarity and the recognition of *déja-vu*. Zambrow is no more – and no less – a member of the constellation of over 6,500 Jewish settlements in Eastern Europe, so cruelly exterminated in what must be considered the single most calamitous breakdown in human civilization.

While again, it is true that the tragic outcome of the recounting of this city's history is known in advance, the record is enriched by the endeavor of these writers to tell this tale from their own unique perspective.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the very fine support that I receive from certain key people who helped me to assure the highest level of integrity and accuracy in my translation work. I am indebted to Tomasz Panczyk in Poland, and Leon Szyfer of Toronto, Canada, for their assistance in assuring that my rendition of Polish names and places, transliterated from Yiddish into English, were done correctly. Leon deserves an extra vote of thanks for clarifying Russian usage, and for rendering such Russian in Cyrillic script, on my behalf. A special vote of thanks goes to my classmate, Sam (Shmuel) Blumert of Jerusalem, Israel, for his insight into some esoteric Hebrew.

The ***United Zembrover Society*** also deserves a special vote of thanks for providing an editorial interface to me, for purposes of proofreading and overseeing matters of text integrity. At the outset of the project, this role was performed by Ron Miller, who discharged his duties magnificently. This role was then assumed by Chanan Kessler, who ably saw the effort through to its conclusion. It is of equal note to recognize the work of Steven Lasky, who scanned in all the images, from the original *Yizkor Book*. This is now the second time that the text in one of my works has been enriched by pictures. Last, but by no means least, my thanks also go to Yeshaya Metal, the reference desk librarian at YIVO in New York City, who, as usual, was ever ready with a suitable insight regarding the occasional esoteric word that would surface from time to time. His absolute command of the formidable resources there, assured that no question went unanswered. I note that Yeshaya retired from his position about three quarters of the way through this work. I wish him well in his retirement, and will miss his sagacious and selfless responsiveness to the many requests I made of him through the years.



SUMMER 2016

Jacob Solomon Berger

Editor's Foreword

After several years of strenuous effort, the *Yizkor* Book about our tragically destroyed home town of Zambrow finally is appearing.

Many strands tied me all of my life to Zambrow, the town where I was born, more than sixty years ago. I left it as an 11-year-old boy. I have wandered a great deal since that time, and absorbed both familiar and unfamiliar cultures – however, I have never forgotten my 'Old Country' [home] with its *Mameloshn*[1] culture. And when Zambrow was so tragically wiped off the Jewish vista, it came back to life again before my eyes, as a 'spiritual' Zambrow, and a mysterious impulse began to nag me: get up and set down a spiritual memorial for Jewish Zambrow! Record its history, its *balebatim*[2], and Jews who were common working people, her clergy, and those activist Jews in secular life, scholars and simple people who just recited Psalms, the synagogue and the houses of study, societies and institutions. And if not now – by the last generation of those personally from Zambrow – it will never come to pass. And so, I took to the creation of the book with affection and longing, but the task was a difficult one.

The memorial has been placed, the book has already appeared. Regrettably, I was not able to accomplish this for everyone:

Zambrow was a small *shtetl*. There is practically nothing written about it in Jewish and non-Jewish writings. Also, our 'old home' is mentioned very infrequently in newspapers. And the municipal archives no longer exist, and in the best circumstance they are no longer available at our disposal. The older people, who were eye witnesses, and can tell us [what we want to know] – have passed on a long time ago. So we turned to our *landsleit*, older and younger, who remember, and are capable of writing. But few volunteered – not believing that anything would come of this.

What remained was for us to fashion something about the history of the town from remnants and old documents and from glimpses and minor observations, going from point to point, item to item, to create an organized list of the history of the town and its Jewish settlement. And who is to know how many facts disappeared from our view, and how many personalities were forgotten by us? We could not resolve this issue. Despite this, we established this initiative, and the book was published, in which the entire town passes before us as if in a play. So, here and there, personalities and facts are perhaps missing. Despite this, we put together a book about our Jewish Zambrow, from its inception to its destruction.

We have written this book in both languages, as our traditional literature had been written at one time: 'The Holy Tongue' (Hebrew) and '*Ivrit-Teitch*' (Yiddish), together. The reader will have to

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1 Literally, 'Mother's Language' in Yiddish, and referring to the Yiddish language itself.

2 Plural of the Yiddish *baleboss*, from the Hebrew, being 'Master of the House,' and referring to someone of that social standing.

make an effort to find the translation on the second side – but in this way we have done justice to our two languages: The Mother-language (Yiddish) and the Father-language (Hebrew). We are providing a short overview in English – to let the grandchildren of those from Zambrow come to know something about their grandfathers and grandmothers... In a few places, we shortened the text in one of the languages, or made use of only one of the two languages. We took care to preserve the Zambrow Yiddish idiom[3] as far as possible.

We have been able to provide somewhat more in the line of pictures, as much as we could, and as much as we had in our ambit, and as far as they were in good condition. We incorporated into the book more that two thousand images of the Jewish Zambrow *Heder* school children, with their *Rebbe* and teachers. We incorporated several hundred young people – pictures of societies and the committees of parties, to the extent that we had them, making no distinction with regard to party and political persuasion. We have also incorporated a few pictures of townsfolk. For the majority of them, their sole remembrance is to be found in this book.

We have included things about the ambience of the town – this freshens our memory, and links us all the more so to the cradle of our childhood.

Regarding the eve of the destruction of Zambrow, and the Holocaust itself, we exclusively relied on primary sources: from letters and eye-witness accounts. Regardless if certain details are not consistent, dates, etc., we have included everything, just the way it was recalled.

The material of the book can, in part, serve as historical sources for Jewish life in Poland, of the last century in general, and of the last several decades in particular. To this end, we have included Zambrow into the Golden chain of Polish Jewry that was uprooted by the German *Amalek*[4] with its accomplices.

It is my responsibility here, to bring to mind, with gratitude and respect, those numbered few who helped me with my work:

My friend, Mendl Zibelman (son of R' Israel-David, Miami, Florida), adorned this book with his inspiring memories. Professor Berl Mark (Warsaw). Chaim ben David (Moshe-Aharon the Painter's son, Detroit – Israel). Zvi Zamir, Sender Seczkowsky (Itcheh the Painter's son, Tel-Aviv), Joseph Srebrowicz (Tel-Aviv), Joseph Yerusalimsky (Ashkelon), The three Yitzhaks: Golda, Golombek, and Stupnik, and Moshe Levinsky – smoking embers snatched from fire and sword. And last, but not least: My beloved father and teacher, Israel Levinsky ז"ל, who did not write just a little for the

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3 Yiddish was far from a monolithic tongue. There were many dialects and variations throughout all of Europe, and no doubt, Zambrow had its own unique linguistic content.

4 This is a metaphoric assignment of a biblical name, of the people intent on destroying the ancient Israelites, to their latter day equivalents, the Nazi (see Deut 25:17).

book, but was not privileged to see it come to fruition. Chaim Tzur (son of Fyvel Zukrowicz, Ramat HaKovesh) designed the cover of the book, and drew a map of the town from memory.

Three *landsleit*-organizations seriously participated in the material expenses for the book: The Organization of the Zembrover Society in New York, with its brother societies, headed by our American 'ambassador' Joseph Savetsky, Yitzhak Rosen, Isaac Malinowicz (who gathered untold tens upon tens of pictures for the book), Eliezer Pav and many others. With their broadness of heart and full and open hands, the book became a reality.

Our *landsleit* in Argentina, led by the prematurely deceased Ch. Y. Rudnik ז"ל, and to be mentioned for long life: Boaz Chmiel, Joseph Krolewiecky, Yaakov Stupnik, Crystal, and many others – also contributed to the book, and from time-to-time offered us encouragement.

The Organization of Zembrover in Israel, headed by the comrades: Zvi Zamir (Herschel Slowik), Zvi Ben-Joseph (Hershl Konopiata), Pinchas Kaplan, the sisters Malka and Liebehcheh Greenberg, Leib Golombek, etc. They were the ones who led the creation of the book.

At the end: Our small Zambrow families: In Mexico City, our comrades Chaim Gorodzinsky, Yitzhak Rothberg, and others, and in France – Esther Smoliar-Szlewin, and others.

All – Those whom I have mentioned here, and those that I have perhaps forgotten – may they be designated for good, and may they all bless themselves with this book, that they cooperated in producing.

Yom-Tov Levinsky, Tel-Aviv

A Word from the Zembrover Organization in Israel

The *Pinkas*[5] of Zambrow is edited and partly written by our *landsman* Dr. Yom-Tov Levinsky.

A full eight years have gone by since we decided to publish a *Yizkor* Book about our Zambrow. In that time, we made strenuous efforts – but I will not exaggerate when I will say that were it not for the editor, Mr. Levinsky, the book would not have appeared: his phenomenal memory made it possible to dig up from the past, and from forgotten memories, men and facts, incidents, ways of life, the history of families and other interesting things that ran their course in Zambrow years ago. He searched, rummaging relentlessly, day and night, and uncovered sources relating to the history of the town, especially in the Hebrew newspapers of the times. He looked after giving a voice to the *landsleit* in Israel, and the world at large, especially those not inclined to take pen in hand, encouraging and directing many in writing. An now, when the book lays before my eyes, and the book of some 700 pages – beautiful Zambrow passes before my eyes like a panorama: The streets and byways of the *shtetl,* the *Pasek*[6] and the marketplace, its synagogue and houses of study, its clergy, the Rabbis, *Dayanim*[7] and *Shamashim*[8]; and community political organizations, their leaders and hordes of members; *HeHalutz*; prominent families who were so extensively branched out, porters, wagon drivers, storekeepers and bakers, the erudite bookseller Abba Rakowsky, and other prominent townsfolk, the young schoolchildren and the elderly – hundreds of pictures, that preserve every aspect of the town of those days, up to the Holocaust. Many pictures, that were donated, were gotten only with great difficulty in Israel and the United States, It seems to me that, the whole town, as it existed, appears in the book. Not a one has been overlooked.

The special chapter about the destruction of Zambrow during the Holocaust is written by Yitzhak Golombek, one of the living [eye]- witnesses, and a survivor of Auschwitz, and with him: Yitzhak Golda, and others. Read it with an ache in your heart, but with respect and recognition for our heroic martyrs, parents, brothers and sisters, – from the beginning of the predation, the concentration in the ghetto, to the extermination – you hear the reverberation of the cries of those who were taken to slaughter, and you breathe in their final minutes.

The folklore pages of the book have special meaning. The editor has incorporated words and expressions from Zambrow, which in part, we still use to this day, in our daily affairs. Special chapters are dedicated to education, political movements, and social assistance. In addition there are descriptions of various type of Zambrow folks, writings about the way of life, etc. Using this, he

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5 The Hebrew word for a ledger.

6 Yiddish for a 'strip' of road, possibly of significant access to the marketplace.

7 Plural of the Hebrew *Dayan*, for a Rabbi who acted in the capacity of a Judge.

8 Plural of the Hebrew *Shamash* (Yiddish: *Shammes*) for a synagogue sexton.

truly takes us into the 'old home'... he deals here with the young people in the synagogue, societies, work and industry, mutual aid, etc. The Zambrow societies of all countries are described, their activities on behalf of the local *landsleit,* and for their brethren in all corners of the world. I will not exaggerate when I say that our *Yizkor* Book will be one of the best of those that have already appeared, up till now, and we may take pride in it.

Our 'old home,' Zambrow is no more. The sacred bones, and remains of our townsfolk have not been given a proper Jewish burial. Their remains lie in the great mass graves in the forests of Szumowo and [Rutki]-Kosaki, and in the ash heaps at Oswiecim. In the town, only Christian peasants go about, who have seized Jewish assets, and no one remains to take it back from their hands. Only a few faded headstones remain in the cemetery, among the overgrowth and thorns, that indicate, at one time, there was a Jewish life and a sizeable Jewish city.

This book is, and will remain for generations to come, the truest memorial for Jewish Zambrow. In it, we have preserved the memory of the lives and the echo of the suffering of the Jews that no longer exist. It is here that we have put a '*Place and a Name*'[9] to their light and their memory

We therefore wish to thank our brother-organizations in The United States, with our comrade, Joseph Savetsky at its head, and in Argentina, and so forth – for their material help, and great interest in the book. We thank those who took part in the book by sharing their memories. We thank all of our landsleit in Israel, and outside the Land, and especially our friend Zvi Ben-Joseph in Israel, who gave so much of his energy and attention to the book. All of, who participated, encountered difficulties with all of the obstacles that lay in our way, and despite this, we produced a book that is both pleasing and substantive. At a suitable time, let our townsfolk consult it, and let us leave thereby, a legacy to those children who will follow us, about the eternal way of life of our people, who lived it in our *shtetl* of Zambrow ה"ד.

All, all of you, consider yourselves saluted, and blessed.

In the name of the Zembrover *Landsleit*-Organization in Israel
Zvi Zamir (Slowik), Chairman

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9 The literal translation of *Yad VaShem*, taken from Isaiah 56:5.

The Origins of Zambrow

ואלה תולדות זאמברוב ...

דער אנהויב פון זעמבראווע ...

The Historical Pages

By Dr. Yom-Tov Levinsky

A. When Did Zambrow Become a City?



Page 19: Dr. Yom-Tov Levinsky

A city does not simply spring into being all at once. First, a small settlement appears, afterwards a village, and later, when the village spreads out, it becomes a town. This certainly must have been the case with Zambrow. It was a small village for many years, and after that a village. It was first, only in the second half of the 15th century, that it grew large, and the residents demanded from the authorities the Mazovian Principality that they grant it the status of a city. Their request was accepted, after it was certified that Zambrow satisfied all the criteria to be considered a city.

In the year 1479, 5239 after creation, the ruler of Mazovia, who ruled over the Płock Region, the Prince, Janusz II, was persuaded to grant the Zambrow settlement the right to call itself a city (Zombrow/Zomrow) And from that time on, to enjoy all the privileges of a city. Several years later, the residents of the city again petitioned on the basis that they did not have any regularly scheduled fairs and the merchants of the surrounding towns avoid coming to Zambrow, and therefore compel the residents to travel to buy goods at the market fairs of neighboring cities. Then, Prince Janusz II officially designated this privilege for Zambrow, even nominating it to be a *Powiat* (a central city). At this time, it was already being called Zombrowo (Zambrowa).

B. The Privileges of the City

The ruler granted the right to the city to conduct two fairs a year. One on June 24 (*Czerwiec)*, on the day of St. John (*Swiaty Jan*) and the second – on September 21 (*Wrzesien*), meaning: one fair before the harvest, and the second after the harvest. The populace needed to wait three-quarters of a year until the new fair. First, 44 years later, when the city had developed further, and a number of villages became affiliated with it, in the year 1523, the government of the Kingdom of Poland, to which Mazovia *de facto* already belonged at that time, decided to designate four additional fairs for the year – a total of six fairs. This was a symptom of a progressing city. With ceremony, it was, once again, designated as a *Powiat*. In 1527, when Mazovia officially became part of Poland, the privileges of Zombrowo were again certified.

In the year 1538, Zambrow was destroyed by fire and sword. The war between Poland and Prussia, by happenstance, took place in Zombrowo. The Prussian military fortified itself in this place, afterwards called Pruszki. The Poles – were on the other side. The city, which was in the middle, was meanwhile burned down, and the residents – all fled. In the year 1575 – Zambrow belonged to Ciechanow, where the castle of the ruling noble was located.

The new Polish King, Zygmunt I, son of Casimir IV, heartily received a delegation of *balebatim* from Zambrow, and listened to their complaints, and took a hand in their plight, promising to alleviate it. There were no Jews among them. He lowered the taxes of the city, annulled all of their debts, and renewed the privileges of the city, that had been lost when the original copy of their official charter was burned. The members of the delegation certified the details of the burned declarations by oath.

C. The First Sign of Jews

Were there Jews already [present] in Zombrowo? It was not made clear to us whether there was already an established Jewish community in the city, but what is known to us [is]: The city government turned to the King, Zygmunt I[10] to have him permit the movement of the market day from Wednesday to Thursday, so the Jews would be able to purchase their requirements for *Shabbat,* the Jews being present in the area in not insignificant numbers. However, a number of incidents took place in the city that caused its decline. It is possible to see this from the revenues [sic: of the market days]: in the year 1620 those revenues from meat, honey, liquor and grains were close to 508 Florins (approximately like Gulden), and those [same revenues] in the year 1673 had fallen to an income of 35 Gulden. The area of the city, and its environs reached 52 *voloki (*the *volok* was 20 *marg*[11]), and only 9 of them constituted land that was being worked, with 49 *volok* remaining fallow.

D. The Name of the City

We have already documented the fact that the name was first written as '*Zambrowo*,' and later as '*Zombrow*.'[12] Stanislaw August II who ruled from 1764-1795, called it '*Zembrow*' (according to '*Starozhitnya Polska*' 530-523). In the 19th century, it was already being called '*Zembrow*,' and in Russian, *'Zambrow*.' The Jews always called it *'Zembrow*' (according to *Pinkas* Tykocin[13]), and in the last century – '*Zembrowo*.' In the list of the Jewish census in Warsaw, from the year 1781, there are listed, among others Jews that lived in Warsaw, but that came from '*Zembrowo*.' One individual registered himself as follows: 'I come from *Zembrowo*,' and another, 'from *Zambrow*...'

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10 Sigismund I the Old (Polish: *Zygmunt I Stary*; Lithuanian: *Žygimantas II Senasis*; 1 January 1467 - 1 April 1548) of the Jagiellon dynasty reigned as King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania from 1506 to his death at age 81 in 1548. Before that, Sigismund had already been invested as Duke of Silesia.

11 The Yiddish says 1 volok = 30 marg.

12 The Hebrew text reads: We have already documented the fact that the name was first written as '*Zomrow*,' and later as '*Zombrowa*.'

13 Tykocin is variously called Tykocin, Tyktin, Tuktin, and Tikotzin in Hebrew.

The name *Zamrow-Zambrow* appears to be derived from the small river, Zambrzyce which is beside the *shtetl*, or perhaps the other way around – does the river take its name from the *shtetl*? One is led to believe that in the 13th or 14th century, there was a Prussian colony of the Teutonic Knights (who were crusaders). Here, a summer vacation spot was located for the German rulers, because the location was encircled by forests. It was called the *Sommerhof* – which [it is believed] that the Poles later modified to *Zomrow* and according to the linguistic rules, either a 'b or a 'p' gets inserted between the 'm' and the 'r,' for example, Klumar – Klumfurst, Kammer – Chamber, Numer – Number, etc. [In this way] *Sommerhof* became *Zombrow – Zambrow*.

E. The Political Situation

Zambrow is administratively divided into two parts: the city proper (called the *Osada* in Polish) and the *Gmina* (the greater vicinity). The city itself was small, encompassing one market square (*Rynek*), from which small streets emanated in all directions. The horse market bounded the town on the west, and the '*Poswiatne*' on the east.

The *Gmina*, however, had under its jurisdiction, 20 villages and hamlets. By 1880, the *Gmina* had 44 villages under its jurisdiction, and numbered 12,154 souls. Jews also lived in those villages, some as tenant farmers (*pokczary*), but the majority, up to about ten or more, were: Gardlin (Galyn, the Bialystoker Road, where Shlomo'leh Blumrosen's brick works was located), Grabowka, Gorki, Grzymały, Długobórz, Wądolki, Wiśniówek, Wola [Zambrowska], Wierzbowo, Tabędz, Cieciorki, Laskowiec, Nagorki [-Jablon], Sedziwuje, Poryte [-Jablón], Pruszki, Konopki, Koretki, Klimasze, etc.

Zambrow belongs to Mazovia, and independent, but poor land, which is rich in water, arable land, forests, cattle and fish – but is little-developed and stands at a low cultural level. After the Crusades in Germany, from the year 1096 onwards, the local Jews began to emigrate to Poland. In the 12th century – thousands streamed here – thousands of German Jews. Thousands also took up residence in Mazovia, in the older cities such as Płock, Czersk, Sochaczew, Wyszogród, Plonsk, Ciechanow, etc.

With their full ardor, the Jews began to occupy Mazovia and industrialize it. The lived here in tranquility, and were not subject to predation. Only when Mazovia first began to draw close to Poland [proper] – did limitations begin to be imposed on Jewish citizenship rights. Nevertheless, Jews enjoyed the privileges in a special law for Jews, '*Jus Judaicum' (Privilegium Judaeorum)*. The Jews integrated themselves well in local life, and the Mazovian laws, even calling it 'our law' *(Jus Nostrum*). In the year 1526, Mazovia is integrated into Poland, and they become one country. The Mazovian Jews now fall under the laws and limitations that apply to Polish Jews.

F. Geography and Topography

From time immemorial, Zambrow belonged to the Lomza *Guberniya* (Province), and is counted as the second largest city according to its population. At the end of the 15th century – Zambrow was officially a *Powiat* (center). In the year 1721, the Polish Sejm divided the Lomza Guberniya into two municipal districts: Zambrow and Kolno. The Chief City Elder (*Starosta*), resided in Zambrow.

Zambrow lies among the Cieciorki and Wandolki forests, among others, not far from the famous forest area of Czerwony-Bor (about 13 versts from Zambrow). And between the cities: On the east – Czyzew[14], which has an important train station to Warsaw and Bialystok, Wyszków, and Jablonka to the west, the train station Czerwony-Bor and Lomza, the provincial capitol of north Bialystok and south Ostrow-Mazowiecka.

Three small rivers ring the town: A. The Jablon – whose headwaters are in the town of Jablonka, courses through Zambrow, flowing for a distance of about 20 versts to Gać. B. The Prątnik, which emanates from the town of Prątnik, near Sedziwuje, and C. The Zamrzyce, which emanates from Wierzbowo, and flows into the Jablon. Jablon (or Jablonka) is the principal river of the area.

Following a regulation promulgated by the Zambrow community, at the proposal of the Rabbi, all of the little rivers were officially referred to as the Jablon, in order to facilitate the preparation of ritual divorce documents (e.g. a *Get*) in Zambrow: this is because the town river has to be documented in the Get. The provincial leadership accepted this proposal.

About one verst from the town, to the east, the '*Uczastek*' of the military region is located. There were not few Jews who lived here, who made a living from the military. They had their own *Bet HaMedrash* there, two bridges –one of wood, and was on the *Ulica*[15] Ostrowska, and a concrete one on the *Ulica* Czyzewska – connecting the town to the surrounding settlements.

G. Jews Build the City

The Jews built out the market square (*Rynek*) and one after another, they erected houses around the marketplace, opening stores, and in this way worked over the center of the town, and took commerce and industry into their hands. The gentiles concentrated themselves around the horse market and the *Poswiatne*, and engaged in agriculture. Zambrow had good drinking water from its streams. The principal stream was behind the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, which provided for more than half of the town. A second stream was on the *Rynek* itself, and the water was obtained by a pump. Water-carriers would also draw water from the river.

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14 Designated as Czyzew Kościelne on current maps.

15 The Polish word for 'Road.' We will opt for the Polish word to achieve better conformity with existing maps.

There were two (Jewish-operated) steam-driven mills, one was a water-mill, and 4-5 Jewish manufacturing facilities. On the *Ulica* Ostrowska, near the water, there was a large Jewish dye plant. On the other side of the city – a large Jewish brick works (Gardlin). Jews participated in small industry/business: distilled whiskey, made wine, brewed beer and made *kvass*[16] and soda-water. According to the census of 1578, there were six distilleries and eight shoemakers, that also employed workers, five butchers, and eight bakeries. Having about itself the rich Jalowcowe forests, much beer was brewed, that was given the name 'Jalowcowce Beer.'[17] In the referenced year, in accordance with the tax rolls, it was established that 241 barrels of beer were brewed in Zambrow.

The city was consistently ruined by fires, plagues, peasant uprisings, invasions by the Tatars, Swedes and Prussians, such that, in the year 5560 (1800) it only had 81 houses in it, and a population of 564 residents. Part of the population lived in barracks, and they cooked and baked under the open sky. In the year 1827, there were 91 houses already (10 new houses in 27 years!) And the population numbered 886[18] people. And it was at this time, that the Jewish initiative and spirit of commitment to develop the city got started. In the passage of 4-5 years, the entire *Rynek* was built up, with 30 new houses of Jews. In each house, there was one or two stores. The city established a cemetery, retained a Rabbi, built a synagogue, two houses of study, a bath house with a *mikva*, established a building for a religious court, founded a yeshiva and – Zambrowo was a Jewish city.

In the year 1868, there are 1397 Jews in Zambrow, approximately 60% of the general population. In the year 1894 – there are, already, 1652 Jews in Zambrow. In the year 1895, at the time of the First Great Fire – according to the newspapers – more than 400 Jewish homes were consumed, among them, about 100 Jewish stores, and eating places, and about 2000 Jewish residents were left without a roof over their heads. The numbers – speak for themselves.

The Jews of Zambrow had an interest in making the city attractive to Christian worshipers, the lesser nobility (*szliachta*), peasants, and dyers, who, in going to church, would along the way, buy all their necessities. So, outside the city, there stood a half-built church dating back to 1283. It became ruined and had been burned several times. At the end of the 18th century, the Canon of Płock, Martin Krajewski became the senior cleric of the Zambrow parish, and in memory of his parents, he reconstructed a wooden church, with a bell and a mortuary. The Christians in the villages would go to worship in Szumowo, Jablonka, Sedziwuje, etc., so that in Zambrow, a larger central church could

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16 Kvass is a fermented beverage commonly made from black or regular rye bread. The color of the bread used contributes to the color of the resulting drink. It is classified as a non-alcoholic drink by Russian and Ukrainian standards, as the alcohol content from fermentation is typically less than 1.2%. It is especially popular in Russia and Ukraine, but also well-known throughout Belarus, Estonia, Serbia, Poland, Latvia and Lithuania.

17 Tomasz Panczyk offers this insight: It's like "redwood forests" or "pine forests" - it won't be on a map. "Jałowcówka" is a kind of a vodka, where you add juniper fruits. I checked and in the region of Lomza they make juniper beer. Only in this part of Poland.

18 The Hebrew text gives this as 668.

be built, which could accommodate hundreds of worshipers every Sunday. The old church stood at the west of the city, beside the horse market, to serve the worshipers there. The new church stood to the east, and attracted scores of peasants from all of the villages, filling it on Sunday, along with the city streets and stores...

Two years after the fire, the number of Jews rose substantially, as seen in the census of 1897, where in the Zambrow *Gmina* (including the surrounding villages), there were 10,902 residents, among them 3463 Jews, nearly 32% of the general population.

H. From When Were There Jews in Zambrow?



Page 28: The Market Place (Zambrow Rynek)

It is difficult to answer this question. Jews were already in Mazovia, the part of Poland where Zambrow is located, since the beginning of the 14th century. However, impoverished Mazovia did not have much attractive power, and consequently, few Jews settled here. Apart from this, the political situation was not conducive; there were continuous invasions by the Prussians, and others, that destroyed the land. It was first at the beginning of the 15th century that the circumstances began to improve, with the Lithuanian princes[19] Janusz I, in Warsaw, and Ziemowit IV in Płock, who strove for peace, under the aegis of Poland. Consequently, economic conditions also improved. Fields and woods bloomed anew, fish and wildlife, leather and hides, flax and wool, honey and oil, all developed, and the Jews found an attractive location here. Cities were established here, and therefore, for the first time, in the year 1471, we hear about Jews in Lomza for the first time; the diocese of Płock spread its ecumenical purview also to cover the Lomza district, and accused the Scholastic, Stanislaw Modzielow of Lomza, in an assault on Jewish merchants of Lomza and has him arrested.

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19 The title '*fersht*' is alternatively translated as a Duke.

I. Tykocin Protects the Zambrow Jews

Since the year 1549, the Jews of Mazovia paid their national head taxes through the '*Va'ad Arba Aratzot*,' the Jewish *Sejm*, which was required to present the kingdom with a specific sum of taxes on an annual basis, which was collected in accordance with a set formula from all cities and towns. Zambrow does not appear in this list, because a Jewish community did not yet exist there. Tykocin, which was one of the three central cities of Podlasie, and collected the Jewish head tax from the residents of Lomza, Grodno and other centers, imposed a levy on the surrounding small settlements, where there was no community, and strictly demanded taxes, and regulated issues between Jews and gentiles, and took care to assure that one party would not unjustly take away the livelihood of the other, in land leasing, and in liquor distilling, fields and gardens, milk and cattle, mills, and the like. If there was a larger settlement – then Tykocin would impose the mission on the community or on the religious court of the *shtetl*, to the point that if a city in the area was mentioned in referenced acts, for example, even one that was as large as Bialystok, it was added to be 'in the vicinity of Tykocin, because Tykocin was the capitol city of the district up to 1764, until the Polish regime dissolved the Jewish *Sejm* – the *Va'ad Arba Aratzot*, which was a government within a government, and adopted other, and better, means to collect more head taxes from the Jewish populace. Also, afterwards, Tykocin continued to be the chief city of the district. Regarding Tykocin, we know that in the year 1676 (5436) the community adopted a resolution 'under penalty of excommunication consisting of seven decrees, and extinguishing black candles, with trumpets and blowing of the shofar: that no one has the right to raise either hand or foot to deal in strong drink, not as a business or for sustenance, whether by license under the government, as a tenant, under beverage-making duty, or beverage-selling duty, etc., without the cognizance and express permission of the community. Everything must first be presented to the community, and its leadership, who must thoroughly and completely examine it, without the presence of the petitioner. Whatever they decide is to be recorded in the *Pinkas* of the community (all this according to the *Pinkas* of the *Va'ad Arba Aratzot,* p. 148, sign שנ"ב). The *Pinkas* of the Tykocin community no longer exists, as was the fate of many of the *Pinkasim* of other cities. However, in The First World War, when the Jews of Tykocin were compelled to abandon their city – the Pinkas was placed in the hands of the Rabbi of Bialystok, Rabbi Chaim Hertz. His grandson, who is today a professor of Jewish history at the University of Jerusalem, Dr. Israel Heilperin, secretly made a copy of the protocols of the ancient Tykocin *Pinkas* and in this way, managed to preserve them for posterity. Among the protocols (which are still in manuscript form) we find the name of Zambrow mentioned in isolated places, and we have made note of them.

J. The Jews of Zambrow in the Year 1716

We now turn back to Zambrow, as it was in those times. There is a theory that in this location, there already was a small Jewish settlement in the 16th century, but that it was disbanded in response to the residents, who had the had the discretion not to tolerate having Jews in their



Page 26: Ulica Kościuszki - At the Koszaren

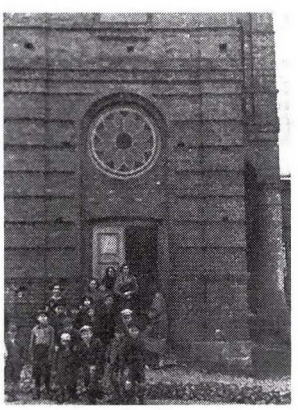
city *(de non tolerandis Judaeis*), as was also the case in Lomza and other tens of cities and towns in Poland. We do not possess any documents with which this can be established. Zambrow was also not an important point and did not have any substantial undertakings that would merit mention in government regulations.

We are able to extract from the Tykocin *Pinkas* that in the year 5476 (1716) there still was no Jewish community, despite the fact that Jews lived here, and ran substantial businesses. On page 164, volume 748 of the *Pinkas*, it says: 'income producing business and the house where R' Shmeryl ben Yitzhak lived, passed into the hands of the brothers Yehuda and Shmuel, the son of the previously mentioned Shmeryl and they are entitled to right of enjoying its benefits in perpetuity. This remains the case even if there is a change in city Elder, or the Elder's death, or if a gentile will have possession of the business for a number of years, and if someone wants to repurchase the business from gentile hands – he has no right to do so, because it belongs only to Shmeryl's children. This was approximately in the year 1716.

On page 271,volume 796 of the year 5476 (1716) it is again told that Yitzhak son of R' Yaakov of Jablonka bought the franchise (the right of *Furmanka* – use of a wagon) to collect 'franchise taxes' from the Zembrowski *Powiat* in the Lomza *Guberniya*. All the franchise promissory notes from the previously mentioned *Powiat,* are his prerogative in perpetuity, even in the event that he should no longer reside in the *Powiat*.

K. Zambrow Has No Control Over Cieciorki

In the same *Pinkas*, page 797, of the year 5476 (1716) there is a reference to a 'sharp discussion' that took place between Tykocin and the Jews of Zambrow, with regard to the control of the liquor franchises in Cieciorka. The noble of that region has constructed a distillery on his estate, and leased it to the Jews. As was the custom, a Jew could not independently come to lease such a facility – only with the facilitation of the Tykocin community, could that be accomplished. And here, the community permitted the lease to go to one, R' Jekuthiel. The Jews of Zambrow argued that they had a prior right to the lease, based on proximity.



Page 34: The Synagogue

In the same year, and on the same page, it is recorded that the lease to the distillery of Cieciorki, which is near Zambrow, was sold by the *Dozors* of the community to Mr. Jekuthiel son of R' Mordechai, and 'no Jew may approach there (to infringe on his territory) because it belongs to him, in perpetuity' – after it was certified that 'Cieciorki is further from the boundary of Zambrow, and that is why it was sold in perpetuity to R' Jekuthiel.' This means: the Zambrow community has no say in whether the distillery is leased to a Jew from Zambrow or a Jew from Jablonka, because Cieciorki is far from the Zambrow border and therefore does not belong to it.

L. To Whom Does Sedziwuje Belong?

It appears that the previously mentioned R' Shmeryl was a businessman on a large scale, and had leases on businesses not only in the city of Zambrow, but also in the *Gmina*, meaning the larger district encompassing Zambrow and its surrounding villages (*Wola Zambrowska*), Nagorki, Klimasze, who according to all our information, were attached to Zambrow, and whoever had a franchise for a certain way to make a living in Zambrow – that privilege extended to the villages. Sedziwuje was excepted because allegations were made that it was far from the Zambrow city limits, and is therefore not included, and as a result a local resident has the right to take the franchise for this village.

In protocol number 784 of the same Tykocin *Pinkas*, we read:

'The decision of the chief Rabbi, Rabbi Yehuda, son of the [former] chief Rabbi Shmeri' Zembrover, that all the villages in the ambit of the city of Zambrow are under his jurisdiction, and no man has the right to infringe upon that right, as if it were in the city of Zambrow itself, and within its borders. And these are the villages, whose status was clarified as being within this ambit: Sedziwuje, Wola, Nagorki, Klimasze. However, a protest went out regarding Sedziwuje which is further from the borders [of Zambrow] and an outcry was made to settle the matter by measurement, by someone trusted by us, and for as long as the matter is not clarified, the village will remain under the jurisdiction of the [Zambrow] community.

Tuesday, 14 Iyyar 5476 (1716)



Page 32: Ulica Wodna - The Wodna Gasse

This means: The previously mentioned Yehuda son of R' Shmerl, one of the two brothers who inherited the franchise for the spirits business in the city of Zambrow from their father, and no one is permitted to infringe on their franchise in the city – registered a complaint in the religious court in Tykocin, that other Jews were grabbing pieces of his income, and violate his right. because they have income from the nobles, part of whose assets is from Zambrow. The defendants defended themselves with the excuse that they transact business only in those villages that are not under the control of Zambrow. A special session was called to clarify this matter. All the previously mentioned villages were measured, to determine if they were close to Zambrow, from the border to the city. They discovered that the villages of Sedziwuje, Wola, Nagorki and Klimasze were close to Zambrow, and therefore are included in its ambit. For this reason, no one may infringe on the franchise of R' Yehuda son of R' Shmerl. The protest of the accused is just, in that Sedziwuje is more distant from the Zambrow border. However, their complaint was not yet researched enough, and 'calls to attain the truth' by means of measurement. Because of this, Sedziwuje was declared to

be a 'free-city;' it did not belong to Zambrow, but was not considered out of Zambrow's ambit. In the interim, the Tykocin community will manage the village, and will designate who may practice the businesses and estates of the nobles of Sedziwuje. The judgment was carried out on 27 Iyyar of the year 5476 (1716).

A short time after this, we read, in volume 785 of the Tykocin *Pinkas* (page 269) that the religious court determined that the village of Sedziwuje is at a further distance from the border of the city of Zambrow, but not more than one quarter of a verst. This became clear through the testimony given by someone who had personally measured the distance. The judgment was carried out on Monday, 2 Elul, of the year 5476 (1716) and the protocol was signed by: Abraham Auerbach, Yitzhak son of R' Abraham, and Gedalia son of Menachem the *Kohen*.

The previously mentioned R' Yehuda son of R' Shmeryl appears not to have remained silent, and complained that one quarter of a verst was hardly a distance that was significant, and that he alone, had the right to [the business of] Sedziwuje, and that right was his as a citizen of Zambrow, and did not belong to anyone else. This matter dragged on from the month of Elul 1716 [5476] to Iyyar 1717 [5477]. And finally, in the end, a judgment was promulgated on the basis of research and investigation, and credible witnesses that Sedziwuje is 'far' from Zambrow and does not belong to it, therefore it is under the aegis of the Tykocin community, and that the owner of the Zambrow franchise has no longer any basis for dispute and complaint against the village, [written] Wednesday, 16 Iyyar 5477 *(Lag B'OMER* eve, 1717). Signed by Yitzhak ben R' M"Y.

We did not find anything else in the Tykocin *Pinkas* about Zambrow. We can, however, infer with great confidence, that if there had been a community in Zambrow with its own religious court building, that Tykocin would not have involved itself in the issues of the city. Zambrow would have independently defended its own interests, even if it would have had to secure the concurrence of Tykocin.

M. The Founding of the Chevra Kadisha in the Year 1741

The cemetery at Jablonka served Zambrow also, as well as other towns in the area including the villages of Nagorki, Pruszki,[20] etc. At the beginning, the bodies of the deceased were brought to Jablonka, by wagon, as they were. The *Chevra Kadisha* of that town then dealt with the bodies – subjecting them to ritual purification, dressing them in burial shrouds, and interring them. However, this was not out of respect for the deceased – having to leave him for a period of time without undergoing purification, but this was the custom in the smaller settlements. When the settlement at Zamborow grew more populous, it was decided to establish a *Chevra Kadisha* here, that was to deal with the deceased in that location, and to bring him already purified to Jablonka to his final resting place. As is recorded in the *Pinkas HaYashan* [The Old Folio] (according to the eye

[20] Shown as Nagórki-Jabłon and Pruszki-Jabłon on current maps. It is of interest that the Jewish Cemetery (*Cmentarz Żydowski*) continues to appear on modern maps.

witness R' Yehoshua Gorzholczany) – the *Chevra* was established on 17 Kislev 5501 [Tuesday, November 25, 1740].[21] It seems that the founding was accompanied by a festive banquet, because the above date is the day of the *Chevra* banquet in several [sic: neighboring] communities. Because the simple goal of the *Chevra*, the "dirty" work, was – the digging of the grave, and performing the burial – that was done by the men of Jablonka, the men of the Zamborow *Chevra* permitted them to add a condition in the *Pinkas*: whoever is not knowledgeable in the study of a chapter of the *Mishna* – cannot be a member of the *Chevra Kadisha*.[22] In a similar fashion, the honorific, '*Morenu*' [Our Teacher] that is added to one called for a Torah *aliyah*, was given to a man only by the *Chevra*. The heads of the *Chevra* were learned men, and it was possible to establish who was a scholar, and rightly could be called: "Let Our Teacher R' So-and-So the son of So-and-So...," and from whom to take away the title of '*Morenu*' if it was improperly bestowed. From this point in the *Pinkas*, it is possible to easily infer that these were learned Jews. The *Chevra Kadisha* was a catalyst to the formalization of a community, with all of the requisite appointments, and that did not tarry in coming.

N. By 1767 There Still Is No [Jewish] Community

On March 21, 1767 (20 Adar 5527) the government commission of the royal treasury *(Kommisja Rzeczypospolitej Skarbu Koronnego*) designated those communities that now belong to the Tykocin Region, with regard to the level of taxes and the collection from both. Nineteen towns are enumerated there: Augustow (Jagustowa), Boczki, Bialystok, Goworowo and its surroundings, Goniadz, Wizna and its surroundings, Zawady and its surroundings, Jesionowka, Jedwabne, Loszyc, Niemirow, Sokoly, Sarnak, Konstantynow, Rutki and its surroundings, Rostki and its surroundings, and Rajgrod.

Zambrow, which is not far from Jablonka, and Rutki are not in the list! And yet, we know from the dispute between Yehuda son of R' Shmerl and other lessees, in connection with the rights over the Zambrow [liquor] franchise, Tykocin got involved and decided who was right. [We deduce that] Zambrow was, indeed, under Tykocin tax control. This means: Jews were living here, but not organized into any sort of a community, without a Rabbi, without a mikva, and without a cemetery.

It is only first, at the beginning of the 18th century, that the history of the [Jewish] community in Zambrow begins. The original settlement was in the villages of Pruszki and Nagorki. The distance between these two villages was not great, and it was there that a *Bet HaMedrash* was built, that also served as a *Heder* for the children. Older children were sent for education to the surrounding towns: Jablonka and Sniadowo. Sniadowo has a reputation as a large Jewish community, and its Rabbi even had aegis over Lomza, which at that time, still did not have its own Rabbi, and not even a bath

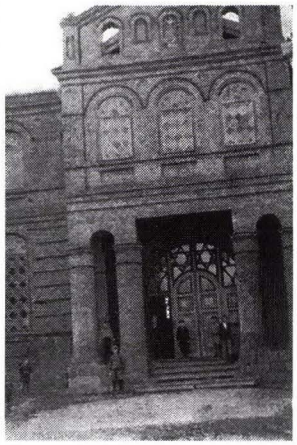
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21 The Hebrew text says 1741, which does not agree with the calendar. The Hebrew seems to suggest the 16th and not the 17th.

22 It is significant that the Yiddish voice is positive: He who is able to learn a chapter of Mishna, has a right to be accepted as a member of the *Chevra*.

house. (According to Polish municipal regulation, it was necessary to have a special concession for a bath house). The Jews of Lomza, from one side, and the Jews of Zambrow from the other, would travel or walk on Friday, so... as to go to Sniadowo to bathe, and wash themselves, get their hair cut, and sometimes be cupped or have blood let – all in honor of the Sabbath.

0. The First Cemetery – In the Year 1828



Page 40: The Entrance of the Synagogue

The number of Jews, who took up residence in Zambrow proper, grew larger and larger. They observed that it did not make sense to go from Zambrow to pray at the *Bet HaMedrash* in Pruszki, so they formed their own prayer quorum in Zambrow and two Torah scrolls were brought in from Tykocin, borrowed for a short period of time. The Jews of Zambrow set about having Torah scrolls written for themselves. The settlement in Pruszki supported its existence, and remained connected with the Zambrow Jews, as if they were one *shtetl*. An incident occurred where a Jew in Zambrow died, and it was necessary to have him taken for burial to Jablonka, by way of *Ulica* Sedziwuje. The weather was bad – with heavy rain, and the road was covered in mud, rivulets of water and potholes, because no paved road existed there yet at that time. Therefore, it was necessary to defer the funeral to the following day, and the day after, and this was considered to be a great offense to the deceased. So, on Saturday night, the Jews of Zambrow and Pruszki came together in an assembly, and decided to create their own cemetery, on the way that was, indeed, between Zambrow and Pruszki. R' Leibeleh Khoyner, the ancestor of the Golombeks, then donated a parcel of land and with ceremony, it was decided to step up to the preparations: obtaining permission from the authorities and indeed, also the concurrence of the *Chevra Kadisha* in Jablonka, which each year demanded a certain stipend from the Zambrow Jews towards the upkeep of their cemetery, and the expenses of the *Chevra [Kadisha]*. A liberal wind was blowing through Poland at the time, under Russian rule. This was evident in the relationship of the Poles to the Jews, in Lomza, the provincial capitol, from which the permission was supposed to come. When the permission arrived, they began to cordon off the field, and build a small structure for purification of the deceased bodies. In the year 1828 (5588) the first cemetery was dedicated.

The community in Lomza was established anew in the year 1812, under the influence of the spirit of Napoleon, who created the slogan among the Poles, with regard to the Jews: – *Kochajmy się*, meaning, let us love one another! In 1815, Poland came under Russian rule. The Russian authorities wanting to disrupt the unity among the Polish population, removed many of the Polish limitations placed on Jews. Despite this, the 'Polish Kingdom' under the Russians, resisted this, and in the effort of a delegation sent before the regime in Warsaw, in the year 1822, they succeeded to create anew, a ghetto for the Jews, and limit their rights in Lomza. This was also the case in Ostrolenka, and other places. It was first, in the years 1827, 1828, that Poland secretly began to prepare for its first uprising

(*powstanie*) against Russian rule (1831). It was necessary to co-opt the Jews, and because of this, liberal winds began to blow in Poland. It was therefore not difficult to establish a Jewish community council in Zambrow. The Jews of Zambrow, at that time, actually favored Poland, and were patriots on its behalf, even in the uprising of 1863.

The *Chevra Kadisha* grew and reorganized itself. A *Pinkas* was initiated. The first *Gabbai* was the father of R' Chaim-Pinchas Sheinker. Later *Gabbaim* were: Monusz Golombek, Shmueleh Wilimowsky, Binyomleh Golombek, Abraham Moshe Blumrosen, Abraham-Yossl Wilimowsky, and Yankl Zuckrowicz. Zuckrowicz was the last *Gabbai*. The Nazis drove him to Germany, and tortured him. When he returned exhausted, at the end of 1939, under the rule of Russians, he collapsed and died.

Of the martyrs, the names of the following are recalled: Abraham-Moshe and Wolf-Hirsch Kuczapa, his son, Elyeh, Israel-David Zibelman, Mottl Melsheinker, and Yitzhak the Dyer.

Approximately in the year 1890, the cemetery was filled to capacity. The community then purchased a new location for a new cemetery, which bordered on the old cemetery, and appeared like an extension to it. It is told that a question arose among the *Gabbaim* at that time, what is to be done with the '*Ohel*' (The small building for purification of the dead): should the old one remain in place, which will now be at the [extreme] end of the new cemetery, and the deceased will have to be carried through the cemetery to be purified, over all of the graves that will, in time appear – or build a new '*Ohel*,' at the entrance of the new cemetery. R' Shmueleh Wilimowsky said that the *Ohel* should remain in its old location, and all that is needed is to re-build it and enlarge it. Monusz Golombek argued – that it makes better sense to have it at the entrance, so that it will not be needed to carry the deceased for a long distance, if it should be on a rainy day or during a snowstorm. To this end, he proposed with humor: we are not going to live here forever. In a hundred years, we are going to be buried somewhere here, in a respectful place, at the front – as *Gabbaim*, and in the coming generation when the cemetery will be full of graves, and the members of the *Chevra Kadisha* will exhaust themselves by carrying the deceased for such a long distance – they will point to other graves on their way through, saying: here lie the elder sages of the community, who lacked the common sense to build the *Ohel* at the entrance, and put it so far away... [at that time] will it be pleasant for us to hear such talk? When no good will be said about us at the entrance, at least we will not be in a position to hear this embarrassment... At this, Shmueleh Wilimowsky laughed heartily, and agreed to what R' Monusz proposed.

In the government regulation about having their own cemetery, they already had incorporated the right to create a Jewish 'community' in Zambrow. And this did not take very long. The communal statute was declared in the same year.

P. The Synagogue and Houses of Study

At first, prayer was conducted in small quorums. In general, the town consisted of small, wooden buildings, with straw roofs, and, without making any comparison, even the church was made of wood, just outside the town, not far from the horse market.

One of the wealthy *balebatim*, R' Leibeh, the son-in-law of Elyeh Katzin, built the first building on the marketplace, and opened a very large tavern there. He was schooled in *Kabbalah*, and a very decent Jewish man. R' Leibeh died suddenly – while still young. His young widow, 'Rosa the Tavern Keeper' or 'Rosa of the Building' gave over part of her house to be used as a *Bet HaMedrash*, and this was the first house of study in the *shtetl*.

They were not, however, content with this: the town needed a synagogue. Accordingly, a collective action was taken. *Balebatim* bought 'places' even before the synagogue was built, and up front they paid a larger amount of money – for the good of the building. R' Monusz Golombek donated the parcel which stretched past his yard in the direction of *Ulica* Lomzynska, for the synagogue. The provincial engineer permitted a street to be cut between his house and the synagogue.

The synagogue was constructed of stone and mortar, made of strong bricks, and stone walls. At the beginning of the construction, the history of the synagogue building was written down on parchment, who donated the parcel, and who made contributions to the building fund, and it was sealed well in an earthenware pot, and imbedded in the foundation. When the foundation was torn apart in later years, at the time the new synagogue was built, it was found – it was re-read, and once again, imbedded in the foundation.[23]

After the construction of the barracks, when the town had grown by several hundred new worshipers, and the synagogue became crowded – it was decided to build a large *Bet HaMedrash*. A 'dispute' arose in the *shtetl*: the grumblers complained: it is necessary to build a stone *Bet HaMedrash*, on the other side of town, on the way to Cieciorki, so that it would be nearby for those that lived far off. The 'Golombeks' argued: we don't have to be pretentious, and if the synagogue is made of stone – the *Bet HaMedrash* should be made of wood, since this is the way things are done by Jews.

Until the time Monusz Golombek turned over his parcel, which bordered on the synagogue, and wood was procured, and boards were carpentered, and the wooden study house started to go up slowly, beside the synagogue... at which time Shlomleh Blumrosen and his partners donated ten thousand bricks from his brick works, Herszak Bursztein donated a place and a stone *Bet HaMedrash* was erected. It was at that time that they began to call [them] the 'Wooden' *Bet HaMedrash* and the 'Stone' *Bet HaMedrash*, or the 'New' *Bet HaMedrash*. During the time of the First Great Fire of 1895, the wooden *Bet HaMedrash* was consumed along with the synagogue. The stone *Bet HaMedrash* remained intact. In place of the wooden synagogue, a stone synagogue was erected already, in about three years time, made of red brick, in accordance with the initiative of the 'forthcoming Golombeks' – Leibl and Binyomleh. It was therefore called the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, and the 'New-Old' *Bet HaMedrash*, which was colored white, was called the White *Bet HaMedrash*, until the town was destroyed. The synagogue remained in burned ruins for nearly 13 years. At first,

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23 The Hebrew version is somewhat different:

After 70 years, approximately, when the walls of the burned synagogue were torn down, the sealed pot was found – however the Rabbi ordered it to be re-entombed anew, and its contents not to be read.

when the Red *Bet HaMedrash* was not yet available, they would worship in the burned out synagogue, between the walls, covered with a sort of tarpaulin.

Rosa's building, where the first *Bet HaMedrash* in Zambrow was housed, went into the hands of R' Hirsch Mikhl Cohen. When the synagogue was built, the *Bet HaMedrash* was liquidated. This then became the location for R' Chaim Nahum's dry goods store. The house was rented to the municipal chancellery, and in place of the old *Bet HaMedrash*.... the municipal jail was put in place [*die Kozeh*]. The building was last bought by Yisroeleh Shia-[Be]zalel's.[24]

Q. The Bath House and the Mikva

There is no city that does not have a bath house and a *mikva*. There had been a *mikva* in Zambrow for many long years. Without one, a Jewish settlement cannot exist, however, a bath house requires special permission from the authorities. It was difficult going with the bath house: the authorities were not easily persuaded to permit a bath house to be built – that is to say, a place to bathe in honor of the Sabbath. From the perspective of the authorities, it had not yet been demonstrated that this was necessary for the populace... the Poles actually did not bathe. Up to the 19th century, only special towns had concessions for a bath house. It was the *Gabbai* Shmueleh Wilimowsky, who built the bath house in Zambrow. The Jewish community invested about 1500 rubles in the building. It was built on community land, near the *Hekdesh*. The bath house had its own special brook, a cold and warm mikva, a sauna to steam one's self, and a cold room, after being switched with branches. The bath house was leased for either a year, or three years, and the community had a significant income from it. It was lit and heated on Thursdays for the womenfolk, and on Fridays for the menfolk. Occasionally, the baths would be kindled in the middle of the week, and it was shouted out in the streets: 'the bath is being heated!' Friday, at midday, when the bath was thought to be sufficiently heated (only men used the steam room) the stones in the oven would glow, and Jozef the *Shabbos-Goy* had provided for enough switching branches, the *Shammes* would go out into the street intersections and announce: 'To the baths!' The military represented a large clientele for the baths. Soldiers, officers would fill up the baths, sometimes causing a scandal.. accordingly, for a while, the bathing season was regulated: after candles were lit – the soldiers can come and a gentile keeps watch and collects the entrance fees.

They did not always succeed in having a good bath house manager. The last of these was R' Alter Dworzec (Koltun) and it appears that the whole history of the baths came to an end with him.

R. The Poswiatne

Together, with the growth of the [number of] Jews in the city – the Christian population also grew. They began to settle in the northeast side of the outskirts of the town. Here, also, is where the post office was set up, the court, and the religious Catholic institutions. And this is the history of the gentile section at the outskirts:

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[24] The Hebrew suggests that R' Yisrael was the son-in-law of Yehoshua (Yeshea)-Bezalel Golombek.

Behind the *Rynek*, on the way to Czyzew there was a large stretch of government land, that was called *Poswiatne*. Shmueleh the Butcher bought this land from the government for a song. Shmueleh the Butcher had an 'in' with the government, and was the contractor who supplied meat to the military. Accordingly, he got this parcel for a cheap price. A short time afterwards, the Zambrow parish decided to build a large, stone Roman Catholic church, in place of the older wooden building that stood at the entrance to the town, not far from the Jewish cemetery. Since Shmueleh the Butcher sold off a parcel at a cheap price for the construction of a church, Jews also bought parcels and built new little houses along the church street, *Ulica* Kosciolna, because this location had developed into a source of livelihood: every Sunday, when the gentiles would gather from the surrounding villages, to perform their religious rites – they provide a great deal of earnings. The Jewish settlement grew and branched out further in this manner.

S. The Military District

In the year 1882, Zambrow became a military [focal] point. The Russian authorities decided to garrison two full infantry divisions and an artillery brigade there. Smaller detachments of soldiers had been in Zambrow for a while, before. Immediately after the Polish uprising (*powstanie*) of 1863, soldiers were stationed in Zambrow. Seeing as there were yet no barracks, they were dispersed throughout the town. At the location where later there was a place for receiving guests, and the old home of the Rabbi, and his small court house – was the post, and at the place of the Red *Bet HaMedrash* – a mustering place for the soldiers. The Jewish populace suffered some bit of morale problems from the soldiers. They would constantly come around begging for food, especially on the Sabbath – a piece of fish and a piece of *Challah*. Jewish daughters would be fearful of answering the door at night. Jewish children learned the profanities used by the soldiers. On the other side, they brought in income to the town. Jewish tailors and shoemakers, bakers and storekeepers that sold clothing, made a good living, and the population of Jews in the town increased. It was only after deciding to station two divisions of soldiers, that consideration was given to constructing barracks. To this end, Captain Radkiewicz was sent to Zambrow from the Warsaw Military District. He then purchased a large parcel of land from Shmueleh the Butcher, on the road to Czyzew, on which to erect the military compound: tens of barracks, places for drilling and mustering, a Russian Orthodox chapel, housing for the officers, warehouses and stables, an arsenal for ammunition, clothing, etc. The contract to put up the entire military compound was taken by a Jew from Lomza, named Manes Becker. He was an orphaned and solitary young boy, and studied at the Talmud Torah in Lomza. Later on, he apprenticed with a mason, and worked his way up a little at a time, until he became a contractor for sizeable structures. Together with his son-in-law Abramowicz (the son of the coppersmith of Łochow), he built the first of the military barracks on *Ulica* Kosciolna, and the street then took the name *Koszaren*.[25] Many Jews, tradespeople, merchants, contractors, all made a good living at the barracks. Those Jews who were engaged in the construction, were called *Koszarers*': Avreml Koszarer, Herschel Koszarer, etc.

Zambrow became a large Jewish town, that provided sustenance to hundreds of families, and people came to engage in employment from all directions.

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[25] From the Polish *Koszary*, for barracks.

T. The Post Office

With the growth of the town in line with the needs of the Jewish populace, which made meaningful use of the post and telegraph services, the small post office on *Ulica* Wola[26] near the nobleman Sokolewski, moved over into the large premises, in Bollender's house, on the '*Uchastek.*' The post office was in Jewish hands, and was closed on the Sabbath. Letters and other posted articles were conveyed by Jewish wagon drivers, to the train station, and from the train station, in accordance with an annual agreement with the postal authorities. The first mailman was Jewish, 'Alter the Mailman.' His mother was a midwife, and had relationships with the wives of the nobility and the wives of appointed and employed people. It was because of her connections that he became the mailman. The post office served the entire Zambrow *Gmina*. However, it would not distribute to local addresses in the villages. They would have to come to get their mail...

No small number of Poles fled the country after the Polish uprising. Accordingly, their parents and relatives would come every Sunday to Alter the Mailman, to inquire whether or not a letter had arrived. Often, he would set out a small table on Sunday, not far from the church, and respond to the interested parties. He was well compensated for letters with produce from the villages and money. So Alter became rich. His two-story wooden house on *Ulica* Ostrowska was one of the nicest in the town.

In time, the post office bought its own horse and wagon, and transported the postal items to the train, as well as passengers. The post office could no longer remain closed on the Sabbath because of the Jewish mailman.

The post office became secularized, and the meaning of 'Jewish Mail' was again applied to letters that were not delivered in a timely fashion, but languished somewhere in a pocket... Alter's position was taken over by a gentile from Goworowo.

U. The First Great Fire

As previously mentioned, Zambrow survived a number of fires concurrently. However, of special note, was a 'Jewish fire' that broke out in the month of Tammuz (July) of 1895, that burned down the entire Jewish settlement, the synagogue and the *Bet HaMedrash*. From that time, Jewish Zambrow began to reckon time with reference to this fire: [to wit]: 'I was born a year after the fire.' 'Such-and-such was before the fire,' etc.

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[26] The 'Old Post Office' (*Stara Poczta*) is located on a street today named '*Aleja Wojska Polskiego*,' (The Polish Military Avenue).

The first great Zambrow fire – made [quite] an impression, and was written up in *HaMelitz* and *HaTzefira* – the two Hebrew daily newspapers of Russia-Poland. No Yiddish newspaper existed yet.[27]

Mr. Benjamin Kagan writes in *HaTzefira*, Friday, the *Parsha* of *Balak*, 5655 (1895), that a large fire broke out. Approximately 400 houses were consumed, and 100 stores, food shops and storage facilities, two houses of study, and the synagogue. Only 20 houses remained, and about 2000 people were left without a roof over their heads. When the news reached Lomza, R' Nachman Drozowsky organized an aid initiative. The Rabbi, R' Malkhiel, went on the Sabbath, with *balebatim* from house to house to collect food, clothing and money.

In *HaTzefira* of 15 Av 5655 (1895) number 167, the committee thanks Mr. Eliyahu Frumkin of Wyszków, on behalf of the victims of the fire, for the bread and 100 rubles that he came up with. The committee approaches the public with a request for assistance to the unfortunate of the town after the fire. When Czyzew, Sedziwuje, and Rutki had burned down – Zambrow did not rest, and it collected a lot of money and clothing. Accordingly, it was now time to return that help....

In *HaMelitz* of November 19, 1895 in 29/11, the Rabbi, R' Dov [Menachem] Regensberg thanks his friend, the editor, for the aid initiative that he published in his newspaper, which on one occasion brought in 150 Rubles and another time, 50 Rubles.

In *HaTzefira*, number 55 of 3 Nissan 5556 (1896), the correspondent complains that since the *Kozioner Rabbiner*[28] R' Moshe David Gold moved to Nowogród, municipal affairs have been neglected. The *Chevra Kadisha* required 1000 Rubles a year for its needs, and no fence has been put around the cemetery. Today, one finds bones there...the money that was sent for those who were burned out, has been distributed without an accounting, and those who stood closest to the trough were the first to benefit from it...

In *HaTzefira* Number 36, from the year 1897, Y. Gurfinkel writes that the economic situation in the town has already improved, the kosher canteen' for the observant soldiers, who do not wish to eat unkosher food from the [regular] canteen, has re-opened, after two years of dispute. Before this, a midday meal would cost a soldier ten kopecks, and as a result there were few patrons. Now, a midday meal is much cheaper, because the contributions from the supporters has increased.

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27 This information is inaccurate. '*HaMelitz*,' originally conceived as a Hebrew and German periodical, first appeared in Odessa on September 29, 1860, edited by Aleksandr Iosipovich Zederbaum (EREZ). In the 42nd edition of *HaMelitz*, Zederbaum put in a large advertisement in Yiddish, covering 4 pages, in which he communicated the news that very quickly he will begin to publish a separate periodical written in plain Yiddish, by the name '*Kol Mevaser*,' whose first edition appeared in October 11, 1862. It is with this edition, that the first epoch of the history of the Yiddish press begins, and a new era in the history of Yiddish literature.

28 The officially designated Rabbi of the area, as appointed by the government.

V. The Zambrow 'Gangsters'

Every town had its own pejorative nickname. For example there were the 'Wise Men' of Chelm, and Warsaw Thieves. In the Zambrow area there were: The *gartl*-wearers of Czyzew, The Bullies of Ostrow,[29] The Kolno package [carriers], the Jablonka Goats, the 'Guys' from Lomza, the Jedwabne Crawlers, the Cymbal-players from Staewka, etc. Every town knew how to describe its pedigree, and the story of its nickname.

Zambrow also had such a nickname: The Zambrow Gangsters, meaning, bands of thieves. This name was notorious in Poland. In a book, *'By Us Jews'* which appeared in Warsaw in the year 1923, Mr. Lehman tells in his article 'Thieves and Robberies' (page 56) why people from Zambrow are called 'gangsters:' 'In the 60-70 years (it really should be 70-80) of the previous century, there were gangs of horse thieves in Zambrow. It is told that the horses were stolen deep inside Russia, and at night, they were brought to Zambrow, and they were quartered in the stables of the large Zambrow taverns. A couple of nights later, the horses were taken out of their clandestine stalls, and taken off to the Prussian border. The investigating judge, Tuminsky, undertook to excise these gangs, and he succeeded. That is what is written there, in the book.

Correspondence concerning the trial of the gangsters was printed in the two Hebrew daily newspapers at the end of the prior century – [in] *HaMelitz* in Odessa, and *HaTzefira* in Warsaw, and we will introduce them here, in abbreviated form: A certain A. Z. Golomb wrote the following in *HaMelitz* Number 123, on June 4, 1887: Approximately 90 men joined together, from the entire area, even as far as Grodno, and carried out large scale thievery and murders, assaults with intent to rob, and so forth. However, they were especially notorious for the stealing of horses. The Chief of the Secret Police in Lomza harassed these thieves, so they stole his horse as well. When he became very upset and ashamed, the thieves told him: he was to put 200 Rubles in a certain place, and they will then return his horse to him. He placed the money in that spot – and they took the 200 Rubles and didn't return the horse as well. At that time, he did a very daring thing: he traveled to Petersburg, and went through a course on how to apprehend thieves. Upon his return to Lomza, he had acquired the [added] title of court-Investigator' and had obtained all the rights to arrest the gangsters. His attack against the gangs lasted for three years, until he captured and arrested them all in Lomza. The trial took place in May 1887 in the Lomza district court. Among the accused, held in irons, were 33 Jews from Zambrow. The sentence was announced on May 28: Of the men, 23 were found guilty, and 10 – innocent. One of them, Moshe, was accused of informing on a gentile. Joseph L. and Joseph Sh. robbed and raped a noblewoman. A boy, Mikhl L. stole a goose and a few days later, attacked the owner and beat him, because the goose was so scrawny. Among those arrested were a number of prominent and respected *balebatim* from Zambrow, owners of taverns, who were sentenced to several years of imprisonment. Two prominent horse dealers from Zambrow Y. and N. were sent to Siberia with their wives and children.

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29 Evidence in the text suggests that when the writers say 'Ostrow,' they are referring to Ostrow Mazowiecka.

In the June 28, 1887 edition of *HaTzefira* Avcheh[30] Rakowsky (see a separate chapter about him later on) offered a rebuttal to the article by Mr. Golomb, indicating that he was guilty of a sacrilege, because the Russian and Polish dailies seized on it, and reprinted it. Mr. Rakowsky argued that the court had added a variety of criminals to the trial of the gangsters, because the police, in this manner, wanted to raise its prestige. [He complained that] prominent balebatim from Zambrow were arrested not because they were partners in the gangs, but – because they were considered disloyal citizens: they had not told the authorities that the gangsters were stopping off in Zambrow on their way to the Prussian border. Abba Rakowsky writes that Mr. Golomb created a tempest in a teapot [literally: a storm in a glass of water] and insulted the Zambrow Jews....

This matter was discussed for many years in the *shtetl*. It was later shown that a political issue was involved here: Germany was interested in buying Russian dragoon horses. A gang of non-Jews, Poles, carried this out. They would bribe soldiers who stood watch, officers, etc., and they opened the military stables. Some of them would then mount some of the horses, tie a row of other horses to them, and go off in the dark night to the border. Zambrow was a strategic point for them. It was possible to reach the border in one night. Here, there were large stables that belonged to the three brothers B. who owned taverns. From time to time, the gangsters would lodge there, posing as horse merchants. The local Polish community put pressure on the Zambrow Jews, the owners of the taverns, to maintain silence. Also the *Gabbaim* of the community, who were responsible for the deeds of their brethren, had to keep quiet. For this reason they too, were arrested – but later on they were released.

However, for purposes of enhancing their prestige, the criminal police added charges of ordinary theft and murder to the charges against the gangsters, which had been 'discovered' and were, incidentally recorded in reporting to the authorities. It was told: Horses were stolen from a nobleman near Zambrow, night after night. the Chief of Police said to the nobleman: leave two good-looking horses in the stable tonight, and I will hide in the haystack, and will harass the thieves. So that night, they not only stole these horses, they also stole the jacket and sword of the secret agent...

For many years, the family of horse traders that was sent to Siberia were called – the Siberians,' when they came back from Siberia. In town, the truth was known, and the dignity of those who were mixed up in this trial was not impaired.

So this is the story of the Zambrow Gangsters, who marked out town with a less than stellar reputation in the larger world.

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30 This is an endearing diminutive of 'Abraham,' but it is spelled with a 'v' because of the Hebrew pronunciation of the name.

W. The Second Great Fire

After the [First Great] Fire, the town got itself back up on its feet. The marketplace, and the surrounding side streets were quickly rebuilt. Instead of single small houses, two-story houses were built. Several tens of additional Jewish homes were added on *Ulica* Ostrowska, on *Ulica* Bialostocka and *Ulica* Cieciorka. Commerce flourished, and the houses of study – full of worshipers. Zambrow became the principal city of all the surrounding settlements. Zambrow looked after the Jewish settlement in Brzeznica, in Szumowo, etc. Approximately 400 Jewish recruits were installed in Zambrow, and the town had to provide for their kosher food., for their Sabbaths, and Festival holidays, and other matters pertaining to their Jewish faith. In general, it was the military that contributed most of the income to the town. During the summer, the Jewish small businessmen and tradespeople would be drawn to the 'summer residence' in Gunsirowa, where the Zambrow soldiers would spend the summer in camp. Maneuvers would frequently be conducted – and at that time, the town was packed with soldiers and the stored were full of them. The town considered itself to be entirely Jewish, and was enclosed in an *Eruv*,[31] thereby permitting the town Jews to carry a handkerchief, or a prayer book on the Sabbath, or to carry a *Cholent,* etc, until the Second Great Fire arrived, which broke out on Saturday night, May 1, 1909.

About 500 Jewish houses were burned down. The misfortune was laid at the foot of the Zambrow Christian Fire Fighters Command, which was anti-Semitic in its sentiments. Once again, the town got back on its feet quickly, and became much more beautiful and prosperous than before. *Ulica* Kosciolna, with its sidewalks and pretty businesses, became equivalent to what one would see in a large city.

From Bygone Zambrow

By Mendl Zibelman
(Miami, FL, USA)

Introduction



Page 48: Mendl Zibelman

How old was Zambrow of yore? Who were its first Jews? How did they make their living:

The *Pinkas* of the Zambrow community was in our yard, from the first day of its existence in 1828 until 1914, as well as the census books of the same period, which were also in our possession, and therefore, I can remember things that I would see, from time-to-time, in the *Pinkas*. I also remember what it was that I heard from elderly Jews of that time, and that which I am capable of remembering on my own.

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31 A ceremonial marker, usually of unobtrusive string hung high, to enclose an area within which the normal Sabbath prohibitions of the outdoors are suspended.

My name is Mendl, a son of Israel-David the *Shammes*, of the former red *Bet HaMedrash* in the Zambrow that used to be. My father was a son-in-law to Moshe *Shammes* זצ"ל. These two people, my father and his father-in-law, were the administrators of bygone Zambrow, for approximately one hundred years.

A. Moshe Shammes, and My Father, Israel - David



Page 50: Monument-Pillar in the Center of the Marketplace

Moshe *Shammes* was the one who started the *Pinkas*, and began to document the out of the ordinary Jewish incidents that would take place in the *shtetl* from time-to-time. He was also in charge of the graves, because in that time, when an incident of death occurred in Zambrow, the deceased would be taken to Jablonka for their final resting place, and this is the way it is described in the *Pinkas*.

Moshe *Shammes* also managed all the books where all births, deaths and weddings were recorded. The census books were kept in the Polish language. From 1863 onwards, the census books, as well as all meeting minutes, had to be kept in the Russian language. As can be seen from the books themselves, Moshe *Shammes* had a good command of both languages. Apart from this, he was a substantial scholar, because many books remained behind him in our house, about which he wrote commentaries which took up tens of sides, and he added them separately to each book. He was also schooled in secular subjects. This could be seen from the correspondence that he carried on with world-famous people of that time. One such person was the world-famous mathematician and astronomer, the editor of '*HaTzefira*,' R' Chaim Zelig Slonimsky. As a fact about Moshe's knowledge of astronomy: he composed a 100-year calendar and displayed it to be engraved on a tobacco snuff box. It was engraved beautifully and artistically. That snuff box was in our home for decades after he passed away. His penmanship in the languages that he knew was clear and understandable, as if it were printed. It appears that he engraved his own headstone 37 years before he died, and the headstone was put in a place that he had selected for his burial spot, and on that spot he planted the sapling of a sweet cherry tree. This was the only fruit tree on the Zambrow cemetery.

My father would tell, that in the summertime, when it got hot, that Moshe *Shammes* would go to the cemetery, and lay down on his future grave, and would often sleep this way for several hours. He did this for many years. I can still recall a part of what was written on his headstone: His soul is still within him, he returns easily to the ground of his creator...' Moshe *Shammes* died at a very advanced age. His son-in-law, my father, Israel-David ז"ל took over all of his responsibilities.

My father also possessed all of the knowledge required to manage the census books, the *Pinkas*, as well as all the functions that Moshe carried out, and he did this without an interruption in service until 1914, when he was already at a very advanced age, over 80 years of age. Being alone (my mother ע"ה died in 1912), his six sons in America brought him to Philadelphia. He died here in the year 1918, leaving eight sons. Two continue to live here, in America, my brother Caleb, and myself,

Mendl. Two remained in Europe: The youngest, Boruch, was in Knyszyn until the Nazi bandits invaded there, and one older than I, Naphtali, who lived in the Caucasus since 1905, in the city of Baku. Naphtali survived the First World War, serving in the Russian Army, and later on, during the entire time of the revolution. He came back sick, and was given a post by the Soviet regime, until after the Second World War. He died in Baku in 1946.

B. Zambrow in the First Half of the 19th Century



Page 53: The Market Place on Saturday Afternoon

Jewish life in Zambrow officially starts from the years when the *Pinkas* was opened, and the cemetery was begun, along with other Jewish institutions. All these events begin with the year 1828. However, there is no question that Jews were already in Zambrow for many years before this. In order to understand what sort of place Zambrow was at that time, it is necessary to grasp what sort of Poland existed at that time.

In Poland, there was still a feudal system in place. 95 percent of the Polish population worked on large landed estates, in the employ of the wealthy nobility, and lived from whatever the earth gave forth to satisfy their daily needs. They received no money for their labor. Not only had no industry developed, but also manual trades stood at a low level.

With what did the Jews of that time, engage, in order to make a living? Most of them had gardens, orchards, fields and parcels of forest. 95% of the Jews already lived a little better than the 95% of the Poles, but not very much better, because they were living in a static, unmoving world, which bore no resemblance to the world in which we find ourselves today.

It was first later, after the Napoleonic Wars, when the Czarist Russian regime began to arm itself against further incursions across its borders, and decided to build paved roads to its towns and villages, that were not far from the German borders — and Zambrow was one such town – the economic condition in Poland first began to improve, and it got better from year to year. In that time, without machinery, every undertaking took tens of years. There were no locomotives or automobiles. Accordingly, it took years, to bring in all of the materials on peasant wagons required for the

construction of the roads. Accordingly, quite a number of years went by, before the roads were completed. Zambrow was ringed by a network of roads from all sides, cutting through the town, both in length and breadth. – This provided an opportunity for hundreds of peasants from the surrounding villages to come to Zambrow, with their accumulated rural produce. The Jews purchased this produce, and for the first time, the Poles obtained money for their produce. Jews opened small stores, taverns; Jewish craftsmen started to get organized; Poles, in growing numbers, began coming to Zambrow with their rural produce, and it was decided to renew the old weekly market day. Every Thursday became the weekly market day, in order that the Jews should be able to purchase items in anticipation of the Sabbath. The gentiles, indeed, immediately spent their earnings in Jewish businesses. And this is the way it went on for a stretch of years. Zambrow garnered a reputation in the area as a small town where money could be made. Many of the Jews from the surrounding villages sought to move into Zambrow, and open stores. The peasants would come and visit Zambrow with increasing frequency, bringing their produce. With time, a large Roman Catholic church was built there, for the mass of Poles who would come to Zambrow on a weekly basis. Sunday also became a day in which Jews could earn a living, and it was in this manner, a little at a time, the number of Jews in Zambrow grew, as well as their wealth. In those years, there were no large cities in Poland, in general. Bialystok was also not more than a small town, not larger than Tykocin, and Zambrow – smaller than Jablonka. It is possible to imagine what Zambrow looked like in those years: small, muddy, no paved streets, small wooden houses, many of them with thatched straw roofs. Decades went by this way, until something like progress began to develop, and brought to a war, or a rebellion somewhere.

In the second half of the 19th century, something happened that shook up Poland – this was the uprising of Poland against the Czarist regime in the year 1863. Russia immediately sent in a large force of Cossacks and they quickly put down the rebellion. However, Russia no longer withdrew the army from Poland. Russia began to construct barracks for an entirely new army, named *'Warszawski Voyenyi Okrug.'* – The Warsaw Military District – with a Governor-General in Warsaw. He had control over all the military contingents in all of Poland, as well as 10 civilian governors of the 10 Polish provinces. In general, Russia entered Poland, as it were, with both feet. Poland, having lost in the rebellion, had now also lost many liberties that it enjoyed up to that point, and became fully controlled and ruled from Russia. However, Russia invested hundreds of millions of new Rubles into the economy of the country. Poland began to come to life, and the Jews of the country took a substantive participation in the economy. Poland, however, accused its Jews of informing the Cossack commanders of where the cohorts of the Polish patriots could be found. Accordingly, the Jew was made to be a scapegoat, that was directly responsible for the failure of the '*Majtez*' (The Polish Rebellion). As detailed in the Zambrow *Pinkas*, tens of Jews were seized in the surrounding villages, and their tongues were cut out. The Jews who were killed, were brought to their final resting place in the Zambrow cemetery...

C. The Zambrow Barracks



Page 56: The Solemn Reception for the President of the Polish Republic, Mr. Wojciechowski (The Representative of the Jewish Community Left, beside the lamppost).

When Russia decided that the army it had sent in to Poland to suppress the rebellion and quiet the uprising, will remain there, it began to build barracks for a quarter of a million soldiers in a variety of cities and towns in Poland, including Zambrow as a strategic point. However, it took approximately ten years for the engineers to get the plans finished. In the 80's, contracts were signed with hundreds of contractors who had to provide a variety of building materials for the barracks, and they began to assemble the various craftsmen from the building industry. The contractors and craftsmen were, mainly Jewish, however there were not enough qualified workers, because in the cities around Zambrow, such as Ostrowa,[32] Lomza, etc., barracks were also being built at the same time. It was therefore necessary to import 500 skilled craftsmen from deep inside Russia. This meant a great deal to Zambrow because, along with the local workers this provided a great deal of income to the Zambrow economy. And this meant a great deal, giving a living to Zambrow store keepers, and people in the manual trades, and the Jewish population in Zambrow grew in number from week to week. The original Zambrow Jews, whose business consisted of gardens, orchards, fields and parcels of forest, now also ran taverns, stores, and became contractors for specific materials for the barracks. It was in this way that the resident Blumrosens provided millions of bricks from their own brick works that they had erected for this purpose in Gardlin, on the *Ulica* Bialostocka. Also, two Jews constructed two steam-driven mills on *Ulica* Ostrowska, one on the right side by Mr. Grajewsky, and the second on the left side of the road, by Mr. Golden of Tykocin. Years later, Grajewsky's mill was burned down, and it was never rebuilt.

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32 A variant of Ostrow, and probably referring to Ostrow-Mazowiecka.

Golden's mill was later sold to three partners and it was still in existence in 1910, when I left Zambrow.



Page 58: *The Market Place in the Days of the Czars. First on the Right, Sholom Rothbard, the Fruit Dealer.*

D. Good Times Arrive...

From all appearances, the oldest families in Zambrow were the Burszteins, Golombeks, the Koszarers, or Levinskys. In former times, they engaged, as was previously said, in forest products, orchards, gardens and fields. However, with the passage of time, they also had taverns and other undertakings. The barracks were finished. In the first years of the 90's approximately 9000 soldiers arrived, and it just so happened that when the soldiers arrived in Zambrow, the officers barracks were not yet completed. So, temporarily, the officers were billeted in private homes, naturally, mostly in homes of Jewish *balebatim*. Among the officers there also was found a Jew, I think the only such Jewish officer in the Russian army. He was Baron Ginzburg from Petersburg.[33] He was quartered with Shlomleh Wilimowsky, who was one of the most prominent of

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33 Baron Horace Ginzburg was a resident of St. Petersburg in Russia and a person of significant influence in Jewish Russia in the latter part of the nineteenth century. His bent was towards assimilating the Jewish population into the general Russian population. He believed that with secular education, the modification of Jewish dress, the acceptance of Russian language and

the *balebatim*, a *Gabbai* of the *Chevra Kadisha* and the *Bet HaMedrash*. With the opening of the barracks, and the arrival of so many soldiers in such a small town like Zambrow, a new, good era was launched for Jewish Zambrow, with good hopes that the *shtetl* would grow larger, as well as the number of Jews and their wealth. The contractors that provided all of the provisions for both of the divisions and also for the artillery brigade – were the Jews Chomsky, Bollender, and Binyomleh Golombek – all residents of Zambrow. Also, the other things that soldiers needed, were provided by Jews. Also, the officers and their families would buy everything from Jews. The officers' tailors, shoemakers, and hat makers were all Jews. The Jews also set up the stores for soldiers and officers, everything, even the wood to heat the barracks was provided by the Blumrosens, kerosene for lamps – by Avcheh Rakowsky. The barracks provided several million Rubles of income to Zambrow's Jews. The Jewish population more than doubled, because the contractors, and most of the Jewish craftsmen that worked for the barracks, remained already, as permanent Zambrow residents. So the town built another *Bet HaMedrash* – the previous ones had become crowded for the large number of worshipers. It was called the 'White' or 'New' *Bet HaMedrash*, because its exterior walls were colored white.

From the past, there already were a large stone-built synagogue, and a wooden *Bet HaMedrash*. There was also a *Shas*[34] study group and a variety of Hasidic *shtiblakh*, and a variety of assistance groups such as: '*Hakhnasat Kallah, Gemilut-Hasadim*, and certainly, *Chevra Kadisha* and a variety of others. By that time, Zambrow also had the well-known *Maggid*, R' Eliakim Getzel, a formidable exponent of *Musar*, and a very animated individual. Later on, a controversy erupted because of him, and he was compelled to leave Zambrow (see Section F). Also, another *shokhet* was retained. With the arrival of the soldiers, every year, it was necessary to swear in several hundred new Jewish recruits. Because the Rabbi of Zambrow ר"ל did not know any Russian, it was necessary to procure a *Kozioner Rabbiner*, recognized by the Russian regime. And so, this is how Zambrow grew, from year to year. In the last ten years of the 19th century, several significant events took place in Zambrow, which I will describe in the following text: the great epidemic, of cholera, the controversy over the *Maggid*, and the First Great Fire.

E. My Father Rides a Horse, and Cholera is Driven from the Town

When the barracks were nearing completion, a terrifying epidemic broke out, cholera, and it kept on spreading in Zambrow and its environs. Medical science, at that time, was on a very low level, and the epidemic took away tens of lives each week. When all of the superstitious treatments and remedies proved to be of no avail, the central authorities from Warsaw

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culture by the Jews of Russia, the "Jewish problem" would be solved. He was one of the prime movers in the building of the great synagogue building in St. Petersburg, a synagogue that the more observant Jews there shunned.

34 An acronym for *Shisha Sedarim*, or the Six 'Orders' of the Talmud, that contain the *Mishna* and the *Gemara*.

brought in a doctor by the name of Delaney, a specialist in these sorts of things. He began to create discipline in order to arrest the epidemic.

First, he prohibited consumption of water from the river, or from brook, that had not been previously boiled. Large containers of water were put up beside the various houses of study, that were boiled day and night, to be used as drinking water for the town. Also, in the community houses, he set up first-aid stations. If someone came down with an attack of cholera, he was immediately isolated from the healthy and brought to a first-aid station, where first aid was immediately administered. With time, the doctor managed to control the epidemic. However, the religious Jews organized a procession to the cemetery, in order to make certain that the cholera not ever return. To this end, the discards of old sacred texts, in the attics of the *Bet HaMedrash* (called *Shamos*) were collected and packaged. The Jews gathered near the synagogue, surrounded with lit wooden torches, to light the way to the cemetery, because the procession took place in the evening. I was, at that time, still a little boy, but I have a strong memory of the incident, because my father was a Marshal and Commandant of the procession. When the Jews arrived with the *Shamos* from the synagogue, they were placed on the same bier on which the dead were placed, on their way to burial. My father rode on a horse, this was the first and last time that I saw my father riding on a horse. He gave the signal, and the procession began on its way to the cemetery. Coming to the 'field,' prayers were recited, and the *Shamos* received a suitable burial. Since that time, cholera did not return to Zambrow.

F. The Maggid Eliakim Getzel Forced to Leave Zambrow (1895)

At the time that Zambrow retained an additional *shokhet,* because of the increase in population, both Rabbis needed to certify his capacity to perform slaughter in accordance with ritual. *The Kozioner Rabbiner* immediately offered his concurrence. However, the old Rabbi, Regensberg זצ"ל was opposed. Meanwhile, the *shokhet* performed slaughter, and Jews ate from his produce. The town *Maggid,* as usual, sided with the old Rabbi. In town, two sides were formed immediately. The majority sided with the *Kozioner Rabbiner*. The *Maggid*, who was a great exponent of *Musar*, in his usual Sabbath sermon, exhorted and indicated to the Jews that ate from the new *shokhet's* produce that they were eating *trayf,*[35] and they will suffer for it in this world and the world to come. He also called out *balebatim* by name, whom he knew to be eating from this *shokhet's* produce. A dispute broke out immediately between the two factions of Jews in the town. It was taken to Lomza, to the provincial committee, where it was averred that there was such-and-such who was a trouble-maker. An investigation committee then arrived, and it decided that the prominent people of the town would decided by a blackball vote: each person would receive two balls, a white one and a red one. If he throws in the white ball – he favors the *Maggid,* a red one – opposed. The



Page 61: Herschel Koszarer, building contractor of the army barracks and his wife, Esther-Mattl

35 Food that is not kosher, and therefore not fit for consumption by an observant Jew.

side that held in favor of the *Kozioner Rabbiner* was in the majority. So, the *Maggid* lost his position, and was compelled to leave Zambrow within two week's time. He went off to Bialystok, and was a *Maggid* there for a couple of years. After that he became the *Maggid* for the city of Brisk. In his final parting sermon that he held in Zambrow, before he went away, he said that the sin committed by Zambrow will not be silenced, and the entire town will suffer for it. He even went so far as to say that the very stones in the streets will burn... Wen he went away, two weeks later, Zambrow burned down, and the entire town went down in a terrifying blaze. The Jews, who held with the *Maggid*, interpreted this as 'God's Finger,' while other said that the *Maggid* had cursed Zambrow. In the history of Zambrow, this is called 'The First Great Fire.'

G. The First Great Fire

The Great Fire took place in July 1895. It was a hot summer day, and sometime during the day. The fire started on *Ulica* Ostrowska, near the river, in a smithy. It was a hot summer day, and a warm breeze was blowing towards the town, where all the houses were made of wood, most of these with straw roofs, dried out from the intense heat. It was sufficient for a single spark to ignite such a straw roof, and for the breeze to blow such burning straw fragments toward tens of other such houses, and in this way, ignite entire streets in a hellish fire. And, indeed, this is exactly what happened. The entire town burned all at once. There was not yet any organized fire fighting command. [To boot], it was Friday, and most of the Jewish men were in the bath house, on the first bench, shouting 'let's have steam!' and they were sweating themselves, and being switched in honor of the coming Sabbath. Women were occupied with their *tsimmes*,[36] with cooking gefilte fish, with getting the *cholent*[37] ready to be placed in the oven, and also wanted to keep an eye on the children, so they would not go run in fire. The town was burning. The stores in the marketplace had small casks of kerosene, which immediately went up in flames. A detachment of soldiers came from the barracks, to see if they could be of any help. But once they saw how taverns were burning, and stores with all their goods going up in flames – they first helped themselves... the children were rescued, and people went off into the forests and fields around Zambrow, and that is where we remained already for the Sabbath.

On the field and in the forest, it was possible to see Sabbath candles being lit, and hear blessings being made over wine, as well as the sound of songs being sung... and so they remained this way in the fields and woods until Sunday, while quite simply: their meager houses were left open to entry by anyone. The fire consumed property from the houses of Avreml Koszarer, which stood beside the bridge on the barracks, to *Ulica* Lomzynska and the synagogue street, up to the bath house, including the synagogue [itself] and the wooden *Bet HaMedrash*, and from the river on *Ulica* Ostrowska –

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36 A confectionary festive side dish made with carrots, prunes, honey and raisins.

37 The *cholent*, was a slowly-cooked stew of meat (usually cheap cuts), potatoes, beans, carrots and sometime *kishke*, kept in the oven overnight. The practice, in these times, to conserve heating wood, was to take the *cholent* pot to a baker, who for a fee, would keep his ovens going overnight, to cook *cholent,* which was then picked up late in the morning, in time for the men returning from their services at the synagogue.

where the fire started – enveloping the marketplace from all sides, and penetrated deeply into *Ulica* Bialostocka, where Khachnik's orchard was located, and where the '*Wieznie*'[38] stood, where transient prisoners were brought from the prison in Lomza and needed to be sent to other prisons, or be sent to hard labor or off to Siberia. Beyond the previously mentioned places, there were not yet any houses. It was first, on Sunday, that the children were gathered up, and using the wagons of peasants, rode off to the surrounding villages, or the nearby towns – to wait while Zambrow would be rebuilt. On that first Sunday, help arrived in the form of bread from all of the cities and towns around Zambrow. Wagons full of foodstuffs arrived, from as far away as Bialystok.

The burned down store keepers began to set up temporary stores, nailed together from charred boards on the *Pasek* which stretched from the middle of the marketplace from *Ulica* Ostrowska to *Ulica* Bialostocka. Such booths were put up on both sides. And the store keepers brought their small amount of merchandise to be kept there, in order to serve the residents who had been burned out – until such time that a new Zambrow would be built, and it didn't take very long. Before the year was out, a new, modern *shtetl* was erected, and the 'town' of Zambrow became the city of Zambrow, and from the small, wooden houses, many of which had straw roofs, were replaced with two-story houses with balconies. Instead of straw roofs, all the stone buildings were required to have tin roofs. And all the houses, stretching form *Ulica* Lomzynska, on all four sides of the marketplace, and also all of the houses on *Ulica* Kosciolna, were required to be made of stone, and not wood. This was a new requirement of the province, and when the city had more-or-less rebuilt itself, all those who had taken up residence in the villages and towns around Zambrow, began to return to the new houses, and the store keepers began to be drawn to the just rebuilt stores, configured in the latest style, with all manner of merchandise and goods, as is appropriate to an urban Zambrow. Zambrow acquired a more modern appearance, and people began to dress better, because it is not proper for a newly 'developed' city to have its citizens walk around bedraggled. Accordingly, the people did not want to detract from the new houses, and they began to primp, and one thing leads to another, and Zambrow became the second city as most beautiful and also aristocratic in the entire province of Lomza.

Regarding what I write here, that one thing leads to another, reminds me about a Zambrow Jew, I believe his name was Yitzhak Velvel Golombek, a son of Monusz. He had a building on the Koszaren, opposite Avcheh Frumkin's building. He dressed modestly. He was, however, quite a clever Jewish man, and he was once asked how is it that he is never seen with his boots shined. He then did a calculation: were I to shine my boots, I would then have to buy new socks. And if one had shined boots and new socks, new trousers would be needed, with a new jacket. For a new jacket, one then needs an armoire, where it can be hung, and to accommodate this, the house needs to be expanded.. so he computed that to shine his boots, it would cost him 1200 Rubles, and it is therefore better, and cheaper, not to shine the boots, and to wear torn trousers... The wags in Zambrow, in a good-humored fashion, nicknamed him 'the man without pants' for his cleverness.

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[38] A holding station for prisoners.

H. Zambrow Also Crowns Nicholas II (1896)

Zambrow also had to participate in the celebration, when Nicholas II ascended the throne, just as all other cities and towns of the Russian Empire. Naturally, most of the ceremonies took place in the barracks, but also in the city, it was a week full of celebrations. First, all the houses in the city had to hang out new Russian flags. Beside the White *Bet HaMedrash*, a gate was erected, fashioned from colored flowers, and at night, they were illuminated by colored lanterns of red, blue and white – the colors of the Russian national flag. the same was done on the balconies of the new Jewish houses on the marketplace. Poles got drunk, soldiers drank, and the Jews offered '*Mi SheBerakh*' blessings in the various houses of study, and sang [the national anthem] 'God Protect the Czar,' the new king, Nicholas II. And Nicholas immediately repaid them with taking away the taverns from the Jews, and replacing them with [state-run] monopolies. Perhaps, it was necessary to stop drunkards from drinking, but many Jews lost their livelihood. Nothing else newsworthy happened in Zambrow in those years. Poland was already on the way to becoming industrialized. This had the greatest effect on the large, landed estates of the nobility, and this brought tens of thousands of the rural element into the cities, to compete with the urban people. And this, in turn, drove thousands of people out of the cities, mostly Jews, causing them to emigrate to other countries, to America. Zambrow was no exception. One would travel to earn and save a few hundred dollars, and then come back. People would even return to serve in the military, because no one wanted to be cut off from their birthplace. In the later years, when the anti-Semitism had worked its way into the fabric of the economy of the land, emigration to America became permanent – to never again look upon Russia.

The beginning of the 20th century heralded the coming of great change, because the masses of two of the largest countries, on two continents, had harbored revolutionary ideas for years: to topple their monarchial governments and to establish a constitutional government. These were Russia and China. The opportunity to do so came quickly, when the Czarist government sought to weaken the revolution, by dragging Russia into a war with Japan. This had exactly the opposite effect – because the Russian masses did not want wars, and this led to sever defeats on the battlefields of Manchuria and forced the Czar to issue a Manifesto, introducing a constitutional monarchy in the Duma.

The economic plight of the Jews in Poland grew worse and worse. The Czarist regime curtailed political rights. This caused a great emigration of Jews, from all cities and towns, to America – and Zambrow was among them.

I. A Jew is Murdered in Zambrow (1905)

During the war with Japan, from time-to-time, 500 or 600 soldiers would be selected from the Zambrow garrison, and sent to the Japanese front. Older soldiers, from provinces deep inside Russia, would be brought to replace them. These were middle-aged men, bearded nomads. On one morning, an officer, riding on his horse in the woods, not far from the barracks, on the road to Czyzew, spied a horse and wagon standing in the woods, and he didn't see anyone near the wagon. This struck him as suspicious. He rode over to the wagon, and saw a couple lying near

the wagon, killed. He immediately began to search and look for clues about the murderers, and discovered them immediately. Not far from the wagon, he discovered a heavy piece of wood, covered in blood, and also a letter written by one of the nomadic soldiers from the Tambov Province, and seeing that the letter contained the name of the soldier as well as the name of the division and the number of his unit, he was immediately arrested and he was asked why he did this. He said that at first he robbed them, but was unable to find more than a ruble and 50 kopecks, and this enraged him so, that he killed them. The most severe sentence in those years was 12 years at hard labor for a murder, and that is what he got.

Who were the two people? This was a Jewish couple from a village not far from Zambrow. They were traveling from Lomza, from a visit to their son, who was studying at the Lomza Yeshiva. The two murdered people were brought to burial in the Zambrow cemetery. Their son, from the Yeshiva, came to mourn them, standing between the two graves, bending over to the father's grave, and took his leave of him with a heart-rending cry, and afterwards, the same with his mother. And anyone who was at the cemetery at that time, wept along with him. It rained, and it looked like the heavens themselves were weeping along with us... a headstone was set at the one year anniversary, which was made by Broder the gravestone maker, beginning with the words: 'Lovers during Life, and not Parted in Death...'

J. The Revolutionary Parties in Zambrow

In that period, there were a variety of revolutionary parties in Zambrow. For the most part, it was the craftsmen of the *shtetl* who belonged to these parties. The leaders, however, were the children of the *balebatim*, or the so-called 'intelligentsia' of the *shtetl*. A few of the parties had a Jewish following in it, such as the *Bund*, or the S.S. (Zionist-Socialist) parties. There were other, simply international [parties], such as the Social-Revolutionary and Social-Democratic parties. The Communist Party did not yet exist then. However, there was an anarchist group, whose program was communist. The Jewish revolutionists from Zambrow could not play a significant role in the revolution, because, as was the case with all small towns, they were only small-town workers, and not industrial workers, and they were rarely visible in times of revolutionary upheaval. The parties belonged to a regional committee which was found in Bialystok. From time-to-time, a speaker would come down from Bialystok or Warsaw. Occasionally, [a speaker would come] from more distant cities, from Russia. A gathering was then called, somewhere in the woods, outside of the city, where the young people would get together, and the speaker would give a report on what the party was doing, and also determine what the smaller towns can and must do. From time-to-time, demands were presented to the balebatim to improve the conditions of their workers, and those who did not want to cooperate, were written up with communication to other cities where the balebatim travel to either buy or sell goods, and they would be met there. Upon returning to Zambrow, they would treat their workers better. The work of the parties had to, however, be carried out in a strictly conspiratorial manner, so that the gendarmes and the police should not be able to discover who was a party member, because for the smallest infraction, in those days, carried with it the possibility of years in Siberia and sometimes also the death penalty. One individual was sentenced to a lifetime of hard labor, and this was because he accosted two gendarmes with a revolver in his hand. He was

a tailor, and had to be grateful for his life to Avcheh Rakowsky, because he [Avcheh] gathered signatures from the resident townsfolk; and Avcheh wrote a petition to the Czarina, and she set aside the hard labor in favor of a 20-year sentence of ordinary prison. Later on, this was further reduced to 9 years. Today, this person is located in New York, and his name is Yankl Grzewieniorz.

K. A Mutiny in the Zambrow Barracks

The defeat of the Czarist régime in the war with Japan profoundly demoralized the Russian armies, and the revolutionary spirit also took hold among the garrisons of the army. In many places, there were open manifestations of armed forces, and they refused to suppress the strikes of students and workers. In the Zambrow garrison, there also was an uprising. It first started in the 15th Rota of the Lodozhsk Division. The soldiers presented a set of demands to the Rota commander. This, of course, was contrary to military discipline. When the commander demanded that they discipline the revolutionary committee, the entire battalion went to the side of the revolutionary soldiers. In a short time, the entire Lodozhsk Division and the entire artillery was on strike, and it instilled a fear among the officers. Most of them fled to the villages and cities around Zambrow, taking their families. The second division, Schlüsselburg, and a very good and wise commanding officer, and he immediately mustered his division, that was already getting ready to support the mutiny, and he won them over with gentle persuasion, saying that everything that the striking soldiers want to win, they will also get, but if they lose, they most certainly will be punished. 'But they will not be able to do anything to you, because you did not take part in this.' Accordingly, his division did not stand with the mutiny. Because of this, he was later made a Brigade Commander, and promoted to the rank of General. He was the Brigade Commander of the Zambrow garrison for many years – this was General Salanin, who was also favorably disposed towards Jews, and he did favors for the Jews. The rebellion was suppressed within a day, because several divisions of soldiers arrived from other garrisons, composed of infantry, dragoons, Cossacks, and artillery as well. The mutinous soldiers were surrounded, and they were disarmed, and many were sent to the stockade in Lomza, where a military tribunal sentenced them to a variety of terms in discipline-battalions. One was sentenced to death by firing squad, because he slapped his commanding officer. He was shot in the woods beside the Zambrow barracks.

L. An Officers' Revolutionary Organization is Uncovered – Because of a Zambrow Merchant

By coincidence, a revolutionary group among the officers in Zambrow came to light in the following manner: In Zambrow, there was a Jew by the name of Pravda, who would often come to the officer's club, where he would sell cigars and cigarettes. He would do this in the garrisons of Ostrowa, Gunsirowa, and the officers knew him quite well. So an incident occurs, that when he came to the officer's club in Zambrow, with his cigars and cigarettes, an officer came up to him and asked him if he was planning to be in the Ostrowa club any time soon, and could he take along a letter to a friend of his, [also] an officer, whom he will find in the Ostrowa officer's club. He immediately composed the letter, and gave it to Pravda. When Pravda came to the Ostrowa club, and asked for the addressee by name, they pointed out the officer, and he gave him the letter. Pravda did not know that there were two officers in the same club with the same name. And indeed, he

switched the two identities... this officer, upon reading the letter, and seeing that it dealt with a revolutionary officers group, immediately turned it over to higher ranking authorities. The officer, along with Prawda and his two sons, were immediately arrested. And immediately, an investigation ensued. In the meantime, Pravda and his two sons were sent to the Warsaw Citadel, and they were held until the trial. The investigation uncovered a rather completely networked revolutionary officers group involving many garrisons, in the Warsaw military war zone. Thirty-eight of these officers were arrested, from a variety of garrisons. Five of them were from Zambrow. They were sentenced to five and six years of hard labor, and service in disciplinary battalions. Pravda, along with his sons, were released. At the same time, it was uncovered that the writers, in the Zambrow military headquarters, were printing up revolutionary proclamations, and distributing them among a variety of garrisons. This revolutionary group was also arrested.

M. The Zambrow Military is Robbed, and a Jew Finds the Thief in Prussia

The custom of the time was that each division maintained its own treasury, and this money was kept in a closed and locked wagon. The wagon could be found outside, near the window of the headquarters. A soldier, with a gun, was stationed beside the treasury [wagons]. Every hour or two, the corporal would come and change the guard, replacing the first soldier with a fresh one. And so it occurred, that once, when they came to change the guard, they found no one there, and the treasury had been emptied. Naturally, the entire division was sent out, to look for the soldier and the money on all roads, fields and woods, but without success. It was a cold and dark night, and the thief understood that an intensive search for him would be launched, so he scaled a tree, and observed how he was being sought so intensely in the area. And since nobody noticed him, and it was cold, the soldiers of the division decided to turn back and return to the barracks, and as soon as he saw that they were falling back, that is how quickly he came down the tree, looking about thoroughly, and not seeing anyone in this part of the forest, he sorted out all of the money. He immediately buried the coupons under the tree that he had been sitting in, and set off with his packet of money to the first village. Along the way, it appears he was able to procure civilian clothes, and when he arrived in Rutki, he went into a saloon and hired a wagon driver who took him to Bialystok, and there, for money, he found people who took him over the border into Germany. He was a '*latisch*' and spoke German well, so he felt very much at home in Germany.

In Zambrow, the higher officers of his division were very depressed by this whole incident, and didn't know what else to do. So they decided, to consult with the Brigade Commander – Salanin. When the entire officer ranks of the brigade assembles to deal with this question, of where to find the soldier and the money, having no trace of him, the general's batman, named Shapiro, a familiar educated Jew, from among the Zambrow intelligentsia, asked the general if his idea for finding the thief would be acceptable. The soldier had, most certainly, already crossed the border, Shapiro said, and before the thief is able to travel further, Shapiro wants to be given papers to cross the border, and also identification papers for the Prussian police. He takes on the task, meaning, locating the soldier, and bringing him back to Zambrow. None of the officers had any better approach, and so Shapiro was given all of the necessary papers, and he went off to Germany to look for the soldier. As soon as he crossed the border, he immediately presented himself to the Bureau of the Gendarmerie, showed his papers, and told the reason for his arrival. He wants to, he said, to have two German gendarmes accompany him to the emigrant-control station. He does not know the thief, and he is

certain that he used another name [than his own], and if one calls out his real name – he will certainly look around, and he will then go over to him and speak to him in Russian, and at the same time, the gendarmes should also come nearby and take part in the investigation. And this is the way it was done. When Shapiro approached, the soldier denied nothing. The soldier was immediately arrested. He argued, however, that he was a political refugee, and Germany has no right to return him to Russia. Shapiro, however, wanted him to show where he had buried the coupons. The Germans agreed to this, and on a Saturday during the day, Shapiro, the soldier and two German gendarmes arrived in Zambrow. It was not permitted to turn over the soldier to the military, but he was held in Plotnikowo in the Hotel – he showed them where the coupons were buried, and he was taken back to Germany.

N. Jozef Pilsudski Robs the Government Treasury in Wysokie-Mazowieckie and Stops at the Zambrow Market



Page 74: The Marketplace on a Market Day

This matter took place in Wysokie-Mazowieckie, but a vary large part of it has to do with Zambrow, and it took place at the same time, and it also has to do with the soldiers of the Zambrow garrison.

In the years after the war with Japan, many revolutionary parties organized assaults against government banks, to obtain enough money to carry out their revolutionary work. The Polish P.P.S.[39] carried out such an assault in Wysokie-Mazowieckie, and as usual, such an assault was planned and executed with great care. First an investigation commission came to see how the bank was guarded, and what were the entrances, and escape routes. The bank in Wysokie was guarded by a unit of soldiers from the Zambrow divisions. On the last day of the month, the unit of soldiers returns to Zambrow, and a day later, another unit comes to take its place. On that day, a well-organized group can assault the bank, because all that remains in the city are a few policemen, who can be quickly disarmed, and the entire town, during the time of the assault, can be under control of the [attacking] group. On the last day of the month, approximately forty members of the Warsaw P.P.S. arrived, and carried out the assault on the Wysokie government bank. For a little under an hour, the entire town was under the control of the group. The police were disarmed. The telegraph and telephone lines

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[39] The Polish Socialist Party (*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna*).

were cut, and the guard at the bank was absolutely powerless to resist, and he had to open the bank to them. Several horse-drawn cabs rode up, and the group loaded the money from the safe on these vehicles, and set off in a variety of directions to different towns. When they left Wysokie, one of the group made a speech for the frightened populace, and told for what purpose the money is being taken, and that no one should make a move to pursue them, including the police. The residents released the confined police, and told them along which roads were taken by the robbers of the money.

The police then too, set out in pursuit along these roads. One of these cabs, with money, and two of the robbers stopped in the Zambrow marketplace, in Mordechai Aharon's tea house. Meanwhile, two Wysokie policemen arrived in a carriage. Recognizing the carriage that stood near the tea house, they immediately began to whistle, calling the Zambrow police to help them. The robbers heard the whistling, and immediately ran out, shot to death the two Wysokie policemen, got on the carriage with the money, and quickly set out on the Lomza Road. Having thus traveled several *viorst* [sic: versts] from the city, they stopped and took the paper money with them, which were in sacks, leaving the small change behind, which remained spilled out inside the carriage. In this way, they took off for the first village and asked one of the Poles, if he will take them to Lomza in his wagon. The Pole went to hitch up the horses, and meanwhile, they went into his house to get something to eat. Meanwhile, the carriage with the spilled coins, stood on the road, and the Zambrow police took Sadawki's (the Zambrow warrior) carriage, and went to find the robbers.

Arriving at the place where the carriage with the spilled coins was standing, the police first helped themselves to some of the coins, filling their boots with as much as could be put in, and they then rode to the nearest village where the robbers were, and immediately entered the peasant's house. Before they even had a chance to ask anything, the two guests took out revolvers and shot them. They came out of the peasant's house got into the cab with which the police had come, and fled the village. The peasant took the two dead policemen, and put them into the wagon that he had hitched up for the robbers, and set out to ride to the magistrate in Zambrow. It was here that it became evident that their boots were full of coins, which they had poured in there. The names of the two policemen were Kocko and Efrimov. The magistrate went to the military garrison for help in apprehending the robbers. Hundreds of soldiers on horseback were sent to pursue and find the robbers, but without success. Police in other cities, who gave pursuit had the same (sic: unsuccessful) outcome. All in all, about ten policemen were killed, and not one of the robbers was apprehended alive or dead. When all of the forty men who carried out this act for their party came back alive to their central committee, with money, they sent a letter to the head of the Wysokie bank, that they had confiscated the money. The head of the robbers signed the letter – Jozef Pilsudski.[40]

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[40] From the website of the Wysokie-Mazowieckie Yizkor Book: http://www.zchor.org/wysokie/zikaron.htm

In 1905, the first Russian revolution broke out, but it passed over without leaving any visible effects on the little town, frozen in its old patterns, whose way of life continued as though nothing had happened. But at about the same time, an event took place in Wysokie which rocked the inhabitants of the town, Christians and Jews alike, and was to remain etched in their memories for years to come.

0. Zambrow in the Year 1905

A general strike broke out in all of Russia in October 1905. After three weeks, the government was compelled to concede to many of the demands, and the Czar Nicholas II proclaimed a manifest that he will introduce a constitutional government like the one in England. In all cities and towns, the people came out *en masse* with their standards, to celebrate the victory of obtaining a constitution. They marched, and nobody stopped them. The gendarmes, police and also the military, did not interfere with the joyful movement of the civilian populace, and that day was also a festive day in Zambrow. It was Sunday, the portion of *Noah*. Jewish revolutionary groups came together after the midday on the Ostrowa highway. Bercheh the *Melamed* released his *Heder* class and sent the older children to go from *Heder* to *Heder*, to let the *Melamdim* know that they have to let the *Heder* class go on a day such as this. It is a holiday for everyone. The Rothberg brothers Malka-Cymbal's children, Elyeh and Itzl, raised a read flag, and they were followed by a group of young people singing revolutionary Jewish songs. The Chief Guard Bamishov, a stout and short man, arrived, holding his hand on his sword, but not knowing what to do: to disperse the crowd or not? – This is something of a constitution, new times in Russia, and specific orders from the province were not yet here. In the meantime, a claque of white-comrades ran up to him, grabbed him and lifted him into the air, and shouted: 'The Cow's Ass, Hurrah!' – 'The Cow's Ass' which was the secret name given to him by the revolutionary Jewish youth in Zambrow. The Chief Guard let himself down, and embarrassed and confused, he didn't know how to react.

In the evening, however, the general festivities of the revolutionary populace took place on the Koszarer *Gasse*, Gentiles and Jews. The young people, and especially those who belonged to the conspiratorial revolutionary parties, came together on Koszarer [*Gasse*] many of them in their uniforms, in red or blue shirts. And as if it had sprung from the earth, there sprouted a red flag. Several Polish nationalists put on their Polish national hats, with four corners (*Konfederatkehs*), which until that time, were forbidden to be worn. The Chief Guard Bamishov again stood, and looked on, asking only that they not create any disorder. The provisioner from Skarzynski's pharmacy, a person of short height, but a great Polish patriot, came outside with his Polish hat with the four corners, and joined in standing with the Polish and Jewish revolutionaries. His name was Strupczeski. In former times, his father was also a pharmacist, until the First Great Fire, he went into the pharmacy and brought out fireworks, which was then lit, and it then burned and spread various colors about. and this illuminated the entire Koszarer *Gasse*. Bamishov and the gendarmes stood by and kept an eye on order, but they did not interfere nor did they stop anything. Six of the young

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This extraordinary event was the famous robbery of the Russian Government Bank, the Kaznochestvo, by members of the Polish Socialist Party (P.P.S.) which was headed by Jozef Pilsudski.

The daring robbery, successfully organized and carried out, made a strong impression on Poland in particular, and on other parts of the Russian Empire as well. And the strongest impression of all was upon the residents of the town who were eyewitnesses to the bold and violent deed.

people again went over to the Chief Guard Bamishov, and picked him up in the air again, shouting: 'Hurrah! Hurrah!,' and the gendarmes laughed. However, they interfered with nothing.

The reactionary elements in the government, though at that time they seemed to be in the minority – they were a strong minority. This was because on their side stood the Czarist family, the strongly reactionary Russian Orthodox Church, and the reactionary elements of the Army, and the conservative right-wing press, all these united in one union, and began a strong movement against the constitution. The reactionary element became terribly frightened when they saw how the people accepted the news of the last few days, and the newspapers began to write and demand even more freedom. The reaction became confused, and Czar Nicholas II began to insist that if the people will be unable to control themselves under a limited constitutional monarchy, he will be compelled to revoke various liberties that he had proclaimed in his manifesto, in the month of October. The reactionary newspapers began to accuse the Jews for all the troubles that befell Russia, and called upon the darker elements of the land to launch pogroms against the Jews. Day in and day out, the newspapers brought more and more accusations against the Jews, and the darker elements permitted themselves to be incited, and in tens of cities and towns, pogroms were carried out against the Jews. Hundreds of Jews lost their lives and their possessions. Millions of rubles were wiped out in fire and plunder. The pogroms went on for several days. When the government finally put a stop to the pogroms, it immediately enacted many of the liberties that were promised in the manifesto, to all nationalities that occupied the Russian Empire. However, the right to elect a parliament (The *Duma*) was not enacted.

The people got ready for the first *Duma* elections, and all nationalities and all parties had the same, equal rights to vote and be elected; accordingly they all began to prepare for the elections. After the elections, it became apparent that the first Duma was the most Left constitutional parliament in the world, because the reactionary elements were in the minority. The majority consisted of various types of socialist parties from all nationalities of the Russian Empire.

P. I Am Arrested

I was arrested in March 1907, and it seemed like I was going to get long, hard years in prison. I was working for Ber'l-Leibl Finkelstein on Koszarer [*Gasse*]. Across the street from Skarzynski's pharmacy, he had a leather business, and also a boot manufacturing operation. In the small towns, the workers and employees would work from quite early in the morning until late at night. the salary was also small; the first and second year were worked entirely without any pay, and so it was decided to shorten the long hours and also to demand a little better pay. The demands were presented by the professional union to the *balebatim* of Zambrow. Many of them immediately agreed.

Ber'l-Leibl was, however, an angry and stubborn Jew, and did not want to agree. The professional unions, however, had means that they would utilize, from time-to-time – to compel those employers who had refused to comply. Each union had a committee that had the Russian name 'Воевй-

Отряд'[41] which would carry out a variety of actions against the employers that would not comply. The committee took down the signs of Ber'l-Leibl's business. They also broke all the window panes in the windows of his business, and his house. It did no good. He then went to the police. but since no one had seen who did all of this, the police were unable to hold anyone responsible. At that time, I was already working at a different leather concern. The professional union also did not remain silent, and adopted more severe measures against Ber'l-Leibl. The work of the *Воевй-Отряд* was very conspiratorial, and nobody knew what or when something was going to be done, because if they were caught, it carried the implication of many years in prison, or Siberia. So they wrote to the union in Czyzew, and they waited for Ber'l-Leibl coming into the train station, and they gave him a warning, he said that they beat him, but it didn't help. He remained even more resolute in not conceding. Once again, he went to the police, who could do nothing. Several weeks later, the regional committee of the union, which was to be found in Bialystok, wrote a warning letter to Ber'l-Leibl, and they referenced my name in the letter and since the letter bore the stamp of the union, and the party, both of whom were underground organizations, and to be a member carried with it the possibility of jail, Ber'l-Leibl immediately turned over the letter to the chief of police, and told him what the letter contained, and he connected this to the threats that he had previously received. The chief of police gave the letter to Szczynka the Teacher, from the public school, to translate, because it was written in Yiddish. The chief of police prepared two charges. One, that I belong to an underground revolutionary party; and the second that, in the name of the party, I participated in criminal acts against Ber'l-Leibl. He sent a gendarme to bring me to the chief of police, and asked me three times, whether I understood well the seriousness of the two charges. When I answered him in the affirmative, he ordered me to go home, but that I should not travel away from Zambrow. My mother pleaded with me to temporarily travel off to somewhere, in another city, because I will certainly be arrested. However, I did not want to be a fugitive. On the same day, in the evening, the same gendarme returned, [accompanied by] a policeman, and a patrol of soldiers, and did a search of the house, and found nothing, because, as it appears, the police chief gave me plenty of time to clean the place out, so that they would not find anything. However, I was immediately arrested and taken to the Zambrow jail. The police chief immediately places soldiers with guns to guard me. For a whole three days, the *shtetl* youth as well as the curious older people, stood and looked at the bars of the jail, wanting to know who it was that the soldiers were guarding so carefully. On the fourth day, I was handcuffed, and put up into a wagon with two gendarmes and also two policemen, and the soldiers were put into two other wagons, one in front, and one behind my wagon. The chief of police, with the charges, sat in a carriage, and he traveled off to Lomza immediately. A little later, our wagons, also, went off to Lomza. This was three weeks before Passover.

When the chief of police went off, a gendarme boarded the chief's carriage, and traveled with him, and two soldiers were boarded onto my wagon. I knew the soldiers from before, because they secretly belonged to a revolutionary group and every first Sunday of the month, I would meet them at a specific place, where I would turn over hundreds of pamphlets that had been printed in Bialystok, especially for soldiers in the entire region. I thought that these two soldiers also had something to do with my arrest, and so a thought occurred to me to ask one of them if he could take off the handcuffs, and descend from the wagon with me for a couple of minutes, and we will follow

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41 The 'violence squad.'

the wagon, because I am very cold. I wanted to find out if they had any part in my arrest, because they would be the best witnesses against me. In several minutes, I concluded that no only did they say nothing, they even told me what the chief of police had said, and this was very necessary for me to know.

We arrived in Lomza, to the district commander's office on the Langer *Gasse*, near the new marketplace. The police chief was there already, and they began to question me, and sought to entrap me in a variety of pitfalls. Seeing that they are unable to do anything with me, they said that an examining magistrate will come to see me at the magistrate building at the old marketplace. Two weeks later, an examining magistrate came, and posed the same questions to me, and I gave him the same answers, because they could not connect anything to Ber'l-Leibl's complaint. Regarding the letter, I said to him that, since the letter was not written by me, I cannot be responsible for it, and as far as I know – the letter could have been written by a provocateur. He began to shout that he was going to send me to jail that very day, and an examining magistrate from a higher court will come there because the complaint is tied up with underground parties from other provinces.

It was the eve of Passover, an hour later five soldiers arrived and led me to the old marketplace into the great prison, near the public hall. On my way to the prison, I was met by Ber'l, the son of Nachman-Yankl the Wagon Driver, quickly hurrying to get to Zambrow for the Seder. In prison, I was given a solitary cell, and a Jew brought in matzo, and told me to see that there was no leavened produce in the cell, and that there would be a Seder that evening, where all the arrested Jewish inmates will be together. Seven weeks later, an examining magistrate from a higher court arrived, because on the door of the room where he interrogated me was written: Следователь поважнийшам Делам (An investigator of the most important issues). He began to question me, and the court secretary began to write. He was, however, a very intelligent and liberal man, because when the secretary left the room for several minutes, he said to me, this is the result of when a party writes a letter, and no name is to be mentioned, because those mentioned are placed in danger of being sent away. He immediately had me freed on bail. However, I was never called up on a complaint. I think he was a bigger revolutionary than I was. Two years later, I was taken as a soldier, and in the papers there was no mention that I had ever been arrested.

Q. The Fear of a Pogrom in Zambrow

In the year 1909, I was taken to be a soldier in the Russian army, and was sent to serve in the Amur area. And since soldiers were sent in freight wagons, the ride took more than forty days, traveling through all of Siberia in colds of minus 40 and 50 degrees. We arrived in the city of Khabarovsk, after which papers arrived from Lomza that I had a *'legota'* (a privilege that freed me from military service), and a high number, so I had to be let go. On the eve of Passover I arrived [back] in Zambrow, learning that Zambrow had just lived through a week of terror, because there was imminent threat of a pogrom that certain anti-Semitic elements, with the help of the Polish press in Warsaw, attempted to incite [as follows]: Jews from Zambrow had allegedly, on a certain night, gone to the Polish cemetery and desecrated graves, and broken headstones. The Polish newspapers from Warsaw even provided names of specific Jews that had been seen on that night when they went out to the cemetery. In the newspapers, the Polish populace was called upon not to ignore this, and

to settle accounts with the Jews because of this. Gentiles began to prepare themselves for a pogrom, during the Holy Week of Easter, when they would be coming to the Roman Catholic Church. Jewish contractors, with Binyomkeh Golombek at their head, went off to the brigade commander and he posted heavy patrols near the Roman Catholic Church, as well as along all the roads that led into the city, and all the suspicious characters were not permitted entry into the city. Afterwards, the culprit was found. [He was] a Polish baker who worked in the German bakery Piper-Kaspar. He got his punishment. Passover for the Jews was not disrupted.

R. The Second Great Fire

A few weeks after Passover, on May 1, 1910, a terrifying fire broke out in Zambrow yet again. It was given the name "The Second Great Fire.' And for the second time, Zambrow was burned to the ground. The fire started on a Saturday night in the stable of Elkanah the Wagon Driver, and in Avreml Koszarer's houses on *Ulica* Kosciolna, not far from the bridge. And since a small breeze was blowing into the city, it quickly ignited many houses simultaneously, and now a larger and more prosperous Zambrow was on fire, and the damages were greater that in the case of the First Great Fire. However, there were more houses that were insured, and so the losses actually didn't come out so large, and it was possible to re-build more quickly. By the time of this fire, there was already an organized fire brigade, but almost all of them were Poles, and instead of putting the fires out, they aggravated the burning by pouring kerosene on the Jewish houses. Meanwhile, the city went under with the fire. A short time after this, I left for America.

Zambrow in the Suwalk-Lomza Kollel in Jerusalem

At approximately the year 1863, the Kollel of Suwalk-Lomza separated itself from the Warsaw Kollel – to support the Jews from both provinces, who travel to the Land of Israel to either 'live or die.'

In 1949, there existed in Jerusalem a unified appropriations committee that allocated the support funds that came from outside the Holy Land to the '*Kollel* of Pharisees' meaning the *Mitnagdim*, and the '*Kollel* of *Hasidim*.'
However, when the *olim* from Germany and Holland established that most of the monies came from their countries, and that the allocation process was short-changing the Germans – they decided to separate, and to form a united *Kollel* for the Jews of Germany and Holland called Kollel **Ho"D** (**H**olland and **D**eutschland).

However, even here the unity did not continue for any length of time. The people of Lithuania and Poland – established a *Kollel* of their own. In the year 1850, the scions of Poland separated from Lithuania, and established '*Kollel* Warsaw' – that received the funds from the Jews of Poland, and distributed it to the émigrés from Poland in Jerusalem. A hundred years ago, approximately in 1863, the émigrés from Lomza and Suwalk who were consolidated from an administrative point of view with the rest of Poland, found they were being short-changed in the allocations, because in those cities and their surroundings, people tended to give more generously to the Land of Israel, for their kinfolk who went 'either to live or die,' but here, no one was taking this into account. Accordingly, a 'Kollel for Suwalk-Lomza' was established for the purpose of allocating those funds raised from

the environs of these cities. The Kollel of Suwalk-Lomza was one of the most active among the *Kollels* of Europe.

The first president of *Kollel* Suwalk-Lomza was the Rabbi of Zambrow, R' Lipa Chaim *HaKohen.*[42] We have no insight into why they chose the Rabbi of Zambrow in particular, and not the Rabbi from Suwalk, Lomza or Szczuczyn[43], as it were. Apparently he was very well-respected, trustworthy and someone you could depend on. All the monies collected for the Land of Israel in all of the cities and settlements that were in Suwalk and Lomza – came to the hands of Rabbi R' Lipa Chaim. After the dignitaries in Zambrow assisted him in the counting of the total – the funds were transferred to the treasurer in Szczuczyn, and from there – to the Land of Israel. The emissaries, who were designated to empty the charity boxes of R' Meir *Baal HaNess* had to receive permission to do so from R' Lipa Chaim. In 1876, Tuvia Fenster, a scion of Szumowo tells from his memory, that when his father wanted to tour the Land of Israel, many tried to persuade him against it, because all the ways of travel were dangerous, etc. His father, Yaakov Moshe, decided to travel to Zambrow, to the President of the Kollel, R' Lipa Chaim, to seek his advice, and he would do what he said. And as it turned out, R' Lipa-Chaim encouraged him, and even wrote letters on his behalf to his acquaintances in Jerusalem, to R' Meir Auerbach who had been the Rabbi of Kalisz and to R' Eliyahu Sarasohn, who received R' Fenster with respect.

Emissaries would come out of Zambrow, to distribute and set up charity boxes of R' Meir *Baal HaNess*, and also to empty them, for the entire area, and they would say: 'Put some money in the box, or it will be an embarrassment when The Emissary from Zambrow arrives, who will be coming shortly to empty the charity box.'

From the accounting records of the *Kollel*, "The Sun of Justice" signed by Rabbi R' Lipa, on this side, and the heads of the *Kollel* in Jerusalem, as well – it is difficult to find support, for Jews from Zambrow among the hundreds of recipients of the allocated funds, because all of them signed themselves 'from Lomza' – the provincial capitol, and not their native towns. Occasionally, some name from Zambrow shows up, but without any family identification, such as: R' Israel *Shammes* from Zambrow, etc.

When R' Lipa Chaim passed away – his son-in-law, R' Yehoshua Heschel Shapiro was appointed president of the Kollel, the Rabbi of Szczuczyn, and after him, the grandson of R' Lipa Chaim – R' Joseph *HaKohen*. The last president of the Kollel was the son-in-law of R' Lipa Chaim, the Rabbi Dov Menachem Regensberg. The treasury was in Szczuczyn.

If anyone from the Lomza-Suwalk area made *aliyah,* he was entitled to receive financial aid from Jerusalem from the allocated funds, but he did not receive this without the consent of the Rabbi of

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42 The full name of the Rabbi is R' Yom-Tov Lipman Chaim Kahana-Shapiro, as indicated on page 152. Throughout the text, he is referred to as R' Lipa Chaim, (sometimes hyphenated as Lipa-Chaim),and we respect this affectionate appellation.

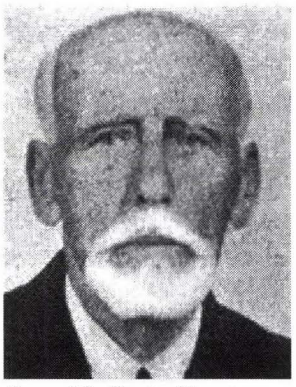
43 It is important to note that this is the *Polish* city almost directly north of Zambrow, and not the *Byelorussian* city of Scucyn, which probably derived its name from it. We will use these two spellings to distinguish between them.

Zambrow. The last appointed head of the Kollel in Jerusalem was the Rabbi R' Moshe Kharl"p ז"ל, who worked faithfully, and knew all the émigrés from Lomza-Suwalk up to the year 1952.

The first emissary that was sent by the Kollel of Suwalk-Lomza to America in the year 1892, to arouse the hearts and to donate for causes pertaining to the Land of Israel, on behalf of the Kollel, was R' Abner, a scion of Zambrow.

A Blood Libel

By Tuvia Fenster



Page 82: Tuvia Fenster

This took place in the 1870's in our town of Szumowo, between Purim and Passover. I remember it as if it were today, and the newspapers also reported it.

The peasant Maczei was a forest worker for *Graf* Zamoyski. In his old age, he purchased a small parcel of land, between Szumowo and Srebrna. His wife had already died, leaving him with three children – two girls aged five and seven, and a young lad of thirteen. One day, when Maczei returned from church on a Sunday, he found all three of his children murdered. This had a terrifying impact on everyone. Maczei sits and mourns, and his loyal neighbor, Bartek is comforting him. Everyone wondered: three souls slaughtered, and no blood was found beside them. What a wonder – Bartek argues: 'It's Jews, Passover!' – That means: Jews murdered them in honor of their Passover, and have used all of their blood...

A rumor then spread, that the Jews of Zambrow, the closest town, came to slaughter them, and use their blood to prepare matzos...

In Szumowo, a police detail had been stationed since the last Polish rebellion, consisting of three policemen and a senior over them, Semyon Gavrilicz (Shimon ben Gavriel) a grandson of a Cantonist[44] (who had been snatched as a Jewish child and was turned over to serve as a soldier, and needed to adopt the Russian Orthodox faith). Semyon Gavrilicz was quick-minded and smart – he had a Jewish head. He was the first to arrive and ask the old man a variety of questions. From this he learned that 150 rubles were also taken by the murderer, and nobody, apart from the neighbor, Bartek, knew about it.

Semyon immediately cast suspicion on this so-called loyal neighbor, and ordered his policemen to investigate what Bartek was doing. He personally investigated, and poked around, and came to the conclusion – that it was only Bartek who was the murderer. But there is no trace, no evidence!

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[44] This is a consequence of the notorious ukase of Czar Nicholas I, promulgated in 1827, who instituted this program in order to forcibly hasten the assimilation of Jews into the fabric of Russian society.

In the meantime, rumors circulated about how the Jews has sucked out the blood from the children. Also, the anti-Semitic Polish press from Warsaw portrayed all of these rumors and incited the masses. Accordingly, all of the Jews from the villages fled to Zambrow. Also, in Zambrow, the priest in church spoke about this, and said that suspicion had fallen on the Jews. A special meeting was called at the home of R' Shmuel Wilimowsky the head of the Zambrow community, and it decided to immediately travel to the Governor in Lomza. The Governor heard everyone out, and promised that he would not permit anything unlawful and without legal permission, and he will personally come down to investigate the matter. Semyon Gavrilicz, however, did not rest. As the suspicion against Bartek acquired more of a basis, he decided on a bold move: In the middle of the night, he took his three assistants, and suddenly woke Bartek out of his sleep, with the shout: 'Thief, where did you hide Maczei's 150 rubles?' Bartek became confused... The police began to conduct an intensive search, and in poking around, they found the money. Bartek was immediately put in chains, and taken off to Szumowo.

As it happened, that morning, the Governor arrived from Lomza. He ordered Bartek released and brought to him. The Governor called him to the table, put a glass of whiskey in front of him, with great ceremony, and asked him amicably:

Listen, Bartek, we are after all nothing but people. Every one of us can fall into the clutches of Satan, and you too fell, and you transgressed. Confess, and you will not be punished. But first eat something, and tell me everything afterward.

Bartek took note of the great respect that was being shown to him by the Governor, and so he crossed himself, emptied the glass, and followed it with a slice of white bread and related the following: I have to buy a horse for my work, because what good is a peasant without a horse?

And for what purpose does Old Maczei need money? So I quickly disposed of the children, while everyone was in church, but I had to struggle with the boy, he was strong.... The details he provided were terrifying. The Governor heard it all, and his face flamed, but he kept control of himself.

– but tell me, Bartek, the Governor says, why is it that not a single drop of blood was found in the house? All are wondering about this? – it is quite simple, Bartek says, I called my dog, and Maczei's big dog, and they licked and licked...

With this, the Governor could no longer contain himself, and began to bang on the table: Keep still you dog, it was not enough that you murdered three children, you wanted to throw the responsibility onto the Jews! You filthy vermin! – Semyon Gavrilicz, he shouted to the police senior, take this criminal away from me and shackle him in irons, hand and foot, and bring him immediately to Lomza, to the prison...

Bartek was sentenced to life at hard labor, in Siberia. Semyon Gavrilicz received a commendation with a "Похволний Лист" (a letter of commendation) and he became renown. Part of the Jews from Szumowo and Srebrna chose to remain in Zambrow.

Pages

By Aryeh Golombek



Page 85: *Executive Committee of the Young Zionists*

Standing (R to L): *David Rosenthal, Abraham Krupinsky, Yekhiel Don;*
Sitting (R to L): *Meir Rutkewicz, Sarah Rivka Slowik, Leib Golombek. Herzkeh Skocenadek, Sarah Rosen*

A. I am the Zambrow Commissar

In the summer of 1920, we prepared ourselves, I and my friend Yitzhak Gorodzinsky, Chava's son, to make *aliyah* to the Land of Israel. It was wartime between Poland and Russia. We waited for passports and visas. In the meantime, I came back to Zambrow, because it was harvest season, and I needed to help. In this time, the Bolshevik invasion occurred. A militia of fire-fighters was formed in the city. The commandant of the fire-fighters left the area, and wanted to take along the Jewish fire-fighter Yaakov Shlomo Kukawka, whom he valued highly. But he [Kukawka] said: I want to remain among my brethren. So the first militia commandant was the Polish harness-maker, Manyk Wysotski, a member of the P. P. S. and a vice-commandant of the fire-fighters. He was not satisfactory to the Russians. So everybody proposed me to be the commandant of the militia. I did not want to do this, because I was not close to the communists, and after all, I was imminently going to make *aliyah* to the Land of Israel. So pleading began to come from all sides, that in my position, I will be able to do favors, and rescue many, even from death. So I accepted the post, and became the chief of police of Zambrow, and they brought me a Jew from Wysokie, Srebrowicz who dealt in foreign exchange, a serious offense. I made an extensive 'investigation,' and then released him. Simcha Stern set up a bottle of vodka for a Jewish soldier of the Red Army – and he was under the threat of a death penalty, so I 'investigated' shouted at him, and set him free. Abraham Shlomo Dzenchill[45] (*Pracht*) committed a severe crime, and a Polish militiaman brought him in chains: he illegally sold a can of kerosene... So I sent him home, etc. When the Russians retreated, I wanted to flee with them, fearing that the Poles would take vengeance on me. But the Poles asked me to stay...so I showed myself running with the Russians on the outskirts of the city, and I secretly got down, and returned home. Afterwards I came to Warsaw, and from there I traveled to the Land of Israel. Six years later, I came back as a visitor. I was then informed on that I was a communist commissar. However, respected Poles gave testimony that I was OK, and I was not detained.

B. Two Tables

The fire-fighters used to have an annual dinner. One time, there were only two Jewish fire-fighters: Gordon the Photographer, and Yossl *Mozzik* (Modrikman). Since The Second Great Fire, there were many Jews. So food was prepared for two banquets – one was *trayf*, with swine flesh, for the gentiles, and one was kosher, under the supervision of Yaakov Shlomo Kukawka, for the Jews. During the feasting, two delegations would come out: A Jewish delegation that would go to offer their greetings to the gentile table, and a gentile delegation, with the pharmacist Skarzynski at its head, to wish the Jews good luck.

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45 This spelling is a variant of the Polish word Dzięciol, which is a woodpecker.

Many last names of the Jews of Zambrow were taken from species of birds (see discussion on page 353). Sounds in Slavic languages do not perfectly align with those in Anglo-Saxon and Romance languages. Accordingly, when the Dzenchill scions came to America, they initially used the spelling Janchill, which morphed into Jainchill, as it is used by many of them today. We retain the 'legacy' spelling in this work, as a matter of respect for history.

C. My Father's Initiative & Influence

My father, may he rest in peace, Binyomkeh Golombek, was the *Gabbai* of the Red Synagogue and of the *Chevra Kadisha*. As a contractor, who supplied provisions to the two military divisions stationed in Zambrow, my father knew the garrison general quite well. One time, when the threat of a pogrom hovered over Zambrow, because the gentiles had accused the Jews in desecrating the Polish cemetery – my father went to the general. My father told him of the situation, and asked for his help. The general immediately ordered that a military guard be deployed in the city, conducted inspections of the peasant wagons, and confiscating any suspicious arms that they found.

D. Jewish Soldiers Furloughed for Festivals

Hundreds of Jewish soldiers served in Zambrow. For every Festival Holiday, the Rabbi would travel to the division commander, accompanied by a number of other *balebatim*, mostly with Avcheh Rakowsky, and request to have the Jewish conscripts furloughed for the holidays. A kosher kitchen was set up for them in the city, and even a special *minyan* in which they could pray, in the 'Wood House' of the White *Bet HaMedrash*. The Jewish conscripts had their own individual to lead services, and their own Torah scroll. Once, on *Rosh Hashanah*, at the beginning of the service, the Rabbi approaches my father and whispers a secret in his ear: 'The soldiers have not been given a furlough this year...' My father immediately set aside his prayer shawl, and immediately ran to the general's quarters. - What happened? The General asked him, Is not today a very important holiday for you? – But my brothers, the soldiers, today they do not have a holiday, they were not given a furlough... the order was immediately given, and an hour later, the *Bet HaMedrash* became full of Jewish conscripts...



Page 89: Binyomkeh Golombek and Family

E. A Soldier Defends Jewish Honor

There was an out-of-town soldier who was serving in Zambrow by the name of Zerakh Kagan. He was zealously observant. Accordingly, every day, before going to military exercises, he would arise to pray and put on his *Tefillin*. Gentile soldiers would gather around him to look at his phylacteries, which they had never seen before, and offer him respect. Except one time, when an anti-Semite paused to mock the Jew. Kagan took no note of him, and continued praying. So he went up to him to tear off his *Tefillin*, and Kagan gave him a stout kick with his foot – and he fell down and ailed for 2-3 days, after which he died. There ensued a tumult during which Kagan was arrested, for which he was under the threat of a very serious punishment. My father involved himself, and with considerable effort, caused the military doctors to establish that the soldier died from a heart attack, and not the blow from Kagan. Kagan was then released. When Kagan completed his military service, he was not permitted to travel home. A Jew like this needed to remain in Zambrow. He was found a match with the daughter of Miriam the Wig Maker, and Meiram Bursztein. He became a teacher in a reformed *Heder*, and educated hundreds of students in Torah and to do good deeds.



Page 90: Young Girl Schoolchildren

How a Pogrom Was Avoided in Zambrow

By Sender Seczkowsky
(As recorded by R' Israel Levinsky ל"ז)

On a fine morning, the fear of death fell upon the Jews of Zambrow: unknown persons desecrated the Polish cemetery, breaking crucifixes, and headstones. The suspicion fell on the Jews. Gentiles immediately came forward who saw Jews milling about *Ulica* Ostrowa, near the cemetery.

The young priests in the church incited the faithful by saying that all troubles emanate from the Jews, leading to the creation of a mood for a pogrom in the city. The gentiles in the surrounding villages

designated a specific Sunday to assault the Jews and to rob their businesses. There were only five policemen in Zambrow, who were Polish, and it was not possible to rely on them. So a delegation went off to Lomza to the Governor. Representatives of the Lomza Jews went with them. The Governor, who was from Courland, was a philo-Semite, and immediately ordered a 100-man Cossack contingent sent to Zambrow to maintain order. Also, Binyomkeh Golombek, the contractor, arranged with the garrison general to have soldiers sent to maintain order. The appointed Sunday arrived, and young and old, man and woman, came out of the church into the city, to rob the Jewish places of business, and they had prepared, in advance, by having axes, staves etc., stored in their wagons. I hauled myself up to the roof of our house, and looked through a crack: the mob streamed out of the church to *Ulica* Kosciolna. A chain of Cossacks, however, came across them on horses, and dispersed the hooligans with their *nagaikas*,[46] removed the axes from the wagons, and the other instruments of violence. The Secretary of the *Gmina* stood near the Cossacks, and for each peasant, he told the Cossack officer from what town he is – and the Secretary showed the way to travel home. If someone resisted – he got a couple of whacks with the *nagaikas*. This immediately softened him up, and he retreated. The Poles did not anticipate such a calamitous denouement. So they got themselves ready for another attempt.



Page 92: At a reunion of Zembrowites in Tel-Aviv to commemorate the devastation of the native town. Mr. Sender Seczkowsky and his wife are in the front row, third and fourth from the right.

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46 A Cossack riding crop.

That occurred – three months later. A fire broke out on a Saturday night on Koszarer [*Gasse*], and the fire-fighters – all gentiles, apart from the two brothers Yaakov Shlomo and Herschel Kukawka, instead of putting the fire out, threw kerosene-soaked rags and caused the fire to spread, and so the entire *shtetl* was burned down for the second time. The gentiles took their vengeance for the cemetery... Several weeks later, the following was clarified with regard to the incident at the cemetery: In a gentile bakery, in the house of Mendl Rubin the Hatmaker, one youthful baker stabbed and killed another one. Before he died, he saw fit to tell the boss, that he wanted to tell the truth, that he had broken the headstones and crucifixes in the cemetery, the other party had harassed him, and that is why he stabbed him..

The murderer was arrested and confessed everything. The Jews of Zambrow breathed a little easier...



Page 94: *The Young Girls of the School*

During Wartime

By Sender Seczkowsky
(As recorded by R' Israel Levinsky ל"ז)

A. The City Is Saved from Destruction

In the year 1915, during The First World War, the city was full of the homeless. Tens of families arrived, who were refugees from Jedwabne, Grajewo, Szczuczyn Nowogród, Ostrolenka, and so forth. They were quartered in the *Batei Medrashim*, in the synagogue, in private houses, to the extent that we could.

Zambrow was a tranquil town, far from a strategic point, and that is why many refugees fled here in order to save themselves. But a little at a time, the battlefields crept near, and the front already stood near Zambrow. A division of Cossacks arrived in the city, and it felt as if the days of the Russians

were numbered – because the Cossacks were the last that left a city, before it falls to the enemy. They received an order: not to leave any town, any city, any repository of grain for the enemy – but to burn everything. Every night the sky was reddened: all around the villages and the stacks of grain burned. When the Cossacks began to behave violently – beating Jews, raping women, robbing, burning – everyone hid out in cellars, and were afraid to stick their heads outside. I sat in a cellar with the family of Yankl Pravda.

At one time, in 1905, Pravda was a fiery revolutionary. He had a warm heart, and was always ready to take a stand for a Jew. And so, it disturbed him: meaning that they were beating the Jews, they are plundering – so something has to be done. That the Cossacks should not set the city aflame in their retreat, and here, rumors were going about that the Russians have already mined the bridge, and plan to put the city to the torch. Pravda wanted to get out and do something, and his wife, Bat-Sheva, Shammai-Lejzor's daughter, didn't let him, and burst out weeping: it is worth your life, and you are the father of children, and therefore he is not allowed to go into the city. Nevertheless, somehow he tore himself away, and use the back ways and fences, to reach the municipal secretary Komorowski, who was friendly to the Jews, and together with him, went through all of the cellars collecting money to buy off the Russians so that they not destroy the city.

They got together a sum of money in a short time, and it was set up so that the greater assignation should be from above, and under a danger to their lives, went off to the commandant, at the bridge. The commandant was not there. His substitute was an officer who indicated that nothing was going to help – the order was to set fire to the city. When Yankl Pravda waved the money about, he softened up, and sent to have the commandant summoned. The commandant says to his aide: 'Берий Денгий и Положий Выещик Козначайство' – Take the money and put it in the safe. And to Yankl Pravda he says: Do you have wine or whiskey? (Because the Russians had confiscated all strong drink in the area of the front, and forbidden it to be sold). Komorowski recalls that in some stable of the municipal chancellery a case of vodka can be found, that had once been confiscated from a storekeeper, and he ran to bring it to the commandant. They stuffed themselves, and half drunk, left the city, not bringing any destruction on it.

We began to kiss Yankl Pravda when he returned. His wife now took great pride in her accomplished husband.

B. When Poland Was an Independent Nation

On a fine morning, when the Germans still held control over the city, a bunch of gentile thugs showed up with Yozhombek the shoemaker's son at their head, and with revolvers in their hands, they surrounded the barracks and ordered the Germans to get their hands up, and surrender. The mighty Germans did not seem to twirl their moustaches, and surrender. The Poles disarmed them, and took away their arms. In a couple of hours later, the Germans took up a position, half civilian – and half military, with small valises in hand, and took off on their way, to the Prussian border. The Poles escorted them with mockery and we Jews, did not know how to behave, because we felt that in the hands of the Poles it would be worse for us.

And in reality, the Poles looked at us askance, and did not include us in their victory. It is true that in matters of money, such as taxes, allocation of materiel, clothing, etc., the Jews were extensively included. The best of the youth went off to serve in the Polish military, and sent to the front. That is, those born from 1896 to 1900.

The Bolshevist invasion drew closer.

The Russians though waged war against the Poles, and for this reason they always trusted the Jews: Jewish employees, in the police, in food jobs, requisitioning, etc. Part of them cooperated in good faith, and part – reluctantly, and under duress. The Poles however, blacklisted them all. When the Russians drew back – all those who cooperated with them, ran off with them. The Polish authorities, however, pursued their parents. Yirmiyahu Syeta (Yass) was severely beaten because of the misdeeds of his son. Israel Pravda was hunted, and his wife was tortured, who jumped off the balcony.

The Polish pharmacist Skarzynski, was sentenced to death by a Bolshevist tribunal. So, temporarily, he left the area, and hid in a booth belonging to Shmueleh Wahrszafczyk, near the river. He hid himself there for a week's time, and the Jews took care of him, until the first Polish patrol returned to the city. At that time, Skarzynski came back to the balcony, and he waved the Polish flag. He was nominated as the chief of the civilian populace. When he was asked about the conduct of the Jews, during the Bolshevist invasion, he stammered, but upon seeing those Jewish eyes that had rescued him, he expressed himself that the Jewish 'ne'er-do-wells' had fled with the Russians, but that the decent citizens had remained here. In this manner he defused the possibility of a bloody pogrom in the *shtetl,* even if a number of Jews did get a beating, and their possessions were robbed. One woman was even murdered.

C. The Murder of Szklovin the Pharmacist

[Zalman] Szklovin the Pharmacist was a discreet person with leftist tendencies. Despite this he was involved in community work, and even worshiped for a time with a *Shas* study group, and during the Bolshevist occupation, he was neutral toward them. It is possible that as a pharmacist, that he had to adopt this posture. The Poles looked for him and wanted to arrest him. So he hid himself. His wife went to Skarzynski, the Polish pharmacist and beseeched him to save her husband. The pharmacist requested that he come to him, and nothing will happen. Szklovin came to Skarzynski in his holiday finest. Polish young people came running, and demanded that Szklovin be turned over to them. Skarzynski didn't think very long about it, and turned Szklovin over, whom they then stripped naked, and together with a young man from Warsaw, was severely beaten and forced to pull a wagon full of manure all over the city. They were tortured for so long, that they died. The 'good' commandant later ordered that their bodies be turned over to the Jewish community, in order that they could be buried.

Three Who Made Aliyah to The Land of Israel

A. The Old Shammes Kuczapa and His Wife

Once, on a Saturday night, in the year 1903, a tumult occurred on the street of the synagogue in Zambrow. The old *Shammes*, Portnowicz, who was called Kuczapa (nobody remembers his name anymore) created a scandal in the city and the *Bet HaMedrash*: 'I am a *Shammes* in the city for over sixty years, serving the community day and night, I was the one who did the burying, the community porter, the *Bet-Din Shammes* – and now, in old age, when I am close to eighty years old, I want to travel and die in the Land of Israel. So I have no money to cover expenses...I would therefore like the community to help me. I have earned this, and the community is not poor – so the money can be procured'...

The *Shammes* lived opposite the synagogue, where later on, Shammes-Lejzor[47] the *Maggid* would live. And so people stood under his window, and eavesdropped on how the old *Shammes* was shouting, cursing and having a fit...also the wife of the old *Shammes*, was weeping and wailing about her misfortune. She was a pious and naive Jewish woman, coming before dawn, with her husband to prayers, in the women's synagogue, and would beseech The Master of the Universe: 'Good morning dear God, I your servant, Kuczap'ekheh,[48] have come to you to recite the morning service, please accept my prayer!'...

Accordingly, the public took an interest in this demanding request from their little old *Shammes*, and decided to provide part of the allocation funds that had been collected (after all, the Rabbi of Zambrow was the *Gabbai* of the allocations committee of the Lomza-Suwalk Kollel). The Rabbi assured him that he would be accepted in Jerusalem, and placed on the allocation list, and there he will receive his weekly stipend.

Apart from this, the following Sabbath, the reading of the Torah was delayed in the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, where he was the *Shammes*. It was decided to give him half of the travel costs from the community treasury and from the *Chevra Kadisha* (he traveled with his wife and a grandchild, a daughter's daughter aged 13, to assist them on their journey to Jerusalem) and the rest, that he was missing would be raised by pledges and contributions: all those receiving an *aliyah* for the entire month ahead, in the Red *Bet HaMedrash,* will be asked for a *Mi Sheberakh* contribution for the old *Shammes*, and the contribution will be 18 groschen (one times *chai*) on his behalf.

Several weeks later, it was on a Sunday morning, on the morning after *Shabbat Nachamu*[49] everyone turned out to escort the *Shammes*, his wife and grandchild to begin their long journey. The Rabbi,

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47 The writer uses the endearing diminutive *Shammeh* for the formal name *Shammai*.

48 The feminine-diminutive in Yiddish for the name Kuczapa.

49 The Sabbath after *Tisha B'Av*.

the most prominent *balebatim*, craftsmen – all escorted them as far as the cemetery. Many gave him groschen, kopecks, and '*ditkas*' even ten-notes – for him to give as charity in Jerusalem, in their name, because an emissary that performs a *mitzvah* leads to success. The *Shammes* then put all these funds in a separate red wallet, bid farewell to the deceased in the cemetery, got up on the wagon, and rode off to Srebrny Borek, and from there, by train, to Odessa... Their daughter, and his three sons, Leibl, Elyeh, and Henokh – escorted them to the train...

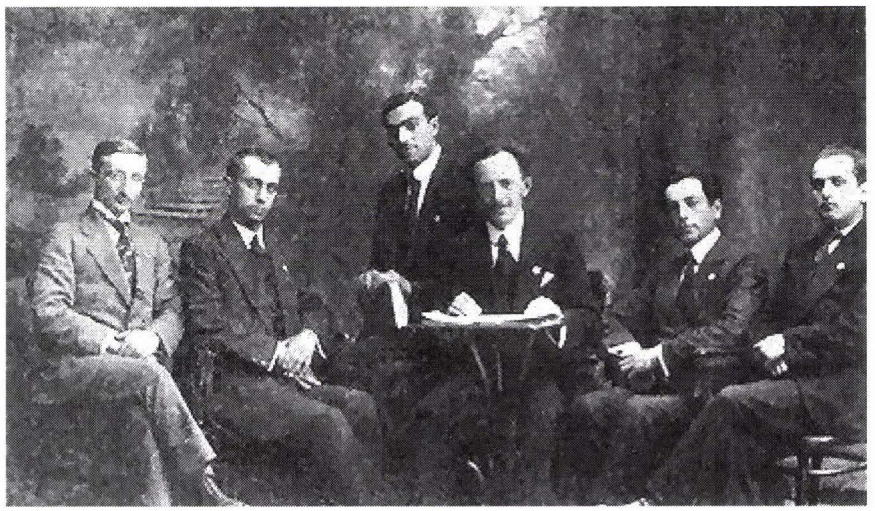
B. Mendl the Half-Carpenter

Mendl Zusman was a carpenter, and he was called 'the half-carpenter,' and was never trusted to produce good furniture, as was the case with Ber'l the Carpenter, or Myshel[50] the Carpenter. People would shrug [and say]: a man has to support a wife and children, and he spends half his time on foolishness: set down on white paper with a corner and ruler in hand... if someone wants a bench, a bureau, a table, etc., he first does a drawing, fusses over it for hours and the buyer is waiting for his result... and they were not satisfied with his work, and went to others... and so his wife would argue with him, demanding money for expenses, and there was none.

Until one fine day, the news came out: Mendl the half-carpenter left his wife and children and went off to the Land of Israel. So the wife ran to the Rabbi, to have him write to Jerusalem that he should not be given any allocation and to apply pressure to him – that he should return. It didn't help, and it was said of him that he was 'caught in the act,' God forbid, and the *Kollel* allocation committee and the Rabbis had not knowledge of him.

Some time later, it was found out: Mendl Zusman the half-carpenter found favor with Professor Boris Schatz the head of the '*Bezalel*' School of Art in Jerusalem, and engages him as a teacher of table making. Under his direction, he teaches the youth how to do wood turning, and is successful.

Mendl subsequently sent for his wife and children, and they settled peacefully in Jerusalem.



Page 102: Maccabi Committee

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50 One of several diminutive forms of the name Moshe.

C. Pesach, the Wine Maker's Son, Travels to Jerusalem

It is 1908. R' Elyeh Zalman the Wine Maker, Yerusalimsky, had a love of the Land of Israel. The family had a tradition of traveling there, in old age, to die. It is from this that the family name Yerusalimsky is derived.

One of his sons, Pesach, a diligent youth, studied in Volozhin, and got married there. So he comes to Zambrow for purposes of saying goodbye. The *shtetl* is overwhelmed: what do you mean, a young man discards all manner of making a living, leaves his wife behind with her father, and travels to the Land of Israel, to become a colonist, a peasant, to make wine from real fresh grapes, not like his father, who makes it from raisins... But it is forbidden to restrain him: he is traveling to the Land of Israel!

So, the Zionists, made a going-away evening in his honor at the home of Benjamin Kagan. Abba Finkelstein brought biscuits, his father had naturally sent wine, and the lady of the house put up the samovar, and served tea with jam, egg-kichel, and fruit. Speeches were given in Hebrew and Yiddish, songs were sung, and a hearty farewell was had.

Pesach traveled on a freighter, which was transporting Russian pilgrims. Accordingly, he suffered a great deal along the way. When he arrived in Jerusalem, he wanted to become a teacher – but was unable to find work. Since he had an talent for drawing and sculpture, he came to the '*Bezalel*' Art School. He studied there for a while, but could not satisfy himself with the work, and in the meantime, he used up the little bit of money that he had taken along with him. And his wife is writing him bitter letters – either he is to take her over to Jerusalem, or he is to come back. So one fine morning, he packed his valise and traveled from Jerusalem to Jaffa, and took the first ship back to Poland. He took a vow, however, that at the first opportunity – he will return...

Jablonka

By Joseph Krolewiecky

Let my little *shtetl* of Jablonka, the mother-city of Zambrow, also be recalled in this *Pinkas*. Jablonka, 9 km from Zambrow on the way to Wysokie-Mazowieckie, was one of the oldest cities in Mazovia, certainly older than Lomza and Zambrow. At a time when Zambrow did not even have a prayer quorum, Jablonka was already known for its Rabbi and congregation. Indeed, in that time, the dead were taken from Zambrow to Jablonka [for burial]. In the year 1863, at the time of the Polish rebellion, Jablonka was the principal headquarters for the revolutionists. Just like at one time, it was not known where Bialystok was located, and it was necessary to add Bialystok, which is found near Tykocin, so it used to be written: Zambrow, which is near Jablonka. It was a poor *shtetl*, and tragically: it was, but is no more!



Page 103: Joseph Krolewiecky

When, in the time of the Czar, it was decided to build barracks near Zambrow, it is told that the engineers wanted to erect barracks near Jablonka. However, they demanded a 'tax' from the city in the amount of 100 rubles – and this money was not available, so the barracks were not built. From that time on, Zambrow began to prosper, tradespeople, craftsmen, and small businessmen were drawn to Zambrow and Jablonka, the Lord protect us, became smaller and more shrunken. But no one could take away its pedigree, its ancient pedigree. Its old synagogue bore the stamp of 500 years of existence. The headstones in both of its cemeteries bore testimony to the many generations of Jews who were brought here to their final rest. The new cemetery alone, boasted of headstones more than 300 years old. Not far from the synagogue, there was a live spring of water. It is told that Rabbi Levi-Yitzhak of Berdichev bathed here. When a childhood disease broke out here, may this not even be thought of today, diphtheria, a fast was decreed, and prayers were said for '*Selichot* of sick children.' When this did no good, Rabbi Levi-Yitzhak was brought to town, he who would carry on conversations with The Master of the Universe, as a man converses with his neighbor, in order that he pray for our children. He saw the poverty of the Jews, with several families living in one room, in a crowded condition, and he made use of the phrase from the *Haftarah* of that Week (in Isaiah 28:10): For precept *must be* upon precept, a precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; and he reasoned from this that it was neither in keeping with modesty and not healthy to live this way. It is further told that: R' Levi-Yitzhak was brought to exorcize a demon: Who are you? He replies: A musician. R' Levi-Yitzhak says: I will not set you right, until you sing for me the tune that you sang at a wedding. The demon began to sing, and all the dark names of the dead. So I skipped eating, and fasted with the group, because it took the entire day. Accordingly, that evening, I had to remain for the large and prominent feast.

Apart from the old synagogue and the *Bet HaMedrash*, there were also Hasidic *shtiblakh*. The oldest and biggest could be found with R' Yosheh-Yankl, not far from the church. Not only once, did it happen that at the time of *Shaleshudes*,[51] when the *Hasidim* went into a state of ecstasy, and began to dance – the church bell would start to ring, which would call the faithful to their Saturday evening mass. The Jews always thought that the gentiles did this on purpose. From time to time the *Rebbes* of the various Hasidic sects would come to Jablonka, and they were heartily received. In the year 1936, when I had come to say goodbye to my kin, before my voyage to go to Argentina, I found all the houses broken into, and the window panes broken, and I did not see a living thing in the street. Approaching the house of my parents – I heard a choked voice from the cellar: 'We are hiding ourselves from the '*Nara*'[52] people who are carrying out a pogrom against us...this is how the nationalist Poles prepared the ground for Hitler... I reminded myself: 75 years ago, in 1863, my grandfather hid himself in the cellar of the Polish leaders of the revolution, among them, the nobleman Skarzynski, the father of the Zambrow pharmacist. My grandfather, at that time, risked his life. Today, his grandchildren sit in the same cellar, and are hiding themselves from the Poles... I documented this, at the time, for the Jewish press...

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51 The Yiddish elision of the Hebrew words *shalosh seudot*, referring the the 'third feast' taken on the Sabbath day, usually in middle to late afternoon.

52 Possibly from the Russian word, to burrow, perhaps alluding to people who come out from hiding.



Page 106: *The Young Girls of the School*
Seated at the Center is the Head Teacher, Mr. Gottleib

Destruction

חורבן

In Memory of My Mother

By Bezalel ('Tsalkeh) Yellin

No Yahrzeit candle, for my mother,
Will I light, no.
For I know not to where she has vanished,
I do not know where her resting place is.

I know not where, I know not when,
In the city, the forest, during day, during night,
No one has brought your remains,
To a proper Jewish burial...

Perhaps, my mother dear,
To the last breath, like a heroine,
You struggled with the enemy,
And fell to the desolate field?

Or did the enemy, in a bunker,
Burn you alive,
When you uttered your prayer
And wrung your hands to God?

Perhaps, mother, before death,
You mentioned the names of your children:
'My children, you must remember,
And avenge your mother!'

I have not yet placed a Yahrzeit candle
For my mother,
I know not where, I know not when,
She left this world.

Every day, beloved mother,
Your visage is before me,
So why say Kaddish and
Light a candle for my mother?...

On the Threshold of Doom



Page 109: Jewish Soldiers Serving in the Polish Army

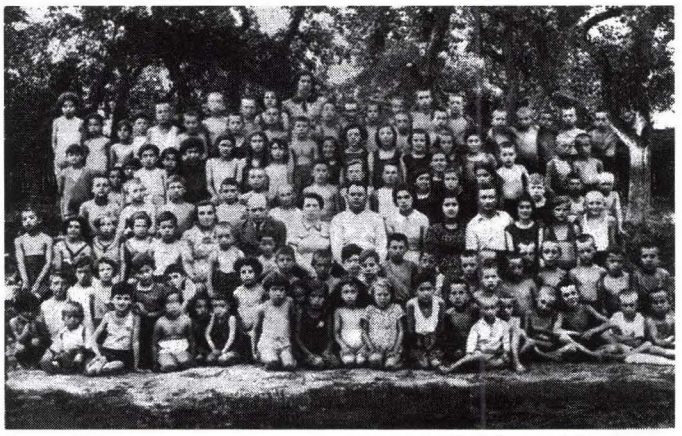
The Last 5-6 Years

The last 5-6 years, before doom overtook the Jewish community of Zambrow, were terrifying. The shine disappeared from this previously mentioned town. The pride of the town's youth vanished. It became a city of the hungry, and the suffering, both physically and emotionally.

There were no citizen's rights, and no rights as human beings. The Poland, which had not been liberated such a long time back, had become 100 times worse that the worst of the Czarist times. A Jew must pay the highest taxes – but he has no right to demand even the most minimal rights as a citizen. If a Jew had a small store, he has to pay all sorts of taxes for it. But the government gives the right to the worst hooligans from the village and the town, to stand at the door of the store, and forcibly prevent anyone to go into the store and thereby let the Jew earn something... legal, plain acts of a pogrom. If the Jew mixes in – he is beaten, and the police do nothing about it: because the Jew mixed in, and violated the law.. is the alibi of the police, and more – a case is put together that the Jew has insulted the Polish eagle, the Polish government – and deserved 3-5 years in jail, or being sent to forced labor (Катopra Работа) in Kartuz-Bereza. The market days are a Hell.

In the good years, the Zambrow shoemakers would provide about 75% of the normal demand for boots by the peasants for the winter, in the surrounding market days, and at cheaper prices during the summer. Both parties were pleased by this: the buyer came home with a pair of new boots, that were inexpensive, and the Jew – made a living. The same also held true for a pair of trousers, a garment, a Boroshkov hat for the winter, and a Maczewieka for the summer. After the merchandise

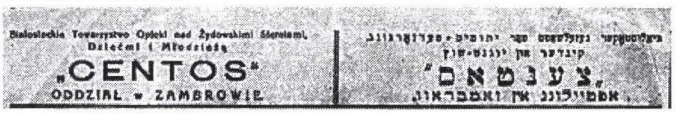
was robbed from the Jewish storage facility, and the Jew beaten bloody – they stopped coming to the fairs, and instead – sat and starved with the wife and children.



Page 110: A Summer Resort for the Sick Children of the Poor from Zambrow, under the Auspices of Centos

A City Hungers

And if a city hungers, everyone goes about in torn clothing, patches on the patches, even on a Sabbath or a Festival holiday, and it is past the point where anyone feels any shame. It is not possible to eat a bit of meat even on the Sabbath, a glass of milk is not available even for the children, a roof is not repaired, even if the rain comes in, a broken window pane is boarded up with wood, even if it keeps out the light of day, the oven is not kept warm, etc. Small Jewish children complain, scrawny from tuberculosis, and the authorities have no obligation to give help. The Sisters of Mercy with their large crucifixes around their necks, who kneel before God and Jesus 10 times a day, and more – cross themselves, when a sick Jewish child is brought to their 'Holy Ghost' hospital, and they cry out in mercy: '*przedziezh to zydek*' – 'oh, it is, a Jewish child!' And they shut the door and do not permit admission...



Page 111: ***Centos***

The Relief Society, Founded in Bialystok with the Aim of Bringing Aid and Comfort to Orphans, Children and Youngsters in General

Who Will Help Me?

And so, the Jew of Zambrow raises his head heavenward and cries out: 'From whence will come my succor?' – So it is with *balebatim* of pedigree, and so it is with the craftsman, the manual laborer, and the common laborer – the proletarian.

And from the Land of Israel come Job's messages. There are not a few descendants of Zambrow there, some well-situated with work, and in their business undertakings, and there the situation is also critical: unrest, assaults, the gates to the land are locked, the sea is a barrier. The eyes are drawn to Zion, there is a striving to obtain release from the Polish Hell – but now that hope is a small one.

However, rays of light became visible from America: Zambrow descendants there, are not silent, and do not sleep the nights, and collect money for their brothers and sisters in the 'old country.'

The Help Committee in Chicago

And ambassadors appear, unappointed ambassadors from amongst the Zambrow scions in America. The Help Committee in Chicago and New York do not abandon their brethren. Every month, a packet of dollars arrives to be divided by the *Hilfskomitet* of the community, who helps the poor without discrimination, especially the poor clergy and the scholars, *Linat HaTzedek*, the Zambrow Sick Fund, which supplied medications, doctors, nurses and sanatoria, maintenance, and healing for the sick of the city, from all walks of life, and the tireless leader in these bad times, Shlomo Dzenchill, the son of Lejzor the Butcher, who is the leader and the father to all of these who are suffering, The Women's Society, that helps the poor women, women going into confinement, etc., in their time of need. The Manual Trades Society, whose Assistance Fund helps out the craftsmen, enabling them to buy raw unfinished goods, on credit, and later to pay this off with income and additional loans for new merchandise, the Savings & Loan Bank, which gave loans to storekeepers to buy merchandise, to *balebatim,* to repair a house, or pay taxes that have been levied against them, and last but not least – the Centos, which provides Jewish children with bread and milk, shoes and fresh air, and saves hundreds of children every year from tuberculosis, and the swollen bellies that come from malnutrition.

Shlomo Dzenchill and Max Stone

The dollars arrive in the name of that decent public servant Shlomo Dzenchill, the man of the people, and he distributes it among the various institutions, and sends receipts back to the brethren in America. We do not have the letters that the Help Committee in Chicago sent to all of the Zambrow institutions. All have been lost along with the addressees themselves. However, we have read the thank you and request letters from them to the committee in Chicago, which were received, thanks to the warm-hearted, loyal and honest secretary, who would answer everyone immediately and quickly sent the needed help – *landsman* and brother **Max Stone**, who [in reality] is none other than Mendl Finkelstein, the son of David Breineh-Pearl's. I remember him quite well, the skinny kid, with the small black, and constantly darting little eyes. According to the letters sent to him – he raised himself to the level of a Joseph in Egypt, who sent sustenance to his brothers in the Land of Canaan...

From a Packet of Letters [53]

To flesh out and illustrate our own words, we include here excerpts from letters that Noah Slowik wrote to his brother Herschel in Israel, from the community *Hilfskomitet, from Linat HaTzedek*, and from Max Stone. Excerpts from other letters are included in the chapter, 'Social Help.'

Jewish Zambrow Seethes...

...It was just a few years back, and the city bubbled. On every street corner there was a 'local' for one or another youth group. Placards hung everywhere, printed and hand-written, done artistically, and inform you: There will be a discussion this evening. Here, a literary-musical evening, there, a presentation, here a concert, there a general assembly, elections, a report from a conference, etc. Today – desolation. Everything has vanished, the youth have fled. Those who remain – have hidden themselves. the Polish authorities – do not permit one to raise one's head. Two sport clubs still exist, on a precarious basis: '*HaPoel*' and '*Gwiazda.*' The first belongs to a wing of the Israel Labor movement, and the second, to the left-wing labor movement – who even Polonized their name (*Der Shtern* has become *Gwiazda.*) They still compete with one another: If one puts on a sports evening in white and blue, the other puts on such an evening in red... From time-to-time, theater groups still come from Warsaw. The people go to get a bit of life from them... just recently we had the 'Vilna Troupe' 'The Happy Band' and lastly, the good orator Rachel Holzer, before she left to go to Australia.

Cultural Struggle Infuses Life...



Page 113: During a Flower Day

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[53] Translator's Note: The Yiddish title uses the rubric '*A Bintl Briv*,' which is a name associated with a famous column of letters published in the *Jewish Daily Forward*. In its day, it was an 'advice column' that in subsequent times was given reprise by the likes of '*Dear Abby*.' I have avoided this rubric in order not to cause confusion, since this content has nothing to do with '*A Bintl Briv*' in the *Forward*.

A breath of life was introduced by cultural competition... Our Rabbi had already given up on the Yiddishist schools. No '*nachas*' is ever going to be gotten from their students. However, from the Hebrew schools, there remains a possibility of salvaging something...

So the Rabbi placed the *Tarbut* school with its teachers into excommunication. The excommunication was carried out to the letter of the law, as it was done in the Middle Ages: A set of Jews were called as witnesses in the *Bet HaMedrash*, black candles were lit, the *shofar* was blown, and the following was said: 'May you be cursed by day, may you be cursed by night'... The *Agudah* and the Revisionists were supportive... the Revisionists did this to take political revenge: their school had been liquidated, because the general Zionists and *Tze'irei Tzion* did not want to support it. This led to a shouting match, and the Zionists called for a mass meeting, together with the parents of the children and declared war on the Rabbi, and provided evidence and justification from *Poskim*, that the Rabbi had acted incorrectly... in the meantime, the Rabbi opened an *Agudah*-School '*Bet Yaakov*,' where the daughter of his second wife was the teacher. This cause 30 girls from *Tarbut* to transfer over to *'Bet Yaakov*.' That night, the Zionist youth knocked out all the window panes in the '*Bet Yaakov*' school... and this brought a bit of life back into the *shtetl*, a struggle between progress and fanaticism...

'Pickets'

Thing are also not tranquil with our neighbors, the gentiles. Here, a pitched battle took place between hooligans – from the villages, who had come to impose that: gentiles should not buy from Jews. So long as all they did was visit trouble on the Jews, nobody stopped them. The police made believe nothing was happening, such as 'picket' – groups of Poles who stand about and assure that no one enter a Jewish store and buy something. If in this process, a Jew was beaten up, a window pane broken, merchandise stolen – the police 'didn't see and didn't hear.' However, when these picket-heroes began to push the politics against the régime – the police intervened, and in the middle of the market, a pitched battle took place and a policeman was knocked down, a platoon leader. All the stores were immediately closed and locked, and the police hid themselves... until police arrived from Lomza, under the leadership of a Police Major. Forty police entered the fray with city and village picketers, and mass arrests took place. Full busloads of arrested people were taken off to Lomza. The peasants fled the city, knocking out the window panes on Jewish stores in the process... all of them were released, except for twelve men, who had mounted a bloody resistance to the police, and they were detained. As a result, 'picketing' was forbidden. However, several weeks later, a delegation of Polish citizens from Zambrow used its influence with Warsaw, to permit the renewal of 'picketing' against the Jewish stores, in which the picketers will make certain not to instigate any sort of pogrom...

The Market



Page 114: Cooperative Shop Operated by Young Seamstresses

What does the market look like now? Of the 95% of the Jewish stores, barely 40% remain, and even these are looking for buyers to take them over... almost every day, a Jewish store shuts down, Christian artists, masons, carpenters, tear down the Jewish sign, and renovate the store... not only businesses – also houses are going over into gentile hands. Jews are thanking God for being rid of these meager assets...the market that once was full of tables – 'warehouses' – that were Jewish: bakers, kerchiefs, soap, goods, shoemakers, tailors, hat makers, pots & pans, furniture, etc. – there is no Jewish footprint remaining...all gentiles...Only two or three tables, off to the side, selling vegetables and fruit only to Jews... The objective of the Poles is: to forcibly take away work and sustenance [from the Jews, and provide it] for the unemployed Christians. But the reality is – the place of the Jewish stores is taken by the rich gentiles, who sell at much higher prices than the Jews, giving bad merchandise, and the unemployed are afraid to speak up...

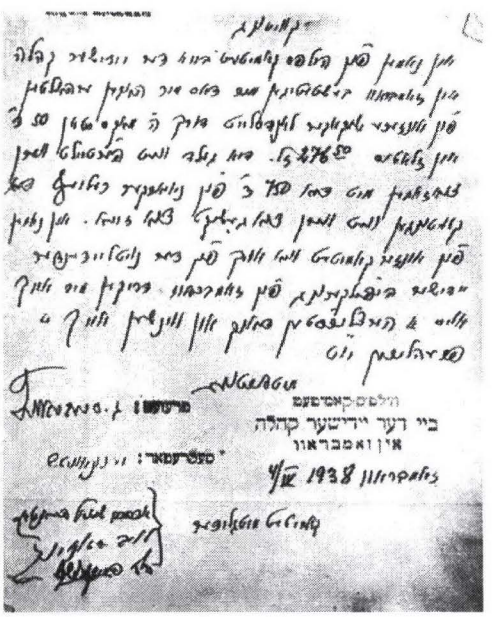
January 12, 1933

Letter Facsimile April 4, 1938

***Hilfskomitet* of the Jewish Community in Zambrow**

To: The Zambrow Help Committee in Chicago

In the name of the *Hilfskomitet* of the Jewish Community of Zambrow, we certify that we have received from our Chicago *landsleit,* through Mr. Max Stone – 50 Dollars (and 276.50 zlotys). The money will be distributed along with the $750.00 from the New York Relief Committee. We will send them the receipts. In the name of our committee, as well as the needy Jewish people of Zambrow, we express our heartiest thanks to you, and our wishes for a Happy Holiday.



Page 115: Letter Facsimile

Signed: Gershon Srebrowicz, President
Y. Dunowicz, Secretary
Committee Members:

Abraham Shmuel Fiontek
Leib Razing
David Finkelstein

Linat HaTzedek

To Brother Max Stone, Secretary of the Help Committee of Zambrow Landsleit in Chicago

12/12/ 19,8[54]

...We have received the fifteen dollars through Mr. Shmuel Finkelstein. We are devastated to hear of the death of R' Zalman Goldman. We immediately called an assembly of mourning, at which we read your letter. We recognized and knew him, his good heart, and his devotion to his Zambrow brethren. In the name of the *Commitet* and many poor and sick, for whom this money will be used, we express our sorrow and wish to convey words of consolation to the widow and the children: 'May you be comforted among those who mourn in Zion and Jerusalem.' May they know of no more ill tidings, and bereavements, and may they look forward to a better day, and may we together fulfill the words: 'From desolation to joy, from a day of mourning to a day of happiness.' We request that you send us the specific day on which R' Zalman passed away, and the name of his father ע"ה, because we will inscribe his name in the *Pinkas* of *Linat Tzedek*, and on the day of Yahrzeit, we will hold a memorial.

In the name of the *Commitet*:

Shlomo Dzenchill, Chairman
Yaakov Odem, Secretary

Letter II

12/7 – 1939

Dear Friend Shlomo Dzenchill,

I have sent 600 zlotys to you for the Zambrow Relief Society, to be divided among the four organizations in Zambrow. The Women's Society – 80 zlotys, *Linat HaTzedek*' – 80 zlotys, The Manual Trades Society – 80 zlotys. To Centos, for the summer colony for the poor children – 360 zlotys. I request that each of the organizations send us an acknowledgment that they have received the funds, just like they did last time.

Max Stone

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[54] A possible typographical error, in which the year very likely was 1938.

Letter III

24/7 – 39

Filled with pain, I must inform you that we have had a great loss. We brought a committed *landsman* to his final resting place, who lost his young life, tragically, while at work. His name is Shepsl ben R' Moshe Kalman Bass. The deceased was active in our organization, and for a time was its treasurer. During his funeral, we gathered up the money that we are now sending to you. We hope that the ensuing money that comes to you from America, will come on occasions that are happy. If possible, it would be appropriate if the children's summer colony this year be named for him in his memory.

In the name of the Zambrow Relief Society
Menachem Stone, Secretary

The Beginning of the End

By Yitzhak Stupnik

I entered my parent's house. A note was already waiting for me on the table: I am obligated to present myself to the military, in the Zambrow barracks.

At the command post, I encountered no small number of my friends, who had already put on military garb. We practically did not speak, we felt what it was that awaited us...

The Jews of the *shtetl* ran about with fear on their faces, trying to provision themselves with food. Mothers stood at the corners of the streets, bidding farewell to their children who were going off to the front.

The Poles, who all the time shrieked that we were aliens – 'altered' their position a bit: our blood was necessary for the Fatherland.

We waited for an order while in military formation. Finally, all of the Zambrow Jews were allocated to one company, to be the first to go into fire...we marched off to the East-Prussian border, during which time the first of the German bombers appeared over Zambrow and destroyed ¾ of the city. We also suffered great losses at the front. Our company lost 130 men, and returned with only 95 men. Then we took up positions behind Nowogród. We dug ourselves into foxholes covered with branches. When the German tanks were to ride over us, we were supposed to blow them up at the point when they ride over our concealed and buried heads...

I fell asleep in the 'grave' while standing, after so many disturbing days and nights. My father then came to me in a dream, with his white head and gray beard, stroking me, and calming me: 'Do not fear, my servant Jacob,' Do not be afraid, my child!...

Thereby, I felt a strong movement in my shoulder: this was my commanding officer, who had ordered me out of the 'grave' because the Polish method of attacking German tanks is certain suicide... we began to move back. It was before nightfall. The Germans detected our company and shot it up. I was wounded in my right foot. We ran for the entire night. Before dawn, with no strength left, without food or drink – we saw that we were surrounded by the enemy...

The Germans transported the able-bodied soldiers off to somewhere in Germany, and the wounded were driven into the church at Yendzev. Despite the fact that I had lost a lot of blood, I jumped the fence of the church, and I went into the *Bet HaMedrash* of the little shtetl, and here I encountered a Jewish family, who immediately changed me into civilian clothing, and with a limp, set out to get back to Zambrow. My parents greeted me with great happiness, let you be wounded, so long as you are alive!' My parents were worried about the fate of my two brothers, Yankl and Moshkeh, who were also at the front, but had no news of them.

There was a panic in the shtetl: the Red Army is leaving, and how long is it before the Germans will kill all of the Jews. Accordingly, the men all hid, and the confused women awaited the surprises of the coming day. We lived in fear of death for two weeks, until finally: the Germans drew back silently, without a word, to the west side. The city remained in a state of chaos, no sort of citizen-militia had been formed. the Red Army entered the city.

The Zambrow Jews breathed more freely: all citizens are equal. Everyone has to work. Collectives and cooperatives were created. Everyone worked at their craft, and made a living. Jews that had no trade, were employed by the Soviets and also earned their bread. Even the very observant Jews, who were far from being in sympathy with communism, saw, in the Red Army, a means to save the oppressed Jews. This example serves to illustrate the fact: On the First of May, many religious Jews marched with a red flag, among them: my father Abraham Shmuel the *Shokhet*, wearing their long *kapotes*, etc.

This 'Red Paradise' did not last long. The Russians drew back, and the Germans took over the city. And it is here that the destruction begins...

A Letter to the Land of Israel

When the Russians Occupied Zambrow

Zambrow, 8.1.1940

My dear son Aryeh,

... We think about you, because we have not heard any news from you for a long time. We received your last postcard. We are all well, and things here are good, we feel free, and Jew and Christian are treated equally...

Israel Kossowsky.

Dear brother Aryeh,

... Fate (or oversight) has spared us. Our family has not suffered from the war and its aftermath. I have returned intact from the field. I obtained work as a bookkeeper in a large business. Mosheki works as a carpenter and Zalman is getting ready to enter the Jewish gymnasium which is opening in Zambrow. You would have never believed this, we have true freedom. Our house has remained intact...

Your brother Yitzhak Kossowsky.



Page 118: Young People Obtaining Schooling After Work

The Teachers are Sitting in the Middle: – Yehoshua Domb, Lola Gordon, Bercheh Sokol, Nathan Smoliar, Pinia Baumkuler

Blood, Fire, and Columns of Smoke [55]

By Yitzhak Golombek

I. Zambrow – My Birthplace

Who among us from Zambrow does not remember our *shtetl* with its precious young people, with its synagogues, its Yeshiva, with its skilled craftsmen, and its workers, who brought honor to the Jewish populace, depriving the gentiles of the canard that Jews are only fit to conduct trade: Jews in Zambrow plowed, sowed, and also reaped.

While being a *shtetl* of *Mitnagdim* – Zambrow also had a reputation from its *Hasidim*.

In the 'Red *Bet HaMedrash* (called that because it was built out of red bricks) it was mostly the occupiers of land that worshiped. In the 'White *Bet HaMedrash*' as it was called in the final years, the *Bet HaMedrash* of the craftsmen, one could come to hear all the wonderful *Maggidim* and orators, that appeared before us in our *shtetl.* The beautiful Zambrow synagogue was a center for the town's intelligentsia. There, on the High Holy Days, one would encounter Jews, who for the entire cycle of the year, had not sat down in a Bet HaMedrash. The synagogue graciously took in all those who came to collect funds for the benefit of the Land of Israel. Neighboring the White *Bet HaMedrash*, was the so-called '*shtibl*,' the [sic: spiritual] home of the *Hasidim* of Zambrow.

The 'Zionist *minyan*,' could be found in Salkind's house, where the activists worshiped with Koczor and Ravikov at their head.

The Jews of Zambrow founded a Manual Trades Bank, a *Gemilut Hasadim* Bank, and a *Bikur Kholim*. Zambrow, which had been small, became a city and a magnet for Jewry. Zambrow, the city of merchants, craftsmen and land leasing, did not know much of the bitter need and deprivation, which never left all the other surrounding small towns. There was a large military camp here, and twice a week there were market days.

In the years 1934 and 1935, Zambrow began to feel the heavy hand of the risen Narodowa Party:[56] they began to boycott Jewish businesses, and beating Jews in the streets. Life became difficult, and unbearable. Young Jewish men organized themselves in order to offer resistance. Once, on a market day, it was on a Tuesday, peasants, who had arrived from the surrounding villages launched a pogrom. They tore out paving stones, and used them to knock out the panes of windows, while robbing stores. Many Jews were wounded. That day remained in the memory of Zambrow as 'The Black Tuesday.' It was from that 'Black Tuesday' that all of the trouble started which Zambrow had to withstand, in the coming years, until its demise.

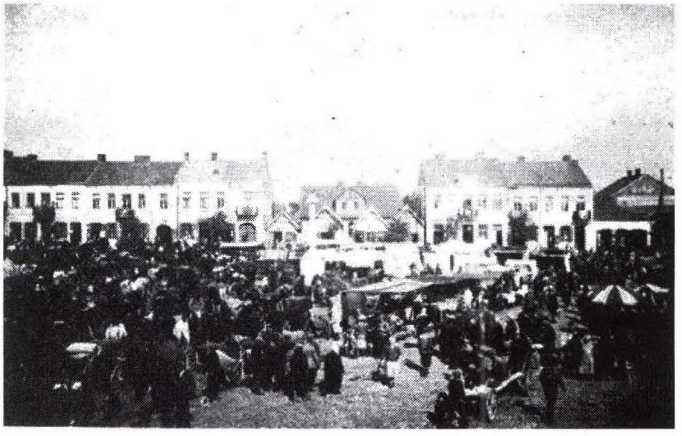
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55 Borrowed from the Passover Haggadah, as an allusion to great destruction.

56 Narodowa Demokracja ND ("*Endecja*") - National Democracy (nationalist). This party had an overtly anti-Semitic platform. They are also referred to as the 'Endekists.'

The young people of Zambrow began to look for ways and means to flee. With great difficulty and the expenditure of much energy, a very few managed to get to the Land of Israel. Many other young people left their ancestral home at that time, and undertook to go all over the world, without any specific goal in mind.

II . The War Between Poland and Russia



Page 121: A Market Day

The outbreak of the war between Poland and Germany heralded the destruction of the Jewish communities. In the year 1939, I returned to Zambrow from the front, as a Polish fighter. It was difficult to recognize the *shtetl.* The side, in the direction of Lomza, and the left wing of the marketplace lay in ruins, gutted by fire. [Also] the Red *Bet HaMedrash* went up in smoke, the house of the Yeshiva, the White *Bet HaMedrash*, and all the surrounding houses. Upon my arrival in Zambrow, the Germans were still there. We had no roof over our head, but my family was intact, and I later heard from people that the Germans still held back their hands from murdering, and did not touch anyone in the *shtetl.* However, a fragment of shrapnel pierced a store, and Leibl Golombek and an additional number of Jews, whose names I do not remember any longer, fell at that time.

After the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the Germans pulled back to the second side of Szumowo, meaning to the Bug River, which was a natural boundary between Germany and Russia, after partitioning Poland.

When the Red Army entered our area, we were overjoyed: the dark terror that weighed heavily on the burned down and impoverished city, lifted, and there was dancing in the streets, the joy being so great – we had gotten rid of the Nazi murderers!

Life in Zambrow began to normalize itself in accordance with the Soviet style. It was our communist youth that had a large part, in the introduction and establishment of the communist way of life. The gentiles immediately changed their skin, and changed their appellation of the Jews away from shame: no more would be heard '*zyd-kommunist*' or '*zyd-spekulant.*' The communist régime did not tarry, and it sentenced masses of Jews for the crime of 'speculation,' for long years of prison.

Slowly, life acquired a certain normalcy to it. Commerce came to a standstill. The *balebatim* got jobs in the government. The larger houses in the city were nationalized. New houses began to be built.

III. The Expulsion of the Jews of Ostrow-Mazowiecki Begins

Like an outpouring that comes from a broken dam, Jews began to come streaming, across the border, into our city. The Germans, on their side of the border began their work of extermination. Thousands of people sat in the streets, without a roof over their heads, and Zambrow did everything within its power to help, and lighten the suffering of the refugees. Meanwhile, the Russian authorities looked away at those events transpiring in our street. But not for long. Some time later, the Russian authorities began to look upon the Jews as spies for Germany, and shipped them off *en masse* to Siberia. Tens of families remained living with their Zambrow relatives, until they were later transferred to Slonim. Our young people were mobilized by the Russians and sent to Russia to serve in the Red Army.

IV . The Russian War in 1941



Page 123: Soldiers Drilling in the Marketplace

The Germans had taken possession of our region beginning from the first day of the war. On the second day, German patrols roamed the streets. In the month of June 1941, the Germans called together the activists of the *shtetl* and said, that they want to have a Jewish representation for the Jewish populace. It was at that time that the first *Judenrat* was created, with R' Gershon Srebrowicz at its head. The first demand that the Germans put forward, was – a financial levy. It was the responsibility of the head [sic: of the *Judenrat*] to provide this 'contribution' in the sum of hundreds of thousands of gold marks, a levy which the German authorities imposed on the Jewish populace.

A failure to provide this contribution at the precisely designated time, placed the lives of tens of Jews in jeopardy. The demands of the Germans became ever more difficult and oppressive. They began to seize Jews and send them to work on the digging of trenches near the Zambrow barracks. Among those seized, on one day, was my father ע"ה. My father told us that, at work, an officer approached

him and asked: 'Jew, what is your occupation? – 'I am a tenant farmer,' my father replied. The German then screamed at him in a wild voice: 'You lie, Jew, you are lying!' He went off, and asked other Jews about my father. Discovering that my father had told the truth, the German called my father away to a side, and asked him to stand on a bench. He called together a number of Germans to look at a Jewish tenant farmer. He questioned my father about his family, about the children, and wanted to know if the children are also tenant farmers. After work, he gave my father a loaf of bread and told him never to come back to work on the digging, but to remain at his work on the land. When our father told this to us, we understood that we needed to hide ourselves...

Living in Zambrow became increasingly more bitter from day to day. One early morning, the Germans went into the Wander *Gasse,* and they seized my uncle Leibl Slowik with his son, Moshe, the old cow-herder and his son-in-law, Leibl Dzenchill, and other additional Jews, whose names I no longer recall. They were taken away – and we never saw them again alive. We were told that they were working here, or there, on roads, and similar stories...

After this incident, Jews began to hide themselves, avoiding the possibility of appearing in the streets. The Germans then took to the *Judenrat* demanding they provide people for labor, most of them for work in the Zambrow barracks. Regarding the 'contributions,' the *Judenrat* failed, not having the resources to satisfy the very high German demands. The members of the *Judenrat* were beaten murderously more than one time. In the end, the Germans dissolved the *Judenrat.* They found a Jew named Glicksman, and gave him full power to set up a new *Judenrat* on a completely different basis. Glicksman, a scion of Grudziadz, was an assimilated Jew without any Jewish feelings, and spoke the German language. He verbally abused the Jews, had bad names for them, and raised his voice to them even higher and more sharply than the Germans. His power over the Jews was practically unconstrained. His police – stern and insolent. If it happened that they could not get what they wanted in a gentle way, they knew very well how to extract it with severity.



Page 125: A Spot in the Marketplace

V . The Sorrowful Tuesday



Page 127: Czyzew Street

The order was given that on August 19, at 5:00 a.m., all the Jews in Zambrow were to assemble on the marketplace. All, except for the small children, have to be in the street. Anyone that will be encountered in a house, will be shot on the spot. Glicksman issued this order. His police force then went from house to house to inform everyone about this issued order. There were many craftsmen that worked in the surrounding villages, so Glicksman's messengers traveled there and brought them back to the city. They were told to dress themselves in their holiday finest. Various rumors began to spread: some said they were to be taken to work; others said that they were looking for communists.

On the day of August 8,[57] at 5:00 a.m., young and old alike in Zambrow, found themselves on the marketplace. At about five o'clock, there appeared armored vehicles with S.S. troops in them, armed with machine guns. They took up a formation surrounding the marketplace. We were arrayed in rows like soldiers. And then the 'work' started. Incidentally, the Poles knew how to keep a secret, that they [sic: the Jews] were to be taken away and killed. They stood behind the houses, and looked out from corners towards the marketplace, waiting for the moment, when they could begin the work of plundering the abandoned city. We, from our places in the marketplace, could see how the company of Poles was forming itself, with bands around their arms. It became very clear to us, what it was that the Poles were intending to do.

The *selektion* then began. The bandits went about between the rows, and selected the best of the young men, and women, and took them out of the rows. They were immediately arranged in groups of five, facing the direction of Lomza, diagonally opposite the Czyzew Street. I was standing with my father and mother, and my two brothers, Israel and Yankl. My brother Moshe, and his wife, stood in a second row. A thought dawned on me and my youngest brother: since another row was formed, selected by Glicksman's men, we were not to stand and wait for the S.S. troops to come to us, and we ran over to the second side of the street, and placed ourselves in that row. And this is how I saw,

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57 The difference in the two dates is not immediately explainable.

five minutes later, how my father with my brother Israel, and the brothers Meir & David Bronack, came to the general row. We stood facing the direction of Bialystok. Later on, it became forbidden for us to look at the second side. I will recall here, that for the elderly in the city, with Rabbi Regensberg at their head, the Germans brought a big freight truck, and took them off in the direction of Warsaw.

Meanwhile the groups were closed. Our group became filled. My brother Moshe, and his wife, were the last ones that finished out the large row, that was headed towards Lomza. The order came to march. The first to move was the group facing Warsaw. After them, we went off in the direction of Czyzew, The group headed toward Warsaw was guarded by Poles carrying staves, all from Zambrow, well-known among the Zambrow populace, and by the S.S. troops. The wailing and keening was indescribable. Mothers ran after children, and children after parents. The Germans opened fire to drive people off the marketplace. The wailing and crying could continue to be heard even very, very far from the city. Little children without parents, parents without children. Entire families were eradicated at one time. A terrible sorrow fell upon those who were left behind. The little children, who remained without parents, were divided up among families. I took Chaim Kuropatwa's child. He was called Yankl, and he became our child – until Auschwitz.

VI . Dealings with the Germans about a Ghetto



Page 129: A Street in Zambrow

The Germans cordoned off the streets that ran parallel to the Czyzew Street, that is, the Yatkowa and Neben *Gasse*, which was to include Szliedziewsky's and Dembrowsky's factories, and the river should be a boundary line. The burgomaster of the city was August Kaufmann, the German, who lived diagonally opposite the cemetery. He confiscated Szliedziewsky's wealth from Gedalia Tykoczinsky ז"ל, and from Dembrowsky – our yard along with the buildings. It looked like the deal was done, but something behind the scenes caused them to regret this and walk away from abandoning their businesses. For us Jews, this change was a matter of great significance. It meant that we would have more room for those who would be taken into the ghetto. Because of this change, things all of a sudden quieted down. And since the space on the two small streets was too crowded for the those Jews who remained, rumors spread that the town council had taken a decision to approach the Germans, and ask them to take away another couple of hundred

Jews, asserting that the severe overcrowding in the ghetto would endanger the health of the Christian populace, which, by the way, would be separated from the ghetto by a barbed wire fence. In the meantime, they began to build a fence, and in the corner of the Bialystok road, near Kaufmann's house, a tower was erected. It became clear, that this enclosed area had been designated to be a ghetto.

VII. The New Aktion



Page 131: The Town on a Saturday

Two weeks and two days later, the Germans again ordered the *Judenrat* to call all of the Jews together on the marketplace, with the same warning, that they will shoot anyone on the spot, who failed to come. Everyone has to appear at the designated location on the marketplace. Everyone, except children. This notification from the Jewish police, engendered a new outbreak of panic, which was anticipated, because they no longer forcibly dragged people along. Whoever could hide themselves did so. I, the rest of my family and the little Yankeleh Kuropatwa, spent the night at our colony under the open sky. At seven o'clock in the morning, the peasants, who had come to the city, were intensely amazed when they found us in the field. They brought us the tidings, that the Germans had, once again, led off many people, men and women. At ten in the morning, I was already at the yard on the Lomza *Gasse*. The Poles had come to see if any of the Jews remained, fully prepared to seize booty. And when they saw me and my brother Yankeleh, they said to me, in amazement: 'You are still here?'

It was harvest time. And since we had just constructed a new barn, small-time peasants came to us, and asked if they could place their grain in a small corner of the barn. Their intent was premeditated: since they expected that I would be taken away, they would come to reclaim the grain they had stored with me, and who would be there to keep them from taking everything?

It was Thursday, September 4. Many people were missing at that time, and to give orders to others as to what they should do, was not possible. Everyone dealt in a way dictated by their own common sense. As we were later told, the Germans raised a hue and cry that they were short on Jews. We thought that the Germans needed Jews to do labor, and therefore, as a result, they would take only the able and young. Accordingly, everyone made an attempt to appear worn out and old. Women put kerchiefs on their heads. The intent of the Germans this time, however, was much worse than before. They seized people randomly, young and old, even pregnant women. 'They are taking us to the

slaughter' the terrifying thought stabbed in our minds. That morning, they were led off in the direction of Bialystok. And as we later found out, they were killed in a forest near Ruti Kasaki. May the Lord Avenge Their Blood.

VIII. The Preparations to Occupy the Ghetto

'Now there will be enough space for the Jews,' the Poles were heard to say.

The Zambrow ghetto was created, but all the Jewish tenant farmers were obliged to remain on their places outside the ghetto, and work their fields. This was the wish of Kishel, the German land farming inspector. It was harvest time, when the grain needed to be gathered in, the potatoes dug up, and to get ready for the winter planting, and he therefore had need of the hands of the Jewish tenant-farmers. The entire population of the ghetto derived help during that time by this. When a Jew was caught outside of the ghetto, he would say that he had been working in the fields with a Jewish tenant-farmer – and this was legitimate.

At the end of September 1941, we were given no more than fifteen minutes of time to go out, that is, to leave our houses, the barns with grain, the machines, horses and cows – and return to the ghetto. My mother, myself and my brother Yankeleh, were taken in by the family of Yudl Husman. Together, we were in a two-story house – the Husman family, Alter Dworzec and we three.

IX. Life in the Ghetto

It was a hard and difficult life. We had many orphaned children. Also, parents that had lost their children. Fate, however, declared, that there would be some solitary families that remained intact. The Zambrow ghetto became a place of refuge for Jews from the surrounding towns. The ghetto was literally the center and gathering point for workers, that the Germans drew from there, for labor gangs to build and pave streets and roads. Our gang worked at breaking stones, and pouring asphalt. All of the Jewish workers worked only for the Germans. There was a gang that worked in the Zambrow barracks, where the Germans had created a camp for Russian prisoners of war.

We lived in the ghetto under a despotic régime of self-governance. Glicksman, the 'Chief Jew' has a police staff under him, and ruled his kingdom with a high hand.

X . A Typhus Epidemic in the Ghetto

The thousands of prisoners in the Zambrow camp fell victim to hunger and typhus. The typhus disease was carried to the ghetto. It was said that since the surrounding fields had been made filthy with the fecal waste from the barracks, that the cucumbers that we ate from those fields carried the typhus bacteria.

Near the river, in the ghetto, we had a hospital. The doctors were Dr. Grundland and Dr. Friedman. The Head Nurse was Masha Slowik. Their dedication was without limit. But their reach was to limited to be of help.

Here, in praise, I wish to recall the lady, Elkeh Kaplan ל"ז, a truly righteous woman, who collected kasha, grits, potatoes, and cooked up a bit of food for the abandoned orphan children.

The ghetto did not know any spiritual life. There was no *Bet HaMedrash*, no school, and there were no resources to be found in the ghetto. In the last months, the Germans permitted the transfer of a new, unfinished house from outside the ghetto. The house was moved, and was set up on the account of the owner, Sender Kaplan. This house became our *Bet HaMedrash*.

In the meantime, a variety of news reached us, brought by refugees. They told of Treblinka near Malkin. The human mind could grasp, and then not grasp what this meant. However, we did grasp that we, too, were exposed to the danger of extermination.

We also received a variety of false reports. Regarding the people who were led away on Tuesday, we were told that they were seen working on a road in Ostrow-Mazowiecki. All of these reports came from gentile mouths, from Poles, that the Germans put up to this. There is a story about a letter from David Bronack, which a Pole named Klosak brought. This Pole had worked steadily for Yossl the Painter, and we knew him well. He demanded 150 marks for the letter from Rivka Bronack. She immediately came running to tell me the news, that the people are alive. We gave the Pole 150 marks, and he gave us the letter. He told us that David Bronack gave him the letter, and apart from this, we could not get another word out of him. In the letter the following was written: 'We are alive and are working on the roads.' Sadly, neither Rivka, nor her son Moshe, could recognize David's handwriting, but because of the many errors that we found in the letter, we understood that this was a fabrication, a means to swindle us out of money.

During the time that I still was living outside the ghetto, Poles told us that they heard from other Poles, who had accompanied Jews along the way, that they were all shot in Glebocz near Szumowo, in an incompletely built Russian fortification, and in this same mass grave, many other Jews were also buried, who were from the area, until the substantial fort, intended for the Russian artillery, was filled up.

XI . Jewish Valuables are Turned Over to be Hidden in Gentile Hands

When life had already lost all semblance of order, all those who remained alive, gave away a large part of their furniture, bed linen, and clothing, to Poles that they knew. And on another day, it was already possible to see how displeased they were, to encounter someone from the family, who knew about these transferred valuables. There were also instances, where Poles immediately refused to return any item, that someone wanted to sell, in order to buy bread, and it became necessary to look for help from the *Judenrat*, meaning from the Germans, to reclaim those items from Polish hands. The Jews of the ghetto were like a thorn in the eyes of our neighbors, the Poles. They would say: 'See, the Jews have been settled in the ghetto, and its like nothing, they are alive. If it were us, we would have died of hunger within a month.'

We began hearing rumors about the liquidation of the ghetto in September. Beinusz Tykoczinsky and I, once when we went together outside the ghetto, ran into Beinusz's good friend Szliedziewsky,

who, under the Russian régime, held the post of Chief of the Fire-fighters Brigade, with Beinusz as an assistant. Szliedziewsky says to Beinusz: 'It goes very badly for the ghetto. This morning, we were given an order to set up a guard over it.' We already knew what this meant, because we had heard from refugees that the Germans always call out the fire-fighters when they are getting ready to liquidate a ghetto. We brought this frightening news into the ghetto, and a panic broke out immediately. Despite this, a couple of days went by, and nothing happened, and the tension subsided.

In those days, a group of comrades, who had left the ghetto, in order to join the partisans in the forests, came back home. This matter was kept in extreme secrecy, so that, God forbid, the news not pass to the Germans by way of an informer. One of the group was Yitzhak Pravda. The group went out of the ghetto well-dressed, shod, and provisioned with a sum of money. In the fields, they encountered remnants of the Russian army, mostly Ukrainians. The Russians and Ukrainians beat them, took away their money, stripped them naked, and barefoot, and drove them away in shame, back to the Germans.

Immediately rumors about the liquidation of the ghetto started up again. As previously already mentioned, the Jewish craftsmen worked exclusively for the Germans. Among them were tailors, shoemakers, furniture makers, and other sorts of trades. One day, the Germans appeared and demanded of the *Judenrat* that they gather up all work, whether finished or unfinished, that the Germans had ordered. The Judenrat police went out to carry out this order. For us, this was the signal, that the danger of liquidation' was near. The ghetto residents, in resignation, and terrorized by fear of death, began to look for stratagems by which to save themselves. Whoever had gentile acquaintances, carried off whatever remnants of goods they had, to have them hidden, or to plead for mercy, that they should hide that individual himself. The work gangs marched into the ghetto. We gathered at the Judenrat, and demanded that Glicksman tell the truth.

XII. Glicksman and His Truth

Glicksman began by addressing his police, and began to shout over the heads of the gathered people: 'What do they want, the dirty Jews? The Germans took away these things in order to exchange them for other things.'

The Zambrow Jews, seasoned from their troubles, and knowing their 'Senior Jew' didn't take him at his word. When nightfall came, everyone took for the barbed wire. The barbed wire was cut, and we fled underneath to the river, near Dembrowsky's and Szliedziewsky's. Men, women, and older children ran, with packs on their backs, to the extent that they had the strength to carry. We fled to the nearest forest. I, and my mother and brother, at about ten o'clock at night, went off in the same direction. In the ghetto, the only ones left were older people, who surrendered to their fate, and children in cradles, that parents were unable to take along. In the late hours of the night, when Glicksman saw that he was left without Jews, he, and his entire coterie also fled and hid themselves, out of fear of the Germans. Those who arrived in the forest later, told that it had already become difficult to get out of the ghetto, because the Germans had surrounded it.

XIII. Zambrow Jews in the Forest

Fate decreed that one misfortune should be worst than the next. Fleeing into the forest, we knew, was no salvation. However, people, when exposed to the danger of being killed, will run anywhere in the world, driven by an inner force, an impetus, that cannot be contained. Having run a considerable distance, one remains standing, spent, without any strength left, and one asks the other: 'Where do we go?' The only answer that could be was: 'Into the forest!' And how will they be able to live, even if just being able to regain some equilibrium – men, women, and children, hungry, beaten down, without help, surrounded with a murderous foe on all sides? – To this there was no answer.

My mother, my brother and I, dragged ourselves to the Czeczork Forest. We sought out a hiding place between shrubs, and settled ourselves there. We hear people running nearby, hearing their heavy breathing and mumbling. The night was long, and didn't want to end. Very early, we heard a great disturbance in the forest, the sound of a struggle. I crawled out of my ditch, and immediately see in front of me a cadre of Poles, in groups of five, six, or more, with staves and scythes in their hands, pushing the Jews, and striking out left and right. The Jews cry, begging for mercy from their beaters, pleading with them to take bribes, ha – money, gold – that is what they want though. Having gotten rid of one band, we immediately fall into the hands of a second band. With each band, little *shkotzim* ran along, from seven to ten years of age. They climbed under every shrub, making noise, whistling, shouting: '*Żydy! Żydy! Żydy!*' I crawled back into my hiding place and sought counsel with my mother and brother, as to what we should do. I had just begun to get back into our ditch, and we have a small *shaygetz* near us, and he is shouting at the top of his lungs: '*Żydy! Żydy! Żydy!*' He lets out a whistle, and the adults immediately came running. As soon as they saw us, they remained standing, and called out, 'Oh, Jesus, the Golombeks!' They covered the mouth of the little rat, and sat down next to us. As beaten down and broken as we were, we burst out in tears.

Who were these *shkotzim*? A person named Proszenski lived on our street. His sons worked for us as shepherds. In more recent times, one of them worked for August Kaufmann, the burgomaster of the city, and sitting on the ground with us, beside the shrub, he told us: in the city placards were hung about, which carried the notice that for the number of Jews that will be apprehended and brought to the gendarmerie, a reward of an amount of money and a bottle of whiskey will be given. I was able to sense that they had already gotten the whiskey. The placard also warned that, whoever would hide a Jew, will be shot on the spot.

It was under these circumstances that the bandits from the city went into the forest – and after them, came the bands [sic: of predators] from the village.

They let us go free, and we proceeded further. After each bit of the journey that we took, they confronted us. They robbed us, and took away whatever they could find that we had. There were those among them who did not allow themselves to be bought off. They did as follows: One of them, who was their representative, first robbed us, emptying what he could of the Jews, after which they began to beat and drive the people further. The seized a couple of tens of Jews this way, and drove

them into a barn in Czeczork. There, others were waiting, who led the Jews into the city. At first, resistance was offered to them, struggling with the assailants. In the end, however, it was necessary to capitulate. We were too weak to defend ourselves against murderous enemies, who only wanted our deaths, in order that they could have all our assets, which would remain as booty for them to plunder. There was not a single Christian family that didn't have one sort of Jewish valuable or another in their possession.

In this manner, the Poles rounded up hundreds of people that day. When the sun was getting ready to set, we also were apprehended, and driven into the barn, which we found to be full of captured Jews. They robbed us of our money, watches, good clothing and shoes. We gathered up money among ourselves, dollars, and shoved it into the hands of the leader of the Polish band from the city. It was now clear to us that they will enthusiastically lead us to be killed.

XIV. We Leave Our Mother in the Forest

Night fell. Again, I sought counsel with my mother, as to what we should do. One of the members of the band told us, after he had received money from us: 'Run!' So my mother said: 'Children, if you can save yourselves, run away from here! Let at least a memory of this family remain.' The first one to run was my brother Yankeleh ז"ל. And as soon as Yankeleh went off, my mother said to me: 'Yitzhak'l try to save yourself.' It was difficult for me to get myself moving. I was suffering from a broken foot that I had gotten from an accident while working in Szumowo. Despite this, with the elastic bandage, which wound around my thigh down to my toes, with all of my strength, I undertook to flee with all of the others. In this way, I reached Bielicki's garden. There, I hid myself in a field booth – and had a long bitter cry.

In the still of the night, yet another cry was carried in my direction, the crying voice of someone who thought they were talking to themselves: 'There is no longer a mother, there is no longer a brother, alone like a rock.' I tear out of the booth, and I run to the fence. I call out: 'Yankeleh!' – but I didn't see him any further. In the morning, my neighbors told me that Yankeleh stayed with them, and left in the night, and they do not know where he went. Later on, I was also told, that had he not left immediately, he would have been taken away with all of the others to the Zambrow barracks.

Glicksman, and his men, as I heard it told, presented themselves to the Germans, and he will be the 'Senior Jew' in the concentration camp.

XV. My Third Day in the Forest

With the setting of the sun, the Germans surrounded the forest, and opened fire. After that, they penetrated deeper into the forest, accompanied by Poles. They again trapped a lot of Jews in their dragnet. The truth of the matter is, that life had become repulsive to these people, and almost all of them had decided to give themselves up.

The Poles did not permit any Jews to come into their homes. When they sold you a bit of bread, they demanded that you immediately go away.

In the garden of a peasant, I found a pit full of potatoes, which had a cover with a small door. That is where I made a place for myself to live. During the day, I wandered about the fields. At night, I went into the potato pit. I loitered about this way for two weeks, in the field and in the pit. With each passing day, I saw fewer and fewer Jews. The Poles told me that all are going into the barracks of their own free will, and they are given food there. the peasants provide potatoes for the camp. Hearing that the people were alive, I decided to give myself up and go to see if I could help my mother. After 14 days of living in a pit, I presented myself to the gendarmerie. I was led to the ghetto. That was the gathering point for all the apprehended Jews, and those who came of their own volition. The fire fighters escorted the captured as far as the barracks. I asked to be allowed to go into my home, to take a towel. I was permitted to do this, but not to take any more than fifteen minutes. I could not negotiate the street in the ghetto, which was covered in mountains of pots, bottles, pieces of furniture, utensils, shoes, linen, clothing, pillows, books, copies of the Pentateuch, and volumes of the Talmud. Every home – was barricaded by loose goods, that had been extracted from the houses. I made a path for myself through this, to our house. The door was broken open, and everything from the drawers had been pulled out, thrown about on the floor, linens, clothing, shoes, – the furniture upended.

The Zambrow Jews, who had gone off to the fields, took practically nothing with them. They left everything behind, abandoned to be plundered. By contrast, the Jews from Lomza arrived in the camp with bedding, pots and utensils.

XVI. The March to the Barracks

The Jews wore Yellow badges, in the form of a Jewish star, on the front and back. The Jews were forbidden to walk on the sidewalk, being compelled to walk in the middle of the street, where the sewer waste ran. Marching over then Zambrow Kosciuszko *Gasse*, I saw Poles, residents of Zambrow and its vicinity, workers, merchants, peasants. All looked to the side, but I saw one *shikseh* who was weeping, as she went by. This was a woman of the streets in Zambrow whom I knew...

XVII. Entry into the New Hell

A German soldier with a death's head insignia on his helmet, opens up the barrier into the stalag and lets us in. Up to then, the Poles had fulfilled their sacred mission – and then left. There is stalag number one, number two, and tower number 3. Thanks to God, I too, am now in Hell. People are running back and forth. Later, I found out that this was the day when the peasants had delivered a contingent of potatoes for the camp. But this is a story unto itself, as we see so later on.

I inquire about as to where Jews from Zambrow might be found. I am told, that block 3 will be designated for them, and those from Lomza will occupy block 1 and 2. Block 4 held Czyzew, Wyszków and its vicinity. In block 5 – Jews gathered up from various places.

When I arrived at the block, I was surrounded on all sides. They began to tell me about the great extent of the hunger. As previously mentioned, those from Zambrow fled into the forest empty-handed; no protection for their skin, not a pot to cook in, and a pail in which to hold water was totally out of the question. In order to get water into the camp, it was necessary to let each other down, one over another, into a deep well. The people from Zambrow were eager to draw water, but they had no pail at hand – so, they are suffering this way for two weeks already, slavering for a drop of water.

I immediately began to inquire: 'Who has seen my mother?' I was led up to the second story. In the large chambers, with plank cots in three levels, lost in a forest of people, I found my mother ע"ה.

This is the picture: The 'residence' was the middle one of the three levels of cots, running the length of the wall, cots banged together from boards and poles. Shrunken in there, sat my beloved mother. Seeing me approach her, she gave herself a push, tearing herself to me, but then immediately falling back for lack of any strength. I jumped up onto the cot, and my first words were: 'Mama, forgive me, for having left you alone.' With tears in her eyes, my mother said to me: ' But I was the one who sent you away. Do you have any news of Yankeleh?'

In the meantime, my entire family gathered around us: my uncle Slowik's two daughters, Chaya and Masha, my uncle Isaac with the children, Rivka Bronack with two daughters and a son, and a little daughter of my brother Moshe, aged 2 ½ years old. She was called Racheleh. I had brought a couple of loaves of bread with me, and I divided this and in doing so, bought myself into both worlds.

My mother told me, that she is living this entire time on the ration of bread that she receives. She had not tasted so much as a single spoonful of soup. Once she ascended to her place on the bunk bed, she no longer stirred from there. And this was also the case with many other women. I sat myself on the bunk bed. When my mother regained some of her composure, she spoke further:

'Since I figured that I had lost my children, and that I would not live much longer than another couple of days, I took my packet of jewelry, and threw it under the bunk bed. Since life has ended, and there are no children, what do I need it for?' This packet held the legacy of generations – precious stones, golden chains, rings and small watches.

The lowest bunk bed was about ten centimeters from the ground. I went underneath, found a stick, and swept the packet out from underneath.

In the kitchen, they gave out a bit of soup and kasha. So I went down, and got a bit of soup, '*vashka*' in the lingo of the camp, in the pot that I had brought with me.

A little later, I went down again, to see and hear what was going on downstairs. Again a running around, a movement, with shooting that came immediately after it. I barely am able to become aware of what had happened, that they are now first carrying dead out on stretchers.

I must say here, that the Jews from Lomza were far more bold than the ones from Zambrow. On that day, potatoes were brought into the camp, and the hungry, pity them, let themselves loose wildly at the fully-laden wagons, and began to grab potatoes. The soldiers at their posts opened fire, and about five or six people fell. Despite this, a number of wagons were emptied of their contents. People fell on the potatoes and began to gnaw them while they were still raw, as if they were good, sap-filled apples.

Everyone in the camp could not understand why I had come. There is no way back from here. A barbed wire fence – and then another fence. And such surveillance! Hemmed in, walled in, unable to penetrate through, and getting close to the barbed wire means a faster death from a bullet in the back. Death here is sown left and right.

XVIII. Getting Out – And Returning

A long row of wagons, loaded with potatoes, stood outside. The peasants, who had to wait in the line for unloading, came inside with whips in their hands, to take a look at the '*Żyds.*' In this way, I encountered a peasant that I knew, inside the barracks, and struck up a conversation with him. And in talking to him this way, I took off the yellow star from myself, put up the collar of my short jacket, and took the whip out of the hands of the peasant. The peasant did not catch on to what was going on. I ask him: 'Where is your horse and wagon?' He says: 'On the other side of the fence.' So I gesture to him: 'Come out of here. Here they shoot. Why do you want to loiter around here? Come to the wagon.' We went out of the barracks and continued talking. I passed the first guard tower uneventfully, then the second tower, and I am now at the main tower. My heart was pounding out of fear, but I steeled myself. And here, I was out free. I am proceeding without my clothes badge, in the middle of the sidewalk, to spite the Poles. I am stared at, indeed, with wonder, but I continue along my way, insolently, with feigned haughtiness. I come to the ghetto, do not go in through the gate, but through the back way, on the side of Dunowicz's fence. Big Tiska, a wall-builder encounters me. He says: 'You were led out of here this morning, how is it that you are coming here?' I say: 'The camp commander sent me to bring back wood for the kitchen.' In the meantime, I grabbed a neighbor of mine, Litwinsky, with a horse and wagon. He tells me that he works in the city council, transporting things from the ghetto. I give him 30 marks for him to transport a bit of wood for me. The gentile permitted himself to deal. I entered my own home, and began to pack up some things with which to cover myself, grabbed a blanket, a bit of underwear, a couple of towels. More to the point, I wanted to take some pots, bowls, plates. And this was mostly to be retrieved from the street. Also, I found small sacks of food, that the peasants felt was not worth taking away, lying in the street. I filled a wagon with pots and pans and utensils, with kasha flour, with everything that came to my hand. On top, over all of these things, I put wood that the gentile through out through the gate; I went out, the way I came in – through the back way. I went into a bakery, and bought ten old loaves of bread, literally dried out, for which I was charged a high price. With everything loaded onto the wagon, I am now traveling with a great deal of merchandise. I had made up with the gentile, that at the gate, he should say that he was sent from the ghetto for the Jews, with me as the interpreter. And that is the way it was. I said that I was coming from the forest, and that the bread was for my family in the camp. With luck, I got through the first gate. And they then

permit you to go on further, because they know that there is no way back. I ride over to the third block. I was greeted with great astonishment and tumult; from whence did I bring all of these things? Previously, I had not entrusted my great secret to anyone, so they would not know what I was thinking. I recall the elderly Chaimsohn falling upon by neck and beginning to kiss me.

When the wood was taken down from the wagon, and they saw the pots and pans and utensils, there ensued such a melee of grabbing, that if I had not grabbed a pot for myself, I would have been left with nothing. Also, all the sacks of food were taken up, but the people, afterwards, brought back part of it for me. On that day, I brought life back into that block, and one could now see people standing by the kitchen with plates and pots.

On that day, Donkland, a man from Zambrow, approached me, who had been a former police-lieutenant in the ghetto, and wearing an official armband in the camp, and he asked me, if I wanted to come and live with him in his room, designated for a couple of families, since it was within his discretion to pick whom he wants, and since I am a 'sidekick' he wants to include me in these couple of families. I was taken into this room with my mother. We got a corner, and in a couple of days time, my brother Yankeleh arrived in the camp.

They were a few tens of Jews near Sędziwuje in a barn on a field (also Chaim Kaufman was in this group). The Poles turned them in to the German gendarmerie. From that time on, Yankeleh was with me.

XIX. The Bread of Hunger

Life in the camp got progressively harder and harder from day to day. The little children that were with us, began to die off. Also, our child, who remained after my brother Moshe and Sarah Bronack, died. The typhus epidemic grew more intense, spreading death and desolation around. A sort of hospital was set up, in a large and cold barracks. Using straw as the bedding, like in a horse stable, and covered in rags, the sick expired from the cold, in pain, and agony beyond human capacity.

It was the months of November-December. Tortured by hunger, strategies were sought for how to get bread brought in from the outside. Those who have survived must surely remember how we used to drain the effluent from the latrines in the barracks, and take it away in large barrels as the refuse with which to fertilize the fields. It was believed, as previously already mentioned, that it was this waste material that was the cause of the typhus epidemic in the camp. Using these very same barrels, the carriers of the typhus plague, they were employed for smuggling bread into the camp. We struck a deal with a certain gentile, a latrine worker, that on the way back from the field with an empty barrel, he should fill the vessel with a sack full of bread loaves for the camp. We paid for the bread with gold and precious stones, which not only once, had traces on it of having been in that barrel. We literally fought with one another, almost like a war, for this bread. And indeed, this war led to the revelation of this 'conspiracy.'

The Germans would never have thought that these vessels would be used to conceal food. And when the fighting broke out in the camp, an open war, the Germans investigated, and discovered the reason for it. They beat up the latrine barrels, but there was no one that was willing to take the cover off the barrel and stick his head inside – well, the Germans then used long insulated tongs...

There were a group of 'toughs' in the block that wanted to seize the 'monopoly' over the bread. The police in the block oversight were partners in this endeavor. On the other side, stood people starved, totally spent, furiously impelled to buy a morsel of bread for themselves. Who were these 'toughs?' The ringleaders were Arky and Barky. The police had to get involved in order to make a compromise: on one day, the 'toughs' will get the bread, and on the next day – the remainder of the block.

About the camp, there straggled people who were mere shadows, who begged for their own death. The block became infested with lice. The lice crawled all over the clothing, those items that were already worn, but had to be worn during the day, and slept in at night. With the coming of the day, some of the clothing was taken off, first the overcoat, and put out on the snow, in order to freeze the lice. This aired out coat was then put on again, and some other part of the clothing was taken off to be frozen.

XX. The Lomza Refugees Plan to Escape

The Lomza Jews had organized themselves to plan a breakout from the camp. And one out of every ten of the group volunteered to crawl through the barbed wire, and to reach the fence. The post watch opened fire on them, but nobody was hit, and the group escaped. At a second time, a group of Zambrow and Lomza residents also attempted an escape. Once again, they were fired upon. Shmulkeh Golombek's son who had blundered into the barbed wire, and was wounded, was captured, this being the younger one from Dobczyn and another young man from Zambrow, whose name I do not remember. The third one captured was from Lomza. The executioners carried out their vengeance in a very basic way, in front of the people as witnesses. All the Jews in the camp were driven together on a large plaza, and the three young boys were brought there, one of them crippled in the feet. Four S.S. troops stepped forward to do whipping, holding *nagaikas*.[58] All three were stood up, and one after another, were whipped with the braided *nagaikas*. Two of the beat them as if they were threshing wheat with grain in them, and each one was given thirty lashes. After the whipping, they were taken to the hospital and they died there.

I had previously told that the peasants used to provide potatoes for the camp. Two of the young men, who has gotten away in the first escape, from the Lomza group, bought a horse and wagon, and brought potatoes, pretending to be peasants. Hidden under the potatoes, they would smuggle meat, butter, and other sorts of foodstuffs. Young men, from Zambrow and Lomza, worked in the commissary of the camp, and they knew how to conceal these provisions. One time the boys dealt with this stuff in an unguarded fashion, perhaps out of too much confidence in themselves. They

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[58] A *nagaika* is a short braided leather whip favored by Cossacks.

came into the camp with a wagon load of potatoes, at a time when there was no one else with them, real peasants. The guards inspected these 'peasants' and they were not satisfied. A patrol was sent after the wagon. An investigation and search was conducted in the wagon, and they found what they found. For this crime of bringing food to the hungry, the Germans sentenced these two young men to death. They were hung in the barracks. If I am not mistaken, they were called Itzik and Yudkeleh. I knew them from the labor camp at Szumowo. We were there together, both people from Lomza and Zambrow.

Once again, all contact and dealing with the outside world was broken off. We literally expired from hunger. Death hovered over our heads.

The dead from the camp were interred in the Zambrow cemetery. There was a small wagon in the camp, on which, day-after-day, the dead were placed, and under watch, taken to the cemetery. The graves were dug to a depth of forty centimeters, and lightly covered with the earth. On the way back, usually we bought a bite of bread, onions, and potatoes from the residents that lived beside the cemetery. On time, Schaja Henoch's son-in-law came along. He stepped away from the funeral procession to buy bread. When he returned, the soldier shot him. He was shot, and we were ordered to bury him immediately. People told that when he was lain in his grave, his still showed signs of life.

XXI. The News

It was the middle of December, 1941. Seeing that the typhus epidemic grew more intense, and people were dying on a daily basis, either from typhus or from hunger, the commandant of the camp, on one day, called our representatives to him and said to them as follows: 'I see that you are all going to die here, and I have decided to convey you 'further to the east,' near Odessa. There you will work and remain alive. Here, we have no work for you. Tell you brethren, that they should comport themselves quietly and in an orderly fashion, and we will deal with them in a good way.'

When the representatives came back to the blocks, and relayed the news to us, there was no doubt in any mind that this means – Treblinka! The exhausted ones were shaken, and the spirit of rebellion rose in the blocks. This was true with the people from Zambrow and Lomza, as by those from Czyzew and Wyszków. Voices were raised that said: 'We will be killed here, but not to go to Treblinka!' Talk began about a rebellion. With bare fists, however, nothing could be done, and there could be no talk about having arms and ammunition. And even, at the price of hundreds of victims, we were to break through the gates, where would we go? We had already fled once – and come back, or having fallen again back into German hands.

XXII. Glicksman Feigns 'Making an Effort'

As we understood it, Glicksman, along with the senior from Lomza, Muszinsky, again made a deal with the camp commandant. Now the commandant no longer spoke of Odessa, but only about a labor camp. I am not certain if he actually called out the name of Auschwitz.

At this time, that name was not familiar to us. The commandant said that in this labor camp there were factories, and he promised that we will have the same seniors and leaders there. That is what was communicated in that hall, that after long negotiations, that Glicksman engaged in, that we will not be sent 'to the east' but rather to a second camp.

XXIII. The Preparations for the Trip

Life has become repulsive, and it is not possible to continue this way!' – You could hear this in every conversation. People, who were half-dead, for whom there are no words to describe their misfortune, gave up on everything, making peace with their dark fate. In the meantime, news reached us, all manner of rumors. First the Lomza block would travel. The transports will depart by night. The extraordinary situation will be clarified. The people in all the other blocks will remain confined, not even permitted to stick their heads out from their confinement, and it is forbidden to light candles.

Between the eighth and the tenth of January 1942, the 'work' began. In the middle of the night, movement began in the first block. Immediately short shots were heard, and there was no lack of victims. The same took place on the second night, in the second block. And now comes our turn: block number three. I think it was about eleven o'clock at night. A fresh newly fallen snow shone in the window with its pristine whiteness. We began to drag ourselves out of the barracks to a rear gate. There was a deathly silence all around. We felt like we were going on our last walk. No one brought so much as a word to their lips, as if everyone, simultaneously, had turned to stone. We go, and fall in the snow. One person helps another. Each one has a pack on their backs. On the other side of the gate there was a long row of sleighs and wagons waiting for us. One way or another, we got on board. The entourage moves. There are a hundred sleighs and wagons. I was among the last. I am not among those who are in any hurry. It didn't matter to me if I was the last one to die. We are traveling in the direction of Czyzew, to the train station. On the way, once again, I spoke my thought out loud: 'Perhaps we should flee?' My mother was silent and didn't utter a word. This time she didn't say 'yes' and not 'no.' She was mumbling with her lips as if she were reciting the *Tehillim*. Yankeleh said: 'I no long will flee. I have nowhere to flee to. The Poles drive you out, turn you over to the Germans. There is no Jewish settlement. Where am I going to go?' I myself lacked nimbleness on my feet, and I had decided to stay with my mother. And Yankeleh added: 'Whatever happens to you, will happen to me.' And so we traveled. The road was strewn with frozen people who had fallen off the wagons. Sleighs came up from the rear, and collected them. I will never forget this terrifying trip.

XXIV. On the Train Station at Czyzew

Dawn began to break when we arrived at the Czyzew station platform. A chain of about 50-60 freight cars stood there. We were driven across the icy stretch. Those who were frozen were dragged by the head, and the feet, and thrown into the wagons. As to the living, about 50 were crammed into each car, and the doors sealed from the outside. And this way, we stood and froze for long hours. In the end, the train moved. After riding for a couple of hours, we again remained

standing. We are expiring from the cold, oppressed by hunger and thirst. We lick the ice from the rivets on the sides of the wagon, that had grown up on their large steel heads.

In my car were: Velvel the Fisher with is wife and little daughter; Elkeh, Meir-Yankl Golombek's daughter with children. We still harbored the thought that, despite all, we were being taken to Treblinka. When we arrived at the Malkin station, and the train stopped there, a frightful panic immediately broke out. We knew that from Malkin, one rode into a forest, and the distance is not more than from ten to fifteen minutes a ride. Velvel's little daughter began to tremble and spasm over her entire body, and she screamed that she did not want to die. Following here, everyone broke out into bitter wailing. I sat stonily in a corner, and looked at my watch. Five, six, seven minutes... ten minutes...fifteen minutes. We are proceeding to travel further. Who can convey the agony of that moment. 'Yes' – Velvel says to me – 'Glicksman didn't deceive us after all. Indeed, we are not going to Treblinka, just as he said.' Velvel, who belonged to the police staff, knew Glicksman and his ways well.

XXV. Not to Treblinka!

We are happy with our newly won life. Not Treblinka, well, then it can be whatever it will be. And, lo, once again we remain standing at a station platform, parallel to our train. My Yankeleh sticks his head out. 'Yitzhak, it is a military train,' he says to me. And the kitchen stands exactly diagonally opposite my little window. Since Yankeleh had worked for the Germans, he spoke German quite well, and so he says to the cook: 'We are refugees, can we ask for something to drink?' The cook says: 'Give me a pot, and I will give you coffee.' I had a small bowl with me, that we used as a urinal in the train car. It was quickly wiped out, and Yankeleh stuck it out between the grating on the little window, that went up and down, and in the blink of an eye, we had a bowl full of black coffee (at the time that the bowl was on the way from the kitchen to our little window, a soldier shot twice in that direction. However, the bowl came into our hands intact). We divided the coffee by drops, and everyone got a taste of it. We were happy: not Treblinka, and to that, we even got a bit of black coffee – well, there must be a God in heaven! But this joy did not last for long.

After two days and two nights of travel, we finally came to a junction. Taking down the covering from the grated window, we saw a lit up area with large excavation machinery. The snow had covered hills and vales. These were the chambers of Birkenau, Auschwitz.

And if so, are these the machines used to dig graves? Is it here that we will come to our eternal rest? Meanwhile, a variety of ideas came to us. Velvel says: 'If they let us take our packages, this will be a sign for life; and if, God forbid not – it means that we need nothing anymore, it will be a sign of death.' We hear a noise, and it sounds Jewish. Yiddish is being spoken. What a joy, we are among Jews. A wagon platform arrived with pickaxes and spades, Several tens of people in pajamas, who speak Yiddish, led by Germans in uniform, and it was about midnight, going from Friday to Saturday. They immediately went to work. The locks on the doors were covered with ice, and they were hacked apart with the pickaxes. They began shouting 'Everyone out! Everyone down!' They

began to hit us with batons over the head. In a minute an entire movement started, and an alarm broke out. Around us, there stretched a long line of freight trucks, covered in black tarpaulins. We hear the command: 'Into the trucks, up!' The unloading was hellish, like out of a nightmare. You immediately saw a pile of people. Frozen, fainted, half-dead. And I saw one, who had pulled his overcoat over his head to protect against the cold, and he was beaten with batons, and thrown onto the huge pile of people. Another command: 'Women separate! Men separate! To the Trucks!' And the freight trucks are soon overfilled. I remain with my mother and brother, locked and impoverished in the great trap. We see how men and women are picked off. They are set out in rows of five. The job of the selection was being conducted by German officers. A significantly large number were picked out. The Germans don't let anyone through. We see the way people tear themselves away to come into the ranks of those selected, and they are driven back. And here my mother said: 'Run children, maybe you will be able to save yourselves.' We exchanged kisses with our dear mother. She remained standing with outstretched arms, and tears were flowing from her eyes. In a moment, we no longer saw her.

We get closer to the row which is very strongly inspected. The big German shouts at us: 'No more room, locked!' We force ourselves over to him. We present ourselves anyway. He takes us in with a glance. Two handsome young men. He asks me: 'What is your occupation?' I answer: 'Construction workers.' And Yankeleh says: ' I am a gardener.' 'Remain here!' the German says. And in this fashion, we were the last two who had the privilege of being in that group.

When we left that place, dawn had already begun to break. God had begun to look down upon his great handiwork. On the killing field, the mountain of the dead, frozen, beaten, and half-dead remained. They waited for new freight trucks to arrive and take them away, because they could not walk under their own power. I remember that Chaim the Harness Maker wanted to push himself into that line. But everyone had received the order to lock [arms] and not let anyone else in. Pitiably, all he got was a whack in the head with a baton, and he was driven away. A minute earlier, before the lined were closed, Bendet Pekarewicz the watchmaker smuggled himself in. We begin to march. That is, those Zambrow Jews able to work, approximately a hundred in number. What the number of the women was, I do not know, but I gathered that it was much less. The remaining Jews of the Sacred Congregation of the Jews of Zambrow, were killed that same night in the gas chambers.

XXVI. The March to the Birkenau Camp

The march began with beating and kicking, with pushing and hitting with clubs and rifles. We came to a large tent. We were taken inside, and turned over to the hands of the camp people, dressed in pajamas.

This was the dress in the camp. We were arrayed in two rows. Those who were occupied with us, were Jews, big, strong young men. They shout like the Germans, and also hit like the Germans. My Yankeleh says: 'See, it is possible to make a German out of a Jew.' One, the senior among them, gives his speech. The first greeting was accompanied by a hail of curse words. listen up! Do you know what Auschwitz is? You came here by yourselves, you were brought here in chains. So, damn

your father! Turn over your dollars, gold and precious stones. If any of these things are found with you after the bath, he will go directly to the ovens. That is a *'K.L.' 'Kein Leben.*[59]' You go in through a gate, and you go up to God through the chimney. You understand, that here, you need nothing!' He goes through the row this way, stops at an individual and asks: 'What, you are not pleased?' – raises his hand and delivers a hard blow to the face.

A blanket is spread out – and immediately a sum of money fell on it, along with watches, Golden chains, and rings. Who could take the risk of trying to conceal something valuable on his person? After this welcome, a number of us were granted a small dish of hot kasha. In this time, less robust five or six men had fallen down from lack of strength, lying by the door, lacking the strength to get up on their own. After eating, the procedure began of etching us with a tattoo number on the arm. When this was over, we were told we would be taken to bathe.

XXVII. Into the Bath!

They lead us out of this barrack and bring us to a second barrack. This is the location of the baths. We are given the order: 'Undress!' To strip naked, immediately outside at the entrance to the barrack. We strip off our lice-filled, but warm clothing, and we stand naked as the day we were born in the frosty outdoors. 'Wait a bit, another party is bathing right now. They will come out soon.' We wait this way for about a half an hour, frozen, contracted from the cold. Our clothing was cleaned off. Finally, with luck, we are going into the bath. Barbers were waiting for us with hair-cutting machines, and they took to us, to shear off the hair from our heads. After the haircut, we went and stood under the spigots. Water is pouring onto us, water as cold as ice. A number of us first take to having a drink. Imagine if you will, how great the thirst was, that oppressed us.

After the bath, we were driven to a disinfection station. We were made to sit on benches, like in a bath house, no comparison intended, and released a bit of steam onto us. After this, regardless of how wet we were, we were driven into yet another large barrack. Here, we were allocated clothing. 'Fall out into rows!' – the order was given. And again a speech, with the same theme: 'anyone who might steal an extra shirt, or a legging for the feet, will immediately go into the oven!' Shirts are given to some, drawers, pants a jacket, a pair of shoes with leggings. Shivering from the cold, we donned these rags. Some got three-quarter trousers, others shoes, that could barely be put on the feet. There was no covering for the totally shorn heads.

Now, Polish guards take us over. We are told, that we are going to Block 21. Again, we stand, petrified by the cold, under an open sky. We wait until everyone gets dressed.

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[59] No Living.

XXVIII. Block Number 21

Finally, the 'party' begins to move. We wind through, in a serpentine path, through small streets of barracks. We come to Block 21. 'Remain standing!' – the block senior orders. We remain standing. And another order: 'Undress, and enter the block one at a time!' We undressed on the snow, and we waited. We are allowed in, one at a time. I happened to be among the first. Inside, near the entrance, there was the camp doctor, not a German. He begins to examine me. As previously mentioned, I wore a bandage on my right foot. I had already torn off the lower part of it, but the top part still adhered to me, even to the point of having melded with my skin. 'What is this?' – the doctor asks me. I explain to him that I received a blow to my leg, when I worked for the Germans, and this was put on me then. He asked me to sit down, and to raise myself fifteen times, and when I did this, he let me through. And this is how several went through the examination, and if someone displeased the doctor, he made note of the tattoo number on his arm.

Now we go to sleep. The bunks are concrete, with five people to a compartment. And on the concrete there was a blanket and two coveralls. We arranged ourselves on the hard bunks, and immediately fell asleep. [After] a couple of hours of deep sleep, and they are shouting already: 'Get up!' We tear open our eyes, and bandits are already standing there with irons and shovels and they are banging on our feet. The feet stick out of the bunks, because we lay stretched out straight, like herring in a barrel. We jump up from our sleeping place, but they don't permit you to get dressed. Nobody indicated doing more than pulling on one's trousers. We ran barefoot, and completed getting dressed on the snow. We received an order to fall in by pairs and straighten the line – and remain standing, not to move from the spot. We stand, and stand, shivering from the intense cold. After standing like this for two long hours, we were allowed inside and given a meal. It consisted of a soup made from green leaves with kasha, and a potato in it. Barely having swallowed the bit of food with the ardor of the hungry, and another order resounds: 'Out!' Once again, we are standing outside in the cold. Clutches of people steal up to us, curious. 'Where do you come from?' – they ask. We hear that the new transports are being taken for work in the factories and coal mines of Buna. 'And if not, you will have our fate.' It is superfluous to say that we envied those who were already dead.

When night fell, we were admitted into the barrack. We were given a bit of black coffee – and to sleep. And do you think we are allowed to sleep? In the middle of the night – an alarm. 'Get up!' We raise our heads. An order: look at the number on your arm!' The senior of the house calls out numbers. And since the group knew what this implied, nobody replied when his number was called. We also knew who they were looking for, because they themselves told us that the doctor had taken down their names. From what I can remember, among the listed were: Bendet Pekarewicz, Kazatzky, Konopiata, and a Finkelstein, who lived with an American widow on the Wodna *Gasse*, and the widow's son, and a few others whose names I no longer remember.

Since calling the names out was proving futile, the guards, who were mostly Poles and Ukrainians, grabbed the shovels and began beat people on their heads and feet. Again we were chased outside naked. Outside, a very frightening snowstorm was raging that night. Half-dead, not one of us was able to utter a single word. The block chief took up a position, and began anew to call out the

numbers, but the numbers that he was really looking for, he kept until last. All of us were let back into the barrack and they detained those sought out of doors. Now the guards took themselves to the job of killing out in the street. The frightening screams from those being tortured, which reached us in the barrack... Kazatzky's plaintive whining.. slowly grew still, and still they kept hearing the dull thud of the shovels, and the tired breathing of the beaters, We never again saw our beaten and tortured brethren again. The block chief ordered the dead to be dragged to Block 5, which was the last station to the crematorium.

XXIX. We Travel to Buna

We stayed in Birkenau for seven days, several days with the same tribulations and severe tortures. A piece of bread with marmalade – and then driven out of the barrack to stand until the meal of a bit of soup with kasha was served. After this meal, again, having to stand on one's feet in the cold. In the evening black coffee brewed from leaves. We never got more than one piece of bread a day. This is how we lived for seven days. Every day, and every hour, was more than we wanted, being not more than a delay from dying, because we had already seen the dead. Hunger and cold began to devour people. One spark of hope possibly remained with part of us: perhaps we will be sent to Buna. There, we heard, people worked, some in a factory, others in the coal mines, and food was given. One morning, when we were driven to stand out in the street, the Block chief arrived with a smile in his moustaches. 'Well, you have luck,' he said. 'You are going to Buna. My block has been selected for this purpose.' Well, good, a joy. It doesn't matter what else will happen, so long as we get out of this Hell. On the second day, they brought us to the barrack with the bath. There, we were examined by the camp doctor. After this, we were given new clothing. When we came out of the bath, we were turned over to the hands of an S.S. command, and we went out to travel. The distance from Birkenau to Buna was about 40 kilometers. After two hours of marching, we were brought into a fine building. This was a bath house with the best and newest appointments. Here, we bathed ourselves, and went through a thorough disinfection. We also were given a portion of bread, and set out on our journey again.

Coming out of the bath, I started to get sharp pains in my foot. My brother Yankeleh & Moshe Bronack propped me up from both sides, otherwise I would not have been able to continue. Late in the night, we came to this new Garden of Eden. Again we were driven to the bath barrack, and again we went through a disinfection. Finally, we were led into a large barrack, a hall, which had rows of beds, three-tiered, with two blankets on each bed. After a lecture, which was given to us by a German Jew with a thick club for splitting heads, we were finally allocated beds. It was the first night, in many long months, that we slept like people, covered with a blanket. A new spark of hope stole into our hearts: who knows, maybe they will give us something to eat... when we go out to work, it may be possible to go on living. Here, we are told, we will remain for two weeks time, meaning, until we regain some of our strength, and after that, we will go to work.

In the morning, we made our beds. Since I was a veteran soldier, I made my bed, and my brother Yankeleh's bed, which was next to mine, like I had learned to do in the army barracks. The report-preparer, an S.S. man, came for inspection in the hall, and he stopped by our beds. He called over

the house chief, and ordered him to bring the two who occupied these beds. We were presented to him, and he designated us to do the work of making the beds and keep all the beds in the hall in order. This was a big deal for us, because every morning, we would be driven out into the street to march and sing German songs, as if we were in the military.

On the third morning, very early, the S.S. man came again to us for an inspection. We were not yet finished doing our work on the beds. I immediately hear 'Come here!' I run over to him. He begins to shout in a wild voice: 'Is this how you make a bed?' and delivers a blow with all his might , with a fist to my face. I immediately spit out two of my cheek teeth. With this comes a second shout: 'Stand at attention!' Like I have a choice here? I remain at attention, bloodied, and he hits me again with his fist, in the second cheek, and knocks out two more of my teeth. I am missing these teeth to this day.

XXX. The Typhus in Buna

Already, in the first days in the new resting place, the result of the physical deterioration to which we were subject, began to manifest itself among the survivors of the Zambrow Jews. Many instances of sickness occurred, headaches, sore throats, congestion, and we had no way to deal with it. To go to the doctor in the hospital meant – 'going into the oven.' One girded one's self to overcome the symptoms, and hid them so long as was possible to conceal the signs of illness. Among the first of our sick was Chaimsohn's son-in-law, who when he arrived in the camp was a healthy young man. When he was bedridden by fever, he had no choice, and was compelled to go to the doctor. He did not return. This was the way several tens of people went away from us.

As for me, my vision began to blur. One day, I was holding myself together with all my might, and then another day. This lasted until I ended up lying on the floor between two beds (it was forbidden to lay down on a bed during the day). I said goodbye to my dear brother, and with all my friends and townsfolk, with the thought that they will never see me again. My brother and Moshe Bronack escorted me to the hospital. There they took my temperature – and no longer permitted me to leave. They established that everyone that had arrived on our transport that came to the hospital was sick with typhus. Every day, from the hospital, nine out of ten of the sick were taken away into the 'oven,' and only one – to the hospital in Auschwitz. After an examination by the S.S. doctor, we were divided into groups. When the hospital attendants gave us portions of bread, they didn't fail to remark thereby: 'this is the last bread you will ever eat.' We are standing and waiting in groups of three and five. My group consisted of three. I no longer remember who the other people were, I only know that they were not from Zambrow.

Transport trucks came to the hospital, and the sick were chased outside, naked and barefoot, in a meager shirt. The S.S. troops would grab people by the head and feet, and throw them into the trucks. My group was last. After an hour of waiting, came our row. We are driven out, like all the others, naked. We were standing in Dutch Sabots, and we were forced to leave them behind and proceed barefoot. Not far from the door, was a Red Cross car. An S.S. man alights, opens the door, and lets us in. He takes the papers and asks: 'This is all the shit?' We bid Buna farewell.

XXXI. In the Hospital

The truth was, that it was all the same to us, wherever they were taking us. We all were running a high fever, and we were badly affected by the cold. We bundled ourselves together and jumped like a ball. After a fifteen to twenty minute ride, the automobile came to a halt and stood still. The door opened. I look around. It is literally a city. Red walls. I read on the big sign: 'Hospital.' We are taken into a long corridor. There is a cement floor. Doors open one against the other. After a long wait on the cold floor, we were taken into a washroom. Here, we were taken over by Poles. The first greeting we received was: 'Clients for the oven.' And they began to 'work' on us. They let a stream of ice-cold water on us from a water hose, until we lay unconscious. Two Poles, took hold of me by my head and feet, carried me into a house. The house chief took note of the number on my arm. I was thrown onto the middle bed of a three level bunk bed. The bed was not more than 65 centimeters wide, but I was not, God forbid, on that bed alone, but with another sick person. I remember enough that my neighbor was as hot as fire, and I was a cold as ice. We embraced each other, and in this way, I fell asleep. In the morning, when I awoke, I was immobilized as if I was held in iron pliers, in the arms of my bed companion, and with great difficulty disentangled myself from him. The young man was dead...

As to medicines, they didn't know about such things in this hospital. The ill were kept there until they either got through their disease, or gave up the ghost. After three weeks of torture and suffering, I was able to leave the hospital – and go back into the camp. It was the camp of Auschwitz.

In the year 1943, a person, meaning a Jew, could expect to endure in Auschwitz for at most three months time. The camp had twenty thousand people in it – Poles, Russians, French, Germans, Jews, Belgians, Dutch. The principal spokespersons in the camp were the Poles. The human stock was turned over continuously. New transports full of Jews kept on coming. A large part of the people were sent to work, and the rest – into the gas ovens. At all times, the camp held the same number of people. Those that fell, were replaced with newcomers. After two weeks of work, all that remained of a person was skin and bones. Added to this, people were beaten with staves unto death. Auschwitz produced thousands of dead every day. Non-Jews there were able to get packages from home, and letters once a month. Only on us, the Jews, did that great anger fall. Death stood ever ready behind us.

In Auschwitz, factories were constructed to make arms. I worked on building the ammunition factory. We were about 600 workers, mostly Jews, and Christian '*Kapos*.' Germans, Poles, and in part also German Jews, worked in the good commands, as in the camp, in the factories, under a roof.

Approximately in May 1943, I met up with Bendet Sosnowiec in my division of a hundred that were carrying bricks to the building. He told me that Koszcewa could be found in Auschwitz, [and] Plotki *Adon-Olam* of Ostrow-Mazowiecki. There was a son-in-law of Zelig from the brick works. From them I heard that everyone from Buna was taken back to Birkenau, and there all the Jews from Zambrow gave up the ghost.

XXXII. The Murder Combination Auschwitz-Birkenau

Auschwitz (called Ashpitzin in Yiddish, Oswiecim in Polish) lies between the Weisel [sic: Vistula] and Salto.[60] Birkenau (Brzezinka) is one large swamp, and in 1944, when the German army retreated from the east, I worked there in erecting barracks for the German Air Command. On the swamp, was



Page 158: The Unforgettable School Students, Beloved and Pleasant in Life



built the great death factory with four large chimneys, which in one day, could cremate between 40,000 and 50,000 people.

As previously told, men and women were held in Auschwitz from every nation in Europe, but only the Jews were killed without stopping. All manner of bizarre deaths were visited on people in Auschwitz, as was the case, for example in Blocks 10 and 11, where the most beautiful women were held, on whom to perform experiments; torturing them, cutting them, sterilizing them, after which they were either shot or gassed. There were also hospitals in Auschwitz, where Jews were brought

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60 Likely the Sola River, a tributary of the Vistula that runs through Auschwitz.

every two weeks for examination. and from there led off in light shirts to the gas chambers. Every month, each block had a quota of 50 men on transport, this means to have them cremated after they had been tortured by hunger. No Christians were taken in such *aktionen*. In 1944, in the course of several days, it is estimated that up to 50,000 French Jews were transported to Auschwitz, and they were gassed. The ovens could not cremate that many, and so they dug pits in which they were cremated. In the factory where I worked, at a distance of five kilometers from that place, it was necessary to shut the windows because of the stench, that was not possible to stand. Some time later, Hungarian Jews were brought, and others, in the same number. A Jew that remained alive after 6 months of being in Auschwitz, was an exception, one out of a thousand. Over one million Jews were exterminated in Auschwitz. Their ashes were spread out over the fields around Birkenau, and saturated their swamps. The black road that led to the crematoria is pressed with human ash and bone. The clothes of a million people, their shoes, gold teeth, glasses, not to mention jewelry, money, valuable papers – everything was precisely sorted and taken off to Germany. That is the way the Germans conducted their war.

In the year 1944, there really was an uprising in one crematorium, but regrettably, not one young man was able to save his own life. Allied airplanes bombed Auschwitz, but no bomb ever struck a crematorium. A bomb fell in the block where Bendet Sosnowiec was, and he was wounded in the arm.

This murder combination operated this way until January 1945. On January 22, I left Auschwitz through the gate that had on it the inscription '*Arbeit Macht Frei*'...

Black Tuesday

By Yitzhak Golda

(A Chapter from my book, "In the Wolf's Talons")



Page 159: I. Golda

It is Monday at dusk, the evening of the *aktion* of August 22, 1941. This is an unforgettable date for us, scions of Zambrow.

On that very day, immediately in the morning, the sun appeared in the sky. However, it rapidly vanished under the black clouds that covered it like a mask. Silence, silence reigned in the street, not a hint of a breeze, as it was a prelude to a thunderstorm. The air was stifling and smelled of gunpowder.

The Jewish populace was expecting something of a decree; each and every one of us knew very well, and had heard of what had happened in the vicinity, and what had happened to the Jews of Szumowo. The Christian populace, meanwhile, also was looking forward to this, in a similar manner, and they later told us everything, how the Jews were tortured: they were ordered to carry out all of the Torah scrolls from the *Bet HaMedrash* onto a pyre of wood, and then burned, forcing them to sing and dance around the fire. After this, all of them [sic: the Jews] were frightfully tortured to death.

We would listen to stories like this every day. Some of the people believed them. However, there were many Jews who simply deluded themselves, and they believed that what had happened in their vicinity would not be true for them, but rather that the Christians are trying to panic the Jews. They would especially comfort themselves in the following way: Zambrow is after all a work center, in which the majority of the Jews work for the Germans. Therefore, such a thing could not happen in our location.

People went about harboring these kinds of illusions. They, the Germans, however, looked upon everyone in the same manner, like a butcher looking at a fowl he is readying to slaughter. There were no 'better Jews' to the Germans, all of us looked the same to them, one sooner, the other later. We Zambrow Jews were among the later ones. And indeed, during that quiet nightfall, the 'Black Terrorists' (S. S.), as they were called, found it desirable to travel to us in Zambrow.

It was still twilight, when first on the Lomza *Gasse*, a taxi appeared, and after the taxi, a freight truck, covered in a black tarpaulin. As it happens, at that moment, I was returning from a friend, and needed to cut through the 'Swietokrzyska' *Gasse*[61] to reach my house, on the Molishev *Gasse* (at that time there was not yet a ghetto). Along the way, I was able to observe this. I immediately understood what was up here. They immediately rode to the city gendarmerie, which was formerly the headquarters of the Magistrate. Immediately a German flag appeared with a swastika in the middle, fluttering at the tip of a high pole, which stood beside the gendarmerie. Police, and all of the S. S. troops entered the command post.

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61 'Holy Cross' Street.

I immediately went home to tell what I had seen, and consulted with the family about what we should do. I thought that, in the house, they did not yet know about this new development. However, when I arrived home, my older brother Ber'l was in the house. At that same time, he had also returned from the street, was also at the '*Judenrat*' and related that the '*Judenrat*' had received an order, that the entire Jewish community is to be notified that at 5:00 a.m. the next morning, all Jews over the age of 15, are to gather on the marketplace. As to what purpose – the '*Judenrat*' itself didn't know.

Hearing this sad news, it became dark and bitter for us. We began to decide what it was we had to do. Our brother Ber'l, added something else: Pruszynski the musician, a Christian, told him that one should not go out into the streets on the morrow, because there is going to be an '*aktion*,' and many men will be taken away to be shot. The Christian told us he had heard this from reliable sources, and was not lying (as happened later on). Therefore, my brother said, my plan is that we will not go to turn ourselves in tomorrow, to the *Angel of Death*, but we should find some place to hide ourselves. All of us were then of a mind not to go to the assembly point.

My brother-in-law, Zaydkeh was not at home, he was with an acquaintance, but in the middle of this discussion, he happened to arrive, and gave us entirely different news. He related that he was at the '*Judenrat*' and said that everyone has to be at the assembly point and there is no danger. The Germans merely wish to take people who are able to work. Anyone who does not appear at that place will be considered the same as a political criminal. Well, my brother-in-law said, he said we should trust in God, and what will be – will be.

My brother-in-law's words affected everyone greatly, and the initiative for everyone to attempt to hide was dissipated. Because of this, we decided, that early in the morning, we would all go to the assembly point. except for my brother Berl ז"ל, who hid along with those who did not wish to go there.

It is night. My mother ז"ל prepared fresh undergarments for everyone. We dress in our better clothing, getting ourselves ready, as if for a wedding. We do not get undressed before going to sleep, but rather, lay down in all our clothes. And so, we await 5:00 a.m. in the morning...

On that morning, Tuesday, August 23, is a date that no surviving Zambrow Jew who lived through that time will ever forget, because we, scions of Zambrow, paid entirely too dear a price. The best and most presentable of our youth torn away from us on that day, never again to return.

The clock struck 4:30 a.m. I wiped the sleep out of my eyes, and reminded myself that in less than a half hour we will be standing before the Day of Judgment. A shiver ran through my bones. I quickly got out of bed. My father, and his brother-in-law ז"ל had been up for some time already, covered in their prayer shawls, reciting individual prayers.

The early morning rays of the sun were beginning to penetrate through the windows. It will be a nice day... the birds were already singing the praises of a beautiful nature. Everything was normal, as if

there were no war even going on. More than anyone else, I envied the birds at that moment, who were so free and fortunate, and don't know anything about 'Black Terrorists,' about any '*aktion,*' and other decrees that we, the pitiable, sinful Jews, all have to endure.

Time, however, did not stand still. It was shortly before five o'clock, and we have to go to the assembly point. At that moment, we heard knocking at the window, this being a member of the '*Judenrat*' I think it was 'Itcheh Pomp' and the second person with him – one of the Jewish police, I think 'Arkeh Bick.' Both were soaked and all sweaty from running around the Jewish houses to tell everyone to gather at the assembly point. Itcheh Pomp quickly said that we were to depart for the assembly point, because almost everyone is already gathered there.

We all immediately set out for the street, and my brother Berl ז"ל was going along with us, but midway, he disappeared, away from us. As he later told us, he took a risky chance at that moment. During the entire time of the '*aktion*,' he stood under a wall to the side, and observed everything that happened from that spot.

When we had all arrived at the assembly point, about 3,000 people already stood arrayed in ranks: the men separate and the women separate, all arranged in straight rows, just like at a military parade. As I learned later on, we came a little too late, because other Jews had been standing there since four o'clock in the morning... because of this, we were that more anxious to quickly fall into the ranks, so the Germans would not notice us. My mother and sister stood themselves in the ranks of the women, and my father and I and my brother-in-law – among the men.

A deathly quiet reigned on the street. All eyes were turned in the direction where the truck with the black tarpaulin stood, and where the S. S. troops in their black, Death's Head uniforms. All were dressed festively. In total, they were only eight men. All were visibly dead drunk, talking among themselves, laughing, and banging with their rubber truncheons against the shined German insignias on their boots.

On the wooden walk that went around the marketplace, groups of people from the Christian populace began to assemble, to look at what was being done to this small group of Jews. The S. S. troops, however, do not permit them to stand by, and order the Polish police with the white armbands – to break up these small circles. The Christians jump into the gates of the houses, and look out from there, at leisure, at the beautiful spectacle that is going to be made of the Jews. They spoke among themselves, and made signs with their hands, one to another, as if they were carrying on a serious debate. No one, not even their neighbors scrutinized them as carefully as I did: I understood what they had to say very well, and what they were gesticulating about. I understood that they were already arguing over those Jewish assets, and how to divide up that booty.... I saw in their faces, how they took such satisfaction from our misfortune. I understood it all, and entreated God in heaven not to let them live to realize their wishes.

The '*selektion*' is at its peak intensity. The S. S. troops, with their truncheons in hand, go about among the people, examining each Jew from head to toe, and those with whom they are satisfied,

are told to step out into a second line, both men and women. In general, they took one out of every three Jews, and ordered him to also stand among those who were 'selected.' At that moment of the '*selektion*,' the people were so confused, that nobody understood what was going on, and what to do. There were, in fact, quite a number of people who simply ran over to the group that was selected. From all of this, it is possible to see how far the Nazis could go, in deceiving a mass of people, so that there would be no chaos or panic, that they should not perceive that they were not being selected for death, but life, meaning – to go for labor.

This '*selektion*' lasted until ten o'clock in the morning. The crowd was already worn out from standing so long on their feet. During that time, everyone silently recited their confession in their heart, because no one could know whose fate it would be to remain among the living. Beside me, in the line, stood the Zambrow Yeshiva Headmaster, called R' Yudl. I can still see him before my eyes (he was later taken away with the other Jews from the 'barracks', to Auschwitz and killed there). At that time, he was standing with a bowed head, and murmured something silently. His long black beard was pressed under the folds of his overcoat, in order that the S. S. troops not take him for an old man. But as the S. S. man went by, he rather calmly raised his head and looked the murderer square in the eye. The Jewish police, that wore white armbands during the '*selektion,*' and who were certain that nothing would happen to them, and because of this their senior, Glicksman ordered them to stand in a separate line. The '*Judenrat'* also stood in a separate line. The members of the '*Judenrat*' as well as those of the police, pulled over many of their relatives to the 'selected' ranks – at the last moment, when the entire colony had already begun to move in order to leave the location. Thanks to this, they were spared from death. This was also the case with Zarembsky, whom Isaac Sukharewicz (a '*Judenrat*' member) had saved. The rest of the people, who had no connection to someone in the 'Judenrat' or the police – were taken away, literally like sheep, to the slaughter.

The Rabbi, Rabbi Regensberg ז"ל, did not go out onto the street during the time of the *aktion*, because he felt very weak at that time, but despite this, he wanted to be among all of the Jews. However, the 'Senior Jew' Glicksman did not permit him to come out to the marketplace, and promised him that nothing bad will happen. However, as it later became evident, even Glicksman's assurances did not help. One of the S. S. men called over the 'Senior Jew' and asked about the Rabbi of the city. He replied that the Rabbi was ill, and cannot come out to the assembly point. They immediately ordered the Jewish police to bring the Rabbi. It did not take long, and two Jewish policemen were seen supporting the Rabbi under his arms, directly to the place where the truck stood that was covered in the black tarpaulin (we later named this vehicle the '*Chevra Kadisha* Wagon'). The S. S. ordered that a stool be brought out for the Rabbi. When the stool was already placed beside the truck, they ordered the Jewish police to take the Rabbi under his arms, and help him get into the truck. The Rabbi thanked them for their 'helpfulness' but got into the truck by himself. It is worth noting that, at the time, the Rabbi was 95 years old. At the time, he was counted among the oldest Rabbis in all of Poland, and it was pitiably his fate to be brought down by such murderous hands. Anyone who did not see how the Rabbi took his leave of all the members of the '*Judenrat*' who stood nearby, since no other people were permitted near to that place, could not have had their hearts torn into little pieces watching his great sorrow from a distance. When the Rabbi was already seated under the black tarpaulin of the '*Chevra Kadisha* Wagon,' the S. S. murderers

gathered together seven other Jews, all of whom were old. Among them was an elderly Jewish man, a *Melamed* from Jablonka. At the time that all of these seven elderly men were standing near the truck, getting ready to board it, this elderly man felt a need to relieve himself. The old man, not thinking, dropped his trousers in front of the S. S. murderer, and they immediately understood what the oldster wanted to do, and he was ordered to quickly get off the street, and return immediately. They did not send a guard with him. The oldster had enough presence of mind not to come back, and to fool these 'wise' guys. They paid no attention to the fact that the old man did not return, and together with the Rabbi, they boarded the remaining old men onto the truck, and took them off in the direction of Szumowo-Glebocz. As soon as they had disposed of the elderly, they ordered the 'selected' ones to begin moving. As the '*Judenrat*' subsequently certified, this colony consisted of 1500 people, of which 600 were women. Women who had small children with them – were not taken. The best, and most beautiful of the young people of our city, on that day, were taken away by the Germans to Szumowo. All of them there were driven into the synagogue building, and from there, by truck, fifty people at a time, they were taken to the execution place in the Glebocz Forest. At ten o'clock that night – all of them were already dead. The transport of this colony of people took place in the following manner: at the front and rear taxis rode with two S. S. troops, who were accompanied by four Polish policemen. with rubber truncheons in their hands. In this manner, a group of 12 men led a host of 1500 people to the slaughter!

The tragic moment was when the entire colony was taken from the marketplace on the Ostroger *Gasse*, down the hill, in the direction of Szumowo-Ostrog-Mazowiecki. Those remaining behind still stood under guard by the remaining S. S. troops on the street. A wailing and a cry went up from the women and children. A frightful panic seized everyone. The S. S. troops immediately took up their arms and began to shoot directly at the people. At that moment, I happened to be standing by the pump which was in the middle of the street. A line of women stood immediately beside the pump. As soon as they heard the shooting, they began to flee. And as they ran, an elderly woman, right in front of my eyes, fell down, not far from me, having been struck by a bullet to the heart. She was immediately covered in blood. The shooting, however, did not last very long, because the crowd became afraid and it calmed down. Once again, the S. S. troops ordered everyone to get into lines, according to age. The first were a group of 15 to 30 year olds. At that time, I wad 17 years old. I put myself into this group. A fat S. S. trooper ordered us not to make chaos or start a panic, and one at a time, we should run home. Our group was close to 500 people. Seeing that we were set free, we fled however quickly we could, in order not to stand there, and look into the eyes of the murderer.

Not knowing the fate of my family, I came running home. I felt myself to be fortunate, that I encountered my father and mother, brother and sister, who were also saved in this way from the *selektion*, as I was. On seeing my sister's sorrow, who mourned her husband, who had fallen in among the 'seized,' all our satisfaction was spoiled. We wanted to comfort ourselves, as did all the Jews in that time did, with the feeling that these people had only been taken away to do labor, and that one day, they would return. My sister refused to be comforted, and cried whiningly...

On that day, it was *Tisha B'Av* in our house, and this is the way it was in all Jewish homes in which some member of a family was missing. This is how the *aktion* of the 'Black Tuesday' came to an

end. This was a day in which we paid with 1500 young innocent martyrs. An unforgettable chapter for those of us survivors from Zambrow.

The Eye-Witness Account of a Christian

After Black Tuesday, after they took away 1500 people, various rumors spread about their fate. Some were comforted and others – were saddened. It must be said that the larger part of the populace allowed itself to be lulled by false hopes: nothing bad will happen to those people that were taken away. They will work for a specific period of time, and afterwards they will peaceably be sent home. They could not grasp, in their mind, how civilized people could permit so many people to be slaughtered. But there were others who understood the situation differently: this was an extermination initiative, and we will never see them again. However, the one thing no one was able to arrive at, was where were all of these people killed. This was a secret. And our family was the only one that was privileged to uncover this secret, thanks to our father ז"ל, who had many connections with the area Christians.

My entire family was killed, and unfortunately did not live to see the liberation, so that they could personally be able to tell this. The details that I relate here, were the eye witness account of a Christian, Stefan Moszalowski, who does not live far from the place where the butchery took place.

A short time after 'Black Tuesday,' a Christian by the name of Stefan Moszalowski came to us, from the village of Glebocz. He came especially to relate the entire story, because he had heard that my brother-in-law had fallen among these hapless people. Before telling us, he made us all swear not to tell anyone, because he was terribly afraid of the Germans. My father ז"ל, was therefore compelled to assure him that nobody would be told. We took this Christian into a second room, where there were no unfamiliar people, and locked the door. The Christian then began to speak in this manner:

On that same Tuesday, a nice day, the hay in the fields that had been cut for some time, and was as dry as pepper, needed to be gathered quickly from the fields, because if the rains came, it would get wet again. I was therefore hurried in conveying the hay, shortly before sunset. I was riding with my wagon full of hay back home, from the other side of the forest, and it was necessary to cross through a small part of the forest itself. Even before I got to the forest, I could hear heavy machine gun fire, and the loud outcries of people. I could not grasp what was going on here. I thought this to be maneuvers being conducted by the German soldiers. But afterwards, I recollected the large pit, that I, and other people from our village had dug. At that time, the Germans told us, when we asked them, why this pit was being dug, that this was a place to 'store potatoes.' Now, while riding along, everything became clear to me: in place of potatoes, they had filled this space with human bodies...

The Christian continues his story: I draw near to the forest, and the sounds of shooting and shouting suddenly stop, and it becomes still. Just as I entered the forest, the entire spectacle was yet again repeated: shooting again, and again, the outcries. Along the path through the forest that I was traveling, it was not possible to pass by and not behold the scene that I later saw with my own eyes, because the pit lay about 50 meters to the left of the road. Once again, it became still for a while.

I saw nothing. Suddenly, I hear a thick masculine voice, in German: '*Halt!*' And I had no sooner turned my head to the left, than I saw a German soldier with a machine gun on his back, crawling out from between the trees, coming right at me, and so I remained still. The German approached me immediately and ordered me to get down from the wagon, I debarked the wagon, with my crop in hand. And I then immediately ask him what he wants of me. He motioned with his hand that I should go with him, because he wants to show me something. His speech was a little bit German and a little bit Polish, and because of this I could understand what he wanted from me. I went with him. It did not take long, and we reached the place of execution. A terrifying picture unfolded before my eyes, when I saw the pit full of fresh corpses that lay like herring packed in a barrel, one thrown on top of the other, twitching like fish on dry land. Around the pit stood about 20 S. S. troops, all visibly dead drunk, watching this whole scene with satisfaction. As soon as they saw me, they immediately called me over to them. One of them then asks me, if I am a Pole. I answer in the affirmative. He then indicates that I should go nearer to the pit, and that I should look carefully at the people in the pit. I went over to the pit, looked at the people, and said that they were Jews. As soon as they heard me say this, one of the S. S. men walked over to me, and gave me a slap across the face, on one side, and then again on the other. It immediately became dark and bitter for me, and I lowered my head. But not waiting long, the same S. S. man orders me to raise my head a little, and pay attention to what else he has to say to me. The same question came again: I am to answer whom it is that I see here in the pit, and for the second time, somehow involuntarily, I blurted out that I did not know. I cannot remember these people, because they are covered in blood, and lie one on top of another. This answer immediately satisfied them, and the translator immediately conveyed to me in Polish: 'This satisfies us. No one knows, and that suffices.' These people, the S. S. man says, are war criminals, these are Russians. They made war against us, and for that reason, we killed them all. And now, he continues, you now know, you filthy Pole, who these people are. Repeat it, the S. S. man repeated murderously.

A heavenly miracle occurred at that time, that a taxi drove up and stopped. A tall man, who was well-dressed emerged, recognizably an officer, and immediately called over several of the S. S. troops to him, and quietly whispered something to them. What he had to say, I did not apprehend. The officer immediately ordered the S. S. troops to release me. The S. S. troops immediately called me over, took down my name, and also the address of where I live. The same S. S. man that brought me there, took me back, crop in hand, to my horse and wagon. I quickly got up into the wagon, flicked the horse, and galloped on ahead. Meanwhile, the S. S. man had turned to the side and vanished into the thick pine trees. When I came home – the Christian continues to tell – it was already dark. I went into my hut to tell my wife the whole story. We did not eat our evening meal. For the entire night, I could not shut my eyes to sleep, the entire picture from the forest, the S. S. troops and the pit, the dead bodies, stood before my eyes. I lay there thinking about the fact that they wrote down my name. Maybe they will come to take me.

Shortly after the liberation, when I had emerged from the dark pit into God's free world, I also had the privilege of being able to see this [mass] grave, now overgrown, thanks to this same Christian, Stefan Moszalowski. The grave is about 20 meters long, and 2 meters wide. One length looks like a long rake. All around is a bare parcel of field, surrounded by a thick stand of pine trees. As the Christian told me, shortly before the liberation, in the month of June 1944, the Germans brought a

party of Jews from Bialystok, who were especially employed to dig up the mass graves in our vicinity, and to incinerate the bones. The grave of the Zambrow Jews in the Glebocz Forest was also dug up, and the bones burnt...

A Smoking Ember Rescued from the Fire

By Moshe the son of Ber'l Levinsky
(From His Memoirs, recorded by Joseph Yerushalmi)

Moshe, Son of Ber'l Levinsky Tells Us:



Page 168: Moshe Levinsky

The Germans occupied our city a month after the outbreak of the war. Before their arrival, they had bombarded the city and burned about half the buildings, among them – the entire Jewish district from the Lomza Road, the synagogue, the houses of study – to the cemetery. They were in the city for just ten days – after which, according to their agreement, the Russians entered. They took over what the Germans had left, founded professional cooperatives, and sent some of the well-to-do to Siberia. In July 1941 the Germans came back. This time, they immediately began with repressions, confiscating assets, seizing people for so-called forced labor, etc. On one occasion they rounded up 90 men, among them also aged, such as R' Tuvia Skocandek, and they never came back. On a second occasion, they compelled everyone to assemble on the marketplace, and seized 800 people, among them the aged Rabbi – and they were never seen again.

We felt that we were going under. We were advised to build a ghetto. We collected money, about 3 kilos of gold, and obtained permission from the Lomza Gestapo to squeeze ourselves into a ghetto, between the Yatkowa *Gasse* and Swietokrzyska – to the river. About 2000 of us people were gathered into that location, and surrounded ourselves with barbed wire. We were there from July 1941 to November 1942. In November, we were taken to the vacant barracks buildings. There were about 14,000 Jews concentrated there, from Lomza, Wyszków, Czerwony-Bór, Jablonka, Rutki and Szumowo. Those were hard days there, hunger and cold, epidemics and death. Until the Nazis began, in January 1943 – to transfer a party of Jews each night, of about 2000 people, through Czyzew to Auschwitz. On the train station at Czyzew, it was easy to escape, but nobody knew where to go. While we were still in the ghetto, I fled, with my entire family, to a peasant, a good friend of mine, but we came back almost immediately, because he was afraid to try and hide the entire family. Also, here in Czyzew, when my feet were almost entirely frozen, a peasant called to me and told me to crawl to the outside of the city, and to travel with him to a village. He said he would hide me. This was a friend of mine from the military, and not only once had I done favors for him. With frozen feet, I crawled, holding onto the hollows in the walls – until I got to the outskirts of the city, and got into his wagon. However, my entire family went off to Auschwitz. I saved myself in order to be able to tell what happened to us. The peasant kept me for only one day, and on the following morning, he told me to travel back to Czyzew, because his wife was afraid to hide me in the house. I went off on foot, through the forest, to the first gentile, who kept me with the family for a day, and he took

me in amicably, trusting the secret only to his son, and did not tell his wife, 'quartering' me in a stack of hay. For me it was sufficiently warm there. During the day, I lay there, squashed in – at night, I crawled out a bit. I ate dried out bread, and every other day, he stealthily brought me a half portion from his dog...

I was severely weakened by the bad food, from the lice that pestered me, and from the wounds in my frozen feet. The peasant tended to me, and with a great effort, got a hold of a small bottle of naphtha with which to massage my feet. He decided to reveal my hideout to his wife. She became extremely upset, grabbed her children, and ran off to her father. However, she calmed down, and came back, and began to give me a warm bowl of soup each day, and washed my shirt. I was there for twenty months. Once, German representatives came and confiscated the hay from the peasant. Everything was laid out in wagons, and taken away. I was almost uncovered. My good gentile, however, rescued me, and told me to run behind to the stacks of hay in the fields. There also, I was saved by a miracle, because the Germans there were looking for peasants who had fled from forced labor. I entered a bog, and sequestered myself there, and I was not taken. I came back to my peasant, and I wanted to surrender myself to the Germans, because I had become severely weakened, confused, and isolated. My peasant gave me hope, and comforted me, saying that the Russians were very close to arriving. The Germans began to scour the entire area, and even at that point I experienced a miracle that I was not taken, practically under their noses. As they retreated, they ripped up the entire vicinity. I barely escaped with my life. The Russians found me fainting and like discarded garbage. They interrogated me, gave me food, and told me to run away from this place. There were battles to take place here. I then dragged myself two kilometers to Kolaki[62] and later was able to return to my good gentile. When the front moved on, I went to Zambrow. I found a city that was destroyed. After a great deal of searching, I found one other Jew, Finkelstein from the Wodna *Gasse*, who had also found sanctuary with a gentile. We took up residence in the attic of Avreml Tukhman's forge, on the Bialystok Road. On the morrow, a few other Jews were found: the three Stupnik brothers, a son of Zaydl Taback, a couple of Jews from Czerwony-Bor. We founded a 'Jewish Colony' and took up residence in the vacant house of Itcheh Mulyar. Together with Finkelstein, we began to till a small parcel of land. The Magistrate helped us out a bit. We saw, however, that our lives were in danger if we remained here. The gentiles were finishing up what the Nazis had not succeeded in doing, and were murdering the few who had been left living. So we fled to Lodz, where a larger center of Jews existed, but also here, we found no home, despite the fact that there was a way to make a living. Our only home became Israel, and I made *aliyah* and was satisfied. True, I was orphaned, isolated, without my wife and children.

I remember my good peasant very well, and I write letters to him, and also, from time-to-time, I send him a little money, to help his family.

I have also not forgotten the *Amalekites*, despite the fact that their name does not cross my lips.

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62 Either Kołaki Kościelne or nearby Czachy-Kolaki.

A Letter from the Other World

Under the ruins of the house at Nowolipki 68, in September 1946, and at the beginning of December 1950, there was found parts of the archive of Emanuel Ringelblum from the Warsaw Ghetto.[63] The historical documents were largely published by the Jewish Historical Society, and others. Among other items, a letter was found there from our *landsman*, teacher and leader of Poalei Tzion, Nathan (Nosskeh) Smoliar, the son of Dovcheh Smoliar, dated the 10th of December 1942, in Warsaw. He tells here of his last meeting with his mother, in Bialystok, how the Germans captured his wife, Esther – the well-known teacher in the Zambrow Borokhov School (Poalei-Tzion) – with his three year-old little daughter Ninkeleh. [And] how later, how his sister Ethel was captured and killed, who had dedicated her life in Warsaw to raising Jewish children – orphans and homeless ones.

Nathan Smoliar was one of the finest Jewish pedagogues, and directed a municipal Jewish school. During the ghetto period, he was alone – and put forward his struggle for giving a Jewish education, and he was in a fighting group of Jewish intellectuals against the enemy, and as such, he fell – on the barricades, among the first active combatants against the Nazi plague. He was among the first instigators of the Ghetto rebellion.

Being isolated, and torn away from his family, he believed that the only one who remained alive was his sister in New York, in The Bronx, at 1568 Leland Avenue, Pesha Deitchman. He therefore wrote her a letter, his last letter. However, since contact with America was broken off, he buried the letter in the cache of the ghetto archive of the historian Emanuel Ringelblum, his friend. He believed that we would not be exterminated, and that a day would come when Jewry would again unite, and push forward its struggle for a better future. He believed that his letter would reach his sister.

As an aside: he did not know that his younger sister, Esther, the wife of the writer Szlewin, saved herself (is now living in Paris). He also did not know that his younger brother, Hershl, also remained alive, after having fought with the partisans in the Minsk area. (Now, he is in Warsaw, the Chairman of Polish Jewry).

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63 The fate of Ringelblum's Archives is only partially known. In September 1946 ten metal boxes were found in the ruins of Warsaw. In December 1950 in a cellar of another ruined house at 68 Nowolipki Street two additional milk cans were found containing more documents. Among them were copies of several underground newspapers, a narrative of deportations from the Warsaw Ghetto, and public notices by the Judenrat (the council of Jewish leaders), but also documents of ordinary life, concert invitations, milk coupons, and chocolate wrappers.

Despite repeated searches, the rest of the archive, including the third milk can, was never found. It is rumored to be located beneath what is now the Chinese Embassy in Warsaw.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emanuel_Ringelblum

And Here is the Letter:



Page 175: *The Smoliar Family*

My dear sister Pesha Deitchman,

Should I not survive, whoever has the possibility should send over to you this small folio about your family, because here a thousand times more awful things happened.

Your brother Nosskeh

The family's Book of Job begins with our dear mother ז"ל, in Zambrow, at the end of July 1941. Even a week earlier, she, the good-hearted one, risked her life for the price of a Golden watch (from father's wedding gifts), and set out on the danger-filled way towards Bialystok, to determine if her children were still alive. She took along a little bag of candy, a bit of kasha, and oil for the children, because in Bialystok, Jews were already afraid to go out in the street to procure a bit of food. In Bialystok, she met up only with me and sister Ethel, after we had fled from Zambrow to Bialystok, on the second day of the war. Esther (our sister) had left Bialystok immediately on the first day, and we have no news from her. Herschel (a brother) left on the second day, and has remained somewhere among the malefactors. I received regards from him somewhere in the vicinity of Baranovich. Mother traveled back on that very same evening – having spent altogether one day with us. A week later, the German band of murderers entered Zambrow, called together and then drove out the entire *shtetl* into the streets, about 1500 old and young, men and women with small children were all gathered together, dragged off to the Czyzew vicinity in the forest, where large trenches had already been dug, and there, met their end with the others. The news reached us in Bialystok three weeks later. We, especially Ethel, the frail youngest of my mother, so spoiled, took it very badly.

Some time passed, and first I, and then Ethel, left Bialystok and came to Warsaw. Ethel considered herself very fortunate when it fell to me to be able to find her work as a governess in an orphanage. How much heart she gave to those children. How many times did she sit for hours at a time, to find a suitable lullaby, or a game for the children, loving them – like a mother loves her own children. Today, there are no more children, there is no more Ethel. I have gotten off the time line a bit – forgive me, my sister.

It is already some time since the 'resettlement' began (this is the name the Germans have given to the mass-murder of Jews), the beginning of the prelude, the preface to the tragedy: shootings have started in the streets, precisely in this fashion: an auto drives by, and from it, they shoot Jewish passers-by. In addition to this, there are organized nightly mass shootings, about fifty or so Jews are taken out of their dwellings, taken away several houses from their own, told to turn around and lie down. Later – a new group of 100 people taken out of arrest houses and shot: through a notification we are told this is punishment for not obeying the demands made by the German authorities, and that we even resist them. And again there are tens and hundreds of murders. Rumors abound, one worse than the next, circulating that they will drive us out of Warsaw, somewhere outside the city. We could not believe it – could it be possible to drive the Jews out of Warsaw, such a city that was a Mother to Jewry, a city of 400,000 Jews? We learned on our own that this would certainly happen to the homeless, with those that had fled here, but no way would this happen to those who were born here.

That is, until the trouble started. Placards appeared – all Warsaw Jews – except... and except... would that it would have happened this way, so there would not have been so many victims. Perhaps self-defense would have been established, and such a denouement would not have occurred, that over 300,000 Jews, among which there were tens of thousands of young, should be led like sheep to the slaughter.

Exceptions were listed on the notices: except for all those who work in the municipal institutions, in the provisioning organizations, social institutions (the Jewish Help Committee, Centos, TOZ), the manual trades union, and others. Yes, and everyone they take under their protection (and do not have to be sent out) their wives and children.

A stampede began. Until the Jewish police was seen to be sending away all the poorest of the refugees that had fled here; driving the poor from their houses, who had nothing with which they could buy themselves out of this situation, since ninety percent already had documentation that they belong to the privileged categories and are not required to be sent away.

I too, who was employed by the community – took care of myself by joining a shop – I became a carpenter and after many pains, I was taken under the aegis of a shop, including my wife and child, even though she herself was also a community employee.

A panic began: the J. H. K. was no longer recognized: in very short order legitimization by the community will not be tolerated... by contrast: 'shop' – that was the talisman, a one hundred percent

assurance. In order to verify the rumors, I was pointed out as one., and there another one of the J. H. K appointed by the community, seized, not paying any heed to legitimacies. When I finally got my ID card with the red stamp of the S. S., I was completely secure, and had protected my family, for whom I had acquired a special classification for all the members of my family. To be absolutely sure, and to obtain further protection, I took my wife and child into the factory with me. Other hundreds of shop workers did the same thing. They sat themselves in the yard of the factory (Gensza 30), shoved far into a corner, far from malevolent eyes, and sat there for the day. And when the Angels of Terror – the Jewish police, bands of German S. S., with their Ukrainian, Lithuanian and Latvian accomplices – ended their day's work, we would go home to lodge for the night. Often, we would not undress, because of the continuous night-shootings and wild rumors about night pogroms.

And lo, one day, the talisman of the shop card became voided, and to my misfortune, our shop was the first one where this gate was broken down. It was on a Friday, August 7, a sum total of 17 days after the beginning of the mass-murders. The women and children, and the old folks were, as they were every day, seated spread out, way back, hidden deep into the yard, unseen by the outside world, when the S. S. And Ukrainians broke into the rear through a fence in the adjacent yard. The people were wondrously calm. They ordered everyone to get up, line up and head towards the gate, where only the documents would be inspected, everyone has documents – so they went quietly. They came to the gate – but there is no inspection of documents: they proceed further, and anyone who dared to utter a word, to resist, began being beaten with truncheons, pointed rods, right in the face. A few were shot outright – and everyone then proceeds as ordered. We, the men, didn't even know what was taking place here, because the factory has to be operating on full steam, and each person has to be at their work station. They did not even look into the factory at that time. They gathered everyone together, and took them to the assembly place – the modern Golgotha, from which they were led to the train cars to the extermination point at Treblinka, where mass executions took place by gas and shooting.

I hurled myself in vain at this, like a wounded animal in a cage. I ran to the assembly point, paid to find out if Esther, my wife, with Ninkeleh are still here. I sent money, a lot of money, to bribe the police, to Dr. R.[64] We sent our own factory police. I found out that they were able to avoid getting on the first transport of 6000 people, which had left at 11 o'clock in the morning. But with force and with beating, they were driven out of their hiding places, when the second transport that day left. Nothing could be done to help them. With a child in her arms, it was not possible to avoid the bleak fate. I received news that she was seen with Ninkeleh, wearing her red jacket, on the way to the train cars.

In vain, I expended additional effort, making a telephone call to a person I knew had a business connection to the overseers at the Treblinka camp. He replied that he could provide no help. That everyone there is condemned to death. (He, himself, was later shot there). From that time on, the glow vanished from the shops. It was not only family members that were arrested, but random people – whoever had, or didn't have a shop ID card. Blockading the shops became a frequent occurrence.

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64 Editor's Note: Apparently to Dr. Ringelblum.

It happened in this way: a pair of S. S. men would enter, and immediately after them, Ukrainians, who spread through the entire area of the factory, and after them, Jewish police. Everyone is ordered out into the yard. Women and children hide themselves. The Ukrainians search. [They look] for money, watches or other kinds of jewelry, they can be bought off, but often: after them, come others, and drive people out of their hiding places. Out in the yard, an S. S. man goes through the ranks with his riding crop, pulling out this one and that one, those who are told to go to the side, this means – to death. Anyone who does not go immediately – is beaten with the riding crop, or as was the case with us in several instances, shot on the spot. Those who have been stood aside squirm, making attempts to run over to the ranks of the ones left behind, but the Jewish police does its job faithfully – and does not permit this. You try to pass them, as you did to the Ukrainians, jewelry, or several hundred zlotys. Much is given to obtain this temporary salvation. Many conceal themselves during these blockades in previously prepared hideouts, thanks to which there remains a small remnant of women. Along with the blockade of the shops, there is a blockade of the housing block of the factory. Everyone is dragged out of there, who have not been able to hide themselves properly, or to bribe their way out of the hands of the Ukrainians. I managed, in this way, partly through concealment, and partly through luck, to stay alive until this day.... 12.10.1942.

On the night of September 5th to the 6th, a new form of misfortune arrives. All the shops, all the '*platzuvkehs*' who go to work for the Germans on the Aryan side are going to be disbanded. Everyone has to leave their residence by Sunday, September 6th at 10:00 a.m., and come to the sealed streets (Mila, Slubecki, Stawki). There, a fresh registration will take place of all the workers, and those that get through this process will be able to go back to their place. I live on the Mila *Gasse*, and on that morning of September 6, I stood by the window and looked out. No pen is able to write down a description of the nightmarish picture of that morning.

Tens of thousands of people, faces darkened, all hope given up, unwashed faces, mothers, masses, and masses, wander back and forth. There is helplessness in their gaze. And they go, and keep going. And the sorting continues to take place. One part goes back, and the larger part, in the thousands, as led to the assembly point.

A thousand and one stories of tragedy are told by those who survived that day. Who can retell it all? Each word is reliving a tragedy. Our segregation first took place on the fourth day – Wednesday. Every day, we waited for our landlord, the German Henzl, and in the end he came with the good news: our shop is going to remain. It is permitted for 500 men to stay, and as they remained, after so many blockades, there were less than 500 men, it appears that everyone will get to stay. Notwithstanding this, the elderly, women and children, should hide themselves. The remaining men should promptly present themselves.

We waited for the entire day for the S. S. troops, who were carrying out the '*selektion*.' They arrived at about 6:00pm, like an angry storm, like a [swarm of] locusts. Leading them was the murderer himself – Brandt. With bloodshot eyes, and a hoarse shout, they quickly, quickly took to their 'work.' Alert workers in the factory understood how to utilize the psychology of terror, and hammered out metallic labels with the initials O. B. W. (*Ost-Deutsche Bau-Tischlerie-*

Warschtatten), with numbers, and sold them at three zlotys apiece. These metal labels were called dog tags, and despite this, many bought them, as if they were a real talisman, to prevent any and all misfortune. In order to make these metallic labels appear to be significant, they were not given to the women. It was these metallic labels that the S. S. troops took to be an important credential and anyone who did not have such a tag, was sentenced [sic: to death]. With wild shouting, with truncheons and riding crops, and the senior Brandt, with a board in his hand, they divided the group up into three camps, and anyone that was sentenced, was bestially beaten. Twice, Brandt broke the boards over the backs and the heads of those who did not move quickly enough who had been sentenced to die. Blood ran freely. And in order to inflame his anger even further, or to justify his perverted actions in the eyes of the civilian German shop owners, he shouted out at every blow: enough, enough, for you, three years we are bleeding because of you Jews, and it is because of you that the German people suffer.

My sister, Ethel, was also among these hundreds of men and women. Her children from the orphanage had long ago been taken away to the usual sacrificial altar. I took her into the factory as my wife, and exerted myself to get her a factory ID, a card with the S. S. stamp on it, indicating that she was legitimate according to the rules – and she lived with me. She went to the *selektion* with confidence. There was no question that she was going to get through. Who could, if not she, a young 22 year-old, fresh, beautiful; especially since the desired contingent for the factory had not been filled. As soon as the S. S. had separated out those with the metal tags, and ordered them to return to the factory, a strict blockade was carried out in the housing, dragging people out of the housing and the hideouts, and afterwards taking them to the train cars, and after that, not a trace of her.

Additional blockades took place afterwards, internal *selektionen,* and seizures – I, in the meantime, remained.

What happened to my sister Chana, and her daughter Baylcheh, I do not know. I only know this: The same thing also occurred during November in Zambrow. There, the executions took place in Czerwony-Bór? – I have no news from them.

This writeup was found in the Ringelblum Archive. The original is found in the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw.



Page 180: To the Forest, the Forest! With Bow and Arrow!

Zambrow Children from the Three Heders, and their teachers: Bercheh Sokol, Fyvel Zukrowicz, and Zerakh Kagan, ז"ל, going to the Forest, with the National Flags at Front, On Lag B'Omer 1918.

The Death Rattle

By B. Tz. Gavurin

All the Jews of Zambrow, as well as the Jews from the surrounding vicinity, were packed in by the Germans into the Zambrow barracks. The Lomza Jews brought the elderly with them from their Old Age Home, and the orphans from the city orphanage. Approximately 20,000 Jews were squeezed into these barracks – without appropriate food, without water, without light or air. There were no sanitary facilities. The overcrowding was frightening. The little food we had taken with us, from the ghetto, lasted about two weeks.

Shortly afterwards, the hunger began to assault us with full force. After much exertion, the *Judenrat* was able to get a 'concession' to gather up the abandoned food that had been left behind in the ghetto, and transfer it to the barracks. When we finally got a bit of food – we immediately opened up a community kitchen, and immediately provided a warm midday meal to the children, and the elderly, and whatever was left over – was distributed to the able-bodied [adults].

Because of the seriously deficient sanitary conditions, a typhus epidemic broke out. People dropped like flies. With the expenditure of a great deal of effort, we managed to organize a hospital in that place, and with great difficulty, we acquired a little bit of medicine from Skrozhnik's pharmacy, where I had previously been employed. By whatever means, under these given awful conditions, we

managed to run a small pharmacy. It is worth mentioning the dedication and extraordinary relationship of the Jewish doctors, who were with us, as for example – Dr. Knott from Lomza (now in Israel) and others. They stood at their post and served the sick day and night.

The moment of the liquidation arrived. The Germans mobilized a mass of peasants with wagons, and every night, they transferred about two thousand men from the barracks to the close-by train station at Czyzew, loaded them onto special sealed train cars, and then transported to somewhere. When someone tried to ask: 'Where are they taking us,' the cynical reply was: to a labor camp, where each person will be able to work at his own trade, without overcrowding or hunger. I was in the last transport, which left Zambrow on December 27, 1942 (19 Tevet 5703). The camp commandant came to the senior member of the *Judenrat* with a proposal: he had, in his possession, a kilogram of Veronal[65] – he wanted to use the drug to put the children, the old and the sick, to sleep permanently, who were not fit to work, and will not be able to survive the difficult trip. No one took up this satanic proposal. Despite this, they managed to achieve their goal, and they poisoned about 200 of the old and infirm.

At the last moment, when I needed to leave the barracks, I ran through the rooms to see if anyone was still left. To my great heartache, I saw about two hundred children, elderly, and weakened, lying sunk in a deep sleep and a rattle coming out of their throats. This was their last death rattle, that pierced the air. I immediately grasped what was going on here, and from my heart, I tore out the old, sorrowful blessing: '*Baruch Dayan HaEmet!*' That death rattle followed me for the entire journey, and with weeping and pain, I stuck with the solitary brethren who yet remained alive, who are now going to experience a train journey of unknown nature, over which death was fanning us with its wing.

We were five days taken on this journey, without food or water. Small children, neglected, lay whimpering: they pleaded for a bit of bread and a bit of water. From time to time, we scraped off the bits of ice from the small train car windows, and gave it to the children to revive them somewhat. We finally arrived in Auschwitz-Birkenau on January 3, 1943 (26 Tevet). There we met up with about 10 percent of those who had come on the transports that had arrived to date that were yet alive. All the others had given up the ghost, and breathed their last in the gas chambers. The ones who remained alive were sentenced to hard labor, in the death camp...

And this is how I got through this gruesome period and was liberated 28 months later by the liberating American army, in Munich, on May 15, 1945.

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65 A sedative containing barbiturates used to induce sleep.

We Organize a Partisan Group

By Yitzhak Stupnik
(Buenos Aires)

My brother Yankl and I managed to wriggle out of the Zambrow ghetto, and went off to work in the 'Pniewo sheds' a colony, not far from Czerwony-Bor, near the swampy Pniewo Forest. We worked there for a prosperous peasant, Wiszniewski. We figured out that when our situation would become difficult, we will flee directly into the forest. My older brother, Moshe, was in the Lomza ghetto. On one Saturday, we went over to Czerwony-Bor. The Jews there were being harassed minimally, because they were needed there to work. Once there, we remained until Sunday. Sunday, after the noon hour, the news spread with lightning speed that all the roads are surrounded by gendarmes, so that no one could flee, and the gentiles in the area had received a forceful order to come with their wagons, to transfer the Jews from Czerwony-Bor to the Zambrow barracks. We came up with the idea by ourselves... we decided to flee at any price. Riding on horses, the gentiles searched for Jews that had fled, in the fields, and brought them back to the Germans. They received either a half liter of whiskey, or a kilo of sugar for each Jew that they could seize this way. The *Soltis* of Czerwony-Bor himself got on one knee, and aimed his gun at a Jewish boy that had saved himself and was running in the field, just as if he were shooting a wild duck, as was reported by other gentiles...

In the dark, we managed to wriggle out into the forest, with a few other Jews. Before dawn, we saw some human form shadows moving towards us. We were frozen: it was our brother Moshe, from the Lomza ghetto. They, too, were confined in order to transfer them to Zambrow. A member of the *Judenrat*, a young man from Zambrow, Baumkuler, accidentally happened to learn about the *aktion*, and he quickly let all the Jews know: save yourselves as best you can, flee! Accordingly, certain individuals fled, among them my brother, Moshe. He ran the whole night to Czerwony-Bor, to us.

We then decided not to separate, and to remain together. We decided to go back to the Pniewo sheds, at night. At the edge of the forest we espied a peasant's hut. Moshe, who looked like a peasant, went into it to ask for something to eat. We waited at a distance. He came out quickly, and a band of gentile thugs began to chase him, in order to turn him over to the Germans. We immediately came to the aid of our brother, with sticks, which we had hacked off the trees, and the gentile thugs ran off. We dragged ourselves to the shed at night. The Wiszniewski family took us back, let us spend the night in the loft of the stall, gave us food to eat – but very strenuously encouraged us stay in the forest during the day, and that only at night, could we come to eat and sleep. In the morning, both our lives and their lives were in danger. We remained there for four weeks: in the forest during the day, at night, up in the loft. Our brother Moshe was counted as a friend, not as a brother. We met up in the forest with other remnants from our vicinity, from Gać, etc., and we decided to form a partisan group at our own risk, in the Pniewo Forest.

Death Sentence

It was about six months after the liquidation of the Zambrow ghetto. Alone and dejected, we wandered in the forests, hiding by day, and looking for something to eat by night. We had no connection to Polish partisans, and when we did come in contact, it would be to our detriment – they would have killed us, being no better than the Germans. When we discovered several others, in the forest, that had escaped death, such as Israelkeh Gebel, the butcher from Gać, his son, Zelik, with his wife and three small children, the two Rudnik brothers, Isaac Bursztein (also a butcher), and Yossl Kwiatek, and others, we decided to organize ourselves into a 'Partisan Brigade,' procure arms, and fight the enemy. My brother Yankl was nominated as the Commandant, and we found a suitable location in the Pniewo Forest for our headquarters. With an enormous amount of effort, we procured some arms, with a limited number of ammunition rounds, from the peasantry. On one morning, a peasant was drawing near to us, with an unsteady gait. We immediately went on alert, because he had become suspicious to us. With fear in his eyes, the peasant got closer, and expressed his feeling regarding our plight, and began to tell us that at his location, under the roof of his barn, a man and his wife are hidden who are Jews, and they need to be rescued, because the surrounding neighbors had sniffed them out, and will turn them over to the Germans. The Polish groups from the A. K. (*Armia Krajowa*) circulate in the area, and they kill off the remaining Jews.

We quickly took counsel, and decided to carefully proceed and rescue these two Jewish people, according to the signs that the peasant had given us. My brother Mishka was designated the one to lead the mission. Late at night, with his gun loaded, he came up to the barn. He climbed up to the eaves, and he heard an intake of breath in the straw. Mishka whispered in the dark: I am a Jew, having come to rescue you! Come out and tell me who you are? – I am Mottl Sh. from Miszenic, a male voice responded. – And I am Rashkeh Ch. from Lomzica, a querulous female voice answered. A shudder ran through Mishka's bones, as soon as he heard the name of Mottl Sh. He was a well-known informer, who had cooperated with the Germans in the Lomza ghetto, and had brought no small number of Jewish lives to an end, and later caused troubles in the Zambrow ghetto. Mishka didn't lose control of himself and said: I cannot rescue two at a time, therefore let Rashkeh Ch. come with me first. Out of a great deal of grief and joy, Rashkeh forgot to put on her shoes, and ran barefoot with me. When we were on our way, she realized that she couldn't step on the pointed little stones, and must go and get her shoes. Mishka did not let her go back, told her to wait at the entrance to the forest, and went back alone to look for the shoes. Looking for the shoes in the straw, Mishka noticed persons wearing short leather jackets, besieging the barn, lighting it up with flashlights – they sensed that there were Jews there... Mishka immediately jumped down and stationed himself behind a wagon, with his gun in hand. One of them drew nearer to him. Mishka did not want to waste a bullet on him, he silently gave his a blow in the head with the butt of his gun to the heart. That individual immediately fell to the ground, and Mishka fled to the forest. They shot at him in the dark, but did not hit him. Mottl Sh. also fled, saving himself, and before dawn, found our location. He stood before us with his head down, and said nothing. We decided to try him. After Israelkeh the Butcher, and others told us about the Jewish victims in the Lomza ghetto that fell because of Mottl, also informing on the secret means of procuring food for the Jews, the new refugees that arrived in the ghetto, etc., until the senior in the Lomza *Judenrat*, Mr. Mushinsky, became aware through a German, that Mottl was a provocateur, and is turning over all this information to the Germans.

Mushinsky then allowed him to be arrested and confined to the cellar of the *Judenrat*. The Germans then let them know that all the Lomza Jews would be held accountable for him. He was released, and he went off to Zambrow... it pained us that millions of our brethren were killed while innocent, and this bandit remained alive here, and was standing in front of us. Our 'tribunal' sentenced him to death.

A Scion of Zambrow – Leader of the Minsk Ghetto Fighters



Page 189: Herschel Smoliar

Herschel, the son of Dovcheh Smoliar, was enthralled with communism as a youngster. He served six years in the Lomza prison. When the Red Army entered Lomza, they set him free. In accordance with party orders, he penetrated the Minsk ghetto – in order to secretly lead the anti-fascist resistance groups. Afterwards, Smoliar went over from Minsk to the partisans, and received an array of distinguished medals from the Red Army, and today is the head of the central committee of Polish Jewry. In the year 1946, his book, *'The Minsk Ghetto'* was published in Moscow in 1946 by the *'Emes'* publishing company – where all the terrifying deeds of the Nazis are recounted. We bring here, a summary of a long article (800 lines in close penmanship) which was dedicated in *'Einikeit'* of 28 September 1944 – an organ of the Jewish anti-fascist committee in the Soviet Union.

...Herschel Smoliar, the 35 year-old young man, had no other option but to fall into the paws of the bestial enemy, in the Minsk ghetto. He could have gotten Aryan papers and resided among the gentiles, but he said, instead: I am after all, a Jew, and my place is among Jews. He immediately went to work as the commandant for the underground resistance company which had only one objective: strike the enemy by all means. Smoliar was already seasoned at this work: it is already 11 years that he is working illegally in the party, including his 6 years in prison, until the Red Army freed him. He had contacts in the surrounding vicinity by clandestine means. [In the outside world] he was known as Yefim Stoliarewicz. After a few weeks, he needed to arrange for the municipal hospital to attend to the sick with infectious diseases. The location was created for him by Dr. Leib Kulik. The Germans did not interfere in the affairs of the hospital a great deal, being afraid to become infected themselves. It was here that the resistance units were organized, and it was here that poisons, and all manner of other dangerous materials were prepared in order to poison the food and drink of the enemy, by Jewish workers and cooks. It was from here that armed wings would sally forth and assault the German provision trucks, food storage dumps, leather supplies, manufactured goods, sugar, etc., and distribute this booty within the ghetto. When the dangerous Stoliarewicz was being intensely hunted by the Gestapo – Smoliar left the area. The *Judenrat* received an order to turn in Stoliarewicz –- if they failed to do so, they will pay for it with their heads. So, the head of the *Judenrat*, Joffe, fell upon a stratagem: a night before this, the Nazis had assaulted a large house and killed about 70 men. They then put false papers on the body of one of the dead men, under the name of Stoliarewicz, bloodied him up, and brought him to the Gestapo commandant. At this point, Smoliar needed to conceal himself even from Jewish eyes, and he was brought into the hospital on

a cot by sanitary workers, concealing him among the severe typhus cases, and his bed became the general headquarters of the underground resistance company. It was here that he organized the plan to send out groups of 150 men at a time, secretly, and to connect up with the partisans in the Naliboki Forests. Everyone began to search for ammunition for these resistance groups. On July 23, 1942, *Tisha B'Av*, the Nazis made a bloodbath in the ghetto. For four days and four nights, they shot and murdered. Smoliar was stuck away in the space between a double wall in the hospital. The Nazis shot and killed all of the sick, and Smoliar stayed between the walls, and carried on from there. This was until a messenger came to him from the party central command, from 22 year-old Maria Gorokhova, who worked as a cook in the German kitchen, and together with another girl, who was Jewish, Emma Rodowa, got Smoliar out of the ghetto. As a carpenter, he was now living in the most dangerous house, in the Gestapo building, and above him was – the senior German commander Kuba. They came to transfer him to the partisans after six weeks. He traversed 10 kilometers with the trusted individual, and gave no sign of connecting with them. He returned, and hid himself with a woman, a lecturer in medical courses – under a bed, covered with sacks and valises. Later, he was taken to a railroad employee at night, where he slept, and the Gestapo came knocking at the door. Smoliar jumped through the window, onto the roof, in his nightshirt. He scrunched himself up on the roof, in order not to be noticed. When it quieted down – he went back inside through the window. His companions were arrested. The Germans sealed up the house. Smoliar gathered up his borrowed papers, and set out on the road. He wandered for 17 days, until he reached the partisan company and became its commander according to the order of the Party. Then, Smoliar began to carry out a new accounting with the enemy.

The Third Fire

By Isaac Malinowicz
(The Bronx)



Page 191: *A Banquet on Israeli Independence Day. A Group of Zambrow Landsleit in America, with Mr. & Mrs. I. Malinowicz drink a 'L'Chaim' to the Zambrow Survivors. At right are Benjamin And Sarah Zedeck.*

They would say, that when the lovely summer arrives – the fires start. Every summer, entire towns would burn down, with Jewish assets, Jews of means, *balebatim*, craftsmen, would pitiably be left without a roof over their heads, or a bite of bread for the children.

The fire did not spare our Zambrow either. The first fire, which burned down practically the entire *shtetl,* broke out on a Friday just before candle lighting.. It was a hot summer day in 1895. Women and Men always liked to tell about the great fire, with the added groan: 'we should not even think of anything burning today, the way it burned back then...' Whole stories would circulate around town about this. Some simply told that in the smithy by the river, on the Ostrog Road, there was a shipment of illegal merchandise, which had been bought from the soldiers, and this had been ignited, and spread the fire all over the town, with its straw-thatched roofs. Others said: If God wills it, a straw roof does not burn, and gunpowder doesn't explode. Rather, the city had sinned against the *Maggid* R' Eliakim Getzel and he cursed the city – and his holy words had come to pass. And you can see a sign of this, adds an elderly Jewish woman, with a sigh: the fire broke out precisely after midday on Friday, when the men were taking a steam bath, preparing for the coming of the Sabbath. Others were still out making their rounds through the villages of the vicinity, and those that were indeed home were working hard to get finished in time for the Sabbath. A garment, a shoe, a hat – not well slept, exhausted by the entire week's labor, barely able to make it to the little bit of Sabbath, to rest a bit, and catch a little sleep. The womenfolk worked hard to get the Holy Sabbath into their homes, cooking, baking, getting the cholent ready, cleaning, washing,, and here, suddenly, totally unanticipated: a fire from God cascaded over the city...

So, afterwards. two times seven good years went by, the shtetl quickly and beautifully had rebuilt itself, the new barracks that were built, the two divisions of soldiers in the city – provided a source of income, so that in very short order, houses were constructed with tin roofs, or covered with roof tiles, some with shingles, but no longer with straw. A very attractive commercial street was set up. The Kosciolna *Gasse*, [was covered with wooden sidewalks, stone and concrete houses, with balconies. The city was revitalized, but that great fire was often recalled: so-and-so got married 'after the fire,' that one was born 'after the fire,' there simply was no other point of reference that had comparable significance.

That is, until... the second fire occurred.

This, indeed, was on a Saturday night, immediately after *Havdalah*, when everyone was home, well rested, and having gotten some sleep, still dressed in their Sabbath finery. This was May 1, 1909. The workers did not strike on the First of May, because that day was a sort of Sabbath to them, and in general, it was rather quiet in the city, not like the year 1905. Along with another couple of young boyfriends, we were sitting at the 'booth' on the *Pasek* drinking soda water with red syrup, joking with one another, when we suddenly heard a shout: Alert, there is a fire. Where is the fire? – At the barracks, the mangel near the capitan is on fire. So we ran home. The fire was already close to us, the Jews having relied too much on the gentile fire-fighters, because there were no Jews in the fire fighting command structure. One Jew, Gordon the '*Tiefer*' was a fire fighter, and no other... an anti-Semitic attitude reigned in the *shtetl*, this being not long after crucifixes had been broken in the

cemetery, for which the Jews were blamed, and because of this, instead of throwing water to extinguish the flames, the gentiles threw gasoline on the Jewish houses, and because of this the Jewish part of Zambrow burned for that entire night, taking down the largest part of the city, up to the middle of the marketplace, and about 500 Jewish houses were burned down.

A variety of curious things took place around the *shtetl:*

One Jewish man, a *Gabbai* in the *Chevra Kadisha*, shouted out into the street: 'Jews, come and help me perform rescue.' He was dragging a very heavy box. So he was given assistance, and the box was taken away to some place on the Ostrog Road. Everyone thought: there is bedding inside, laundry, jewelry, candlesticks, but it was later found out that the box contained soil from the Land of Israel... He actually permitted his bedding and clothes yo simply get burned...

A second person was storing his daughter's dowry in his oven, not trusting to turn it over to earn interest. He shouted: 'Jews, help, the oven is on fire...

On the following morning, wagons laden with bread arrived from Lomza, from Bialystok, and from other neighboring towns. Also, this time, the shtetl was quickly rebuilt. By and large, the homes were insured, and the Jews took on fire protection, borrowed a bit, and built even nicer houses, mostly of stone, concrete construction, with balconies and pretty stores in front. There was a living to be made, and the homeless erected barracks for themselves on the marketplace, and life began to normalize itself. However, there was one thing that Jewish Zambrow won from this fire: many Jews signed up into the fire-fighters' brigade. While it is true that the anti-Semitic commanders, like the pharmacist Skarzynski, and his deputy, the Prussian, Baker, looked askance at the Jewish firefighters, but they had no right to forbid it. Accordingly, every Sunday, the Jews would put on their fire fighters' caps (the satin covered helmets were not made available to them so quickly...) and went to conduct an 'exercise.' They would stop the formation at some spot, and drill, or just plain crawl up on a roof, and wield the axes or a hook against the burning roof. In time, the Jewish fire fighters became the best in the *shtetl.*

Until the third fire came along – after 32 years....

The city had changed considerably. Government changed hands, Czarist, German, Polish, Bolshevik, and again German. All of then excelled at one thing: their enmity towards the Jews. At the end of 1941, the Jewish section of Zambrow burned down for the third time, but this fire was the most terrifying. After this, it was no longer rebuilt, and will never be rebuilt forever. It is told that this too, took place on the Sabbath. It was not a summery Sabbath day, but rather a frosty day in December. The Jews that had been held in the Zambrow barracks were brought to Auschwitz before dawn that day, where they were crowded in together with the Jews of Lomza, and other Jews from the vicinity. That Saturday, it was not the houses of Zambrow that were burned, but rather the living souls of the residents of Zambrow....

We counted: the first fire, the second fire, but it is the third fire that will eternally remain in our memory. Our living Zambrow residents were carried off with the smoke and the gas, and they will never come back to us...



Page 193: The 'Special Cave' Devoted the Memory of European Jewry on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, is comprised of monuments to the destroyed Jewish Communities. The first one, to the left, is the Zambrow Memorial Tablet, and standing beside it, is the Representative of the Society of Jews from Lomza and Zambrow in Argentina, Ch. H. Rudnik, of blessed memory.

The Four Graves

By Joseph Savetsky

Memories of a Yahrzeit

From that beautiful, living Zambrow, all that remained were four mass graves, somewhere or another, without a marker, and without a name. No one knows where to go, to pay respect to one's ancestors.

The First Grave was at the long military trenches in Szumowo.

This was in the middle of summer, on the 19th of August. All around, things were flowering and growing. As usual, the sun was sending its rays into the world. The *German Beast* then ordered us to gather at the marketplace in Zambrow, on a beautiful clear Tuesday. The Germans selected 1500 men, the best among the Jews, along with the Rabbi and the Yeshiva Headmaster, and drove them

all off to Szumowo, into a church building, or a church school, divided them up into groups, in accordance with their crafts, by age, and until 10 o'clock at night, the trench in the Glebocz Forest became filled with the dead, and the living dead...



Page 194: The United Zembrower Society recently purchased $10,000 worth of State of Israel Bonds. Right to Left: Sam & D. Stein, Joe Savetsky, David Stein, Joe Waxman, I. Cooper (President), M. Monkasz (representing the Israel Bond Organization), G. Taback, Isaac Malinowicz, Ben Cooper.

Today, this blood-soaked place is covered in wild grass, and forest trees. Cattle graze there. And who is to say, that late in the dark nights, that the solitary groan does not reverberate about, the echoes of orphaned wailing, the weeping of fathers and mothers, the sighing of sisters and brothers? ... Who knows?

The Second Mass Grave, takes us to Kosaki. Three weeks later, at the beginning of September, an additional 1500 men were driven to that location. This consisted of about 900 from Zambrow and about 600 from Rutki, and they were all thrown alive into a mass grave. The earth at that location heaved for hours on end, like fermenting dough – until those who were buried this way eventually asphyxiated and died, and no longer twitched in their grave. Wild grass grows there today, dogs howl on dark nights. The 'God-fearing gentiles' cross themselves, when they travel past this place... Jews are no longer here. There is no one to recite a *Kaddish* at this terrifying place.

The Third Grave is someplace behind the Zambrow barracks. On December 27, 1942 (19 Tevet 5703) the inhuman Germans could no longer stomach the suffering of the 200 elderly and sick Jews in the ghetto hospital. They were all dosed with Veronal barbiturate, and put permanently to sleep. The last of their death rattle reverberated through the empty barracks for hours on end, until they lapsed into unconsciousness.

Very quietly, the murderers disposed of the dead bodies, and to this day, no one knows where their remains are to be found...



Page 195: *On the 18th Memorial Day, dedicated to the Annihilation of Zambrow (Tel-Aviv 1961).*

Right to Left: *M. Bursztein, L. Golombek, J. Jabkowsky, Ahuva Greenberg, Chaim-Yossl Rudnik (Argentina), Zvi Zamir (Slowik), Cantor Wilkomirsky, Gershonovich, Dr. Yom-Tov Levinsky.*

The Fourth Grave, the last one, somewhere in the gas ovens of Auschwitz... Here our Zambrow martyrs were exterminated en masse. Here hundreds and thousands of Jews were burned alive and asphyxiated, from all over Europe. It is here that a world of Jews must come to recite the *Kaddish*...

And yet, the world continues on its trajectory, the sun continued to bestow its light, and the earth brings forth its fruit.

As to the 'Old Home' from that sacred Jewish Zambrow, somewhere or another, 4 graves were created – without a marker, without a name....

The Survivors, After the Holocaust

The Heart-rending Results

As soon as the war between Poland and Germany broke out, Zambrow was cut off from the surrounding world. And so it was with all of Poland.

During the short Russian occupation, a few letters from Zambrow managed to get through and here, once again, we present a letter from Israel Kossowsky and his son, Aryeh Kossowsky, in Israel. A variety of rumors surrounding the mistreatment of the Jews, and the suffering of Polish Jewry, circulated around the world – one's heart became embittered and angered – [because] the reach of the hand was too short to extend help...

After that frightful war, the heart-rending results of what occurred to our '*Alter Haym*' began to become visible: everything had been wiped off with fire and sword, and that which remained, by some miracle, fell into the hands of the [sic: gentile] Poles. Shamelessly, they took possession of assets that were openly and justly the property of Jews. They killed out those few surviving Jews (such as Beinusz Tykoczinsky, Hillel-Herschel Sziniak, etc.), after victory had already been declared against the Germans, who had struggled with death against the Germans, and managed somehow to survive – doing so, in case they will come and demand their just legacy from their Christian Zambrow neighbors.

Those Who Vanished in the Fire

A remnant of survivors from Zambrow did remain. About a *minyan* of Jews had managed to save themselves from the gas-ovens in Auschwitz, and remained forlorn, exhausted, with no strength to continue the struggle for life any further (such as Yankl Stupnik, Chaim Kaufman, Fyvel Slowik, etc.). A *minyan* of Jews hid themselves, using [sic: forged] Aryan papers, among the gentiles, in the partisan groups in the forests, such as Herschel Smoliar, Elazar Wilimowsky. The three partisan Stupnik brothers. And another *minyan* came from Russia, those who were left from the ones that had been exiled to Siberia as either bourgeois or Zionists, such as Zayda Piurko, the son of Moshe the Butcher, Shlomo Pekarewicz, two sons of Herschel the Tinsmith (who were in the Russian Army), David Regensberg, the Rabbi's grandson, Rabbi Israel Rabinovich, son of the *Melamed* Mendl Olsha, Motya's son-in-law, Yitzhak Gorodzinsky (son of Leibl the Watchmaker) with his family, etc.

Two Central Addresses: Jerusalem - New York



Page 198: *(Top): The Devil himself has not yet created the instruments for exacting vengeance for the spilled blood of small children.*
– Ch. N. Bialik

The Precious School Children of Zambrow



Page 198: *(Bottom): Survivors of Zambrow Among Other Refugees in Lodz (1946)*

These very survivors did not even know of each other's existence. They needed one central address to which they could turn, and to get back addresses from that central point, as well as

news and help. And these were the two such points: In Israel, Jerusalem, with the Jewish Agency – the general – 'Office for the Location of Relatives,' – a facility to locate friends, and in New York, consisting of the Help Committee of the Zambrow Jews, during the time of its active existence (it has only been active until now), the 'Office for the Location of Relatives,' in Jerusalem found hundreds of thousands of addresses and tens of thousands of Jews that were then connected to their relatives that had been saved, it reunited families, got children returned to their parents, sisters and brothers re-united, etc. Not the least among them were Zambrow Jews.

The Zambrow Help Committee in New York was especially active on behalf of those Zambrow Jews who had saved themselves, and survived.

The Food Packages



Page 199: The Committee for Youth Evening Classes, on the Occasion of the Departure of its active member, Mr. Moshe Eitzer to Argentina (1921).

As soon as they received the general lists of survivors in the camps, and saw someone from Zambrow, they immediately sent out a food parcel, with clothing, and asked for an answer, and to document: who is the individual, which members of his family are living in America, where would he like to move to, and like questions. It was in this manner that the Zambrow committee sent out thousands of valuable packages of food, containing, for example, canned meat, milk, honey, butter and oil, tea, sugar, cocoa, etc., and valuable packages with clothing and suits, jackets, underwear, etc. Even when the address was not sufficiently certain and precise, the committee took the risk and sent the packages. And this got the package recipients back on their feet, and if the produce or clothing was not appropriate, or didn't fit – they either sold it, or exchanged it for something else. The sick got the most expensive medicines by air mail, such as penicillin, and cortisone, to be administered by injection.

Zambrow *landsleit* concentrated themselves in specific cities, such as in Bialystok (Stupnik, Slowik, Finkelstein, with the little boy Beinusz, etc.), in Lodz (headed by Moshe Levinsky), or in Zambrow itself.

In Milan [sic: Italy] (Yankl Stupnik, Moshe Pekarewicz, Menachem Blumstein, the Topols, with their daughters, and son-in-law). One of them was designated as the Representative and Trustee, and sent over tens of thousands of dollars for the Zambrow *landsleit,* providing for ship tickets, if someone had expressed a desire to travel somewhere to take up residence, and with resources to get themselves settled even here in the current location, etc.



Page 200 (Top): A Maccabi Demonstration and Gathering in the Market Square (1918)

Moshe Eitzer and Joseph Savetsky

And let this be the place were we recall, with respect and affection, the two *landsleit* from Zambrow, the leading people in the Zambrow Relief Committee, who held the position of Secretary, answering hundreds of letters with brotherly warmth, and implemented the help activities: Moshe Eitzer (who introduced himself in his the letters as: son of Baylkeh and Abraham the Barrel Maker, and a grandson of Shakhna the Shoemaker. His wife, Pauline, was a daughter of Mottl Shafran), and Joseph Savetsky, the son-in-law of Chaycheh Koziol the Baker.

I had the opportunity to read over 100 letters from Zambrow refugees to these two mentioned individuals, about what they accomplished with their letters of encouragement, and rapid help. Everyone on the committee pitched in and helped with heart and soul. As is related in the letters, how R' Yaakov Karlinsky, David Stein, Shmuel Stein, Sholom Avner Bernstein, Louis Pav, Leibl Molitsky, Hirsch Kukawka, Moshe Bernstein, Isaac Malinowicz, Nathan Berg, Joseph Wierzbowicz-Waxman, Yitzhak Rose, etc.

Joseph Savetsky is especially mentioned, in tens of letters. This generous man of the people, and honest committed activist was elevated, in these letters, by the survivors to the level of a legend. Like

a father, a generous-hearted father, he stood and helped. He answered correspondence promptly, sending many tens of letters a week. I read part of those he sent to his suffering brethren, written in his clear handwriting. He found a word of comfort for everyone, understanding what the other person felt. He would send one person only money, another only food, a third, a raincoat and a pair of boots, a fourth, tea with cocoa, knowing who each of these people were, where they were, and where he was thinking of going to. We must be proud of such a brother and with this kind of devotion.



Page 200 (Bottom): On the Memorial Evening Ceremony Dedicated to the Memory of the Exterminated Jews of Zambrow (Tel-Aviv 1965)

From 'A Bintl Briv'

These are excerpts from a rather large portfolio of correspondence which is in our possession, from those first years after the [Second World] War. They shed light and provide context regarding the plight of the refugees, and the many-branched relief activities of the American Help Committee.

A Letter from Fyvel Slowik

Zambrow, 25.7.1945

Dear Gedalia,

... it is now a couple of months since I was liberated from the German camps.

I struggled with death from all manner of causes: hunger, cold, illness. Thanks to my strong body, and my strong will to survive against the Germans, and exact vengeance from them – I remained alive. From the camp, I traveled home immediately. I figured that I might meet up with some of my own, my only sister, Zambrow Jews... and I, wander about, and I am alone, not sure whether I will wake up tomorrow alive. They reside, the Poles do, in Jewish houses, Jewish bakeries, Jewish factories, and if they should spy a Jew – they think that he is coming to claim what is his, and therefore he needs to be wiped off and gotten out of the way...

Fyvel Slowik

From a Letter, Written to Joseph Savetsky

22/2 – 1946

.. You ask: is it possible to prepare a list of those from Zambrow who are still alive?

It is difficult. Because a small part of them were driven off into Russia – and we know nothing of what happened to them. Several of the Zambrow families came together in Zambrow, a few from the surrounding villages, and thought about establishing a new community, and to begin rebuilding the city anew from this. Practical considerations showed that our lives were not safe, that the Poles are no better than the Germans, and it is dangerous to go out into the street. So everyone fled – to Lodz, to Wroclaw, etc. At this day, in Zambrow, the following are found: Shlomo Pekarewicz – returning from Russia, Itkeh Morozowicz with a child – a scion of Lomza, who was hidden by a Christian. The writer of these lines – Fyvel Slowik, a baker, arriving alive from the German camps, and Moshe Levinsky. This is all of Zambrow... your packages, that you are sending us, are keeping us alive, and in our heart, there still flickers a spark of human love: we still have brethren in America...

Zambrow, 22.7.1946

.. I am the only Jew in Zambrow. A few *landsleit* are holding themselves together in Bialystok and Lodz. I saw Berl Sokol in Bialystok, the Stupniks, Givner, Golombek. I am here alone. My life here is also not secure – but my life, in any event, is broken... from time-to-time, the feeling is awakened in me, that it is necessary to marshal the resources to rebuild everything from anew...

... after a great deal of effort, I found my brother, in Mexico City. I am waiting for exit papers to arrive from him...

Fyvel Slowik

Chaim Kaufman to J. Savetsky

Lineburg, Germany, January 1946

... have you perhaps heard from, or received a letter from *Yankl Stupnik*, a shoemaker? I was together with him in Auschwitz until last year. I, and many other Jews have much to thank him for, in that we are still alive. The entire time, he worked in the camp as a shoemaker, and helped everyone out...

... write to *Moshe Levinsky* about me, that I am to be found in Germany, in the British Zone. He will be happy to know this, because before we were sent off to Auschwitz, I advised him to approach the Christians he knew, in connection with being hidden by them, and he did this. I also wanted to do this, but because of my mother, I did not do so, my conscience did not permit me to abandon her to be alone – so I placed my life in danger for my mother. It is for my mother's sake that I have remained alive.

...I work in a big hospital as a pharmacist, and get 100 cigarettes a month for this, lunches, and 360 marks, and there is nothing available to purchase with this money.

...You certainly knew *Aharon Leibl Karlinsky*, a very reliable person, that I became friendly with towards the end. He worked for the Russians as an employee, and his older son also earned a wage. As soon as the Germans arrived, they dragged the first 50 men away, among which were Karlinsky and his son. His wife, Sarahkeh was left by herself, until she was taken away to Auschwitz...

Lineburg, 10.3.1946

... In the previous week I received a letter from my friend Leibczak Golombek in Israel. He writes me that *Beinusz Mikuczinsky* with *Hillel Sziniak* were murdered by Poles, six days before the arrival of the Russians. I cried very intensely when I heard this news. I had advised Beinusz that he should attempt to conceal himself among the gentiles. I was certain that he would survive the Germans. You cannot conceive of the extent to which Beinusz helped me, and others, in the ghetto. Together with him, I had the oversight for the sanitary conditions in the ghetto. There was no such thing as a job too difficult that Beinusz didn't manage to see through. He was a loyal comrade *for all of the Jewish people.*

... I heard that Dr. Grunwald and his wife and children are in Lodz. I must tell you that he received much in the way of earnings during the final period. He was the only doctor in the ghetto.

... Yesterday, I received papers from my cousin, to be able to travel to America. I immediately went off to Hamburg, and registered in the American consulate. 'Also you send me papers,' she writes to me, which will make it easier for you to obtain an American visa. After several months, I will leave this dark 'camp life' forever. My friend Brenner, from Wysokie Mazowieckie, also received papers to travel to America. Think of this: we are managing to hold on her from Auschwitz and [Bergen] Belsen, and also here in the camp... the foreign hospital where I used to work, has been closed up – and so, once again, I am without work and without food.

Dearest Joseph, I thank you yet again for the package and for your letter. I get a letter from my friends in Israel every other day. Also, from friends from America, such as Malka Koven-Scheinkopf, Joseph Wierzbowicz-Waxman, and others, write to me.

Please send regards to [my] friend Moshe Eitzer. I have a great deal to tell him about Freidkeh Shafran, his mother-in-law. She clung to my mother up to the last minute...

...from the family: Shlomo was taken away immediately with the first transport to Szumowo. His wife and children, as well as Basheh with the oldest of the sisters were in the ghetto until the last day. They had a good place to live, with Menachem Dunowicz, in a new house...

...regarding Nehemiah's (Golombek) family, I remember how his brother's wife was taken away in the first transport, meaning, (Meir) Bronack's daughter, their little girl remained alone, a very pretty

little girl – who later died in the ghetto, while Bronack and his older son and his young wife, Leibl Rosing's daughter also went off in the first transport...

25.9.1946

I received the package and letter today. You are so punctual with your writing and mailing: in a week's time, I have an answer from you, and a package takes only five weeks. All of the packages that you send to my address arrive regularly, and I divide the contents up, in accordance with your instructions, on that same day.

You did well in looking up the friends of Yossl Schmidt and made an effort with the Rutkers to help him.

... Who has returned from Russia? It is interesting to me to find out, if those who were sent there are returning. I am imagining the multi-branched and tireless work you do in writing so many letters, so many people to reply to, to fulfil their requests, to try and locate their relatives and to help them...

...together with a partner, I have opened a wholesale pharmacy, because I received a good recommendation from the Red Cross, for the work I did at the hospital that has since been closed. It is possible that it will develop into a good business, even though I strive to flee this place. I am among the few that have abandoned the sordid life of the camps and have moved over to the city, in order to achieve some independence. I am occupied here with community work, and in the Jewish society...

...You cannot imagine the joy with which I received the letter from my elderly *Rebbe*, written in the style of Sholom Aleichem. It restored many memories of my first *Heder*, of my childhood. Give this elderly *Rebbe* (Bercheh Sokol) my heartiest regards and wishes. May he have as many years to live, in wealth and honor, as the number of smacks he laid upon his pupils, and I will write to him later on.

Chaim Kaufman

Chaya Kaufman writes:

Reichenbach 10.11.1946

..I cannot find the words to express my gratitude to you for your activity.

The packages of food and clothing – sustain us, as does the money...

The war has completely broken me. It took everyone and everything away from me. The worst blow for me was the loss of my best friend, my husband. With his death, I feel like I have lost my life, and I no longer have any will to live. I live only because of my two children: my daughter, who has remained behind in Russia, and a little boy that was sent off to Israel by way of a kibbutz. My daughter is studying in Russia, and chafes to get out of there to be with me together. I am now in

Silesia, in Reichenbach, and am preparing to travel to Israel, and I have become a member of a kibbutz...

Could you perhaps put me in touch with my friend in New York, Alta Pakczor, and with the daughter of the Zambrow *Hazzan*, Wismonsky, who calls herself Adina Cantor in America. My one desire at this point, is to find young friends, and immerse myself in the depths of the past....

P.S. Because of the political life of my husband ע"ה – I have not changed my family name.

The Two Kalesznik Sisters

Paris, 2.8.1946
Dear Friend Savetsky,

... We have received your letter containing the gift, and we heartily thank you.

We do not need the clothing as much as the foodstuffs. The matter of domicile has not yet been resolved, and we are living on a roof without a kitchen and without gas...

...Tomorrow is Yom Kippur Eve. We are going to buy candles for the memorial lights of those departed souls who were exterminated, and carry them off to the synagogue. We still have to locate a synagogue that should be nearby, so we will not have to say the *Yizkor* prayers after using the Metro... The holidays had a different look to them back in Zambrow... We remind ourselves of how, during the High Holy Days, we would run to the synagogue to our mother. Yes, we too, at one time, had parents (when that was, we no longer recall...) We went to hear the sounding of the *Shofar* here, and did not go to work on *Rosh Hashana*. And so the local Jews here laughed at us. And so as the holidays arrive, we become even more broken, both spiritually and physically. The French Jews don't feel this...

Heartfelt blessings for the New Year. Give our regards to Yudka and Naomi Jablonka...

The Two Kalesznik Sisters

Paris 28.10.1946

... Thank you for your letter and gift. We want to pass along some news: we have received visas for Australia, along with exit papers. this will spell an end to our wandering. Perhaps, once again, we will be able to live like human beings...

Paris 25.11.1946

...We are going to Australia. While still in [Bad] Waldsee, we made the acquaintance of two boys, that later went off to Australia, to their families. When they found out that we were in Paris, they sent

us exit papers, and visa, through the British consulate. They sent us ship's tickets, which we are expecting to receive soon. Should we not receive the ship's tickets, we ask you to permit us to borrow the costs, and we will pay you back double... only with them, will we be able to be happy, and live once again...

The Kalesznik Sisters

The Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee

Moscow, 20.6.1945
Our Respected Joseph Srebrowicz.

... I remember you very well. I guard the memory of everyone and everything that has any relationship to our hometown. Foremost, I am happy at the thought that in your second letter to me, I will receive regards from all of our *landsleit* that find themselves in Tel-Aviv, what their fate is, and their current circumstances... Only one sister has survived from my family, Esther. She is with me. My sister Sarah was killed in the shtetl of Radun, near Lida, where she was working...

...After two years of fighting with the partisans, I turned back to more satisfying work. I say 'turned back.' There will no longer be any satisfaction in my soul, until I draw my last breath, I have had no rest in the Byelorussian forests, where day-in and day-out, we paid the debt of blood. I have no rest here [either], when I pay the obligation to the memory of our slain brethren through my modest literary work. This is the destiny of my generation. To tell the truth: I am applying what remains of my energies to once again restore our people. I exert myself to do what is more basic – seeing in this the sole possibility to still my raging heart...

Your Herschel

Herschel Smoliar Proposes the Publication of a Zambrow Yizkor Book

Lodz, 4.11.1946

Respected Friend Savetsky,

It is now several months since I have returned to Poland. I have plenty of work... I am a member of the Presidium of the Jewish Central Committee and we are required to exert ourselves considerably, to attempt to restore, even piecewise, that which the Hitler murderers have annihilated here.

... It was a great joy for me to learn from our friend, Moshe Levinsky, about your endeavors to help all of those that were saved. I have always held, that people from Zambrow, in general, are always and everywhere, very decent people... Your help today, has given the those from Zambrow a chance to get themselves together – after the difficult war years....

And now, I wish to approach you on a more general issue: Zambrow, as a Jewish city, no longer exists. However, our home city continues to live in the memory of all of us, as it once was. I am trying to say that it is our collective responsibility to place a memorial marker, for our hometown, and in memory of the lost lives of our dearest. My proposal is that you should gather a specific sum for the purpose of publishing a Memorial Book about Zambrow. In my opinion, such a book this sort of a book should accept an array of articles and writings, memories about Zambrow of yore, and a greater section of material about the destruction of Zambrow during the German occupation. From my end, I am prepared to devote all my energy to help you to realize this plan. I await your reply to my proposal.

Wroclaw, 25.12.1946
Dear *landsman* Savetsky,

I have received your letter and package. I want to express heartfelt thanks for your special effort in trying to locate my family: my grandfather, and great-aunt. My grandfather has sent me money. I am in a *Kibbutz* and I am waiting for a certificate. I do not wish to travel illegally, because I have bounced around Russia for five and a half years – and that is enough for me. Now, I wish to enter Israel legally, and get right to work. Costs here are very high: a pair of boots costs 25,000 zlotys... I am preparing to get married with a pretty young lady, also in the Kibbutz, solitary and poor, just like me... Shlomo Pekarewicz has already received the visas for Mexico. He is waiting for a ship's ticket from his brother...

Gershon D.

Salzburg, 7 Tishri 5707 (1946)
Honorable Chairman of the Zambrow *Landsleit*, J. Savetsky,

My name is Yitzhak Golda, and I am from Zambrow. I am sending you a bit of writing that I have done, after having spent the year in Zambrow. I am no poet or writer. I do have an inclination to document everything that has occurred. I have documented my life as a partisan in the forest, and kept a daily diary from the beginning of the liquidation of the ghetto in Zambrow up to the liberation by the Red Army. For the time being, I am sending you this fragment of writing... there are several other Zambrow *landsleit* in Salzburg, such as Kadish Kaplan, Sender's brother, as well as Isaac Bursztein. There are even more Zambrow *landsleit* in Munich, and my brother is there as well... My uncle has sent papers to me.

16.6.1947

... I am from Zambrow, Dobka Wonsever, a daughter of Topol. My mother Yehudis Topol is a daughter of Koziol. I am in Germany with my husband and child, and I am in need of help...

Buenos Aires 24.7.1949

I am from Zambrow, Hona Goldwasser, a son of the Shoemaker from Gać. I have a brother in Brooklyn, Israel Goldwasser, and a sister Golda. Her husband's name is Hona-Yudl Katz. I would very much like it, if you would be so kind, as to locate them. I have already written to the paper(s) and to the Union of Polish Jews, but without success.

Hona Gaćer

Milan 22.4.1947
Dear Comrade Savetsky,

With thanks [we acknowledge] –receipt of your letter and packages.

... We are in Milan for four months already. Pretty soon, I will be going to Israel. The following people from Zambrow are found here: Reineh Sokol, Moshe Khanit, Yaakov Stupnik, Abraham Kron and others.

...In 1939, I was compelled to flee from Zambrow, from the Russians, because of my Zionist activity. They seized me in Lithuania, and had me arrested. For five and a half years, I served time in Siberia at hard labor, in a climate of 70 degrees below zero, wearing threadbare rags. I worked for 12 hours a day under armed guard. Our food consisted of soup made from nettles, and I was left sapped of all strength. When we were let go, I walked 20 meters and collapsed. A Jew in the street recognized me as a fellow Jew, and took me into his house, until I came around a bit. I came back to Poland, and went off to Zambrow. I did not encounter anyone that I knew there anymore. So I began to wander from border to border, until such time that I will come to my home – in the Land of Israel. Now, we are sitting in Milan and waiting... with our eyes turned to Israel.

Elyeh (Zayda) Piurko
(A son of Moshe the Butcher).

Lodz, 23.9.1947
Dear Friend Savetsky,

Today is the eve of Yom Kippur. I am moved to write and thank you for everything that you do for us. You do more than a father would. I received the *Tallit* and *tefillin*, and how can I thank you? Such a prayer shawl cannot be found in Poland, and, wrapped in it, I go to worship, walking with great pride, knowing that we have such good brethren. Mrs. B. needs to receive assistance. She is a grandchild of B. who worked in Abraham Schwartzbard's brick works. He was called Abraham *Strikhar*. She is here with a small, sick child, and has a right to the help sent by the Zambrow committee. Rachel Rubin's daughter is in Cyprus. Rachel and her son feel well. I do not know the landsman Kron. Stupnik divided the money for all of the people from Zambrow, in my house...

Moshe K.

Bad Reichenhall, 25.12.46

..I am in Bad Reichenhall to be cured. In the year 1942, I was run over by an auto. For the entire time I was in the camp, I did not have any pain. However, recently, the place where I was hit had begun to hurt, and I am in Reichenhall to take the waters...

...Regarding the *landsleit*: In the previous week, Shlomo Lehrman received an affidavit. Stupnik has received a national exit permit for Australia. In Facking, there is a Lifschitz and a Golombek – Abraham Shlomki, the son of the *Melamed*. The Kasha Maker's children were with me. Herschel the Tinsmith's second son – came back from the Russian Army. He is found in Feldafing (Lower Bavaria) together with his brother. I forwarded them the letters. Wahrszafczyk was also to see me. I have received a letter from Chaim. It is entirely possible he will come to me, in which case, I will help him get settled....

Golombek

Paris, 29.12.1946
Respectfully sent to the community activist
R' Yaakov Karlinsky נ"י

I am Israel Rabinovich, a son of R' Mendl Olsha, who was called Motya's son-in-law. My father was a *Melamed,* on Bialystoker *Gasse* No. 3. My mother ע"ה died in the year 1939. I do not know my father's fate. As the Rabbi, the Russians exiled me in 1940, having found my credentials of rabbinic ordination and other writings in my possession. They proceeded to torture and oppress me. It is four months since I have returned from there, destitute, and without anything, with sick children. I met up with a *landsman* in Lodz, a neighbor, Mr. Moshe Levinsky, and he has helped me a great deal. Now, I am in Paris. I already have papers from the Baltimore Yeshiva, named for the Chafetz Chaim, as a teacher of *Talmud*. My father-in-law will be traveling with me, a former *shokhet*, who is an elderly man. When you are able to find the address of a relative of mine, David Cohen, in Detroit, and R' Yaakov Yellin in Buffalo...

Rabbi Israel A.

With the Help of *HaShem*, Monday, Portion of *Ki Tetze*, 5707 [1946], France
To my dear *landsman* R' Joseph Savetsky,

...I have received your letter, You have asked, who am I? I am a son of the Rabbi of Wierzbnik. As a six-year-old orphan, I came to Zambrow, to my grandfather, R' David[66] Menachem Regensberg. I lived with my grandfather in Zambrow for twenty years. During the war, I fled to Russia, and *The One Above* saved me. Now I am in France. My name is now Sivenbuch, [because] I had to change my name in order to save myself using someone else's passport...

David Regensberg

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66 A seeming error, since the Rabbi's name is elsewhere given as Dov Menachem Regensburg

Brooklyn, 19.12.1947

... The Yeshiva of Lomza, where I once studied, brought me to the Yeshiva in Brooklyn from Italy. Now, I am studying at Yeshiva University. I am, however, in need of resources for support...

Moshe Kerszanowicz

Zlota Gora 23.4.1949

...I thank you for the package that I have received. It is not effective to send clothing to Poland at this time, because the [local] factories are working, and there is now sufficient clothing [to be had]. What is worth putting in the packages are: black pepper, bitter cocoa, penicillin, streptomycin...

M.G.

Bialystok, 20.10.194_
Dear Friends, Savetsky, Moshe Eitzer,

I am Khatzkel Givner from Zambrow. I am here for two years already. I have never before asked for any help or a package. Suddenly, from Golombek's address, I receive a package from the Zambrow Help Committee, which moved me greatly, to see that I had not been forgotten, despite the fact that I had not asked for anything... and I thank you. I am a son of Chaim-Hirsch Szatka and a brother of Aharkeh's.

R. G.

To the honored Zambrow Help Committee,

Thank you for the packages that you have sent me. For us, it is a wellspring of solace, that someone is still out there, thinking of us. Who is this Joseph Savetsky, who's name had become a legend among us? I was told that he is a son-in-law of the lady baker, Chaycheh Koziol, is this correct? I went to *Heder* together with the son of Chaycheh the lady baker...

Please send regards to Yehudit Jakula. Her husband's name is Chaim Tzedek. I am a brother of Sarah Rachel Yerusalimsky. If she writes to me – I have a lot of information to communicate. I fled to Russia, and thanks to that, I remained alive. As soon as possible, I would like to flee this polluted soil...

Moshe Yerusalimsky

Szczeczin, 19.4.194_
Dear Friend Savetsky,

... I am from Zambrow, and my husband is from Goworowo. We have come back from Russia broken, impoverished, and isolated. My husband was wounded in his right hand during the war. I have five children, may they live and be well, and we need much for them. My father's name was Mendl Denenberg, and was a cousin of Avcheh Rakowsky and Avcheh Frumkin. I ask that you add us to your list of those eligible to receive assistance...

Chaya Sh.

Sanatorium Byelokhonko, 5.4.1949
Dear Savetsky,

...I am from Zambrow, my father was Pinchas the Tinsmith, on the Bialystok Road. My mother, – Tsirl. They were murdered. I was sent off to Russia and liberated not long ago, with lung disease. I find myself in a sanatorium in a struggle with death... coming back from Russia, I came for a visit to Zambrow....I was unable to find a single person that I knew...

Yaakov Moshe M.

Salzburg, 26.1.1947
Dear Friend Savetsky, Yossl
President of the Zambrow Scions,

... I am from Zambrow, Menachem ben Yekhiel Blumstein. We lived at the house of Gershon Jablonka, my uncle, in his yard. We had a large family – and now, I remain the only one... I spent five years in the Russian military. After the war I returned to Poland. I was to frightened to go back to Zambrow. The Poles stop the buses, and drag Jewish passengers off in order to kill them. I could not longer countenance the Poles, who were Hitler's accomplices – so I went over to Austria. My friends in America help me a bit. Please send my regards to my cousin Yudka Jablonka. Can you send me cigarettes? I smoke a great deal out of nervousness....

Menachem B.

Giveat Brenner, 14.6.1947
[To my] best friend Savetsky,

By happenstance, I became aware that you are the one who answers all of the letters and send each and every package. I am in the *Kibbutz*, and I lack for nothing. I am a daughter of the tailor, Abraham Posner. My husband is still in Germany, and he is yet to arrive.

I have only one request to make of you: help to locate my brother, who has been in America for 40 years already. His name is Yaakov Herschel Posner. Because of the war, I lost his address.

Regards, Malka P.

Milan, Italy. 4.10.1947
Dear Savetsky,

I have received your letter of 15.9, and this is my one solace. I have many friends in America: Abba Stupnik, Leib Becker, the Blumwalds, the Fyevkas, the family of Elyeh Weinberg. I write to them – but the letters are returned to me; the address is incorrect. The only one who gets my letters and replies, is – Joseph Savetsky. I have also received the package that you have sent to me...there are a number of people from Zambrow milling about in Italy: Moshe Pekarewicz, the Topols, with two daughters and a son-in-law, having returned from Russia, Reizkeh Sokol, Menachem Blumstein. Give regards to all the folks from Zambrow.

Yankl Stupnik

Wroclaw, 19.3.1949

I have received your parcel, and it has sustained my soul. I haven't written to you in a long time, because my wife was seriously ill. However, thanks to my great-aunt Liebeh Pekar, who sent over doses of penicillin injections to us, through our Zambrow Relief Committee, my wife stayed alive. Now, my child, who is six months old, has need of penicillin, and it is very difficult to procure it here. We are yearning to leave Poland and travel to the Land of Israel, but difficulties remain yet... I do not know the situation of our *landsleit* in Lodz. Dr. Gurland and his family are found with me, in Kalina Jospa.[67]

Gershon R.

Zlota Gora, 23.11.1949
Dear friend Joseph,

...Until the year 1946-47 there were about 600 Jewish families here with a Jewish aid committee. But they all moved off, and the committee no longer exists. Only five Jewish families remain, and I am among them – and we all would like to go to Israel as soon as is possible, but we have no means at our disposal... can you possibly place me in contact with my brother, Itcheh and my brother's daughter Rana Sztupakewicz? Perhaps they will assist me in being able to go to Israel? Please, my dear friend, see to it that I do not remain here as the only Jew...

Moshe Granica

Lodz, 12.2.1949
Honored friend Savetsky,

I thank you for your letter and the five dollars. Thank you for the packages. Should you be sending parcels for Passover, please send tea in one box, not in individual small packets, send pepper. Do not send margarine, only olive oil. Do not send borscht kosher for Passover, because there is no lack of beets in Poland. Please send some snacks for my rascal, meaning my little boy. I have managed to acquire a bit of down, and if it is not difficult for you, can you send me something to fill, because that is hard to come by here. Please send 18 meters of material – for a down blanket and two pillows. It is very forward for me to ask this, but I have no choice. My husband is working, but he is an invalid. Send regards to everyone from Zambrow.

Your Peshki G.

Lodz, 17.8.1949
Best friend Savetsky,

...You have forgotten me, and don't even ask if I am well or sick. You sent a *tallit* and *tefillin* to our friend M. which he doesn't need them because he will not put on the *tefillin*. Rabbi Olsha thought he was observant, and demanded of you, that you send this to him. I have remained the sole survivor of such a large family, and have need of medical help. I am selling my clothes in order to buy medicines...

Sarah S.

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67 There is a Kalina not far from Wroclaw in South Poland, but it is not certain this is the one.

16.9.1949

...I swear by God, that I will never forget what you have done for me. The medicines are getting me back on my feet, and I get better day-by-day. The 25 grams that you sent me – are almost gone, and the doctors say I need 100 grams. It is getting cold already, and I am naked and barefoot and sick. I am tranquil, because you will not abandon me.

Yaakov M.

Lodz, 17.3.1950

I received your package only after a great deal of exertion, because the address was incorrect. You got the package to me just as Elijah the Prophet would have... I have recently hosted a circumcision ceremony. Accordingly, two people from Zambrow were invited: Rachel Rubin and Moshe Levinsky. They are set to travel to Israel soon. Regrettably – my husband is sick. As a result, my family and I must continue to suffer here... can you send us powdered milk? The little children don't even lay eyes on any milk...

Pessie G.

Souls that Were Saved

Beinusz Sarny

Beinusz was a little boy that was born in Zambrow at the end of 1940, at the time when the Russians still ruled the city. His father, whose family name was Sarny – was from Zambrow. His mother – was Christian, who lived among the Jews, and was counted as a Jewish woman. Did she, perhaps convert? Who knows? Beinusz was raised within the Covenant of Our Father Abraham, like all other Jewish children. About a year later, in 1941 – when the Germans entered the city, his father was murdered – he was one of the first victims. His mother – remained alone, and supported herself and her child in her village, close to her own relatives. In the year 1944 – the Germans shot the mother, because 'loyal neighbors' had told the Germans that her husband was Jewish, and she was giving the child a Jewish upbringing, so that he remain a Jew. So Christians, fearing the wrath of God, kidnaped the four year old boy, and hid him.

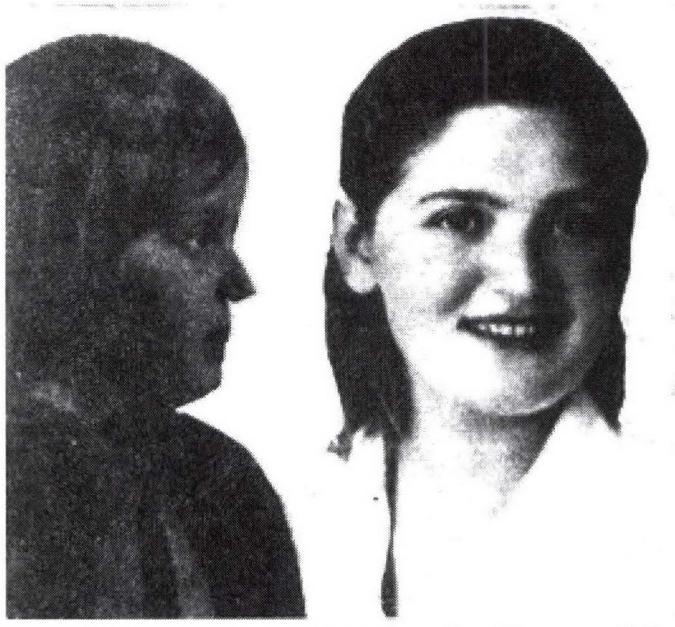


Page 211: The Boy, Beinusz Sarny

After the war, at the beginning of 1946, a peasant came to Zambrow from some village, that was not too far away, and scrupulously searched for Jews... he was barely able to find one, Mr. Gershon Finkelstein, and entrusted him with the information that he was sheltering a Jewish child, and wanted to be paid for this, in return for which, he would continue to shelter the boy, or pay him off for his endeavor up to this point, and have him take the boy away. So Gershon Finkelstein sought counsel with *landsleit* in Bialystok, with the chairman of the L"L Union in America, Mr. Savetsky, and decided to redeem the child from gentile hands, and give him a Jewish upbringing.

Until this time, the little boy had been raised in an anti-Semitic environment, often saying that he hated Jews, despite the fact that he had never seen them. A little at a time, Beinusz became attached to Jews. With the assistance of the Help Committee in America – the little boy was placed in a Jewish Home in Bialystok, and in time, he became a Jew, just like other Jewish children...

Chana Kopperman[68]



Page 212: A Photo Montage of a Picture of the Daughter and the Mother – to Establish Resemblance

There was a young couple in Zambrow, Mendl Kopperman, a tailor, and his wife Gutsheh. In the year 1941 –the Germans murdered both of them. However, they had the presence of mind, before death, to hand over their only daughter Chana, almost five years old, to elderly Christian woman, Leszczynska, who had worked for them, and this Christian woman secretly raised the child. the parents saw fit to give the Christian woman the address of the mother's brother in America, Mr. Irving (Isaac) Rubinson, in Brooklyn.

The Christian woman hid the child for about a half year. Until she no longer could. The ghetto had been liquidated, and she didn't know what further to do. Contact with America had been cut. So she came up with a plan, that she would surreptitiously leave the little girl at an orphanage, and they would be forced to take her in. So she rehearsed the little girl, who spoke Polish, that she should only say that she is a Christian child. She put on a crucifix around her neck, and traveled with her to Lomza.

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68 Mrs. Sibony, née Kopperman, has indicated that the photo on the right is of her, not her mother.

At night, in the middle of a snowstorm, when not a living soul could be seen in the street, the elderly woman put the little girl into a sack, told her that she must keep still, and under no circumstances reveal who it was that left her there, and where she is from, and she left the sack by the door of the orphanage on the Ostrolenka *Gasse*. The old lady hid herself in a yard somewhere close by, and watched from a distance, through a slit in the fence, to see what would happen... a few minutes after this, the dog in the yard of the orphanage began to bark, and tried to tear himself from his chain. It became irritating to the Headmistress of the orphanage – a good, pious woman, who secretly worked against the Germans – and she went out onto the doorstep to see what was happening: why is the dog barking like that? She then saw the sack with the little girl in it... she immediately brought the sack into the house, and the elderly gentile woman left immediately, and on the following day, she went off to the Zambrow Road, late in the night...

Even before they had begun to ask her anything, the girl, out of fright, immediately began to cry, and say: I am not Jewish, I am Catholic, see the crucifix around my neck... the Headmistress understood only too well, what it was she had in front of her, but she feigned ignorance, calmed the child, gave her food and drink, washed her, and put her to bed. In the morning, she went with her to the municipal office to present her. First, however, she learned what to say, and what not to say. She gave her the name Halina Koperska and rehearsed this name many times. The Headmistress and Governess Julia, prepared her well for her 'examination,' and came with her to the municipal office. A Polish-speaking German received them, and continued to shout that she was a Jewish girl, from the liquidated ghettos, and she needs to be taken away... to her parents. The little girl, however, held her ground: I am a Christian!... soon we will know the whole truth, the employee threatened: I will call in the big dog: If you are Jewish, he will tear you to pieces, he hates Jews. So the little girl burst into tears: he will not tear me to pieces, because I am a Christian girl... the interview lasted for three hours... and she remained in the orphanage, as a Christian girl, until the year 1949 – seven years. The Headmistress of the orphanage was seized by the Germans, as an underground operative and shot. Halina Koperska was baptized and raised as a religious Catholic girl. She studied in a *Volksschule,*[69] learned how to sew, run a business, and the secret of her origin was known only to the faithful Christian Governess, Julia.

Would that life had continued tranquilly. The elderly Christian woman, Leszczynska, was troubled by her conscience: she had promised herself to contact the uncle of the little girl, in America, about this. Now is the time, and she wrote up a letter to him, and told him everything, giving the address of the orphanage and in this way, assuaged her conscience.

The uncle, Irving Rubinson of Brooklyn, immediately turned the matter over to the proper authorities, and the Help Committee for the Rescue of Children, the Zionist coordination for children and youth issues, '*Beyt Aliyat Yeladim*,' in Lodz immediately intervened in the matter. Here is what the representative of the Central Committee writes to the uncle on June 4, 1947:

> 'Your letter of March 2... we have received the full authority of the consulate and immediately begun an initiative to repatriate your sister's daughter Chana

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[69] The German term *Volksschule* generally refers to compulsory education, denoting an educational institution every person (i.e. the people, *Volk*) is required to attend.
In Germany and Switzerland it is equivalent to a combined primary (*Grundschule* and *Primarschule*, respectively) and lower secondary education (*Hauptschule* or *Sekundarschule*), usually comprising a mandatory attendance over a period of nine years. In Austria, *Volksschule* solely is used for primary school from Year One to Year Four.

(Agnieszka) Kooperman[70] from the Christian orphanage in Lomza, where she was converted, and currently resides.

Lomza, and the entire surrounding region is today *'Judenrein.'* We have sent a special emissary there, who has visited the orphanage, saw the child, and has negotiated with the leadership of the orphanage to have the child immediately released. For the moment, this is not possible, because of the many formal difficulties. The reason is, that the register of the orphanage, counts the child under her current, Christian name, Halina Koperska. the child was taken in 1942, as abandoned, immediately after the liquidation of the ghetto. From the first moment on, whether in front of the people who found her, or in the orphanage, whether later falling into the hands of the Gestapo – the child consistently argued that her name was Halinka Koperska. It was in this fashion that the child saved herself from the German murderers.

The inculcation of this story, that she was Christian, has remained with her to this day, and she continues to argue that she is Halina Koperska, and that she never was a Kopperman. Accordingly, the management of the orphanage cannot release the child, and the matter will have to go to court. However, in court, we have no evidence that it is she. For this reason, our emissary has carried out the following: he photographed the child, and has brought the picture to Lodz. Here, we have found three people, former residents of Zambrow 1. Moshe Levinsky, former chairman of the Zambrow *Landsmanschaft* in Lodz, and former employee of the Zambrow *Judenrat*. He knew the mother since the time she was a girl, and the child up to the age of five. 2. Rachel Rubin and Pessia Gutfarb who verified that the child completely resembles the mother. With this kind of evidence, we will launch a legal proceeding. But since a legal process must take a long time, and it is not desirable that a Jewish child should remain for any length of time in Christian hands, in the next immediate few days, we are sending our special emissary to Lomza, to try and get the child out by more quick means.

We need an affidavit from you for the court and the lawyers. We also need a photograph of your sister, certified by the leadership of the Zambrow Landsmanschaft in New York.

Signed: Leibl Karsky
(Central Committee of the Zionist Children's Coordination in Poland).

The Jewish-Polish officer, Drucker (today in Israel) and the emissary, Gerschater, exerted themselves strenuously to get her out of gentile hands. It was first in April 1949, that the girl was let go, legally, from Christendom and from the Polish orphanage. During the time of the court proceedings, she accustomed herself to the idea that she is a Jewish child, and began to long for her heretofore unknown uncle in New York. But she could not be taken out except by means of a family that would legally obligate itself to be her guardians. This is because she was still a minor of 13 years of age. A Jewish woman in Lodz responded to this, Alice Kyle (her husband Handelson was the director of the new theater in Lodz) who took her under her protection, looking after her like her own child, and expanded her exposure to practical Jewish life. Her uncle in America sent her money, and packages,

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70 The Yiddish spelling is different here.

and wanted to take her to him. The girl, however, made friends with other Jewish children, and understood that she had no recourse but to turn back with her whole heart to her people, from who it was attempted to tear her away. She then decided to travel to Israel, notwithstanding her love for her uncle, who was her savior, was boundless.

She came to Israel in 1950, with a youth *aliyah,* and she was sent to *Kibbutz* Rukhama, in the Negev. Here she learned Hebrew, and agriculture, got a general education, and devoted herself to small children. Later on, she went over to Kibbutz Noah, to her future husband Siboney. Today she is a mother and works as a child supervisor.

The City After the Destruction

By Herschel S.

(An Excerpt from a Letter)

...It is *Shavuot* of June 12, 1959.

I had come to visit our Zambrow, together with my friend, Moshe Eitzer from America – also a *landsman.* There are no more Jews here any longer. Zambrow is known in Poland for its large textile factory. There is no trace of Jewish buildings – everything is burned down. If something had survived – it is in gentile hands. On the location of Beinusz Tykoczinsky's cinema – a Polish Lyceum is being built. Zambrow has within it 9500 residents. It has three schools and an orphanage.

About a week ago, it was discovered that near the village of Kołaki, there is a mass grave of 1500 Jews from Zambrow and Rutki, who were murdered in August 1941. Perhaps my dear mother lies among them, and my sisters, Chana and Baylcheh, who were murdered at the beginning of the war? In the year 1944, before the retreat, the Germans set up a machine [gun] at that location, that shot for a whole day, without stopping, at Jews who were put up there. I wanted to visit this grave, and made an effort to do so with the authorities, but I was not permitted to have access... there is an hypothesis, that close to their retreat, the Germans dug up the bones to grind them up – in order not to leave any traces... the local populace does the same – it is wiping off all the Jewish traces of the former Jewish presence in Zambrow. I made an effort to go and see the mass grave on my own, but I was not given permission... I intend to investigate this matter, when I will return to Warsaw, and demand that some sort of a memorial be erected there. A similar mass grave is near Szumowo, containing Jews from Zambrow, and yet another place – not far from the city. We went to visit the cemetery. Here, too, almost everything has gone away. All we found was the grave of Szklovin. The authorities of the government assured me they would not eradicate the cemetery. The headstones, however, are falling over out of old age. I attempted to lift a headstone – and it disintegrated. This is what our home town looks like. The city is a new city, all that is left of the old Zambrow – are only graves.

On the Ruins

By Chaycheh Zukrowicz-Netzer

In the year 1961, as a co-worker with my husband, Zvi Netzer in the Israeli Embassy, I made a visit to Zambrow, the city of my birth. It is difficult for me to let go of the town where I was born. I knew that, in this area, there was not even a single Jew anymore. I knew I was not going to hear the sound of my brethren, the sons of my people. And how could I restrain myself, and not go, to shed a tear over the graves of fathers and mothers? Only a short time ago, it was even a life-and-death danger for a Jew to come and visit the towns surrounding the area from Zambrow to Lomza. Despite this, I went to search for my city.

To my great pain, I could not find it – it no longer existed. A new city in the direction of the Ostrowa highway had sprung up, without even a single Jew in it. the little river is dried out, the bridge is new, and the Burgomaster – a joke of fate – is Jewish...he comes from somewhere far away, assimilated, with no interest in Jews or *Yiddishkeit*, and is a loyal party man... the only one who recognizes what was once the burgeoning Jewish Zambrow is the gentile Komorowski, the former clerk and *Wójt*[71] of the city, who is now on the periphery, living on a pension. The barracks are still standing. The center of the city is there, and a huge textile factory operates there with approximately 500 employees. There isn't a Jew to be had even to save your life. The entire Jewish section, around the synagogue and the study houses is eradicated. The pitiful cemetery stands alone, vandalized, overgrown with 'prickles' and thorns. No one comes any longer to pay respect to the dead ancestors. [That is to say] apart from Polish intruders, who come to drag away the last of the headstones, those which have fallen down, which they need for paving purposes. Our Zambrow exists only in our memory.

I Write a Letter

By Moshe Wilimowsky

Yiddish Version

I write a letter – I don't know to whom
I begin to enumerate names
Of father, mother, sisters, brothers.
Of all manner of branches of the family;
I enumerate an entire list;
But who of them has remained in the *shtetl?*

To where should I address it?
Maybe, what I need to do is try

Hebrew Version

Let me write a letter to the members of my family,
To father, mother, brother and sister,
But there is not a person left in the Vale of Tears
There is not a single address, at the least...

I will recall names and addresses from my memory,

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71 In Poland the title of *Wójt* was used to denote hereditary heads of towns (under the overlordship of the town's owner - the King, the Church or a nobleman). Today *Wójt* denotes the elected mayor of a rural commune (*gmina*), i.e. one consisting only of villages (mayors of towns and cities take different titles).

To send it to Majdanek?
Where 'Fritz' and 'Janek'
Concluded an unclean pact?

And maybe send it to Buchenwald?
Where, forcibly, hordes of Jews.
were driven from their homes,
Forced to dig deep pits,
And then arrayed the entire assembly?

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And perhaps send it to 'Treblinka?'
Where Germans of the 'left and 'right,'
With new 'Aryan theories'
Created crematoria,
And a huge gas chamber,
And, in front of the eyes of a watching world,
Drove Jews to death
And derived such glee from their death throes?

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And so I light a *Yahrzeit* candle,
Burn the letter...cover my eyes
And say: *Yitgadal veYitkadash*
Oh God, take the ashes from this letter!
Combine it with the ash from those who are holy and pure,
Who gave their lives in Sanctification of the Name!

Relatives, friends, the names of city residents;
Oh, but they no longer exist: sons on fathers
All were put to death, without leaving a memory or trace!

And the letter is dropped, abused and orphaned
Without an address, and to nowhere.

What if I addressed it to Majdanek,
Will it thread its way there these days?
There, the Nazi Fritz, and the Pole Janek
Concluded a blood pact against us.

And perhaps to Buchenwald? – hah, to the prison,
Hordes of Jews were crammed in there,
Man, woman and child,
Forced to dig their own graves.

To Treblinka, the place of the crematoria
If I address you there, would you meekly go?
– There, lo, daughters, sons
Were asphyxiated by the light of day!

All, all of them were lost, incinerated,
There names and memories forever ended...

Without a memorial – I have lit
A candle of the soul, to my martyrs:
I whispered the 'Kaddish' in silent trembling
And by the light of the candle – I destroyed the letter...
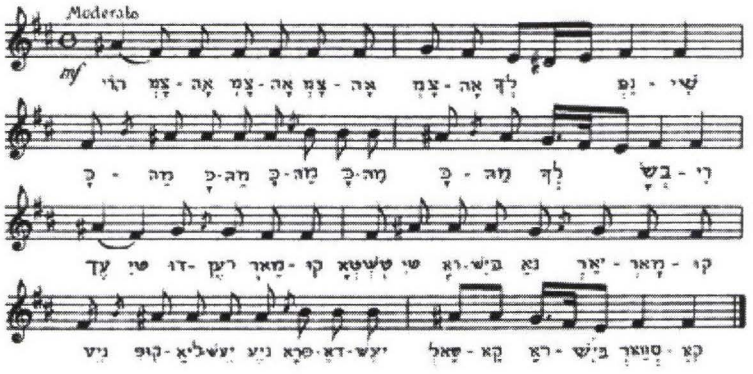
And this ash as well, Merciful Lord, mix in,
With the ash of those who gave their lives
In Sanctification of the Name...

The Houses of Study, Rabbis & Other Clergy

בתי מדרשים, רבנים כלי-קודש



Page 218: *The Yeshiva of Zambrow*
Seated: R' Meir Zukrowicz, R' Leib Rosing, The Yeshiva Headmaster Kovir, The Rabbi, R' Yeshea Gorzholczany and R' Abraham Shlomo Dzenchill



Page 220 *The Rabbi's Melody*

An old Ukrainian folk song that deals with a foolish peasant, wandering about the marketplace, buying nothing, but just making a tumult. The Chabad Hasidim changed the words and used the song to make sport of the evil inclination in Man, which wanders about among God-fearing Jews – trying to entice their souls... (see further on, pp. 256,258)

Houses of Worship and Public Institutions 50 Years Ago

By Yom-Tov Levinsky

The White Bet HaMedrash

That was how the older *Bet HaMedrash* was called, that stood diagonally across from the Fire-fighters station, in the direction of the Cieciorki Forest. It was called 'the New *Bet HaMedrash*' because it was burned down, and then built up again. It was stained dark on the outside, but the color was faded, as was the case with many other houses. But since the second Bet HaMedrash, which stood by the synagogue in the direction of the horse market, was built out of red brick, with its roof stained in red, and the rain runoff being red, etc., it got the name of the 'Red *Bet HaMedrash* – the other was then called: the White *Bet HaMedrash*.



Page 221: Nachman Granica, the Shammes

The White *Bet HaMedrash* was one that selected its members. It was here that the *balebatim* recruited one another, the disciples of the Rabbi and his people. It was here that the Blumrosens worshiped, along with the Burszteins, the Wilimowskys, the Levensons, Abba Rakowsky, the Kossowskys, Levinsky (my father), Kagans, and others. Almost all of the butchers in the *shtetl* worshiped here, beginning with the Pendzhukhas, who lived across from the *Bet HaMedrash*, with their children and sons-in-law, the Dzenchills (their elder, Lejzor the Butcher, also lived in the neighborhood of the *Bet HaMedrash*). Many craftsmen worshiped here, who were, indeed, the living and moving part of those who prayed here. Almost all those who espoused a love of Zion congregated here. At the time that Dr. Herzl passed away, and the Rabbi ordered that all the houses of study be sealed. in order that this 'apostate' should not, God forbid, be eulogized, the *balebatim* of the White *Bet HaMedrash* tore open the doors and conducted a substantial memorial service (see the chapter about Abba Rakowsky).

Those craftsmen that needed to get up before dawn, in order to go to work, travel to fairs in nearby towns, and set up their booths there – would drop into the White *Bet HaMedrash*, when it was still dark, and snatch a prayer session. Also, the 'strikers of The Fifth Year' (1905) also found themselves a center here. They would meet here on the Sabbath, set up an 'exchange' in the *Bet HaMedrash* premises, which was always full of worshipers, in front of the door, on the pavement, and not under surveillance by the authorities. The important thing: it was here that the city *Hazzan*, R' Shlomo Wismonsky, and his choir led services regularly. He was a modern Cantor, who completed a Cantorial School in Lodz, could read [musical] notes, and would also teach the members of his choir to sing from notes.

True, the Rabbi, who carried out his role fanatically, so that God forbid, no spark of frivolous abandon penetrate the *shtetl* – looked askance at this modern Cantor from the outset, who by the way, was religious, and an observant Jew. The Rabbi could not oppose the *balebatim* that wanted

this Cantor. It was especially the Pendzhukhas that wanted him, the butchers, who were dying for a good Cantor. So the Rabbi found a way to keep him at a distance, diminishing his prestige a bit: when the Cantor went to the Rabbi to have his '*Kabala*' (diploma as a *Shokhet)* certified, to permit him to perform ritual slaughter in the *shtetl,* as was the usual custom of being a '*Hazzan-Shokhet,*' the Rabbi disqualified him as *Shokhet*: 'His hands tremble a bit' – despite the fact that the doctor did not confirm this... On *Shabbat sheMevarkhim*[72]*, Rosh Hodesh,* Festivals (on the first day) the *Hazzan* would lead services with his choir, and the *Bet HaMedrash* was packed. Even the gentiles would come and stand under the windows to hear the Jewish melodies. On special Sabbath days, and on the second day of Festivals, the *Hazzan* was turned over to the Red *Bet HaMedrash.* The choir consisted of good voices, brought in from the outside. Singers came to perform with him even from as far away as Odessa. A young singer, by the name of Binyomkeleh, earned quite a reputation. He had a beautiful alto voice, and all the girls in the *shtetl* would chase after him... later on, the Cantor obtained choir members from Zambrow itself, such as Myshkeh Reines, Mordechai Sokol, Abrahamkeh Rothberg.

The *Shammes* of the *Bet HaMedrash* was R' Nachman Granica, a handsome Jewish man, strong, tall, with a wide, white beard. He was in good, and had substantial relationships with all the worshipers, knew what sort of compliment to utter, and how to accord each person the proper respect, and would participate in all the happy celebrations that worshipers had, from a *Brit Milah* for a male child – to a wedding, or a housewarming for a new dwelling. He knew whom it was appropriate to invite to such an affair, and whom not to invite. He had a metal-silver disposition, and I loved to hear him, especially on the High Holy Days, how he auctioned off the Torah honors, driving up the bidding as high as he could, doing it with goodness and understanding, for the good of the *Bet HaMedrash.* Nachman the *Shammes* was a baker, and that is how he made a living. The congregation allocated a residence to him, near the entrance of the *Bet HaMedrash*, to which a courtyard was built on. When the worshipers would leave the *Bet HaMedrash* before dawn, to go to work, or to a fair – the fine odor of fresh baked goods was already pervading the *Bet HaMedrash*. He would bake beautiful *pletzl*, in the morning, sprinkled with onion and poppy seed, or sugar. The craftsmen and workers would grab a piece for their 'morning slice' to satisfy their appetite, and the mothers would buy it for their children, to take with them to *Heder.* A few years later, when the children of Nachman *Shammes* grew up a bit (all artistically gifted as artists and musicians), and the location became too crowded for him, he left an opened a bakery on the Lomza road. His former residence was given the name '*Beyt Eytzim*' – a small premises that served the *Bet HaMedrash* around the year as a storage facility for wood, peat and kerosine to light up the interior, broken benches to be repaired, etc.

When the eve of Passover would arrive, or the eve of the High Holy Days – Jewish soldiers would arrive from the barracks, carrying out all of this stuff, washing, cleaning, whitewashing, and repairing it all for a minyan for the soldiers. Jewish soldiers, that served in Zambrow, in the two Russian divisions, Lodozhskii and Schliesburgskii, as well as those from the artillery brigade, would receive a 'furlough leave' during the Festival holidays, thanks to the efforts made by the Rabbi and the *Gabbaim*, and they would come to worship here in the hundreds. They even had their own soldier-cantors, teachers, who knew how to lead services. If it would happen that, at the end of

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[72] The Sabbath before the beginning of the New Month, or *Rosh Hodesh*.

summer, the Russians would 'detain the regiment' and not let the thousands of soldiers, who served in Zambrow, go on leave for 'their six weeks' – the soldiers minyan would get crowded, and take up the entire entry way and a part of the courtyard.

For many years, the *Gabbai* of the White *Bet HaMedrash* was R' Shmulka Wilimowsky, a handsome and wise Jewish man, one of the leading *balebatim* of Zambrow, who was for many years also the *Gabbai* of the *Chevra Kadisha*, and discharged the duties of his position with a firm hand. When he grew older, the *balebatim* demanded a younger man as *Gabbai*, who should be a modern Jew, more representative of 'today's world.' So, once, on a *Hol HaMoed Sukkot*, R' Itcheh Levinson, Kharlokova's husband, was selected as the new *Gabbai.* Kharlokova's first husband was named Greenwald. Itcheh Levinson was an Enlightened man, had beautiful penmanship with which to write up notices for the worshipers, both in Hebrew and in Yiddish, and knew a bit of Russian and Polish, and because of this, he could be a representative to the authorities, when it was required, and the central point: he was fluent in the skill of bookkeeping, and every year, at *Sukkot* time, he would hang out an impressive annual report in the *Bet HaMedrash*. It would detail all of the income and expenses of the *Bet HaMedrash*, all pledges and contributions (everyone could be found there). Money for 'status' for the High Holy Days, heating and lighting, outlays for the Cantor and the choir, the *Shammes*, etc. This was a modern development in the shtetl. And for many years, in the competing Red *Bet HaMedrash*, this was not done.

So, R' Itcheh Levenson noted that having only one *Shammes,* was insufficient for the congregation, especially on a Sabbath, when two sets of services were conducted: a first *minyan*, and a second *minyan*. And the *Bet HaMedrash* needed to be kept clean. So he arranged for another *Shammes*, a *sou-Shammes*, R' Henokh Portnowicz, the son of the old *Shammes* of Zambrow, and the founder of the 'Kuczapa' dynasty of *Shamashim*. Previously, Henokh had been a Hebrew teacher in Szumowo, where he was supported by his father-in-law while he studied. A small house was built for him near the *Bet HaMedrash*, with the same entrance, and he became the Torah Reader for the *Bet HaMedrash*, the collector of all pledges and donations, the scheduling of all those who would lead services for the entire week, with a special 'honorary position' as the town crier, because of his strong penetrating voice: at dusk on Friday, before candle-lighting, he would come out of the bath house, properly switched with branches, dressed in his black Sabbath kapote, with boots, freshly shined with brine or wheel grease (later he 'became more modern' and polished them with 'Glinsky's Shoe Wax'.) A tall silken hat, (similar to a Russian *furazhka*[73]) on his head, from which two freshly washed side locks would dangle. He would exit the bath house quickly. The sun had started to set behind the trees. The marketplace vendors had already taken their carts full of merchandise off the marketplace – vegetables, fruit, *Challahs*, soap, kerchiefs, etc. The last contingent of laborers, tired out from their week's work, craftsmen and small businessmen, have already gone in to the bath house, where one received a small whisk broom and a container for water. Through the small windows in the side of the bath house, that face the outside, one can still hear the shouting of the Russian soldiers, that are going out to the small side street leading to the brook, the shouting of the Russian soldiers that enjoy the Friday evening hot bath with us, and shout with glee:

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[73] A Russian soldier's peak dress cap.

'paru davai, paru davai' – meaning: pour more water on the hot stones, to make more steam, more vapor! And here, the penetrating blast of Henokh's voice resounds, the *Shammes* of the White Bet HaMedrash, as he turns on the heels of his newly shined boots, and shouts to the four corners of the world: 'I-n– t-o the synagogue!' The throng that is running late rushes to inaugurate the Sabbath with the last of its energies. Henokh the *Shammes* runs to his second station: the side street that is between the synagogue and marketplace, and then to a third station – on the '*Pasek*' in the middle of the marketplace, further up on Koszar, at the beginning and the end of the street. He would then turn about, and come out on the side street between the marketplace and the Bialystok Highway, and quickly run into the White *Bet HaMedrash* – to welcome the Sabbath [Queen].

Municipal gatherings would take place in the White *Bet HaMedrash*. Not only when the fence of the cemetery was broken, and the *Feldscher David* 'Yudises' (Rutkowsky) 'held up the Torah reading' and called a special meeting because of this. Not only with regard to religious issues, such as picking a *Hazzan*, a *Shokhet*, a *Shammes*, or a *Dozor* for the municipal leadership. Even political gatherings took place there. When the socialist party split in two, to form the S. S. and the S. R., this split took place on a Saturday night in the *Bet HaMedrash*. If *balebatim* needed to be elected to the *Duma* – it was in the White *Bet HaMedrash.*

If new *Dozors* needed to be picked out, needed to discuss 'local taxes' needed to found a cooperative bank, needed to celebrate a national holiday ('*Galyubka*', or '*Tabel'*) it always took place in the White *Bet HaMedrash*. The Red *Bet HaMedrash* was free of all these things. Every day, between afternoon and evening prayers, and a good bit after evening prayers, a full table of Jews would be sitting at the table engaged in study. These were the laboring Jews, craftsmen such as tailors, shoemakers and wagon drivers, etc. Tuvia the Lamp Lighter, Skocenadek the good-natured scholar, with his soft loving eyes, would lead the study of *Mishna.* He had effective communication skills, and was a lost talent of being a Jewish educator for the adults. He would explain the text of the *Mishna* in such a good-humored, and good-hearted way, with the commentary of Rabbi Ovadia of Bartenura,[74] and the *Tosafot Yom-Tov.*[75] It was not only once, that I would take a seat at the table, and enjoy participating in study with them. Apart from them, young men would be standing at lecterns, genteel young folk, sons-in-law being supported while they study, etc., and with a small candle in the hand, they would sway back and forwards over the *Gemara* until late into the night.

As was mentioned, during a national holiday, the little boys would not go to *Heder*. the children of the municipal Russian school, and the *Heder* children, would come together with their teachers in the White *Bet HaMedrash.* The Cantor would sing a verse from the Psalms, recite the '*Mi*

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74 Rabbi Ovadia of Bartenura is recognized as the best commentator on the *Mishna,* and is also commonly known as 'The Bartenura' or Ovadia of Bertinoro. Rabbi Ovadia of Bartenura was born in 1445. His path commenced in Italy and ended in Jerusalem in 1488. There he died sometime between 1500 and 1510. The importance of the Bartenura's commentary is illustrated by the fact that since its appearance (Venice, 1549) hardly an edition of the *Mishna* has been printed without it.

75 The second commentary typically found in the *Mishna*.

SheBerakh' and recite *'HaNotayn Teshua'* for the Czar and his wife, his widowed mother, and heir. After that, the *Hazzan* would lead the children in the singing of 'Боже, сЦаров' – that is, the Russian hymn – 'God Save the Czar!' We children would love to see how the entire cohort of officials, the *Pristav*, the *Strashi-Strozhnik* and the officer from the *Uchastek* would snap to attention (at the proclamation: 'To your health!') and would perform '*chesti*' with their right hand on their sword. This showed respect for our Torah and our *Bet HaMedrash* – the children would say.

Approximately in the year 1908, a renovation was carried out in the *Bet HaMedrash*. The walls were painted with an oil-based paint, the benches were painted, the Holy Ark was decorated with two lions rampant holding the Ten Commandments, and other forms of decoration. This turned the *Bet HaMedrash* into a beautiful place, which attracted worshipers. Apart from this, the *Gabbai*, Itcheh Levinson, installed special lighting with gasoline,[76] which the *Shamashim* would kindle with great effort, and would too often spoil the finery. The 'municipal engineer,' Binyomkeh Soliarz implemented the lighting. at the beginning of the World War in 1914, the White *Bet HaMedrash* also became a club for periodicals and war news. The municipal newspaper distributor, Herschel Pachter, Yankl Bursztein's son-in-law, would also read Russian newspapers, and he knew what was going on between the lines, and what was being secretly discussed by the General Staff – even before Nikolai Nikolaevich[77] himself knew.

Young people, who had returned from the Yeshivas, and had been cut off [sic: from going back] because of the war, such as to Lomza, Volozhin, Mir, Telz, Navahardok, etc., settled here: hours were set aside for the study of the Talmud, an hour for a chapter of grammar and the Prophets, an hour to study Russian and French. A special group studied the poetry of Y. L. Gordon (called YALA"G). It was here that medical help for the refugees was organized, who had come in from the surrounding small towns: Jedwabne, Nowogród, Myszyniec, Ostrolenka, and others. Night groups were organized – to attend the sick and provide them with help. A Jewish lady doctor, a lady *Feldscher*, came to Zambrow, thanks to the intermediation of the union of Russian cities, and monies – to make it possible to open a kitchen for the Jewish homeless. the seat of all activities to render aid was here, in the White *Bet HaMedrash*. When the time of the eve of Passover arrived in the year 1915, – the *'Beyt Eytzim'* was cleaned out, and it was made into a matzo bakery for the homeless. The Help Committee provided flour and wood, and the entire youth of Zambrow – boy and girls, would come, according to their assignment, to help with the baking: some would roll the dough, make circles, put it into the oven, verify the kashrut, serve as someone to pour the water, or a flour mixer, packaging, distribution, etc. This was a very nice idealistic and helpful undertaking, where the young people truly enjoyed themselves, but at the same time, performed an act of charity, and gave up many hours for the needy and the homeless. This work, the expansive work to provide help to our impoverished brethren, was done in the White *Bet HaMedrash*.

Since the year 1915, I have not seen the White *Bet HaMedrash* again...

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76 More likely kerosine.

77 The Grand Duke, and uncle of Czar Nicholas II, who was the Russian Army Chief of Staff.

The Red Bet HaMedrash

It was here that the Rabbi worshiped, and around him were gathered the Golombeks, who were the Rabbi's 'Cossacks' and protected him in all of the disputes and incidents that occurred in the city. The *Gabbai* was R' Binyomkeh Golombek. He was a different type of person than R' Itcheh Levinson of the White *Bet HaMedrash* – a contractor, a more practical Jewish man. At some location, or another, Binyomkeh Golombek saw a beautifully carved Holy Ark, which caught his fancy, and he did not rest until he brought the Jewish craftsman, a carver, a diminutive Jew, with crooked feet, like the musical notes '*Mercha-Tipkha,*'[78] and a clean-shaven chin, slanting eyes, more suitable to a Japanese than a Jew, who loved a good drink, – but was a real artisan, a drawer, carver, a man of great imagination. In the course of 6-8 weeks, he made the beautiful Holy Ark, carved out all the animals, and covered them in fine gold and silver leaf. Binyomkeh Golombek did everything he could to assure the Holy Ark would be finished on schedule. He paid the carver out of his own pocket, and also for the materials. At the time he was elected to be *Gabbai* for an additional term, on *Shemini Atzeret*, Binyomkeh sent for apples. It was a sack of beautiful red apples, from his own garden, and they were distributed among the children and the worshipers.

The elderly *Shammes* was R' Israel-David Zibelman, the municipal sexton who recorded the [social] events of the Jewish population for the authorities, such as: weddings, births, and, God forbid, instances of death. His assistant was Shmulkeh Soliarz. However, they were the official municipal sextons. The community was served by the son of the previously mentioned elderly *Shammes* – Ely' Kuczapa. He was a clever little Jewish man, but naive. I remember once when he was holding forth to a clutch of Jews in the *Bet HaMedrash* saying: the Messiah would have come a long time ago, but seeing how the Jews go about dressed in 'German' clothing (short coats) he spat upon us, and does not want to come... to this R' Zalman the *Dayan*, a smart Jewish *Litvak* replied with a smile: R' Elyeh, if the only sin of our Jewish people was to go around dressed in short coats, the Messiah would have come a long time ago. Regrettably, there are much more serious sins...

By contrast with the White *Bet HaMedrash* that often was like a beehive, the 'Red *Bet HaMedrash'* was a quiet refuge. In the morning, after prayers, young people would be quietly looking over their page of the *Gemara* in study, until someone would arrive and call out: 'Let's go to eat.' It was here that the two brothers-in-law, who were *Dayanim*, studied, these being Zalman the *Dayan* and Shepsel the *Dayan*, the sons-in-law of Yisroelkeh Shi' [Be]zalel. It was here that the elderly *Shokhet,* R' Nahum Lejzor Ciwiak would sit and study until noon. His sons-in-law would sit near him, and study. Here, prayer was conducted quietly, silently, and at an easy pace, without hurrying one's self to go to the market fair. It was here that rabbinical courts took place, and arbitration among the *balebatim*. It was to here that children were taken to the 'Jewish' teacher in school, and couples were taken to the wedding canopy, and it was here that a cortege would pause as the deceased was being taken to burial. The board on which the deceased were purified often was stood by the door... it was here that the more observant Jews would pray – this was well-known, and therefore, when it was necessary for Psalms to be recited on behalf of someone who was sick, or when women would have

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78 Suggestive of being bow-legged.

to disrupt the Holy Ark in the middle of prayer, or after prayer, in order to pray themselves, and cry out for succor on behalf of a Jewish woman, having a particularly difficult labor and delivery, or just someone who was plain sick.

Between afternoon and evening prayers, Yitzhak-Velvel Monusz's (Golombek) would learn *Gemara* with a coterie of Jews, by the light of an electric lamp. It was here, also that the *Mishna* was studied, the *Shulkhan Arukh*, Pentateuch with *Rashi* commentary, and even '*Sefer Yosefon*' – that wondrous book, written in the Holy Tongue, using *Rashi* script, that tells Jewish history, with folklore mixed in. There was a little old man, a paver, who during the day would repair pavement, plastering stones, and in the evenings, he would surround himself with about 10-15 Jews, working people, porters, wagon drivers, and under the balustrade, by the light of a little lamp, or a small candle, he would read them stories from the *Yosefon*, in the Holy Tongue and then translate it into a very rich understandable Yiddish. Not only once, would I drop into the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, at evening time, despite that my regular place was at the White *Bet HaMedrash*, to hear these little tales from the *Yosefon*. I have, long ago, forgotten his name. At that time, he was already a man in his eighties, but he stands before my eyes, and his stories resonate in my ear to this day. Eliakim-Getzel the rigorously observant *Maggid* of *Mussar* would also appear in the Red *Bet HaMedrash*.

Prayer was conducted there, just as in the White *Bet HaMedrash*, in accordance with the Ashkenazic tradition. *Hasidim* prayed according to the Sephardic tradition, but only in their own *Hasidic shtibl*. On the night of *Shemini Atzeret* – after eating, a few tens of the *balebatim, Hasidim* and *Mitnagdim* would get together, and arrange for *Hakafot*. This was actually a night before the official *Hakafot* conducted on *Simchat Torah*. This was done out of respect for the Land of Israel, where *Simchat Torah* is celebrated simultaneously with *Shemini Atzeret*. R' Berl Nigubcer, R' Leib Aryeh Rosing (who was called '*Sefer Torah*' because of his piety and fanaticism), Alter the *Maggid* (the son-in-law of the artisan) and several of the prominent personalities among the working people, like Abraham the Tailor, Myshel *Stoliar* (the Carpenter), Shlomo Szerzug and just plain young sons-in-law, from small *Hasidic* towns, who had to be counted here for the entire year, in the camp of the *Mitnagdim*, under the aegis of their father-in-law, at whose table they depended on, for their sustenance. All of these indulged themselves in a bit of a dance, a *Kazatzky*, or a *Komarinka*, holding the Torah scroll in their hands. On the High Holy Days, straw would be spread on the floor, so that it be easier to stand on one's feet. This was done away with, in later years, because it made too much dust.

The Women's Prayer House also served as a premises for an elementary level Yeshiva. One always found teachers learning together with children there. At night, women paupers would sleep here. At the entrance to the Women's Prayer House, there was a corner with remnants of holy books (*shamos*): if someone had a worn out copy of the Gemara, a torn prayer book, loose pages from a small book, it was cast there. (At the White *Bet HaMedrash*, this was inside, under the Holy Ark). Worms and mice would be drawn there, and goats would come there to sleep at night. Across from the entrance to the *Bet HaMedrash*, was a special room, which was called the '*Kahal-Shtibl*.' Community meetings would take place here. It was here that donations were distributed, and *Maot Khittim* – on the eve of Passover. It was here that Yankl Tross, a *Hasid* with a yellow beard, a clever and shrewd man, would arrange a large community tub, during the most severe cold times, where

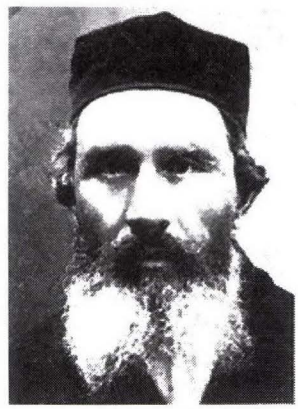
one could come and get warmed up, and get a free glass of tea, or take a teapot full of warm water home. The Yeshiva boys would hole up in this '*Kahal-Shtibl*,' together with the Rabbi's children, and would rehearse a Purim Play: 'The Selling of Joseph' or 'David and Goliath.' Also the meetings of the *Chevra Kadisha*, and their gatherings, would take place here.

On the last day of Passover, and on *Shemini Atzeret*, when the *Yizkor* prayers were recited, all the members of the *Chevra Kadisha* would come together there to pray. In their honor, the cantor would sing for them, and the *Gabbai* of the *Chevra Kadisha*, R' Yaakov Moshe Blumrosen, or Binyomkeh Golombek, would sponsor a *Kiddush* for all the *Chevra* members.

The sadness and the quiet increased in the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, when the synagogue beside it that had burned down, was rebuilt. In the final thirteen years of the community, the Rabbi and the Golombeks had a falling out.The Rabbi went off to worship at the White *Bet HaMedrash*, and threw in his lot with the progressive *balebatim*, and the Zionists – even if he was not a Zionist sympathizer.

The Synagogue

The Zambrow Synagogue burned down in the First Great Fire in the year 1895. The burned down edifice stood that way for thirteen years: four tall walls, with holes for windows and doors. Inside, tall trees grew of their own accord, wild trees and fruit trees. Goats found this place to be their home all day long. The poor, and those who were down on their luck, would spend the day sitting there, and doze off a bit. At night, the place became frightening: the residents, especially children, would be afraid to traverse the street by themselves, because it was bruited about that 'the dead' circulate there during the night, praying, reading a *Sefer Torah*, reciting Psalms, etc. And woe betide anyone passing through the burned out synagogue at night, and hearing his name called to come up to the Torah. No one would emerge from that place again alive. And there were instances...



Page 232: R' Shlomo Saraczkewicz

After long meetings and fund-raising, it was decided that each homeowner that had any 'standing' in the synagogue at some point in time, before it burned down, is obligated to re-purchase that 'franchise' in cash – and if not, he will forfeit his claim, and someone else may be permitted to buy it. In a short amount of time, a couple of thousand Rubles were collected. A committee was selected to direct the reconstruction of the synagogue: the Rabbi R' Regensberg, Berl Golombek, Shlomo Szerzug[79], the Tailor, Moshe-Aharon Bednowicz the Builder, my grandfather, R' Nachman Yaakov Rothberg (he donated 150 Rubles for the balustrade with its supports all around, and his donation was indeed etched into the brass plate, on the Bima) etc. The plan, it is understood, was made out by the government engineer from Lomza. R' Moshe-Aaron the Builder (Bednowicz) was responsible for the construction. His right-hand man, and for practical purposes

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79 Correction required in picture caption (see errata, p. 626)

the principal project manager, was Jozef the Builder – a comical gentile, who spoke Yiddish like a Jew, and wagging tongues had it that he was a *mamzer*, sired by a Jewish father, and born to a gentile woman...



Page 234: *The Synagogue*

In knocking down the old, burned out walls, the *balebatim* came upon a stratagem: instead of breaking them down brick by brick, which would entail a great deal of time and cost – it would be better to dig under the foundation, and using balls, strike the walls, causing them to collapse. In this way, it will be easy to take away the debris and clean the site. Tens of *balebatim,* and workers, would give of their time at no charge, as a donation to the synagogue. When a wall was brought down this way, and the street became full of debris – a group of Jews would set themselves to it, made a 'chain' and cleaned up the street, and piled up the bricks. Wagons full of bricks were carted in, and a 'chain' was formed again, and one would hand bricks to the next, until the bricks were laid out in a straight line, in order, ready for the building process. Then lime needed to be applied – so the Jews attacked this, poured water, mixed the calx with a special powder, and saved the city several tens of Rubles. But there were also, you understand, salaried workers. And here, I recall a sad incident: one person, a poor boy, his name was Fyvkeh, with sick reddened eyes, worked illegally. On the eve of *Shavuot*, he was late to work. The Rabbi who would register the workers early, did not want to take him on: it was the eve of a Festival, and the workday would be short and on top of it, he is late. So he burst out crying: *Rebbe*, I need the money for holiday expenses for my mother... so the Rabbi took him on. That day, a wall was undermined, and was made to fall. Fyvkeh was one of those who were undermining the foundation. However, he was not quick in getting out of the way, and the wall fell on top of him. This was the first and only victim of the new synagogue. His funeral took place towards that evening, until such time that the police gave permission for him to be interred. His death made a very moving and emotional impression on us children. In the city, it was said that Fyvkeh was a sacrifice to expiate the sins of the city: the trees in the synagogue were cut down – and this was forbidden – they were to be uprooted and re-planted elsewhere.

We, the children, organized ourselves to carry bricks, on a carrier on our backs, each according to their strength: 5-10 bricks at a time. It was dangerous for small children to go about with heavy carriers up so many flights, above the gutters. Jozef the builder arranged it for us, and permitted for us to go up and survey the entire vista from that height, reaching all the way to Zbrežnica, and the entire Ostrow road and the river.

Jews would constantly be sitting on a bench near the synagogue, together with the Rabbi, holding the engineer's plan in hand, and trying to understand it in simple terms: what does the engineer mean by putting this box here, with this circle, with this underline, etc. All of these Jews, scholars with good heads, with and without eyeglasses, would discourse among themselves for so long, that the little tailor, Shlomo Szerzug, a lean little Jewish man, not particularly tall, constantly smiling, with a pair of all-knowing eyes in his head, and a short pointed beard, would go over to them. Everyone would fall silent: Nu, R' Shlomo, what do you say? And he, R' Shlomo Szerzug, would put on his sewing spectacles. One earpiece was missing, and a thin strand tied the glasses to an ear. And R' Shlomo takes a stand, and explains to this gathering of scholars and intellectuals, what the plan means, measuring each line with his finger, and clarifies it for everyone. Now, it is as clear as day. And Berl Golombek who had a quick mind, immediately grasped it, and immediately relayed the explanation to the Rabbi and the others. '*Reb Sleima*' the Rabbi says to the little tailor, you have the mind of a minister, and you should have been a Rabbi, not a '*sneider*.'[80] So R' Shlomo smiles and says: a tailor is also a human being[81]... and then Moshe-Aharon the builder took the plan and went off to consult with his builder, Jozef.

The synagogue was being built with deliberate speed, for the entire summer. In the end, Friday, on the Erev Shabbat of *Nachamu*, Jozef the builder nailed in a rod to the *zdromb* (meaning: the joint where the walls meet the roof), covered it with leaves and flowers, and on the tip of the rod, – a large Star of David, banged together from strips of molding. This was a sign that the synagogue was complete on the outside, and it will be possible to worship within during the [upcoming] High Holy Days.

Binyomekeh *Schuster*[82] was designated as the first *Shammes* of the synagogue (see a separate article about him). The synagogue attracted intelligent Jews from all over the city, and both of the *Batei Medrashim*, and became the official house of worship of the Zambrow community. The interior remained half-finished for a few more years, without a proper Holy Ark, simple benches, and poor lighting. A little at a time, step by step, the synagogue became improved, and took its [proper] place in the city. It was here that gatherings were arranged, it was here that a kitchen for the needy was created, and in the First World War, it was here that the representatives of the powers that be, came

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80 We reproduce the writer's original intent to mimic the Litvak accent of the Rabbi, where the 'sh' sound is pronounced 's.'

81 Reminiscent of the line from '*Fiddler on the Roof*!'

82 At this juncture, we do not know if this was a formal last name, or a trade-related descriptor, because he was a shoemaker.

to show their respect for the Jewish religion, and it was here that the sermons of the famous *Maggidim* would be given. In the final years before the Holocaust, the synagogue fell increasingly into disuse. The young people had moved away, and the elderly were afraid to go there at night. It was one of the first buildings to be burned down, that will never again be rebuilt...

The Shas Study Group

A *Bet HaMedrash* of scholars was established on the Koszarer *Gasse,* that also included some of the 'modern-world' *balebatim*, called *Chevra Shas*. It was a progressive *Bet HaMedrash*, a small one – in a private house. Prayers were seldom said there, as was the case in the other Batei Medrashim. The Rabbi would not step over the threshold there. Here is what Mr. Leib Dunowicz writes about the *Chevra Shas*:

> 'I remember the *Chevra Shas*, which was founded by my father, the late Menachem Dunowicz, of blessed memory, together with other balebatim who studied the *Shas*.
>
> Despite the fact that this *Chevra* carries such an explicitly religious name, it was a progressive institution, and its members were even freethinkers, such as the pharmacist, Szklovin, the photographer Gordon, and several of the leaders of the Zambrow labor community.
>
> However, the dominating element in the *Chevra* was the religious one, among which could be found renown scholars. Here, I will mention only a few of them: Mordechai Yerusalimsky, Abba Frumkin, David Smoliar, Yitzhak Greenberg (later on a Cantor in America), Joseph Frumkin (Abba's son, who was beloved by all of us for his gentleness, and his knowledge of Torah and wisdom, most recently, a Rabbi in America), etc. Up to the First World War, my father was the *Gabbai* in this *Chevra*, but when he went off to do military service, this position was taken over by Yudl Ausman.
>
> I can still recall those halcyon days of celebration, that we would arrange in the *Chevra Shas*, with all of the pomp and circumstance, and full ardor, We would make these celebrations fit for royalty, with drink, fruit, baked goods. I do not know how it was that Jews suddenly became 'artisans' and made fully colored lanterns, that spun cleverly, along with other fine decorations. It was with a special gusto that the holiday of all holidays – *Simchat Torah* – was celebrated. On that day, joy reached its zenith: Jews went and searched out – from whence I do not know – outsize hats, which they would wear sideways, tying up their beards with red kerchiefs, and in a feigned drunkenness, they would dance in the middle of the street. We, the little children, their junior partners, would hold onto their *gartels,*[83] and dance along with them – regardless of how much we did not want to irritate them, it was not a deterrent – this was our and their Festival.
>
> An entirely separate story were the High Holy Days. Along with my father, I would go to *Selichot* services at midnight. It was still all around. A gentle rain would often be falling. The awe, before the High Holy Days, before the Day of Judgment, coursed over everything. It seemed that even the fish in the water trembled before that awesome day. And here, we

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83 A ritual waist sash used by the ultra-Orthodox to separate the lower [sic: impure] parts of the body, from the upper [sic: spiritual] part.

arrive at the *Chevra Shas*. Jews are standing about already, and waiting. R' Mottl Melsheinker, who conducts the *Musaf* service, also recites the *Selichot* prayers, each word accompanied by an '*Oy!*' and a groan. And, before you know it, we are at *Yom Kippur*. R' Mottl Melsheinker has already recited the *Hineni* prayer – and the walls about us shuddered. The Yom Kippur candles, and the boxes of sand, also trembled, and shed tears, hot tears. And we, the children, frightened, repentant, would turn the pages of the Mahzor, praying with conviction, with a broken heart before our Master of the Universe...'

One of the nicest people in Zambrow in general, and in the *Chevra Shas* in particular, was R' Yaakov Kukawka, the Shoemaker (see the special writeup about him). He was a truly well-learned Jew, wise, progressive, at ease among the finest of the *balebatim* and the intelligentsia of the town, and was the right hand of Abba Rakowsky, in community affairs, and was the main pillar of the *Chevra Shas*. The *Chevra Shas* met in a rented premises. Later on, the Righteous Woman, the Chaste elderly Mrs. Sokol, made a pledge that when she would build her own house, she will allocate space there, in perpetuity, to the *Chevra Shas*... and she fulfilled her pledge. It was not only the premises, – but she also assumed responsibility for its cleanliness. On the eve of every Sabbath and Festival Holiday, she and her daughters would 'invade' the *Chevra Shas*, washing the floors, cleaning the walls, the benches, the candelabras, and lamps, and everything glistened under her hands.

In the *Chevra Shas*, mutual aid was also organized: in the event that one of the worshipers was occasionally in need for a helping hand, or other forms of assistance – he got it.

The Hasidim Shtibl



Page 238: The Teachers and the Committee of the Jewish-Polish Volksschule. R' Menachem Dunowicz, the Municipal Dozor, sits in the center.

There was no lack of *Hasidim* in Zambrow. The ritual slaughterers Yudl Yismach and Benjamin Rosenbaum were *Hasidim*. Most of the more prominent *balebatim*, mostly who had come here to live from elsewhere, or sons-in-law from *Hasidic* towns, worshiped in the *Hasidic shtibl*. There were Hasidic 'dynasties' in the town, like the shoemaker from Gać, along with his sons and

sons-in-law, each and everyone a zealous and fanatic *Hasid*, and had strong opinions. R' Herschel *Czeszliar*[84] and his fine sons, among them R' Yehoshua the *Melamed*, were *Hasidim*. The Laundry Dyer, and his children – fanatic *Hasidim*. And so were the millers and kasha makers, Old Man David Shlomo Bronack (Sokherzug), R' Moshe Aharon Mulyar, R' Itcheh Mulyar, R' David Itch'eizeh's with his sons, R' Yankl Trum, R' Yossl Konopiata, the Zarembskys, the Baumkulers, Sendaks, Pszysuskers, and many others. Previously, there were small Hasidic *shtiblakh*, split up and divided according to the *Rebbe* they followed: Amszinow, Ger, Alexander, Tomaszow, and here and there a *Hasid* from Kotzk, Radzymin, etc.

The large *Hasidic shtibl* was finished being built in 1908, which took in all of the *Hasidim* in the *shtetl,* and unified all the followers of the *Rebbes*, and created a sort of center for the *Hasidim* in Zambrow. The *Hasidim shtibl*, built out of wood, on a side street neat the White *Bet HaMedrash*, became a magnet for many of the lively and observant Jews. The little street resonated with the chants of the *Hasidim* on a Friday night, both in solo and in group singing. At twilight on Saturday, at *Shaleshudes* time, the walls of the surrounding houses literally shook: there was dancing, singing, Torah lessons were given, there was drinking and eating, and people let themselves have a good time. The Saturday evening *Melave Malkeh* would stretch late into the night. Were a *Rebbe* to visit, or a *Rebbe's* grandson, or just a plain ordinary member of the *Rebbe's* immediate court, – the celebration in the *shtetl* that Sabbath was akin to that on *Simchat Torah*. Often, the *Hasidim*, while still wearing their prayer shawls and *gartls*, would go over to R' Shlomo Sokherzug (Bronack) for *Kiddush*, or sometimes to someone else. The entire *shtetl* rocked with them. On *Simchat Torah*, the *Hasidim* would dine together at a collective feast. In a designated house, of one of the *Hasidim*, between 4-5 barrels would be set up, from the businesses with the boards. Each family would bring food, and pour [contents] into the general barrel: here fish, there soup, here *tsimmes*, and there meat. The Hasidim would eat from a common pot: all as equals, the important people, poor-rich, accomplished and simple, all prayed together from one prayer book to one God – and ate from one pot...

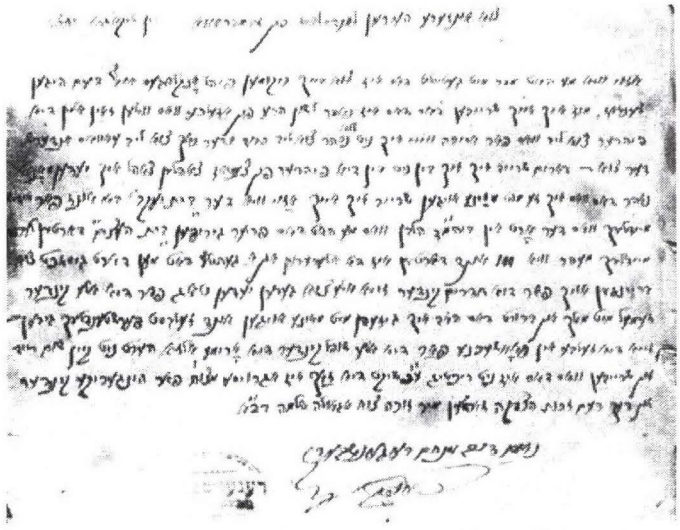
Occasionally a *'Rebbe'* would come in connection with 'business matters.' He would loge somewhere or another for the Sabbath – and there, he would set out his 'Tisch' for a large audience. This was also done by the 'agents' who would sell ship tickets to America, and would smuggle tens of immigrants over the border. They were called '*Yendikehs,*' in a coded form of slang. Abraham Aharon Brizman, as it turns out, not a Hasid, had an 'office' with a large ship on a sign. Occasionally a '*Rebbe*' would come for the Sabbath, and there would be much merriment. But the '*Rebbe*' was more business man, and carried on business with ship companies...and in the *Hasidim-Shtibl,* weddings would sometime take place – either paid for or not.

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84 Subsequent items in the text lead to the conclusion that this is a variant spelling of *Tischler*, a trade designation for a carpenter who is a joiner. We retain the 'variant' spelling out of deference to the original authors. Further, because of later descriptions, it would appear that this individual's family name is Gorzholczany. Accordingly, he will be so referenced in the List of Names at the end of the text.

Fundamentally, the city was a city of *Mitnagdim,* and the opinion of the *Hasidim* did not carry much weight. If it did – it was on account of the individual's standing, and not because he was specifically a *Hasid*. However, contrary to what was the case, in other towns, there was not a great divide between the *Hasidim* and the *Mitnagdim*. The young people were of both schools of thought: *Hasidim* and *Mitnagdim*. But in this respect, the *Hasidic* youth was more distinguished.

The Rabbi's Handwriting



Page 240: A Facsimile of a Letter, from Rabbi Dov-Menachem Regensberg of Zambrow to the Relief Committee in Chicago, in which he refutes the false rumors concerning 'Centos.'

The Rabbis

The First Rabbi of Zambrow (?)

Older people (Meir Zuckrowicz) related to me, that the first Rabbi in Zambrow was Rabbi Zundl. There is no longer anyone who knows, however – who he was, from whence he came, and how long he held his seat. It was additionally told that: When R' Lipa Chaim became the Rabbi of Lomza, the *balebatim* did not want to bring in a Rabbi from a strange place. They approached R' Abraham Zarembsky, a wine merchant, proposing that he become the Rabbi. R' Abraham was a formidable scholar, was much loved in the *shtetl*, and had an ordination from distinguished Rabbis. But he did not want to make a living from his Torah knowledge. When he was intensely lobbied, he finally agreed, but only on condition that he receive no salary from the city...

When R' Lipa Chaim was not certified by the government to become the Rabbi of Lomza, he returned to Zambrow, and R' Abraham immediately relinquished the rabbinical chair to him.

R' Lipa Chaim

R' Lipa Chaim, who strictly speaking, was the second Rabbi of Zambrow, was a personality – in Torah, wisdom, and good deeds. He was born in Tykocin. His father was the Rabbi of Krynki, and was descended from Rabbis and *Gaonim*. At first, he was a merchant in Tykocin. [However] he devoted himself more to Torah study than to commerce. Accordingly, his businesses did not do so well, and he sought another way to make a living. The offer of the rabbinical seat in Zambrow was made to him. At that time, he was 45 years old. He was a substantial open-hearted donor to charity. He would concern himself about the welfare of the poor, and would personally go to find places for food and lodging on the Sabbath, for itinerant paupers and clergy. When, on one occasion, he put pressure on one wealthy man in Zambrow to take in a guest for the Sabbath, that rich man replied: *Rebbe*, I am not a scholar like you. When your business didn't go so well – you became a Rabbi, and what will I become, should my businesses not succeed?

When R' Elyeh Chaim Maisel, the Rabbi of Lomza, became the Rabbi of Lodz, the *balebatim* of Lomza sent an offer letter for the rabbinate in their city to R' *Lipa Chaim*. R' Lipa Chaim was, however, the Rabbi in Lomza for only a short while: the Russian régime did not grant him certification to be the Rabbi, because he knew no Russian. R' Lipa Chaim then returned to Zambrow. the Zambrow *balebatim* were happy with his return, and took him back with open arms. In his last years, when he had already become old and weak, he spent his time in devising innovative interpretations of the Torah, and effectively groomed his son-in-law Rabbi Regensberg, who actually became the Rabbi of Zambrow after his death.

R' Israel Salanter – In Zambrow

By Sholom-Avner Bernstein
(New York)



Page 243: The Remains of the Grave site of the Pharmacist Szklovin in the Zambrow Cemetery.

It was a Thursday, before daybreak, some time ago, in the year 1883. The Jews were beginning to gather in the market place, to buy bargains for the Sabbath. A fishmonger had already opened his fish stand, and women and men had already gathered around him. A wagon drives up, from Tyszowce, and an elderly Jew, of imposing appearance, dressed well and enchantingly, like a Lithuanian Rabbi, with shined boots, holding a small valise in his hand, instructs the wagon driver to take the larger trunk into Mordechai-Aharon's inn, and asks for the *Bet HaMedrash*, where the Zambrow Rabbi, R' Lipa Chaim worships.

–' during the week, he does not pray in the *Bet HaMedrash*,' someone says to him, but rather in the community *shtibl*, where the 'ten idlers' pray, that is, the *balebatim* who learn a page of *Gemara* with the Rabbi before dawn, before prayers, and then another page of *Gemara* after prayers.

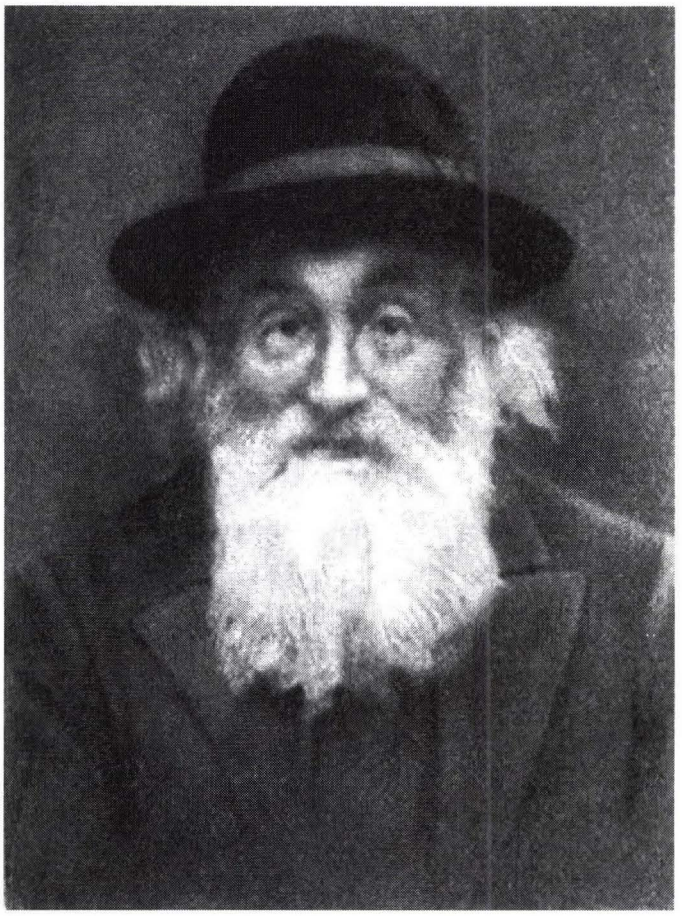
And so the guest smiled and replied: Good, let it be the community *shtibl* then! And so, a clutch of Jews gathered around the guest, greeted him with '*Sholom Aleichem*,' and did not have the temerity to ask, 'from where do you hail?' This because they trembled before the imposing appearance of the man. He was then led off to the Rabbi, followed by a crowd of curious onlookers. When he came into the community *shtibl*, the elderly Rabbi, R' Lipa Chaim, rose like a soldier in front of an officer, and offered the blessing: 'Blessed be he that has offered from his wisdom to those who respect him.!' [He] offered him the greeting '*Sholom Aleichem*, Rabbi Israel Wolf Salanter!' Then all the other worshipers rose to their feet, and each, in turn, offered their greetings to the great guest. Not much was said, and they took to recitation of their prayers. When it came time to read the Torah, R' Lipa Chaim went up to my father, R' Israel-Zalman the Holy Emissary, may he rest in peace, and said: 'You are a Levite, and today, you are due to have the second *aliyah*, because tomorrow, Friday, there is going to be a *brit [milah]* at your house. However, we must honor this great guest with this *aliyah,* because he too, is a Levite. But because of this, God willing, tomorrow, R' Israel Salanter will be the *Sandak* for your youngest son..' the newborn Jew, at his ritual circumcision, was given the name Sholom-Abner, and that was me...



Page 244: The Workingmen of Zambrow, taking their leave of R' Alter the Maggid, on the occasion of his departure for the United States of America. The Maggid can be seen at the center of the picture.

R' Israel Salanter, the founder of the renown '*Mussar*' Yeshivas in Lithuania – had planned to bring the *Mussar* movement also to Lomza, where he planned to found a large Yeshiva. He traveled to Lomza about this, to his student, R' Lejzor Szuliowicz, the future Headmaster. Along the way, he stopped at Zambrow, took counsel about this with the wise old Rabbi, R' Lipa-Chaim, who knew the area very well, and was himself a disciple of the *Mussar* movement, in opposition to the *Hasidim*.

The Holy Rabbi R' Dov Menachem Regensberg [85] הי"ד



Page 245: R' Dov Menachem Regensberg

He was born in Lithuania into a rabbinical family in the year 5612 (1852).

As a wife, he took the daughter of the Rabbi R' Lipa Chaim, in Zambrow, in the year 5632 (1872).

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[85] We note here that Rabbi Regensberg is referred to as both 'R' Dov Menachem' and 'R' David Menachem.' It is not clear which is the 'proper name.' Furthermore, 'Dov' is not conventionally used as a shortened version of 'David,' since it is a standalone Hebrew name in its own right, meaning 'Bear.'

He assumed the rabbinical chair in Zambrow, after the passing of his father-in-law, in the year 5642 (1882). He died a martyr's death at the hand of the Nazis, on 3 Elul, 5701 – 26.8.1941.

During a period of 59 years, he was the central figure of the Jewish community, set its boundaries, and personally injected himself into its troubles.

He represented that Golden Chain of Polish and Lithuanian Rabbis, was a student of the Torah and a doer of good, practiced respectfulness, and offered good deeds, was a staunch guardian in assuring that the glowing coal of Judaism not be extinguished and be permitted to expire.

He stood at the center of the community's troubles, and its celebrations, took part in its suffering and celebration.

He was a living witness to its rise, and also, unfortunately, of its fall.

With his tragic death, the fall of the [Jewish] Zambrow community is ushered in. May their blood be avenged.

A Small City With A Great Rabbi

Here is what a pupil of his, today a Rabbi in America, writes about the Rabbi:

'Zambrow was a small *shtetl,* and had a great Rabbi, one of the best and most outstanding Rabbis in all of Poland. While Zambrow still existed as a city, we did not recognize him as such. Now, after the destruction of that community, we see how great his personality really was, and what sort of scholar and *Tzaddik* he really was.

While still a Talmud Torah student, I already recognized his great love of Torah, and his devotion to Jewish children. In the class that I was supposed to complete, and then transfer to the Lomza Yeshiva, the Rabbi ordered us to learn twenty pages of the *Gemara* by heart, beginning with '*Shnayim Okhazin*,' in *'Baba Metzia.'* He listened to us, like a loving father, and picked out six students to go to the Yeshiva. I was one of them. He rewarded us with a piece of honey cake and wine, and gave each of us three zlotys. When we traveled to Lomza, he accompanied us to our hansom cab, giving us parcels of food, chocolate, and letters of recommendation to the headmaster of the Yeshiva – that he should take good care of us, as good students.

We came home for the holidays. The first order of business was to pay a call on the Rabbi. He was happy to see us, as if we were his own children. Approximately two quorums worth of Yeshiva students would gather to pray with him, at his home. When the *Shammes* would come to call him to worship, because the congregation was waiting on him, he would try to get out of going, and remain here, among his own. After prayers, on the Sabbath and Festivals, he would make *Kiddush*, treat us to a piece of honey cake, wine and fruit, and ask us to rehearse Torah for him, and then engage with us in a – a bit of a Torah dance.

The Rabbi was a very substantial student, and by five o'clock in the morning, he was already sitting in the White *Bet HaMedrash* learning. After worship, he would study until 12 noon, or longer. He would then grab a bit of *kichl* to eat, and drink a bit of warm milk that he would bring with him in a thermos bottle. After the noon hour, he would sleep a bit, and again sit down to learn some more. At dusk, he would learn a page of *Gemara* in the *shtibl* of the Ger *Hasidim*, despite the fact that he, personally, was a *Mitnaged*.

When the 'committee of the Yeshivas' was established to raise money in the towns for the Yeshivas, the Rabbi was one of the first [of its members]. Paying no mind to his advanced age, he traveled from city to city: he held forth with lectures, and collected money for the poor Yeshiva students. On one occasion, a rather significant Rabbinical Court was empaneled in Lomza. The *Rebbetzin* did not want to permit him to travel there, because he was weak. All the Rabbis were beside themselves: such an elderly man is to travel so late at night? He had been told that R' Elyeh the *Shammes* had hit a Yeshiva student, because the latter had broken a window in the Red *Bet HaMedrash*. Accordingly, the Rabbi had the *Shammes* summoned, levied a monetary fine on him, and prohibited him from ascending the *Bima* for two weeks. 'When a Yeshiva student causes damage, first come and tell me, and I will pay for it' – he admonished the *Shammes*.

About a year before The Second World War, I came to receive my ordination from him. He drew me near, and showed me how he adjudicates questions that have been posed, how he concerns himself for the city, works to further Judaism, and maintains oversight, to assure that the '*Talmud Torah*' building is erected as quickly as possible, at his expense: he had won five thousand zlotys in the lottery, and had given it all to build the new *Talmud Torah*.

Once, he came to Lomza, in connection with business for the Talmud Torah, and he encountered me at the home of the Rabbi, where I was ruling on a particularly difficult matter. The Lomza Rabbi had deferred to me, according me the honor of issuing the ruling, and the Zambrow Rabbi was very happy to see his student receive such a consideration. The losing side in the case attacked me: Is the young Rabbi putting himself up opposite the elderly arbitrator R' Naphtali Garbarsky? The Zambrow Rabbi quickly rose to his feet and said: You have insulted a formidable scholar – you must apologize to him, and pay a monetary fine in favor of the Zambrow Talmud Torah. The remaining Rabbis lowered their heads – because they did not react the same way he did.

Simchat Torah in Zambrow. I never saw the Rabbi so lively and full of joy. He danced around us, a group of young students, and shouted with all his might: you are, after all, living Torah scrolls!

One time, he fell sick, and the doctors forbade him to exert himself and speak. When he spied me, he demanded that I give a Torah talk on his behalf. No excuse helped – and I had to do it. A week later, when I came again to see him, the *Rebbetzin* bemoaned to me that: she had stepped out to buy something at midday – and in his weakened condition went off to Lomza, for a major case between the Nowogród Rabbi and *Shokhet*...

He was told that a new teacher had come to the city who was a freethinker, who was teaching the children, boys and girls together, to mock Judaism. The Rabbi burst into tears. A couple of days later, Abraham'l Golombek brought the Rabbi a torn *mezuzah* that a young Yeshiva student had torn out of the teacher's hands. The teacher wanted to burn the *mezuzah*. The Rabbi immediately called for a gathering in the White *Bet HaMedrash*, and excommunicated the teacher as well as those who send their children to him. So one woman stood to oppose him – so her daughter became ill, and died, and the Rabbi was moved to tears: why is the child guilty, if her mother is the one who sinned? The teacher left the *shtetl*, and went to Ostrolenka and died there.

A vigorous battle was had with the owner of the movie theaters that were open on the Sabbath. They wanted to beat him, blocked his way, and for a week's time did not let him into his own house. However, the Rabbi ultimately prevailed.

Hanukkah 1940, in the heat of the war, I came to take my leave of him, before my trip to Vilna. The *shtetl* was half ruined and burned down. The synagogue and the *Batei Medrashim* were incinerated, as well as the new *Talmud Torah*, etc. I met with the Rabbi and the *Rebbetzin* in a tiny room, where they lived after their house and the entire library had been burned down. With tears in his eyes, the Rabbi told me how the bomb exploded in his house, and the *Rebbetzin* had to force him out of the house, literally seconds before the explosion. He was only able to save his *Tallit* and *Tefillin* and one small book. I went with him to collect bread for the poor. He asked me to help him reconstitute the *mikva*. Accordingly, I said to him: 'At a time like this *Rebbe*?' So he says: 'The house is on fire, and the clock is ticking'...

I was compelled to leave the city and flee to Vilna, from which I was able to save myself. I said farewell to the Rabbi for the last time.

His Grandchildren Tell

Here is what his two grandsons write about their grandfather, the Rabbi, these being the brothers David and Heschel Klepfish, the children of Sotshe.

David Writes:

My grandfather, Rabbi David Menachem Regensberg, occupied the Rabbinical Seat in Zambrow for nearly 60 years, from the year 1882, when he was barely 30 years old, to the year 1941. When he became 90 years old – he was still completely alert, he could still see with his eyes, and he was still fresh. However, the Nazis forced him to dig his own grave.

When he became the Rabbi in Zambrow, it was still a small *shtetl,* with 300 families, approximately. But since the Russian authorities decided to build barracks in Zambrow – the city began to prosper, and grow. In a short time, the population tripled in size, up to 1500 Jewish families. There were approximately as many non-Jews. Together with the city, the functions of the Rabbi also grew. And

the Rabbi loved his *shtetl*, and loved his position. And it didn't come to him so easily. For many long years, he conducted a battle, with the *balebatim*, with the government, and with the *Kozioner Rabbiner*. Rabbi Regensberg took over the position of his father-in-law, R' Yom-Tov Lipman Chaim Kahana-Shapiro. The Rabbi was born in the year 1852, into a family of Lithuanian scholars. His father, R' David was the Rabbi in a number of small Lithuanian towns, and was a descendant of prominent Rabbis, both on his father's side, and his mother's side.

I know little about his youth. However, my grandfather once told me that he studied in the Yeshiva at Eishyshok, together with his brother Ely'-Sholom, who later became the Rabbi in London. They studied their under deprived conditions, and sustained themselves for an entire week on bread and cheese – except for the Sabbath, when they would eat at the table of one of the *balebatim*.

He arrived in Zambrow in 1872, approximately. After being subsidized for a few years by his father-in-law, the Rabbi opened up a small food store, and for a number of years, he was a storekeeper. That went on until R' Lipa-Chaim, the old Rabbi, attracted him to his profession, and that he should help conduct the business of the rabbinate, and adjudicate community issues, resolving questions, and preside over rabbinical courts.

The End of the Past Century

In the year 1884, they began the building of the barracks, and as it was in those years, in Russia, the contractors were Jewish. They brought a new stream of life into the city, and exerted a very strong influence on the Jewish way of life. In those years, 'Zionism' also appeared, on one side, and the Socialist Labor Movement, exemplified by the '*Bund*,' the S. S., the S. R., and '*Poalei Tzion*, on the other side. The *shtetl* seethed and boiled. And the Rabbi opposed this, and, as you can understand, fought all of them, as elements that were harmful to the spirit of Judaism and the study of Torah. Consequently, he made a lot of enemies. He had a second war going on with the government. The authorities insisted that the Rabbi be able to transact in Russian, and lead in Jewish civil matters. This was difficult for the Rabbi, who was actually quite fluent and knew Russian very well, but he had no heart for it, and for him, it represented an inexcusable waste of time, to be taken away from Torah study in this manner. And at that time, he already had four children. When the authorities remained adamant in their demand – the decision was taken to emulate the practice that had arisen in other towns, in such an instance: they retained another Rabbi, a 'government Rabbi' (*Kozioner Rabbiner*) that would speak Russian and manage municipal affairs. To do this, they brought in Rabbi Moshe David Gold, for this purpose, who was also a recognized scholar, and a fully-ordained Rabbi, a son-in-law to the Rabbi of Kopczewa. Now the real battle began: The Rabbi wanted to have control of weddings and ritual circumcisions. The Government Rabbi argued that this belonged to him. The *balebatim* divided up into parties: One – for the Rabbi, the other for the *Kozioner Rabbiner*. His supporters were the ones who worshiped at the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, with the Golombeks and the craftsmen. The opposition – in the White *Bet HaMedrash*. This dispute between the Rabbis reached the court in Lomza. The Lomza rabbinate involved itself in this, fearing that if the Government Rabbi would win – then all the 'spiritual Rabbis' will suffer a loss of prestige. This went on until Rabbi Gold was nominated to be the Rabbi of Nowogród, near Lomza, at which point peace returned to the *shtetl*. One way or another, Rabbi Regensberg got through the examination, studying a bit, offering a bit of bribery, and the government left him alone.

In His Later Years

When the Rabbi became an old man, he became weak, and traveled to Germany to 'take the waters' at the spas. My grandmother would travel with him, and occasionally, one of his supporters, R' Abraham Shlomo Dzenchill, who was called '*Pracht*' (because of his use of German words, and especially for using the word '*Pracht*'[86] often). On occasion, he would also take along a grandchild. He loved his grandchildren immensely. When his oldest son. R' Yaakov-Aharon, the Rabbi of Wierzbnik passed away, he raised his children, two grandchildren. My grandfather told me about a frightening night that he lived through, at the time the Russians retreated, in the year 1920, and the Poles came back. A group of Polish soldiers, who were beating and robbing Jews, came to the Rabbi, with the intent to 'make merry.' And at the Rabbi's home, a number of Jewish men had gathered to discuss municipal matters. They broke in the door from the street side, but were overcome by fear on the steps, and the soldiers drew back.

His Scholarship

My grandfather learned day and night. He had a large library. During the winter on a late Friday afternoon, he would study at the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, by the light of a gas lamp, until late at night. Once, when the lamp had begun to go out, he got up on the table, and placed the *Gemara* up close to the lamp, and finished his studying this way. Also, in his own home, in his court *shtibl*, he would study until later into the night, either alone, or with a companion, Zalman the *Dayan*, and others.

In the year 1903, he founded a Yeshiva in Zambrow. However, in the year 1905, the year of the Russian revolution, it was closed until the year 1917, when his son-in-law, my father, R' Aharon-Yaakov Klepfish ז"ל re-opened it.

In the year 1930, the Rabbi won a large prize in the Polish lottery. However, he donated all of the money for the construction of a new Talmud Torah, across from the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, where the guest house formerly stood, and was the old house of the Rabbi. At the same time, he completed his two books: '*Divrei Menachem*,' and '*Minchat Menachem*,' which were his solace during his older years.

His Activities

The Rabbi involved himself in all community affairs: in the ritual slaughter, charity, etc. He loved to do everything by himself, and not through any intermediary, or representative. He, personally, would commit himself on the eve of Passover, to go out and collect support for the poor – *'Maot Khittim'*, and he would personally volunteer himself on behalf of the city after the fires. Incidentally, during both of the great city fires, his house was spared. During the First Fire –

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86 German for 'magnificent, splendid.'

it is told – that the Rabbi ascended to the roof of his house, and gesturing with his hands, recited a sacred incantation from the *Kabbala*, and his house was spared. In the years of peace, the Rabbi was always the representative of the city to the authorities. He concerned himself to see that Jewish soldiers were given furlough during the Jewish holidays, and receive kosher meals at a Jewish table. Year in – and year out he would swear in Jewish soldiers 'on the spot,' obtaining their oath to serve the Czar loyally, and later – the Polish State. When the First World War broke out, at the end of the summer of 1914 – the Rabbi was in [Bad] Kissingen, Germany, at a sanatorium. The Germans interned him as a Russian citizen. Nine months later, he was released, and permitted to travel home by way of Sweden.

The front got closer to the city, and the harassment of Jewish citizens, as spies, grew in intensity. Jews were whipped, beaten, arrested, and exiled into faraway Russia.

The Rabbi needed to put up with a great deal, and had to be constantly on guard. When the city filled up with the homeless, the Rabbi concerned himself with their plight, sought food, clothing, a place for them to live, and employment. The Rabbi and his 'Cossacks' such as R' Leibl Rosing, R' Abraham Shlomo *Pracht*,[87] R' Shia the *Melamed*, Yaakov-David the Shoemaker from Gać, Sholom Yaakov the Fruit Storekeeper, etc., set down a discipline that it should be a requirement to study, and not violate the Sabbath. Even when the '*Agudah*' brought down its agitators, the Rabbi was very watchful, and watched with both eyes open, lest their intent be to do something else.

His Relationship to the Land of Israel

Even though he is a member of the *Agudah*, he was always interested in the Land of Israel. On *Tisha B'Av* he would mourn intensely over the destruction of Jerusalem. He would receive fruit from the Land of Israel with great joy, on *Tu B'Shevat*, or olive oil, etc. In a like manner, his entire family was suffused with a 'Love of Zion.' His brother took up residence in Jerusalem. The Rabbi, himself, looked after the fund-raising and allocation *Kollel* of Suwalki-Lomza in the entire area, and would do a great deal for those who would travel to live out their final years in the Land of Israel. The Rabbi worked in this way, for all of his Jewish flock, until his last day.

In the year 1936, when I was on a pleasure trip in Poland – I met my grandfather, when he was already 85 years of age, in Warsaw, together with Mr. Gottleib. They had both come to raise support for the city. My grandfather had been Rabbi of the city, uninterrupted, for nearly 60 years. He went through everything with the Jews of his city, until his last day.

The Second Grandson Tells, Heschel:

My grandfather stood at the head of the Zambrow community for a full 59 years. Actually, he was acting in this capacity even a few years prior to this, when his father-in-law, R' Lipa

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87 His nickname: his real last name was Dzenchill.

Chaim had grown old, and his son-in-law carried out the duties of his office. I would wonder when my grandfather would use the familiar '*du*' in speaking to an elderly Jew, with a gray beard. When I thought about this, and realized that the Rabbi knew him when he was still a little boy, I understood it better. I recall the time when I had just become a Bar-Mitzvah. My grandfather is sitting in the *Bet HaMedrash*, in his *tallit* and *tefillin*, and he is studying. I had already finished my prayers, and was removing my *tefillin*. My grandfather says to me: Come, let us study a page of the *Gemara* together! I say: Grandpa, I am hungry. My grandfather says, in a stern voice: Why am I not hungry?

The *balebatim* knew my grandfather as a fanatic and someone who had a temper. Few, however, knew his gentleness, his good-heartedness, his naivete and folksy nature. When the Yeshiva boys would gather about him on Festival days, my grandfather would dance with them, and sing his particularly favored little song:

Oh, you evil inclination,
Keep on going,
Turn and come back
Go to your most beloved brethren!

They will heed you
they will hear you
Whatever it is you
Will want of them!

Dear *Hasidim*, dear *Mitnagdim,*
Dear *Yerushalmi* students, Dear *Bavli* Students,
They will not heed you
And will not hear you,
Whatever it is you
Will want of them!
My soul yearns for you,
My flesh thirsts for you

Yearns, yearns, yearns, yearns,
Thirsts, thirsts, thirsts, thirsts,
My soul yearns for you,
My flesh thirsts for you!

This is just an excerpt of the song, and possibly inaccurately rendered – but this is how I remember it! Perhaps someone will complete it, and turn it over to a collector of folklore? (See above page 130).

My grandfather was a man of the people, and suffused with the ideals of the Rabbis of his generation. It was not only once, that he would burst into tears during one of his sermons, when he

would speak about the bad conditions of the faith. In the year 1939, summer, he spoke before a Rabbinical Assembly in Vilna. He was the oldest Rabbi at that assembly, and shook everyone up with his words about the desecration of the Sabbath. The entire Assembly wept along with him.

He studied constantly. I was so used to seeing his house full of books, like my grandfather's, that when I would travel somewhere else, and did not find any books, I would wonder, how can this be? During the Second World War, a bomb exploded in his house and destroyed it, burning all of his books. It was only by a miracle that he personally was saved, but it did him no good. The Nazis murdered him. It is with his death, that the annihilation of Zambrow [Jewry] commenced.

The Rabbi's House



Page 260: A group of active members of 'Poalei Tzion' from the Lomza circle, in honor of Riva, the Rabbi's daughter (center), with her husband (to the left), Moshe Erem.

It is the eve of Passover 1929 – two days before the *Seder*, and everything is almost finished, the fashionable Anglican shoes shined, and the beet borscht is strained. The *Rebbetzin* Mindl[88] has come in immediately in the morning, and presented herself to my mother with her borscht, like 'nice wine,' and stood to recite the morning prayer. And suddenly, something happened, we found her unconscious – having suffered a cerebral hemorrhage. On the following morning, we laid the *Rebbetzin* Mindl, daughter of R' Lipa-Chaim זצ"ל, to her eternal rest. She was a quiet person, constantly busy. She would avoid entering the *shtibl* of the Rabbinical court. In her old age, she was the one who raise two orphans: Lipa-Chaim, and Davidcheh – the children of her son Yaakov, who had died as a young man – the Rabbi of Wierzbnik.

The holiday served to mitigate the bereavement. On the eve of Passover, the Rabbi dressed in his holiday finery, and rode off to get the soldiers released for Passover. Surrounded by the family of his daughter Sotshe, he got through the first time.

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88 The flow of the narrative suggests this to be the wife of R' Dov-Menachem Regensberg, and the daughter of R' Lipa-Chaim Kohana-Shapiro.

As was always his habit, shortly before *Lag B'Omer*, the Rabbi began to make preparations to travel to his vacation place in Długosiodło. On the eve of *Lag B'Omer*, the *Shammes*, Nachman, escorted him to Długosiodło, and on the following morning, returned quite early, to inform us that the Rabbi had married a cousin of his, Rachel, a sister to Molya Cohen. She was a widow, a mother of two daughters (her older daughter Sarah'leh was the teacher in the *Bais Yaakov* School, and later married Molya).

On the eve of *Rosh Hashana*, they returned from Długosiodło. The *Rebbetzin* Rachel was a middle-aged woman, very refined, and intelligent, and highly suitable [to her position]. She applied herself to getting accustomed to her new home, and established relationships with her neighbors. Shortly after Sukkot, on Friday morning, in getting ready for the Sabbath, she fell down and had a cerebral hemorrhage. On Sunday, she was laid to her final rest... this event left a very profound impression on the *shtetl*.

On the eve of Purim, the Rabbi called me in, and asked me to fill out checks for large sums, without dates. We immediately understood that this was connected with assuring widow's pensions with the community. That same night, after reading the *Megillah*, the Rabbi entered into marriage with a woman from Kolno, a relative of R' Mordechai Yerusalimsky, her name was Eiga.

On the following day, she sat in the Rabbinical court *shtibl*, wearing a wide apron, and listened to the questions posed, and other community issues.

Eiga was killed together with the Rabbi.

From the Spark, Emerged a Flame

By Israel Levinsky

(From my recollections about the dispute between the *Kozioner Rabbiner*, and the 'Spiritual Leader' in Zambrow)

After the death of R' Lipa-Chaim – his son-in-law, R' David-Menachem Regensberg ז"ל became the Rabbi, who came from Lithuania, from a prominent rabbinical family. The new, young Rabbi, was not so easily accepted in Zambrow. The old Rabbi, R' Lipa-Chaim was, apart from his formidable erudition, a loveable man, a great sage, and showed affection for Jews even if they were not observant, and drew them near to him, and in general, was very strongly committed to his flock.

The young Rabbi, by contrast, was a formidable zealot, very observant and a fanatic. In his early years, he could not find that balance, and began to stubbornly harass the irreligious, meaning all those who were going along with progress. You can appreciate that an opposition to the Rabbi formed immediately: all the *balebatim*, sympathetic to Zionism, and people who generally were

enlightened, did not want him as a Rabbi. The city therefore divided itself into two camps: one consisted of the Rabbi's opposition, who worshiped in the new (later called the 'White') *Bet HaMedrash*, and the second, were the Rabbi's supporters, who worshiped in what later came to be called the 'Red *Bet HaMedrash*.' His opponents in the White *Bet HaMedrash* were: Avcheh Rakowsky, a well known writer, a great scholar and a Zionist, Benjamin Kagan, a son of the Rabbi of Zabludow, also a scholar and ardent Zionist, Shlom'keh Blumrosen, the Burcziniaks, the writer of these columns, etc. In the second (Red) *Bet HaMedrash*, the aristocratic Jewish establishment family presided, the Golombeks, and they took the young Rabbi under their aegis.

Since the young Zambrow Rabbi did not know Russian, the language of the land, the government could not designate him as the ' official Rabbi' – according to the law – but only as the Rabbi as a 'spiritual leader', who must confine his duties to internal matters of Jewish religion, such as adjudicating religious questions, and such. Civil matters pertaining to the Jewish community, such as managing the books of the community (recording Jewish births, weddings and deaths, matters pertaining to taxes, etc.) needed to be given over to a second Rabbi, who was called the *Kozioner Rabbiner*. He did not have to be a scholar, and even did not have to be observant. All he needed was to be literate in Russian. His work was to conduct all Jewish administrative functions.

In this connection, the opponents of the Rabbi made every effort to assure that the *Kozioner Rabbiner* was also a *bona fide* ordained Rabbi, a scholar, in order that they be able to mount a contest with the spiritual Rabbi. And, indeed, it happened just this way. The community selected one R' Moshe [David] Gold, the son-in-law of the Rabbi of Kopczewa. He was a scholar, had a rabbinical ordination, and knew Russian well. So, it became rather lively in the *shtetl.* At first, there was peace between the two Rabbis, and they even studied together. But then, Rabbi Gold took note of the fact that he had the right, according to the law, to conduct ritual circumcisions, and especially, to officiate at a wedding ceremony. However, Rabbi Regensberg did not want to accept this.: after all, from time immemorial, the Rabbi was the *Sandak* at a *Brit Milah*, as well as the officiant at weddings, and is recognized in this capacity everywhere. But Rabbi Gold didn't want to concede this. Better said: the 'White *Bet HaMedrash*' didn't want to concede this. So, if someone invited Rabbi Regensberg to a *Brit Milah*, then Rabbi Gold would refuse to record the details about the child in the books, and did not prepare a birth certificate on his behalf. If someone requested the Rabbi to officiate at a wedding – the *Kozioner Rabbiner* didn't want to recognize the wedding, and did not issue a marriage certificate. If the *Kozioner Rabbiner* wanted to meet him halfway – give the Rabbi the honor at a *Brit Milah* or a wedding, but to retain the official side of the transaction, Rabbi Regensberg would, under no circumstances, agree to this, because this would have created a breach of rabbinical authority. Should someone want to invite both Rabbis to the wedding of a son or daughter, it was impossible: 'Two Rabbis under the wedding canopy!' There were instances that after a wedding ceremony, the newlyweds had to appear before Rabbi Gold, and the groom needed to repeat the ritual formulation anew.

After a *Brit Milah* – it was necessary for the *Mohel,* and two witnesses, and the father of the child, to come to get a certificate. Binyomkeh the Shoemaker's eldest son, Abraham ל"ז, was not properly recorded for his entire life, had no birth certificate, and was never called for military service, etc.

This was because Binyomkeh was one of the Rabbi's men, and did not want to offer recognition to the *Kozioner Rabbiner*. Accordingly, he didn't get the birth of his son recorded.... The following incident happened to me, personally: my father-in-law. R' Nachman Yaakov Rothberg was a very close friend of R' Lipa Chaim ז"ל, and therefore also with his son-in-law, Rabbi Regensberg. He wanted to invite both Rabbis to the wedding of his only daughter Tzipa, my wife ז"ל, to accord each of them proper respect. So each did not want to attend because the other would be there, and my father-in-law did not want the wedding to remain illegal. Also, I did not want to lower myself by having to repeat the wedding ritual twice. Attempts at sending intermediaries did not help – the Rabbis would not give in. So one night, late in the evening, when the guests were hungry and impatient, a way out: I will perform my own wedding ceremony (before the setting of the wedding contract conditions, the Zambrow scholars examined me, and found that I was properly schooled and therefore qualified) and in the presence of two witnesses, that Rabbi Gold will send. And that is the way it was... this 'stroke of genius' was subsequently emulated also by others...

So a worse matter takes place in the *shtetl,* that involves a desecration as well. Herschel Bursztein (Herschkeh) had no children. He wanted to leave behind a memorial to himself, and wrote a fine Torah scroll. He was a supporter of Rabbi Gold. When the writing of the Torah scroll was finished, by the elderly Zambrow Scribe R' Zelik'l, a festive occasion was arranged, and the Torah was taken to the White *Bet HaMedrash* under a wedding canopy. It is understood that Rabbi Gold led this event, and gave the sermon in honor of the new scroll. After him, Avcheh Rakowsky spoke. A military orchestra played [music]. Everyone made merry. On the following morning, when Nachman the *Shammes* came to open the *Bet HaMedrash*, he noticed that the Holy Ark was open, and the new Torah scroll was missing... the supporters of Rabbi Regensberg had stolen it, and tossed it somewhere, possibly into the water... the whole city was abuzz: such a scandalous act and desecration was unheard of. The Rabbi himself, Rabbi Regensberg, decried it, but nothing was of any avail: the opponents of the *Kozioner Rabbiner* were mad. It was possible for the Rabbi to excommunicate the thieves, if he had wanted to, and they would have brought the scroll back. But he did not do so, and the matter was turned over to the police. So the Zambrow and Lomza police searched for the scroll in the area synagogues and where prayer quorums gathered, going so far as to violate sacred places, but they did not find it...

The tumult in the city became even greater. Observant Jews, held with certainty, that such an act of desecration must surely bring misfortune to the city. Rabbi Gold's father-in-law, the elderly Rabbi of Kopczewa, who in his old age was living with his daughter in Zambrow, demanded that the city bring a sacrifice to expiate the sin, and if not, the entire city will suffer. So, together with the help of children, he captured some young birds, and incinerated them in the oven of the White *Bet HaMedrash*, as a burnt offering to be entirely consumed[89]... but this did not help. The misfortune was visited upon the city, in the middle of a clear day. This was on a hot Friday summer's day, at the beginning of the month of Ab 5655 (1895). The sun was burning hot, and there were few people in the streets, most of the men having got to the baths in anticipation of the Sabbath. The womenfolk were occupied with preparing food and getting their cholent ready to be cooked. Suddenly, shouts

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89 Called an 'olah' in the Book of Leviticus.

were heard: Fire, help! The fire broke out in a smithy, near the river. It appears that there were also hot ashes. Accordingly, the straw-thatched roofs would catch fire, and burst into flames, baked by the sun, and they immediately became ignited by the sparks, and the city was engulfed in flames on all sides. There were no organized fire-fighters, and the few vessels that were available to extinguish fire were not in proper condition to be used. Until the fire-fighters arrived from Lomza, and Ostrowa, 275 houses had been burned down, in the course of 3-4 hours. The synagogue and the *Bet HaMedrash* were also consumed. Among the discarded sacred documents in the attic of the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, the stolen Torah scroll was spotted, but it was no longer possible to save it, and it too, was consumed...

At the Rabbi's Table

In the Zambrow *Batei Medrashim*, there were enough tables at which Jews would sit in groups and learn.

Such a table was set up by the Rabbi himself, by himself and for himself, in the Red *Bet HaMedrash*. Every evening, after *Maariv*, Jews who were studious, would seat themselves at this table, such as Shammai-Lejzor the Messenger, Shlomo-*Pracht*, who was the Rabbi's adjutant, Yitzhak the Dyer, Nahum-Hersh the Dyer, Cibuliak the Tailor, Abraham Shlomo the Tailor, Moshe-Leib, the Miller's son, Meir-Shlomkeh, Blumrosen's son-in-law, Lejzor the Smith, and other individuals whose names I can no longer recall. The Rabbi would learn with them. It was during the occupation, in the years 1916-17. I had gotten 'illegal work' with the Germans – cleaning out the barracks and carrying water for the laundry, for 2.50 marks a day. Tired, I would drop in, at night, into the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, to participate in the *Maariv* prayers. The dulcet tones of the study of *Gemara*, the light in the faces of those who were studying, who forget everything else at such a time, when there is not enough to eat, when there is no work to be had, and the political situation is not clear, and find their solace in a page of the *Gemara* – drew me to them. But I also studied the *Gemara* in *Heder*, and enjoyed the reputation of being a good student. Accordingly, I would sit to the side and listen in. I did not have the nerve to go directly up to the table. Until, on one occasion, R' Shammai-Lejzor said to me, with is affable smile: Pinchas, why are you sitting over there like a stranger, take a *Gemara*, sit beside the table and learn along with us! So I worked up my nerve, took a *Gemara* and learned along with them with satisfaction. From that time on, I studied every evening at the Rabbi's table. I was the only one of the younger boys who did this.

Many years have passed since then. The times have changes, the *Bet HaMedrash* was destroyed, as was the entire Jewish component of the city. Nevertheless, the sing-song tune of the *Gemara* study, from that time, continues to echo in my ears to this day.

His Energy

Itcheh Mulyar's son, tells of the Rabbi's heroism and energy:

Near the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, there was a small house that blocked the rays of the sun into the *Bet HaMedrash*. When the owner wanted to add a stable, the Rabbi did not permit it – since it would block the light of day even more, within the *Bet HaMedrash*. Every time they began to build the stall – the Rabbi's supporters knocked down the boards and stones. Some time later, a wagon driver bought the property, and for any price, he wanted to construct a stable, and so he retained Christian workers, to prepare to erect the stable immediately. And this is the way it was. But the Rabbi sent his men to knock the building down. The wagon driver angrily came running to The Rabbi. the Rabbi says: You didn't have to start the construction, because you knew what the outcome would be. And so, the wagon driver went out, and organized a wing, with Israelkeh the Glazier's son at its head, to go and make a case to the Rabbi, on the premise that he would not consent to the construction. When Israelkeh entered the Rabbi's premises forcibly, the Rabbi delivered two brisk slaps to both his cheeks, drove him out of the house, and the entire band dissolved. Israelkeh had to answer for these young upstarts: to start up with the Rabbi, and to raise a hand to him, will the entire city will curse me for this?

When it became known that the barbers were working on the Sabbath, the Rabbi went into the barbershop, sat down on a stool and said: I also want a haircut! All of the customers then fled the scene. He did this for a number of Fridays, in all the barbershops, until they were compelled to close up their shops on Friday, all at the same time. The same was true of the cinema, when it was opened on the Sabbath too early.

The butchers trembled before him, and did everything that he said.

One time, he was told that one of the *balebatim*, S. had slapped the S*hokhet* Y., because he declined to slaughter his fowl on the first day of a Festival Holiday. The Rabbi summoned him immediately and levied a punishment: to pay a fine and to call out loudly during prayers every Monday and Thursday: I beg the forgiveness of the Shokhet for raising my hand to him. Despite the fact that he was from 'Agudat Israel' – he gave me his blessing before I made aliyah to the Land of Israel, and even gave me a letter of recommendation to great Rabbis in Jerusalem, asking them to extend their help to me in getting settled.

The Rabbi's Prophecy

Mr. Joseph Krolewiecky (Buenos Aires) tells:

President Wojciechowski made a tour of the cities and towns of his country, and he also came to Zambrow – a city with a large military garrison. The city went all out, the Christians, on one side, the Jews on the other side, made preparations to receive the President of the country.

It is understood that the Rabbi stood at the head of the Jewish delegation. All dressed up in his splendid Rabbinical attire, the elderly Rabbi, in a *shtrymel* and white gloves, carried a Torah scroll in his arms, while standing underneath a canopy. Beside him stood the most senior representative of the community, R' Shlomkeh Blumrosen. When the President approached the Rabbi, the Rabbi

became confused, and instead of saying '*Witam Pana Prezydenta*'! (I greet Mr. President), he said: '*Witam Pana Referenta*'! (I greet Mr. Clerk). The President, who was not friendly to the Jews, smiled sarcastically. The Rabbi immediately corrected himself: '*Herr President*!' But his prophecy quickly came to pass. Not waiting very long, Pilsudski the Prime Minister, removed President Wojciechowski[90] and made him a clerk, in a university, somewhere in Posen.

And the Rabbi of Zambrow Spoke...

By Chaim Grade

At the Rabbinical Assembly in Vilna



Page 269: Rabbi Dov Menachem Regensberg, ז"ל

Close to the time of the Second World War, a Rabbinical Assembly took place in Vilna, at the initiative of the '*Chafetz Chaim*,' a gathering of Rabbis, from Lithuania and Poland, which was attended by the elderly Rabbi of Zambrow.

Despite the fact that Zambrow was not in Lithuania, the Rabbi was accorded considerable deference, because he was numbered among the oldest of the Rabbis in Poland.

The talented Vilna writer and poet, Chaim Grade – who had married the Rabbi's granddaughter Fruma-Liebcheh, the daughter of R' Aharon Yaakov Klepfish ז"ל, and Sotshe the Rabbi's [daughter] – describes in his landmark work, '*Der Schulhof*' this very Rabbinical conference, and the appearance of the Zambrow Rabbi.

.. The Zambrow Rabbi spoke, as one of the greats, who sat close to the front, an old man, approaching ninety, with a broad spread out beard, a bared chest, with his fringed garment tied on over his overcoat. He read without quoting references, or the Great Sages, but rather tore sighs out from within him, along with hunks of flesh, at the same time, groaning out his pain, and condemnation of the city, where he was the Rabbi for over fifty years:

Over a Jubilee of years, he looked out of the window from his house, and saw how Jewish children went to *Heder,* and how, when they were grown, would go to prayers. He saw how the younger generations were led to the wedding canopy, and the older generations to the cemetery. He knew the grandfathers, the fathers, the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren. But on one wintry Sabbath

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90 Stanislaw Wojciechowski served as President from 1922-1926. In 1926, after disputes over the direction of the government (Wojciechowski favoring a continuation of parliamentary democracy over increased authoritarianism), his old friend Józef Piłsudski staged a *coup d'état* and Wojciechowski resigned from office. Stanislaw Wojciechowski retired to private life and died in Golobki in 1953, at the age of 84.

morning, he looked out from his house, and the Rabbi no longer recognized Zambrow. He saw – woe unto his eyes, what he saw! – How an autobus, packed full of Jews from the surrounding towns, drove through Zambrow on the Sabbath. He was frozen in place beside his window, and also the elderly *balebatim* outside, who were on their way to worship, were also frozen in their places, remaining stuck in the snow up to their knees. So he began to rail against the desecration of the Sabbath in the *Bet HaMedrash*, in the marketplace, and at meetings, crying and pleading that Zambrow not permit these buses that operate on the Sabbath to pass through its streets, packed full of Jews. It came to the point where the youth of Zambrow also began to ride on the Sabbath, using the same bus, but to go to Bialystok, Sniadowo, to Lomza, and to all of the surrounding towns, along the banks of the Bug and the Narew [Rivers]. Even the older Zambrow *balebatim*, the very ones who originally were shaken by the frightful desecration of the Sabbath, got used to this a little bit at a time. So he stopped looking out of the window. He had looked out the window for more than a Jubilee of years, and now, now he no longer looks...

–Holy Jews – the old Rabbi gestured with both of his trembling hands, – none of us, who occupied a Rabbinical Seat will have any explanation for The One who occupies the Throne of Glory, when He will ask us: Why were you silent? We, the Rabbis, were obligated to lay ourselves down in front of the wheels of the buses, so that they would not be able to ride through our cities on the Sabbath – the Old Man carries on in a loud and bitter weeping. The tears run down his face, and beard, and over the gray hair of his revealed chest. His body trembles, his hands shake, and as if he was cut down, he slumps back into his seat...



Rabbi Aharon Yaakov Klepfish ז"ל, the Rabbi's Son-in-Law

By Y. Meshuli

Page 272: R' Aharon Yaakov Klepfish, the Rabbi's Son-in-Law and his wife, Sotshe

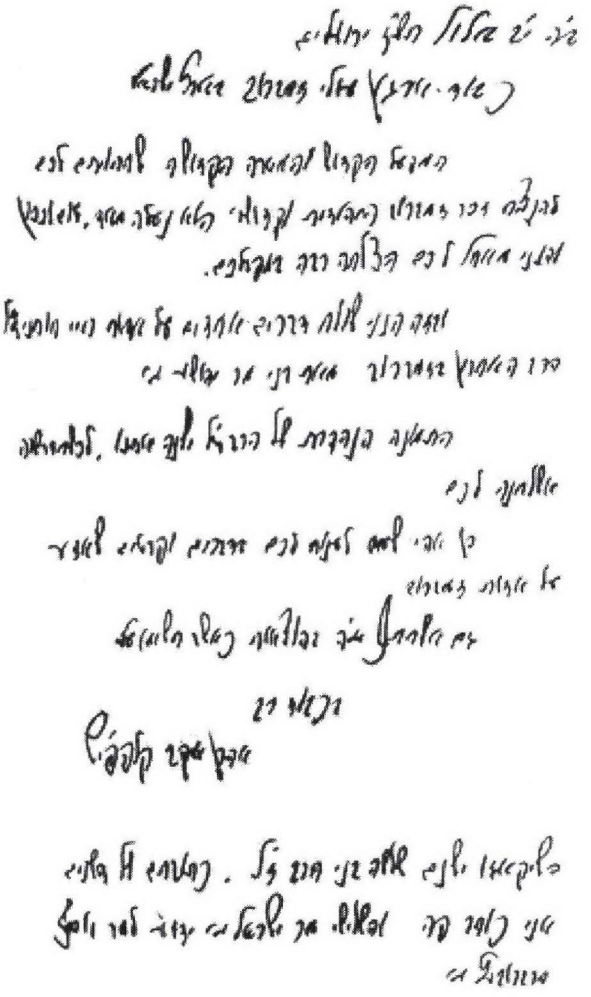
Translation of the Text

To the respected members of the Organization of Zambrow Émigrés in Israel

Your sacred undertaking, and the sacred objective that you have set for yourselves, to memorialize Jewish Zambrow and its martyrs, is lofty indeed; it is the right thing, and good, and I wish you success in your undertaking. In this connection, I am sending along a few words about my father-in-law, may his memory be for a blessing, the last Rabbi of Zambrow, which was written by my son, Yehoshua, ב"י. The wonderful picture of the Rabbi ז"ל is with us, and I will send it to you, when you require it. With great pleasure, I will answer all questions that you may need to ask me about Zambrow. I will also contribute to underwriting the expenses for the book, to the extend that you ask of me.

With great respect, Rabbi Aharon Yaakov Klepfish.

Three sons of the Rabbi live in Chicago. I am sending you two addresses, and the address of the third, Israelcheh, is in the possession of Mr. Joseph Srebrowicz ב"י



Page 275: Letter sent to the Zambrow Society in Israel by R' Aharon Yaakov Klepfish, now residing in Jerusalem, expressing his warm feelings towards the idea of publishing the present Memorial Book and his readiness to help in the enterprise.

R' Aharon-Yaakov, the Rabbi's son-in-law, came from a large, well-branched, and prominent family in Warsaw (his father was a cousin of the Chief Rabbi of Warsaw, R' Shmuel Zeinvill). He was born in Szczuczyn in the year 1880. He was raised at the home of his maternal grandfather, Rabbi Yehoshua Heschel Shapiro, the Rabbi of Szczuczyn. When he was seven years old, his father became a *Shokhet* in Warsaw, and the family moved to Warsaw. Aharon Yaakov studied well at the yeshiva there, and had a special teacher who instructed him in Russian, Polish, Hebrew and Arithmetic.

When he was 18 years old, a marriage contract was drawn up between him and Sotshe, the oldest daughter of the Rabbi of Zambrow. That Rabbi was also his uncle. Two and a half years after this contract was drawn up, the actual wedding took place. In the interim, the prospective bridegroom studied at the Yeshiva in Mir, and obtained his rabbinical ordination. After this, he stood for military

conscription, and was exempted. It was only at that time that he got married, and was supported by his father-in-law for five years. Later, he opened a business in Zambrow, selling glassware, porcelain and 'blue' ware. That is to say, it was as if 'he opened the business.' In reality, it was his wife, Sotshe, who ran the business – he would be sitting in the study house and learning, or assisting the Rabbi in dealing with his issues. Someone asked him: Well, R' Aharon-Yaakov, how is it that you opened up a business selling glassware? The *Gemara* says that he who wishes to lose his money should buy glassware. To which R' Aharon-Yaakov replied: The *Gemara* says 'who buys glassware' not 'who sells glassware – and I am selling!' When he told his Rabbi, the Headmaster of the Mir Yeshiva, R' Eliyahu-Baruch Kamai, that he had opened this business to sell glassware, he said to him that this was not for him, and it would not succeed. And that is how it was. In the large fire of 1910, his entire store burned down, and R' Aharon Yaakov was left with nothing, and was burdened with a great deal of debt. When he re-established the store, later, there still was insufficient income from it, and a few years afterwards, he was forced to liquidate it.

In the year 1913, he became the Headmaster of the Yeshiva in Slonim. He was very successful in this capacity, and earned a very great name. However, the First World War broke out, and he was compelled to return to Zambrow.

He did not rest. Together with his brother-in-law, the Rabbi's son, Chaim-David (today a Rabbi in Chicago), he rejuvenated the Yeshiva in Zambrow, and invested the best of his energies for four years, to its development, in Torah study. He looked after paying the *Mashgiach* and others, arranged for the Yeshiva boys from faraway places to have a place to take 'daily meals,' and lodging, while he personally earned nothing from doing this.

In 1919, he became the Rabbi of Sniadowo – one of the oldest communities in the entire area, which had become impoverished over a period of time. He did not lack for tribulation here. The town was completely burned down at the beginning of the First World War by the Germans – but, a little at a time, the Jews began to return, and to rebuild the ruined structures [of the town]. Rabbi Klepfish did a great deal for his congregation, seeing to it that it would receive foodstuffs from the Joint, as well as money, and helped to found a credit bank, obtaining the means to re-build *the Bet HaMedrash* (the famous ancient wooden synagogue of Sniadowo had been burned down during the war), and to found a Talmud Torah.

In the year 1935, he and his wife arrived in the Land of Israel. For one year, he held the pulpit at Kfar-Saba, and was outside of the country, for purposes of taking a cure. After that, he traveled as an emissary to America, to raise money for the Yeshiva at Lomza, which had relocated itself to the Land of Israel, in Petakh-Tikva.

In the year 1943, he took up residence in Jerusalem. Here, he received a very honored position: he is nominated – at the recommendation of the Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Herzog ז"ל – as an expert colleague for the work on the: 'Questions and Responses' Encyclopedia. Approximately 18 distinguished Rabbis and scholars were to be selected from the great treasure of rabbinic writings, all of the rulings of law, during the span of approximately one thousand years. Such a work could only be carried out

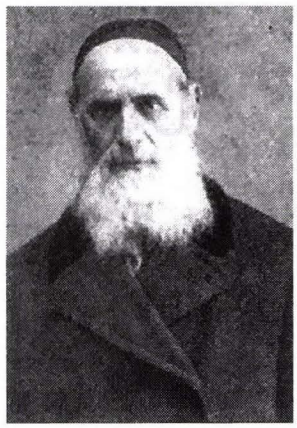
by a truly distinguished scholar, who was thoroughly grounded in *Shas*, and its commentators. And this was R' Aharon Yaakov. He was counted among the senior editors, and dedicated 18 years of work and knowledge into it. His name became exceedingly well-known in rabbinical circles. He would also set aside time for his own personal study. He would rise each day, before dawn, for study. He would often engage in fasting. He would help others with a full heart. Not a few people would benefit from his personal largesse. He was a very modest, self-effacing man, and possessed of a genteel character. Everyone held him in great esteem. When he lay ill in hospital, he was visited by Chief Rabbi Herzog, the Rabbi of Ger, and other great Rabbis. He worked up to the last day of his life.

On Friday, 22 Adar 5721 (March 10, 1961) as he was preparing to go to synagogue to welcome the Sabbath – he fell, and passed away early that Saturday morning, in the hospital. The funeral took place that Saturday evening, as is the custom in Jerusalem, and it attracted thousands of people.

His daughter, Fruma-Liebcheh, was the wife of the renown Yiddish writer and poet, Chaim Grade (in America). She was killed in Treblinka by the Nazis. His son, Moshe, was active in the *Haganah*, and served in the Jewish Brigade and fell as a hero in the War of Independence, at the battle near '*Bet Keshet*,' in the Lower Galilee. His wife and three sons live in Israel.

The Dayanim [91]

R' Zalman Kaplan



Page 276:R' Zalman Kaplan ז"ל

He was the son-in-law of Israelkeh Shia-'Tzaleleh's and Liebeh [Rosenthal]. He came from a distinguished family, counting the Chafetz Chaim,[92] and R' Yehuda HaLevi Epstein as his uncles. He was a formidable scholar, a *Litvak*, and one of the best of the young men from the Yeshiva at Volozhin. His father, R' Nahum *Maggid*, the author of '*Nahamot Israel*,' made *aliyah* to Jerusalem in the year 1877. It was to avoid military service that he came to Zambrow. He came to Zambrow as a 21 year-old young man, with a recommendation from his uncle, the '*Chafetz Chaim*.' The [sic: Zambrow] Rabbi was very much taken by his knowledge of Torah, his wisdom, and his resplendent appearance. He then called on Israelkeh Shia-'Tzaleleh's and said: I have here, a son-in-law, suitable for your daughter Mashkeh, he is a rare find, and you should grab him! He pleased everyone, including his prospective father-in-law and prospective bride, because he was handsome, robust, tall, and possessed of pleasant demeanor. At first, he was the Rabbi of Tyszowce. Because of a dispute that arose between the balebatim and the local clergy, he gave up the rabbinical seat, and came back to Zambrow to become a *Dayan*. He was a gentle man, never mixing into the community debates, was one who loved peace, and did not follow in the direction of fanatics. He was a liberal man, and would read newspapers and books. When his children grew somewhat older, and his salary proved insufficient, he was given a monopoly to sell candles for sacramental purposes. He died in the year 1937. He left a daughter in Argentina, and a son and daughter in Israel.

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91 A *Dayan* is a Judge (the Hebrew word). It was a title accorded to an ordained Rabbi, known of scholarly repute, but who, for any number of reasons, did not choose to occupy a pulpit. The quality of his expertise caused him to be called upon, in those events, where it was necessary to empanel a Rabbinical Court [sic: a *Bet Din*]. Since a *Bet Din* required a minimum of three sitting Judges. Having access to such capable people within a community was an asset, since it meant the town would not have to send to nearby Jewish settlements for a Rabbi, thereby sparing them both time, expense and inconvenience. In view of the overwhelming choice, in those times, to educate Jewish boys at a Yeshiva, receiving ordination was not uncommon. Accordingly, there was usually some number of this type of individual available to the *Mara D'Asra* [sitting Rabbi of the community] for the legal purposes described.

92 Rabbi Yisroel Meir HaKohen (1838-1933) one of the greatest figures in modern Jewish history. He was recognized as both an outstanding scholar and an extraordinarily righteous man. His impact on Judaism was phenomenal. It is interesting to note that, despite his great stature, he refused to accept any rabbinical position and supported himself from a small grocery run by his saintly wife in the town of Radin where they lived. Rabbi Yisroel Meir devoted himself to the study and teaching of Torah.

The Dayan, Shabtai (Shepsl) Kramarsky



Page 277: R' Shepsl Kramarsky ז"ל

A handsome Jewish man, with a 'Herzl beard,' and large, dreamy eyes. He came from a family of merchants, from the Prussian border. He studies at Yeshivas, and clandestinely obtained secular education. He married Rachel, the granddaughter of Shia-'Tzaleleh's and Liebeh Rosenthal. Together with his brother-in-law Zalman, they were the two *Dayanim* of the community, and at the disposal of the Rabbi. He was a quiet and tranquil man from whom no one ever heard a loud word, and he would never get mixed up in municipal disputes. He would spend the entire day studying the Torah beside his father-in-law's table. He was in harmony with his environment. He enjoyed reading the books of the Enlightenment, and as *Dayan*, you will understand, he did not do so publicly. In later years, when his compensation proved to be inadequate, he would learn the *Gemara* with older students, and even worked to prepare younger students to be candidates for ordination.

He has children in Israel.

Rabbi Abraham Goronczyk (Goren) זצ"ל



Page 278: Rabbi Abraham Goronczyk-Goren ז"ל

He was the son-in-law of the senior *Shokhet*, R' Nahum-Lejzor Ciwiak. He was born in Ruzhany Poland in 1888, and studied at the Greater Yeshiva of Makow,[93] and later on at the Yeshiva for young people in Warsaw, where R' Abraham Gruzhinsky was the Headmaster. He received his ordination from R' Chaim [sic: Soloveitchik] *Brisker*.

He married at the age of 20 to the daughter of the *Shokhet* in Zambrow and became a Zambrow resident. At first, he became a teacher of *Gemara* for older boys. During the First World War, he committed himself to provide a substantial amount of assistance to the homeless. Two years after the end of the war, he and his family moved to Warsaw. Immediately after the Balfour Declaration, he joined the 'Jablon *Hasidim*' to make *aliyah* to the Land of Israel, and to build up the village of '*Nakhalat Yaakov*' using their own personal energies, in the Jezereel Valley (today, it is called *Kfar Hasidim*).
He made *aliyah* in 1924, along with the first who went, and he settled temporarily in Sheikh Avreik. A proposal was made to him to become the local Rabbi. He accepted it under the condition – that he not be paid any salary, and otherwise to count him as another member of the community. He then proposed to give his own hard pioneering work to dry out the swamps that were a deterrent to the development of the village. With all the ardor of a *Hasidic* and pioneering spirit, he personally

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93 This appears to be Makow Mazowiecki.

drained about 17 kilometers of swamp. However, he fell sick from the tropical malaria, and together with his family, he was compelled to move to Jerusalem. At first, he became the Headmaster of the '*Torat Chaim*' Yeshiva. After this, he took up residence in a park near Rehovot, because he was drawn to working the land, and did not want to make his living from the study of Torah. During the unrest of 1929 – he took up residence in Rehovot, and afterwards returned to Jerusalem, and opened up an institute to prepare students for rabbinical ordination. Rabbi Kook drew him close, and in more or less all his correspondence, encouraged him, and praised him for his work, and the tens of his students who assumed rabbinical pulpits in the larger world.

In his final years, he dedicated himself to rabbinic literature, and prepared the book, 'Explanations offered by the Vilna *Gaon* and the *Rambam*.'

He passed away after considerable suffering, on 14 Kislev 5720 (1959).

Rabbi Shlomo Goren, שליט"א Chief Rabbi of the IDF

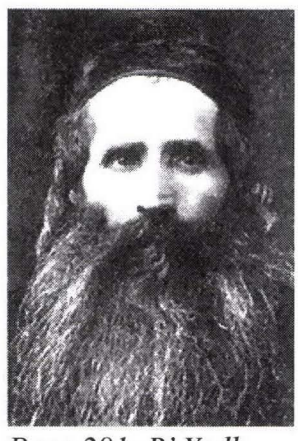


Page 280: Rabbi Shlomo Goren

He was born in Zambrow on 21 Shevat 5675, July 2, 1918, to his father, Rabbi Abraham Goronczyk-Goren (see above) and was the grandson of the eldest and beloved *Shokhet*, R' Nahum-Lejzor Ciwiak. He came to Israel with his family, in 1925, as an 8 year-old boy, first to '*Kfar Hasidim*,' and afterwards to Jerusalem, first at the '*Etz Chaim*' Yeshiva, and then finishing at the '*Hebron*' Yeshiva, obtaining his rabbinical ordination at the age of 17. He pursued Jewish studies at the Jerusalem University. He pursued research in Talmudic studies, and made significant contributions to research in the Jerusalem Talmud, and at his initiative, a scientifically well-edited version of the Jerusalem Talmud was published. He was the recipient of the first ever, Rabbi Kook Prize, awarded by the Tel-Aviv municipal administration (1943). He served in the '*Haganah*' and the Israeli military, and was a role model for many young rabbis, and immediately upon the founding of the Israeli Army, he was nominated as the first Chief Rabbi, which he occupies to this day, with esteem and substance. Rabbi Goren is the most serious candidate to become the Chief Rabbi of Israel, after the passing of Rabbi Herzog ז"ל.

R' Yudl Shokhet, הו"ד

By Joseph Yismach



Page 281: R' Yudl Shokhet

Let us first pen several lines to serve as a memorial to a small corner of our little town, which is our house.

We were five neighbors. We were five working neighbors, laborers, from whom light emanated, along with tranquility and a love for work.

Yankl the Hat Maker with his five little children, worked hard from before dawn to well after dusk, and it was not only once that those little children went to bed hungry. Nevertheless, he was a man you could count on. He always worked while singing, singing while he worked – all manner of folk songs, bits of cantorial liturgy, and hoped for better days.

Yaakov the Barrel Maker, a quiet and good Jewish man, worked from dawn until late into the night. His wife, Chaya Sarah, always helped the poor and was always at the ready to do a favor for someone else. They had fine children, a son, Sholom, and a daughter, Sarahcheh.

Moshe'l the Carpenter – This third neighbor had golden hands. Much of the youth of Zambrow, among them not a few who went on to become *Halutzim*, were trained by him.

And another neighbor was *David the Painter*.

And the fifth neighbor was our family – Yudl the *Shokhet*. His family name was Yismach.

They were five residents there. They were all exterminated....

However, let me stop here about one of these neighbors, who was the closest and most beloved by me. This is my father, Yudl the *Shokhet* ז"ל.

In reality, it would be appropriate to write about all of those who were ritual slaughterers in Zambrow, who made no small contribution to our town, and were fine *balebatim*, and prominent members of the clergy, such as R' Nahum Lejzor Ciwiak, the eldest of these ritual slaughterers among us, and the grandfather of our military Chief Rabbi, Major General Rabbi Shlomo Goren. After that come R' Benjamin Shokhet (Rosenbaum). And my father Yudl *Shokhet*. Further, there are R' Abraham Shmuel Fiontek, R' Moshe Aharon Amsterdamsky, etc. To my sorrow, I possess only minimal facts about them, and I can only pen a few lines about my father.

As was the case in many small towns, my father carried out those functions that had a connection to his calling: a *Mohel*, a leader of prayer services on the High Holy Days, blowing the Shofar, and also a Torah Reader. It is understood that he did not receive any extra compensation for doing these things. He did this out of a sense of duty, in performing a mitzvah. Performing these mitzvot, bound him and tied him to the other clergy in the town, the Rabbi and the *Dayanim*, the *Gabbaim* and the laity serving as *Parnass*. My father was a *Hasid*, and worshiped at the *Hasidic shtibl* all year-round. He made it his business to assure that his children abided by *Hasidic* standards in dress and in habit. I recall the instance when my brother Herschel הי"ד, was studying at the Yeshiva in Lomza, at which time, word reached us that he had begun to favor the wearing of a white tie, in the aristocratic fashion. This irritated my father, who immediately traveled to Lomza to determine if it was true and see if he could influence his son.

My father was one of the prominent *balebatim* in the *Hasidic shtibl*. A long beard added to his resplendent appearance. He was always an inspired teacher of the *Hasidim*. He was versed in *Hasidic*

lore, and was always telling historic episodes of the *Hasidic* movement. Because of this, he was loved everywhere, and sought after. He was quite renown for his deft touch in performing ritual circumcisions on newborn Jewish male babies. He was well-versed in all the laws pertaining to treiboring[94], and the examination of slaughtered animals, and not only once, would he be called to Lomza, and other cities, to offer a ruling on a difficult question in this area. He was an accomplished leader of prayer services. The various houses of study competed fiercely, with each other, to have him officiate as a Cantor for the High Holy Days, until a compromise was reached: the first day of *Rosh Hashana* – at the White Synagogue, and the second day – in the Red one. In the latter, he also blew the *Shofar*. On Yom Kippur, he would conduct the *Kol Nidre* services, the *Musaf* and *Ne'ila* services. After Kol Nidre services on Yom Kippur [sic: Eve], he would spend the entire night at the *Hasidic shtibl*, standing up on his feet, reciting *Tehillim*, and learning, until the morning.

My mother, may she have a bright, illuminated Garden of Eden, was always there to help him, being occupied with receiving guests, and to be available to help out the needy. If the need arose to spend the night and tend the indigent sick, she would cook soups for them. When she would get the '*kashrut*' from the butchers, as was the town custom, (the viscera from a slaughtered animal), she would first send packages to those who were keeping their needs secret, and afterwards to the indigent Jewish women.

My father was a *Shokhet* in Zambrow for a little under sixty years. In his old age, he was bereft of energy. After he married off his daughter Chaycheh to R' Benjamin Musicant – he permitted his son-in-law to come in and be his assistant and to take over the business, with the consent of the Rabbi. My dear sister and her husband, regrettably, were killed by the murdering Nazis, together with the Rabbi and other *balebatim*. May their memory remain for the good.

R' Berl Nigubcer זצ"ל

He was a formidable scholar with few who were in the entire area like him. He was a self-effacing and honest man, without any personal pride, and did not want to assume the mantle of the rabbinate, notwithstanding the fact that he was repeatedly offered such. He was a scion of the family of R' Leibeleh Kovner, and the root of his family was in Karlin, near Pinsk, and he came to Zambrow from the village of Nigubcy. His wife, Genendel, a Woman of Valor, ran a store of woven goods, in the city square, and he was the Headmaster of the Yeshiva at Lodz. He invested the money he earned, as a Rabbi, in woven goods in Lodz, and was an intermediator for his wife. He then moved to Zambrow, and helped his wife in the business. He took part in the religious life of the city, and was a confidante of the Rabbi's. He was fanatic in matters of faith, but also perceptive and knew how to weigh a matter, and not to impose anything on the community that would be unbearable. He was a joyous person, and his dancing on *Simchat Torah* tugged at the sympathies of the heart. He studied day and night, arising at one in the morning in order to study Torah.

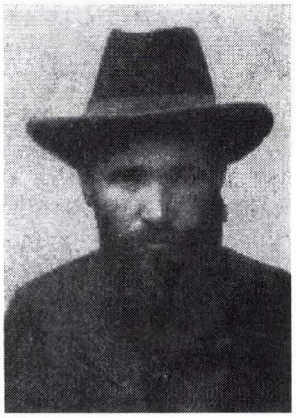
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94 A ritual specialty that entails the removal of the blood vessels and sinews from the hindquarters of a slaughtered animal, so that the meat of that part of the animal would be kosher for consumption. Not all those who qualified as a *Shokhet* necessarily also had this skill.

His oldest son, Yeshaya, was a scholar and a Rabbi in one of the towns of the Minsk Province, and was a son-in-law to the Rabbi of Myszyniec. He emigrated to the United States and was one of the leaders of the Rabbinical Council, appointed to oversee '*Kashrut*' in a number of large institutions that served food. He had the same insight as his father, and was active in Torah institutions.

Regarding his second son, Aharon-Leib and Yaakov – see further on, in the list of Berl Mark, regarding three families. In his youth, R' Yaakov was one of the heads of the Zionist movement in Zambrow, and the first leader of *Keren Kayemet*, when the 'blue box' reached the city. He is today in the United States, and a secretary to the Rabbinical Council.

Rabbi Leib Rosing



Page 284 (above): R' Leibl Rosing ז"ל

He was the son-in-law to Breineh-Pearl Finkelstein, born in Russia. He studied at the Slobodka Yeshiva, and received his rabbinic ordination there. After his marriage, he returned there for further study, for some additional time. His mother-in-law, Breineh-Pearl took great pride in him: 'I bought a 'Torah scroll' for my daughter, because he is a holy man.' And this nickname stayed with him. He was one of the great Torah scholars in the city, responding to the needs of the community, and establishing a *Gemilut Hasadim* Organization. For all his days, he was the right hand man of the Rabbi, and assisted him in leading the city, in his zealous struggles against outbreaks of opposition to the faith and its tradition. He served as a member of the Rabbinic Court of Justice, and because of this, he was elected to the municipal council. He was beloved by all who knew him, for his honesty, and the goodness of his heart. In the ghetto – when the Rabbi succumbed to weakness and exhaustion – he served in his place as the Rabbi of the community. He was cremated in Auschwitz with his wife, Elkeh, four of his daughters, and two sons-in-law.



Page 284 (below): The Dayan, R' Zalman Kaplan, with his wife, Mashkeh ז"ל*, his son Pinchas, and his two daughters.*

Cantors



Page 285: R' Shlomo Wismonsky

We have no recollection of the first cantors of the city. The older folks still speak about R' Pinchas who was a Cantor and a *Shokhet*. He came from Lithuania, and was a good friend to, or perhaps altogether, a son-in-law to R' Israel Szkoder, the renown Cantor in Lithuania. Also, his wife, Shifra, was also musically talented. It is told that the famous Cantor, Yossele Rosenblatt, was a student of her father, and being in America, at a very advanced age, he would confer with her on matters pertaining to cantorial liturgy.

R' Pinchas died before his time. It is told that he fell off the top seat in the bath house, was injured and died. The *balebatim* took care of the widow as follows: each week, she received a portion of the animal fat, that the butchers took out of the slaughtered cattle. From this, she made a living. At an advanced age, she emigrated to America, to her children and grandchildren.

One of her sons, Yitzhak (Itzik), was also a Cantor.



Page 286: The Cantor's wife, Shifra, and her son, Yitzhak, the Cantor.

The second Cantor in Zambrow was R' Shlomo Wismonsky, from the Lithuanian *shtetl* of Dieveniskes.[95] He was a handsome man, and well-dressed, who wore a top hat, and a black overcoat. He had a formal musical education, and could read musical notation. He mastered all musical compositions, and led a fine choir that consisted of the best voices in the city. In the first period, he would even import singers from faraway places, and the city financed the choir. He was a student of the Cantorial School in Częstochowa, that was founded by Abraham-Ber Birnbaum. The Cantor was also a *Shokhet*. Only the Rabbi was concerned about his slaughtering, because he had doubts about his piety. His permanent position was in the White *Bet HaMedrash*, and would, from time-to-time, arrange a visit to the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, and to the synagogue. Many, especially the craftsmen, would come to the *Bet HaMedrash* to hear how he led prayers, and to listen to his music.

He lacked for food in his last years, because the city had become so impoverished that, together with his wife, he was compelled to take up doing business in the marketplace. Later on, he went off to America, to his children.

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95 Called Dievenishok by Yiddish speaking Jews.

He was the last Cantor of the city. For a short time, Leib-Herschel, the youngest son of the *Melamed*, Israel-Chaim, served in a cantorial capacity. He was mainly a hat maker, but he also had a pleasant tenor voice, and had a bit of book-learning. Accordingly, he taught himself to be a *Shokhet*, and had been a singer for a while in the Cantor's choir, where he grasped the essence of what was needed, and later on, became a Cantor somewhere in a small town, not far from Zambrow.

Preachers

As was the case in all towns, from time-to-time, an itinerant preacher [sic: A *Maggid*] would come through and preach. The Rabbi would preach twice a year: on *Shabbat HaGadol* and on *Shabbat Shuva*. On all other Sabbath days, and quite often in the hours between *Mincha* and *Maariv* services, itinerant preachers, who would often go on foot from one location to the next, would fill in with their own sermons. They would ascend the pulpit, and leave a collection plate at the door, into which each person would throw in a few kopecks. It was from these funds that such itinerant preachers would derive the funds to marry off daughters, build themselves a small house, and make a living. They were called '*Piekhotna Maggidim*' – those who were pedestrians. A renown preacher would be invited to a repast with the *Gabbai* or the Rabbi, where he was given some pointers on what to include in his message. His words would be filled with the legends of the Sages of old, parables, all delivered in a sweet, traditional sing-song, that would leave an impression on the city.

R' Eliakim-Getzel Levitan



Page 288: R' Eliakim-Getzel Levitan

For a time, Zambrow had its own stable of preachers that were paid a weekly salary from the community treasury. R' Eliakim-Getzel was one of the most renown of the preachers in all of Russia and Poland. He was a powerful orator, a fanatic, who mesmerized his listeners with his words. He would always use his voice to thunder, with eyes closed, and accuse the people of transgressions and malign intentions. He came from Zaslav. His father was a renown teacher of the *Gemara* in Kaidanov, at the courtyard of the Rabbis, and later on in Stiubic. One of his students is the current President of Israel, Mr. Zalman Shazar, as he describes in his book, 'The Star at Dawn.' The father exacted a vow from his son, Eliakim-Getzel, that he would not become a preacher, because it will tear him away from study. However, the Rabbis saw that the [sic: younger] generation was falling away from *Yiddishkeit* and there was a need for an effective preacher that will awaken the flock to fulfilment of *mitzvot*, and to do good deeds – and so, they sent him to the *Tzaddik* of Grodno, R' Nahumcheh, to annul the vow, and Eliakim-Getzel became a *Maggid*. When his father heard this, he said: 'He will now no longer be able to learn!' In Zambrow, Eliakim-Getzel founded a youth group, '*Tiferet Bakhurim*,' where the young workers and craftsmen, could study Pentateuch with *Rashi* commentary in the evening, recite Psalms, and become 'Jews.' Because of his fanaticism and his sharp tong, the less observant element in the city hated him. During the dispute between the two ritual slaughterers, he took the same side as the Rabbi and excoriated those

who ate the meat that came from the second *Shokhet,* saying that it is 'as if they were eating the flesh of swine.' It was then conveyed to the provincial seat in Lomza, that Eliakim-Getzel is awakening unrest in the city, and is inciting the citizenry to conflict, one with another. The Chairman of the provincial government then insisted that the Dozors of the city vote on this. A vote was taken, with the majority finding against the *Maggid*. Accordingly, he was compelled to leave Zambrow. On his last Sabbath, he saw fit to appear and curse the city: 'A fire burns, and the city will be consumed by it.' And indeed, shortly thereafter, in the year 1895, the city burned down.

As previously indicated, he was a great orator, and had great influence among the uneducated masses. He would move men and women to tears, speaking of sins, and about the punishment that awaited sinners in Hell. Later on, he was the *Maggid* of Bialystok, Minsk, etc., and his name was famous throughout all of Russia and Poland.

In the year 1908, his son, a Reverend from America, gave a sermon in the White *Bet HaMedrash*, not at all like the father. He was dressed in the short [sic: modern] style, and spoke like a modern orator, not using his father's sing-song style, and was a Zionist... accordingly, the listeners in the *White Bet HaMedrash* were disappointed.



Page 289: The Ruins of the [sic: Jewish] Cemetery in Zambrow

R' Akiva Rabinovich (Poltaver)

R' Akiva was a son-in-law of R' Elyeh Rosenberg. He was raised in Piątnica, where his father was the Rabbi. However, he would often come to Zambrow, where he loved to preach.

When, later on, he became the Rabbi in Piątnica, after his father passed away, he joined the Zionist movement, and was one of the first Rabbis who was a 'Lover of Zion.' Thanks to the initiative of the Rabbi of Bialystok, R' Shmuel Mohilever, Akiva became the Rabbi of Poltava.

Because of an incident, in which he was insulted, he became a great opponent of Zionism: at a '*Hovevei-Zion*' conference in Warsaw, a Rabbi Rabinovich was elected President. He thought that they meant it was him, and when he saw that he had made a mistake, he was deeply offended, and became a protagonist. Once, after the second Zionist Congress, he was on a visit to Zambrow, at his father-in-law, Hona Tenenbaum, and appeared, according to his father-in-law, to manifest a desire to preach. The Zionists then organized themselves, and would not permit this under any circumstances, because he would speak out against Zionism. This persisted, until he promised that he would not speak out against Zionism and the Land of Israel. A tumult ensued: Well, (they said), you mean that you won't? He answered: Let me give you a parable: a person had to go to Lomza. He encounters a horse on the way. So he says: Little horse, little horse, take me to Lomza! So the horse replies: But I am going in the opposite direction, to Tyszowce! So he says: It doesn't matter, take me on board, and I will ride to Tyszowce. When he already was sitting on the horse, he pulled on the reins, and turned the horse around to Lomza, where he wanted to go... the analogy is: if I am already standing on the *Bima*, I can say what I please... and said: I will offer you yet another parable: a king had a beautiful daughter, and God forbid, not on you, she fell ill. No doctor or professor was able to save her. A pauper came along, dressed in torn clothing, and offered that he could save the sick princess. The king saw that he had nothing to lose, because his daughter was in dire straits – so he agreed to let the pauper try and heal his daughter. When the sick princess saw the pauper standing beside her bed, she understood how great the misfortune was, and how dangerously ill she was, and that it was all the same as far as her father was concerned... the same is true with the sick 'Mother, Zion:' when she sees who it is that is coming to cure her of her illness, she weeps and says: Zion-Zion, our Holy Land, how great is your misfortune, who will heal you... these Zionists?... You can appreciate that Akiva Poltaver never again preached in Zambrow, even though he had friends here, and was later on to become famous as the editor of the anti-Zionist journal, '*HaPeless*.'

R' Alter Maggid (R' Moshe Zalman Urwicz)

(Son-in-Law of the Lady Dyer)

Alter the *Maggid,* or as he was called, the 'Son-in-Law of the Lady Dyer,' because he married the widow's daughter, from the house of Wierzba. He was a comely Jewish man, with a wide black beard, attractive blue eyes, and would always dress neatly, wearing a wide *Hasidic* cap. He would speak softly, smilingly, exhibiting no sternness, even to those who opposed him, and would even try to be helpful in responding to those who abjured their faith. Nevertheless, he was a zealot, and he did what the Rabbi directed him to do, in fighting every new thing that intruded on Jewish life. He would weave in all of the shortcomings of the life in the city, into his sermons, and would severely reprove all those who did not adhere to the old ways. He abhorred the Zionists whom he would call '*Tzio-nisht-en.*'[96] He could not countenance the socialists, and fought against the modern school for children, the parties, the library, etc.

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96 '*Nisht*' being the Yiddish word for 'not,' and implying their unwillingness to abide by 'the old ways.'

His faithful listeners, and students were the simple people, workers, craftsmen, and small scale businessmen. The more urbane *balebatim* and youth would fight back against his preaching – but always respected him personally because of his good character. When the economic conditions worsened – the Zambrow Society in America assumed the burden of supporting him. In about 1924, he came to New York. All of his adherents escorted him with tears in their eyes, and said their goodbyes to him. Zambrow, they said, will never again see such a *Maggid*... (see above page 244).

In America, as well, he was a *Maggid*. He would 'preach' in the other synagogues, but his chief means of support was from the Zambrow Society, which greatly respected him. Later on, he became a Rabbi in the United 'Zembrover-Jedwabner Synagogue.' He mellowed in America, and understood that it was necessary to go with the flow rather than against it, yet he felt alone here, and defeated. He no longer had his one-time ambience, his learning coterie, and the observant Jews.

He passed away on 9 Shevat 5713 (1953) and the entire [sic: Zambrow] Society attended his funeral, according him this last final measure of respect.

A very substantial memorial service was also arranged by the Society on February 21, and he was eulogized by Rabbi Yaakov Karlinsky and others. In the invitation to the service, it was written: He was beloved by all for his good Jewish heart.

Shammai Lejzor

He was a big-boned strong man, and good-natured. He was a scholar, and God-fearing, and would derive his sustenance from his small bakery, where his wife and daughters would bake bread, Challahs, and put up *Cholent* [sic: on Friday nights, to be kept warm for the Saturday main meal]. Shammai-Lejzor would assist in this, and quite often engage in putting in and taking out the bread from the oven.

What was special, however, is that he was something of a preacher. He would travel among the various cities and towns, collecting money for the '*Kessel Kosher,*' this being the kitchen for the Jewish soldiers that did not want to eat from the 'Unkosher Pot,' as it were. He would hold forth on the virtues and the great mitzvah of observing the rules for a kosher kitchen. When he would stay in Zambrow, he would study a page of the *Gemara* with the Rabbi. Occasionally, he would assemble a coterie of young people and study with them. After the war, when Poland became independent, he became an emissary, and he would travel to raise money for the Yeshiva. He never preached in Zambrow itself.

He was a man of the people, mixing easily with the erudite and the simple folk. His two sons-in-law, Monusz Burokewicz and Yankl Pravda, were active 'strikers' in the year 1905.

Chaim Velvel Pav

He was a special kind of a preacher to the masses. He was really a man of the people, living modestly, as if he were a *Lamed-vovnik,*[97] and would comment in a rather soft manner with regard to those who did not conduct themselves in a manner that was appropriate.



Page 293: R' Chaim Velvel Pav

He was born in Ostrow-Mazowiecki, and took up residence in Jablonka, and as a young man, he studied in the Yeshivas, and knew how to learn well. However, he did not want to derive his sustenance from Torah study, and took to a trade, a hatmaker, working very hard, and often dozing off while at work, because, late into the night, he would sit and be studying from the *Gemara*. On one occasion, a large fire broke out in the *shtetl.* His house and all of his possessions were consumed. When he went up into the attic to rescue his furs, the fire enveloped the ladder. It was necessary for him to jump down, as a result of which he was all banged up, and his face was burned. The burn scars remained with him for the rest of his life.

Without a *groschen* to his name, and without bread for his children, he came to Zambrow, but was no longer able to practice his trade. He took the advice his good friend, Alter the *Maggid*, and mastered a number of sermons, because he knew how to learn, and he became a *Maggid* himself. He would travel and go from town to town, and always obtained a couple of *groschen* for his sermon. He would never 'orate' in Zambrow. When his children gave him some help, and his son, R' Louis Pav, sent him the first $25 from America, – Chaim Velvel immediately abandoned his oratory, and again began to live off of his own work: He leased an orchard with a partner, and from this, more or less, he made a living. He would lie in the orchard for the entire summer, with his *Gemara* in his hand.



Page 294: A Group of Teachers and Pupils

During the German occupation, of the First World War, he went to break stones to avoid having to approach people for charity. Everyone respected him, as a decent and good Jewish man. Shortly before the Second World War, in the year 1938, he died in Zambrow, and was privileged to be interred in the Holy Land.

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97 Derived from the Hebrew number thirty-six, given by the letters *Lamed Vov*. The reference is to a mythical thirty-six righteous, anonymous men for whose sake, it is said that God does not destroy the world because of man's wickedness.

Women of Scholarly Repute

Zambrow Women Who Possessed Scholarly Expertise in Depth

In the past couple of decades, Jewish daughters in Zambrow studied: Pentateuch, Hebrew, Yiddish, Russian, Polish, and learned to write '*Shura Gruss*' with the more skilled among them taught the writing of addresses in English, in the event that they should marry husbands that would emigrate to America, so they not be disadvantaged, and be able to write out a mailing address without recourse to an 'expert.' They were taught by special teachers, such as the 'Fly-Doctor' Nosskeh the *Melamed*, Bercheh the *Melamed*, etc. Such [sic: girl pupils] sat on separate benches, and were not intermixed with the boys. Later on, the '*Szkola*' came along: [with them] the Russian-Yiddish teachers like Swiersky, Szczynko, Friedberg, Lev, and others, who would teach girls mostly in the Russian language. Afterwards, close to the time of the First World War, and later – a modernized [sic: reformed] school came along, and the schools of Fyvel Zukrowicz, Zerakh Kagan, [Yaakov] Tobiasz, the Yiddish school of N. Smoliar, Y. Domb, Lola Gordon, the Polish *Volksschule* and others. It was here, that the Jewish daughters obtained their education.

However, in the days of yore, until the beginning of the 20th century, girls were not educated. Accordingly, it was by a miracle that there developed Jewish women who were righteous, who took upon themselves as a sacred mission, to teach girls '*Ivri,*' to read the '*Teitch-Chumash,*[98] teach then how to properly kosher meat,' to be able to recite a prayer of request to the Almighty, and to be able to participate in prayer at the women's synagogue.

I am desirous of writing about a number of these 'Educated Women,' to the extent that I can recall them, now nearly 60 years ago.

1. Chashkeh the Lady Carpenter

The first among these women was Chashkeh, the wife of Moshe'l the Carpenter, who was a tiny shrunken old Jewish lady, with weak eyes (who became blind in her old age). She knew how to read and write, and how to recite incantations to ward off the 'Evil Eye.' She knew all of the prayers of beseeching the Almighty by heart, as well as all the weekly Torah portions – as they appeared in the *Teitch-Chumash*. She would take no fee from poor girls that she taught. Her home was in the Horse Market, at the adjacent corner of the Lomza Street. In the city, she was characterized as a Righteous Woman. From time-to-time, she would walk through the streets, visiting all of the houses, with a red handkerchief in her hand – to collect small coins for charity, and the mitzvah of dowering a bride who might be poor and orphaned, or for widows, for a woman whose husband had abandoned her to go to America, or for just plain people in need – there was Chashkeh. She was always respected and donations given gracefully.

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98 Renown among Jewish literati as the Yiddish translation of the Pentateuch, also called by its Hebrew name, *Tzena u'Re'ena*.

If it happened that a woman bore a child with a great deal of difficulty, which compelled everyone to engage in the ritual of 'tearing open the graves,' that is to tear open the Holy Ark, and to compel the Master of the Universe – to bring this sick person back to health, and if it was necessary to inform a young woman of the rules pertaining to how she must now conduct her ablutions, etc. – one came to Chashkeh. She knew everything. Today, to conjure a 'good eye,' or to recite complete esoteric passages, and to then spit seven times, in order to drive a disease away – this was Chashkeh.

In her old age, she located a virtuous young girl, who was an eldest daughter, and the eldest granddaughter of an eldest daughter, to whom she transmitted her secret incantations, teaching her all the right words to say, to thwart the 'Evil Eye,' and other such stratagems.

2. Fat Baylah

'*Die Grobbeh Bayl'tseh*,' as she was called [sic: in Yiddish] , was the Director of the girl's Division of the *Heder* of Israel Chaim Fleischer – or as he was called: 'Srol Chaim of the big backside' He was my first good *Rebbe*, who taught me Hebrew, and I have much to be thankful to him, for my understanding of *Yiddishkeit*. I recall: At noontime, the girls would start to arrive in *Heder*, mostly 7-9 years of age (I was, at that time, barely 5 years old). They would mill around the door, helping the *Rebbetzin* to peel potatoes, and together carrying out the scoop pail full of peelings, and pour it out on the side street that was behind the burned down synagogue, helping to wash groats, making a herring, etc., until a tall stout Jewish lady would walk in, with a stern smile on her lips, her head covered in a colored babushka, girded around with a broad blue-checkered apron, over a brown cotton and linen or velvet skirt, with a green-stripes and a chintz flowered little blouse. She would exclaim: 'Children, go grab a bite!' and then nothing would avail. R' Israel Chaim was compelled to leave the student, in the middle of poring over the Siddur, smooth out his bunched up fringed garment, scratch his beard on the right and left, take a deeply inhaled pinch of snuff, look at the side of stout Bayl'tseh and say: 'Indeed, go grab a bite!"

When the young boys left, came the time for the girls. Israel Chaim would then sit down to eat some radishes with sour cream, a green scallion, with bread dipped in salt. A plate of potatoes and kasha – with milk, and would occasionally wash this down with red borscht, together with the keg, or with a green *shchav*, whitened wither with the yolk or the white of an egg, and in the meantime, Baylah would don her metal-rimmed glasses, and study Hebrew with the girls, holding a pointer in her hand. Later on, she would teach them how to recite a blessing. In taking the ritual portion of Challah in preparing to bake Challahs for the Sabbath, or bread, lighting candles – with the movement of her hands, showed them how to shut their eyes, and how the blessing was to be recited, etc. Not only once was she compelled to shoo me away: Go home, little boy, it is not nice to stare at girls while they are learning...

The *Rebbe* would look askance at her – that she should take account of who I was: Nachman-Yankl's grandson, and a son of the teacher...

This was something of an affront to the *Rebbe's* sister, or sister-in-law, because she would act as if she were in her own home. The girls would bring money for the new month, and occasionally a special gift: a *rogovka*, a piece of white-blue soap, sometimes small red turnips, or sometimes green '*tshiftchukh*.'

On the Sabbath, and on Festival holidays, especially on the High Holy Days – she served as a '*Zogerkeh*' in the Women's Synagogue: with a clutch of women around her, with the '*Korban-Mincha*' prayer books in hand, or the Shas supplications, repeating after her, word for word, using her melody and intonation. Mend'keh, Israel Shia-Tzaleleh's and other wags, would mimic her and tell jokes about the women who would recite after her, who didn't know what they were saying, and often making errors that were laughable. Yet, this is the way it was in many towns.

3. Henny Itkeh

Henny Itkeh was a widow, the mother of Abraham-Herschel and Shlomo Burokewicz (the father of Shmuel-Lejzor's son-in-law, the mailman during the German occupation of the First World War). She would read the portion of the week in front of the women every Saturday, after the noon hour, from *Tzena u'Re'ena*, and would add her own commentaries and stories that related to the portion. She was called 'The Lady Rabbi.' It was told that she possessed the capacity for study just like a man, and had, at one time studied the *Gemara* – something that, at that time was barely believable.... she would take no money for her learning with the women, so the women would send her gifts: a liver, a fish, a Challah, eggs and honey for the High Holy Days. She was a 'Reciter' in the White *Bet HaMedrash*. I remember how the people joked about her: 'And Noah was a righteous man for his generations,' she would translate as 'Noah was an observant man *(frumer mann)* in his generation.' The naive women would repeat, and say '*fur mann*' instead of '*frumer mann*'[sic: a wagon driver] *with* instead of *in*, his '*tzoris*' 'instead of '*doyress*.'

4. Bluma the Blind Lady

I did not know her. She lived at the Koszaren, and was blind in one eye, and she was a teacher. She was a tall Jewish lady, and healthy. She would teach girls the aleph-bet. She was a 'Reciter' in the synagogue of the *Chevra Shas*.

5. Pesha Golombek

She was the wife Monusz Golombek,[99] was totally fluent in the *Mahzor*, and knew all of the prayers of beseeching by heart. It was told that she even created her own prayers of beseeching. On Yom Kippur Eve, she would assemble the women about her, many who were indigent, in the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, and read the prayers to them. She would also got to the homes of the poor to read confession with the sick, and to give them courage, and not to be afraid: 'One does not die from making confession,' – [she would say], and the righteous recite such a confession every night

[99] See errata p. 626.

before they go to sleep. She would visit the poor women who lay ill – recite *Tehilim* and when necessary: would recite confession. 'One does not die from reciting confession' – she would raise the spirits of dying and bewildered women, the righteous recite confession every day...

The time when she shone was during the High Holy Days. The prayer hall of the Red *Bet HaMedrash* would be packed with women. They came to pour out their hearts before the Master of the Universe, and their command of Hebrew is tenuous, and they can't follow, repeating after the *Hazzan*... so she would sit herself on an elevated stool, and direct the tens of women: now, my dear children, show your hearts, we are getting ready to say *u'Nesaneh Tokef*...' You understand, of course, that she took no remuneration for this.

6. My Grandmother, Rivka Gittl

My grandmother was also an 'educated woman' according to what that meant in those days. She had her own separate shelf with her books: a *Teitch-Chumash*, with many illustrations, a *'Korban-Mincha' Siddur,* a book of prayers for beseeching, *Mahzors* containing translations from Hebrew [sic: into Yiddish], booklets containing blessings for after meals, books on Mussar in Yiddish, a calendar with candle-lighting times, a '*Ma'aneh Lashon*,' etc. Women would be constantly coming to her with questions about the appropriate action and what should be prepared for the 'First Seder,' and what for the 'Other Seder,' what should be included in the *Cholent* for '*Shabbat Shira*,' or '*Shabbat HaGadol*,' which may have come out on the eve of Passover itself. I remember very well, her 'cultural work' among the women, after the Saturday afternoon nap, during the day, and especially at *Tisha b'Av* at night. In the summer months, on Saturday after the nap, the lady neighbors would come to my grandmother, her daughter, and daughter-in-law, to recite '*Perek*'[100] with Yiddish translation from the Hebrew, and to read the weekly portion in *Tzena u'Re'ena*. My grandmother would serve Jalowcowe Beer as a refreshment, which she would make herself, or with a drink of cold water, which one of her sons, or grandsons would bring from the brook. An elderly woman would come to my grandmother every Friday, would smear her head full of a mild soap, and shave her entire head with a straight razor. Immediately afterwards, she would don her Sabbath wig, woven from nice black hair, adorned with pins, that were decorated with colored beads and flowers. Dressed in a black silk dress, with jewelry around her neck, on her breast and hands (part of her gold jewelry is under my care to this day), with a thin, woven Turkish shawl thrown about her shoulders, she would sit, with her feet on a footstool, and read to the women – from the portion of the week, or the appropriate section of *Perek* for that Sabbath.

On the night of *Tisha b'Av*, she 'observed mourning the destruction [of the Temple]:' Sitting on kerchiefs, spread out on the floor, women would listen to how my grandmother would read from the Book of Lamentations in her *Teitch-Chumash*. In the house – it was dark, except by my grandmother's side there stood a brass candlestick (the Sabbath candlesticks were silver) with a large candle in it. My grandmother is reading, and the women weep and wail over the destruction [of the Temple]...

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[100] A short name for *Pirkei Avot*, The Ethics of the Fathers.

Once, on *Shabbat Shuva,*[101] after reading the *Haftarah* in Yiddish, my grandmother said a few words about the Day of Judgment which was drawing nigh, and the need to engage in repentance. Suddenly, she sang out:

HaYom, HaYom HaYom,[102] *vos helft dir dyn gevayn,* Today, today, today, what good is your weeping,
Az der Boyreh Oylem ruft, mooz men dokh gayn... If the Creator of the World beckons, one must go...

This ditty, with its melody, echoes in my ears to this day....

7. Chaya Zukrowicz

She was the widow of Nahum-Leib Zukrowicz, who was the uncle of Yankl and Meir Zukrowicz, and father to the teacher Fyvel Zukrowicz. She was a clever, witty woman, who would make sport of the *balebatim*, and unlettered people, who tried to pass themselves off as scholars. On the little bridge, before nightfall on Friday, she would tell stories abut the righteous, and by contrast, about devils and spirits. She would serve as the master of ceremonies at large weddings. No one made a move without her. She would put together the menu, and where to have the reception, where the groom should stand, and where the bride should sit during the *badeken*, etc. She knew all the little details and would also serve as a Reciter in the women's synagogue of the White *Bet HaMedrash*. She would laugh at the women who had no facility with Hebrew, and all they could do was repeat.

She was an alert woman, loving to tell stories and jokes, and would prepare menus for lavish weddings, and would recite prayers and beseeching verses before the women. Not once, would I subsequently overhear her joking with a Polish woman about how she would deliberately make errors and switch around lines in the prayer text. She once told the story of how a certain woman, wanting to demonstrate her fluency in prayer in reciting before the women, began the introduction to the '*Shema*' as *'El Melekh...*' and continued with '*Katckeh Drelekh*' – which is nothing more than a child's song.

8. Women Who Received a Pension

Every Thursday, Shifra, the elderly wife of the *Hazzan*, would receive the 'leavings' from the slaughter, a portion of the cartilage and fat of the gut – as a pension, because her husband, Pinchas the *Hazzan* and *Shokhet*, died before his time. She would bring this fat to her granddaughter, 'Chana the Busy Body' – Broder, and both of them would cut up onions, melt the

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101 The Sabbath between *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur*.

102 A play on the word *HaYom*, which is the start of the concluding prayer of the High Holy Day Musaf Service.

fat [mix it together,] and sell it. She made a living from this, because the community was not able to pay her a special pension (see above p. 286).

A second one was Malkunyeh. She was a heavy-set woman, with perpetually red and sickly eyes. Her husband was 'Abraham Berl Klinn,' the village idiot. She was well-regarded by the women, a member of the *Chevra Kadisha*, and at one time, she was a functionary at the *Mikva*. She, or her former husband, had some kind of relationship with the butchers, and they would always give her the stomach and tripe at no cost, or at a nominally low price. So she would go to the river to wash the tripe and temporarily dirty up all of the water. The boys who would go there to swim, would curse her for this, and sing after her:

Malkunyeh with the lungs
Jumped into the garden...

One time, when I was learning at Bercheh [i.e. Sokol, the *Melamed*], who had his *Heder* near Yossl the Oil Maker at the edge of the river, we planned to accost her, and insist that she wash the tripe at the pond near Pfeiffer's burned out mill. Well, Bercheh the teacher butted in, and it became evident that she was a relative of his, his aunt's daughter, or a sister-in-law...

9. Malka Cymbel

She was a fiery sort of Jewish woman, whose husband was a porter for the Rothberg family, if I am not mistaken. She was a happy sort of woman, and would cheer up the men and women at weddings and other happy occasions, singing folk songs, reciting jokes, etc. It was told that once, when she was younger, she would dance at weddings and sing with a cymbal in hand, like Miriam the Prophetess had done, when the children of Israel had crossed the Red Sea, and for this reason she was called Malka 'Cymbel.' She had talented sons, one like the other: Elyeh, Abraham'keh and Itzl. Abraham'keh was the Zambrow songbird, singing for the *Hazzan*, and would sing beautifully along the promenade on the evenings when folk songs were sung.

10. Shayna Mindl

She was the oldest daughter-in-law of Israel David *Shammes*. Her husband, Herschel, was a Jewish man of scholarly repute. He went off to America, and caused his wife to wait for a long number of years. Together with her gifted daughter, Chana-Gittl (her husband was also in America), she made a living by selling illegal whiskey (*Okwiat*). After prayers (she lived across the street from the synagogue), the Jews would stop in at her place for a quick snort and a bite of egg *kichel* or a piece of sugar. Not only once, did the police come to perform a search to find whiskey. However, she was a very clever woman (she came from Goworowo), and when the police would discover that she had a flask of liquor, she would pour out large glasses of the stuff, set it up in front of these officers and say: good, first drink, and freshen yourselves up, afterwards, you can carry out your procedures.... and so they would drink themselves full, wipe off their moustaches, and go away.

On one occasion, a new, and unfamiliar police guard came along, so she grabbed the flask of whiskey and said: see what is here – this is after all only water – and pours it all out right in front of his eyes... and so he became verbally abusive for these 'Jew tricks' and was unable to do anything...

She was a wit, and would tell spicy jokes for men from time to time, and would order the children to leave in those cases. She read 'modern day books,' and was thoroughly conversant with the novels of Schamer and Blastein, always being cheerful and full of humor.

During Passover, Jewish soldiers would always get together and eat a good holiday meal at her place, and the house would be gay, and people from all over the city would come to stand under the windows, to hear the singing and small talk. She died in America.

Scribes

By Eliezer Pav

Zambrow also had its own scribes. The creation of a Torah scroll was usually done in some other large city. However, smaller tasks, such as Torah scroll repair, preparing a set of phylacteries, a *mezuzah* – this would be done locally, in the city here. We had an elderly scribe, a diminutive Jewish man – Zelikl the Scribe. He derived insufficient income from this, and accordingly sought a different craft: he would make cotton blankets, together with his wife. He had an only son – Isaac who was called *Meizl*. He wasn't very capable, with crooked feet, and he was a conversation piece in the city.

Fishl was a second scribe. He was somewhat hard of hearing, middling height and broad-boned. He was a good scribe, and worked out the formats personally: he bought leather from a kosher animal, personally scratched off the fur, straightened it, whitened it and powdered it, and afterwards, wrote on it.

When economic conditions worsened, he opened a private little library, and would deal in modern Hebrew and Yiddish books. He would astonish everyone with his knowledge of books, and their authors. One could get a good book to read from him at a cost of a kopeck a week, and he would always consult with Benjamin Cohen, who was the principal representative of the books put out by 'Toshia.'

R' Fishl was the last scribe in the city. After him, no scribe was able to find a way to make a living in the city. Accordingly, *mezuzahs,* phylacteries, and handwritten Torah scrolls were purchased from outside sources...

Education & Culture

חינוך ותרבות

דערציונג און קולטור



Page 304: The Long-Serving Rebbe and Teacher, Bercheh Sokol, with Pupils

Yeshiva

Zambrow supported a Yeshiva for all its years. This means: it was concerned to assure that older boys, who wish to continue their studies beyond *Heder,* will be afforded the opportunity to sit and learn. Good Jews, for the most part, craftsmen, would see to it that all the Yeshiva boys from outside of the city would be allocated 'days' to take their meals, free lodging, and also looked after assuring that the various headmasters received their wages. When the Lomza Yeshiva was founded as an institute of higher learning for Talmud, its leadership decided that it would found small Yeshivas in the smaller towns such as Makow, Zambrow, Ostrowa, Stawiski, etc. – that would prepare students for the more advanced Yeshiva at Lomza. The Yeshiva at Zambrow was counted as one of the best, and even received support from Lomza.

After the fire, R' Yehuda Adaszko was Headmaster (he was killed by a lightning bolt), and then R' Yehoshua Gorzholczany. The Rabbi directed the Yeshiva and concerned himself for its survival, and under him – the entire city... among the first of the Inspectors, who provided oversight of the curriculum, and how the young students were being directed, was R' Moshe-Michael, the son-in-law of Shmuel the Butcher: a tall and stern Jewish man, who limped on one foot, and before whose walking stick the young little boys cringed. He would also run a lesson. A second such Inspector was R' Moshe Yaakov Slodek from Wyszków, etc.

In the year 1916, during the German occupation, the Rabbi's son-in-law, R' Aharon Yaakov Klepfish, returned from Slonim, where, for a period of time, he had served as a Yeshiva Headmaster. Together, with his brother-in-law, R' Chaim-David, he planned to open a large Yeshiva, and make Zambrow a center for Torah study. At that time, the Lomza Yeshiva was in distress. The leader, R' Lejzor, and his sons-in-law, went off to Russia by way of Semiatice, and remained there. The sources of money were tapped out, and the severe years of hunger tore away many young boys from pursuing learning. It would be somewhat easier to support a Yeshiva in a small *shtetl.* And indeed, in Radun, Volozhin, Novardok, Telz – you had small towns with large Yeshivas. As an Inspector, they attracted to themselves the son of the Inspector of the Slobodka Yeshiva, R' Shmuel Finkel, who by luck, happened to be located in Lomza. Accordingly, Zambrow became a locus for Torah study. Apart from the children of Zambrow, talented children from all of the surrounding towns came, even from [as far away as] Bialystok, and among them, a few scholars who could not travel back to the Lithuanian Yeshivas. In time, additional resources arrived, such as the son-in-law of the Rabbi of Wizna, Rabbi R' Yehuda. A scholar from Bialystok, R' Eisenstadt, and others. All of the Zambrow *balebatim* and craftsmen donated 'days' and also paid in a weekly stipend. R' Shammai-Lejzor became an emissary and traveled to gather funds for the yeshiva from other cities.

During the time of Polish sovereignty, the Yeshiva again was sapped of its strength: part of the students went off to the military, or had to emigrate, R' Aharon-Yaakov became the Rabbi in Sniadowo, R' Chaim-David married the daughter of the Rabbi of Lomza, and the Yeshiva nearly fell apart.

The Rabbi and the *balebatim*, such as Meir Zukrowicz, Abraham Shlomo Dzenchill, Leibl Rosing, etc., did not rest, and they restored a small Yeshiva. The Rabbi and R' Yehoshua gave lessons, and R' Yankl-David the Shoemaker, the son of the shoemaker from Gać, stood at the head of those who looked after arranging 'days' and lodging for the young scholars. The Yeshiva existed until the city went under (see above, page 218).

Heders

As was the case in all other small towns, there existed in Zambrow, three types of schools for children:

1. The *Heder* – Run by *Melamdim*.
2. The *Heder Metukan* – The reformed *Heder*, which served as a transition to the third sort of educational institution:
3. The School

Of the *Heders,* let us here recollect the three of the outstanding *Heders* which were close to me: [sic: those of] Bercheh Sokol, Fishl Danielewicz, and Yehoshua Gorzholczany.

There were many *Melamdim* in the *shtetl,* whose names continue to reverberate in my ear to this day, such as Chaim Reuven the elementary level teacher, Israel Chaim Fleischer with his son, Pesach the *Melamed*, Elyeh the *Melamed*, Shimon the *Melamed*, Pinia, Shepsl Kwiatek, Motya's son-in-law – Mendl Olsha, *'Tzenerl'* the *Melamed*, Abba-Leib, Chaim *Melamed*, Avi-Ezer, Lipman, Fyvel Branever. Itzeleh Abraham'l the *Melamed* from Kolowo, the one from Jablonka, Khamiszoszka's son-in-law, Herschel Kooker, Chaim Hirsch Tzinowicz (a *Gemara Melamed*), Shlomo Tzinowicz – his son. Meir Fyvel, Abraham Moshe, and others.

However, the previously mentioned were the best in the city.



Page 307: R' Yehoshua Gorzholczany (Marmari)

Bercheh Sokol,[103] a short person with a broad back, was the son of a prominent Jewish man, who held the office of the gentry house, and was a *Kohen*, and because of this, was called 'The High Priest.' Bercheh was a smart man, and a first class pedagogue, even though he would hit the children (he was a *Kohen*, with a bad temper...). He always had a large *Heder*, of up to 60 children, of various ages. He would divide them up so that the older and better students would learn with the younger ones, and quiz them, so that Bercheh himself would just maintain control and oversight. These 'assistants' would keep track of which lines the students did

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103 There is a single reference in the text that identifies this venerated teacher by a more formal name, that of Dov 'Bercheh' Sokol. This is a slightly diminutive form of Dov Ber Sokol, the proper formal name. Throughout the text, he is referred to by his diminutive Yiddish name of Bercheh. We retain this reference out of respect for the individual and his community.

not know, on a note, which they would turn over to Bercheh, and afterwards, he would quiz them on exactly those sentence. Despite the fact that he did not teach Hebrew in Hebrew (*Ivrit b'Ivrit*), his students knew the *Tanakh* and Hebrew well. They wrote compositions in Hebrew, descriptions, letters, etc. He subscribed to a weekly paper: '*Olam Katan*,' and afterward '*HaChaim v'HaTeva*,' '*Perakhim*,' and others. He organized a small library in the Heder, and every Friday, each student would receive a book to read at home. He also taught song and sport. At his place, young boys and girls studied together. In the summertime, the children would enjoy the benefit of fresh air, by going outside to study, or conduct a stroll in the forest, and not only on *Lag B'Omer*. He would go with the children to swim in the river, would do gymnastics, etc. Religious parents would not send their children to be taught by him.


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Page 308: Invitation to the Memorial Meeting for the Late R' Bercheh Sokol

Bercheh was not any kind of observant individual, and would involve himself in partisan politics, and was a socialist, once was a *Bundist*,' and in his last years, a member of '*Poalei Tzion*.' His student knew the *Poalei Tzion* 'Oath' by heart, in both Yiddish and Hebrew. As far back as 1905, he had organized evening courses for male and female working people, and was a Yiddishist more than an Hebraist. He was a Melamed for over thirty years, until he went over to America, to his children: Ruvkeh, Myshkeh, Shimon, and a daughter, approximately in the year 1918. There, his children set him up in an Old Age Home, and he lived there to the marvelous old age of 100. He passed away in 1961, and his New York *landsleit* accorded him great honor.

Fishl the Melamed

Fishl the *Melamed*[104] came from Sniadowo, married Zissl in Zambrow, who was a sister of Yirmiyahu Syeta. He was a good Hebraist, and earned a reputation as an outstanding pedagogue. He taught *Tanakh* and Gemara. He taught a great deal of Hebrew, and loved to read every day, in class, in front of the students, chapters from the Hebrew literature. He read stories from 'Memories of the House of David,' and would excite the imagination of the students, and encourage them to do independent reading. He taught the laws and customs from the abridged '*Shulkhan Arukh*' for students, prepared by Rabbi Y. B. Lavner (the editor of '*Perakhim*' and the editor of the book 'All the Folklore of Israel.'). He was disinclined to take on many students, as did Bercheh Sokol. Fishl the *Melamed* came from Sniadowo, married Zissl in Zambrow, who He had two classes, which he would integrate frequently. He gave his students a very impressive national education. He was a genteel man, of mild manner, a Zionist and a lover of the Hebrew language. He

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104 Formally, Yerukham Fishl Danielewicz.

was one of the first Zionists of the *shtetl.* When *Keren Kayemet L'Israel* was established in 1902, and before the blue boxes reached Zambrow – Fishl the *Melamed* pre-empted the process, and together with is friend and comrade, Rabbi Israel Levinsky, ordered 100 boxes from Leibusz the metalworker on their own account, with the Star of David etched on them, and they distributed them among the Zionist households, going so far as to nail them on doors, as charity collection boxes, until the official blue boxes reached us from Berlin, a year later.



Page 309: R' Fishl Danielewicz

In his old age, he went to America, to his children, after spending about forty years in the inculcation of Torah in Zambrow. His eldest son Peretz is a Rabbi in New York.

R' Yehoshua (Yeshea) Gorzholczany

A pleasant Jewish man, with a black beard and black piercing eyes, a son of Herschel *Czeszliar* – an alert man, full of zest. This Yehoshua taught only *Gemara*, and at infrequent intervals, also *Tanakh*.. From time-to-time, he served as a Headmaster at a small Yeshiva. His students had no difficulty in gaining admission to the Yeshiva at Lomza.

An intelligent and fine-looking Jewish man, he was well-loved in the city, was both a *Dozor* and a Vice-Burgomaster for a time. He spoke Polish beautifully, and a bit of Russian. He had some knowledge of medicine, and even permitted himself the freedom to write 'prescriptions,' and visit sick people just like a doctor – understandably, without charging a fee. Women would come to him for blessings, and incantations to ward off plagues – as if they were coming to some Holy Man, and Rabbi. During the partisan struggle in Zambrow, R' Yehoshua sided with '*Agudat Israel*,' and even expressed his ardor for it.



Page 310: All that Remains of the Jewish Community, of Blessed Memory, in Jablonka

He made *aliyah* in 1936, from Kirov, and settled in Petakh-Tikva. There, again, he earned his reputation and the affection of the *Haredim* and the scholars. He would teach a 'page' of *Gemara* to the *balebatim* and even continued to give a lesson at the Lomza Yeshiva Branch of Petakh-Tikva. He died in Petakh-Tikva, in Israel, in the year 1959, and was extensively honored at his passing. He was eulogized by Rabbi Katz, R' Yekhiel Gordon – the Headmaster of the Lomza Yeshiva Branch of Petakh-Tikva, and others.

Struck by a Thunder Bolt

By Israel Levinsky

On the early evening of a summer Friday, a consultation took place between four teachers and myself, at the home of the *Gemara Melamed* R' Yehuda Adaszko: R' Yehuda, Yeshea [sic: Yehoshua] Gorzholczany, Yerukham Fishl Danielewicz, and Dov 'Bercheh' Sokol. They decided that I should study Russian and arithmetic in their *Heders* – instead of being instructed by the municipal Russian teacher, Szczinka. Coming home, it suddenly became dark: a downpour ensued, accompanied by loud thunder and terrifying lightning. A loud clap of thunder, accompanied by a frightening bolt of lightning, elicited a shudder from the entire town. It then became apparent that R' Yehuda had been struck – together with his son. R' Yehuda was standing on a table and was pouring oil into the hanging lamp – and the lightning bolt passed through the wire and entered R' Yehuda's body. The son was saved – but R' Yehuda was dead. All manner of things were tried [to revive him] but to no avail. A gentile advised that he should be buried in a standing position, and to surround him with ewers of sour milk. Accordingly, on Friday, towards nightfall, a pit was dug. With the consent of the Rabbi, and for the entire Sabbath, containers of sour milk were set out – *Tehillim* was recited without interruption – and none of this helped.



Page 312: A Group of Yeshiva Scholars in Zambrow
From the Right: Zvi Ben-Joseph, Berl Paciner ז"ל, Menachem Wismonsky, and Shmuel, son of Rabbi Klepfish

The Holy Sabbath had already been disrupted in the *shtetl.* Traditional songs were not being sung. For the entire night, everyone stood at the pit that had been dug out and recited *Tehillim*. Two Jewish men were sent to Lomza to fetch a doctor, a specialist – but he was not effective... On Saturday night, he was taken out of the pit, the right thing was done by him, and a substantial funeral was arranged for him on Sunday, which included many eulogies.

Before the funeral, the teachers decided among themselves how to deal with the sustenance of the unfortunate [surviving] family. It was decided that the widow would receive her share of the tuition paid by the students that the teachers would earn, in taking the place of her husband. A specified sum

of money was added to this, and many of the respected women of the town assumed the obligation to buy their necessities from the widow, in the store that she would open.

The funeral was attended by a large throng. The crying and wailing of the bereaved were heart-rending. His friends eulogized him, and his grave site was considered one of the important ones in the town.

R' Meir Fyvel Melamed

By Chaim Bendor

I was five years old when I arrived to learn at [the *Heder* of] R' Meir Fyvel Zarembsky, the *Melamed*. Before that, I had studied with Herschel the *Melamed*.

It was a small *Heder*, with a low tuition fee. The breadwinner was his wife, Szprinza, who would bake honey cake and cookies, a lot of which she sold to children for small coins. On Friday nights, she would bank the fires in her oven, and take in the pots of *cholent* from the town to be kept warm. Immediately after Purim, the *Heder* room became transformed into a Matzo bakery. We, the children, helped the Rabbi oversee the *Kashrut,* and would sometimes be 'flour shakers' and 'water pourers.'

His eldest, and only son, Alter, was a culture activist in town, but sickly, suffering from tuberculosis. There is no doubt that this is the reason why he never married. He died during the First World War from his illness. I can still see in my mind's eye, and hear in my ears, the bitter 'weeping' of all the family members, when this beloved son was taken into the Russian army, despite his ailment, but was immediately discharged.



Page 314: Chaim ben David [Chaim Bendor] (center) To his Right, Baumkuler, and To his Left, Yekhiel Pravda

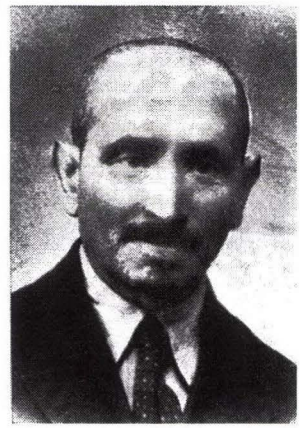
The *Rebbe,* Meir Fyvel, was constantly in good humor, with a smile on his lips, having no complaints to tender to anyone, despite the fact that he had no small amount of family troubles. Apart from his three daughters, he raised two other orphan girls, and held them as if they were his own children. He was a Ger *Hasid.* He would lead services from the pulpit, he would call worshipers up to the Torah reading, would allocate *Hakafot*, and his fiery festive voice would bring in light and joy to everyone.

About ten years ago, I undertook a trip, with a daughter of Zambrow, to visit other *landsleit*. On the way, we talked about the past personalities of the town who were no longer with us. How elated I was to encounter in the 'subway' two ladies from Zambrow, my teacher, Meir Fyvel's daughters...The elder of the two, widowed and without family, lived with the younger and her family.

This encounter made an extraordinary impression on me. Since that time, I have met with them more times, and concluded that they were in fact going in their father's ways, and display his good traits.

R' Israel Levinsky

He was born in the village of Kozhidlo, near Ostrolenka, in the year 1871. He studied at the Lomza Yeshiva, and from there, went off to the Lithuanian Yeshivas in Skidel, Orany, and came to Vilna, against the will of his parents – because they feared that in Vilna, he would become 'spoiled.'



Page 315: R' Israel Levinsky

He befriended a poor Yeshiva student, Chaim Helfant, who later on became renown as the leader of the *Bund*. Levinsky was eager for a general education and did not content himself with the *Gemara*. Like other Yeshiva students without means, he would go to the municipal gymnasium, wait for when the gymnasium students would be going home, and try to spot a Jewish student in their ranks, to consummate a friendship, and ask for 'help' – that he, or one of his friends, teach him Russian...

In this manner, he acquired the education of six classes of gymnasium in the span of two years.

He married in Zambrow and became a prominent citizen. Here is how he describes, in his memoir 'Thorns and Flowers,' how he became a teacher (see below):

He was one of the most active of the Zionist workers, one of the first who carried on with the work of *Keren Kayemet*, of selling shares in the Jewish Colonial Bank, and shepherded the introduction of the teaching of Hebrew in many of the Heders, and undertook leadership in the culture circles for the young people. In 1905, he drew closer to the work of the socialists, and believed that a socialist Russia would give the Jews rights, and their freedom.

In 1909, he was engaged by Jedwabne to establish a Hebrew school there. As a good pedagogue and organizer, it was possible for him to establish this school and place it on a high level. However, the authorities did not grant him permission to be the director for the school, because the teachers there informed on him, accusing him of being a revolutionary. He was compelled to leave Jedwabne. A year later, he established such a school in Lomza, called '*Torah VoDa'ath*' and stays at its helm for 25 years, until 1935, when he turned it over to his comrades, and made *aliyah* to the Land of Israel. In Lomza, he was also active in the area of national education, and in working tirelessly for *Keren Kayemet, HeHalutz*, and other Zionist endeavors, and was in the leadership of those caring for orphans, also a *Gabbai* of the Great Synagogue, etc.

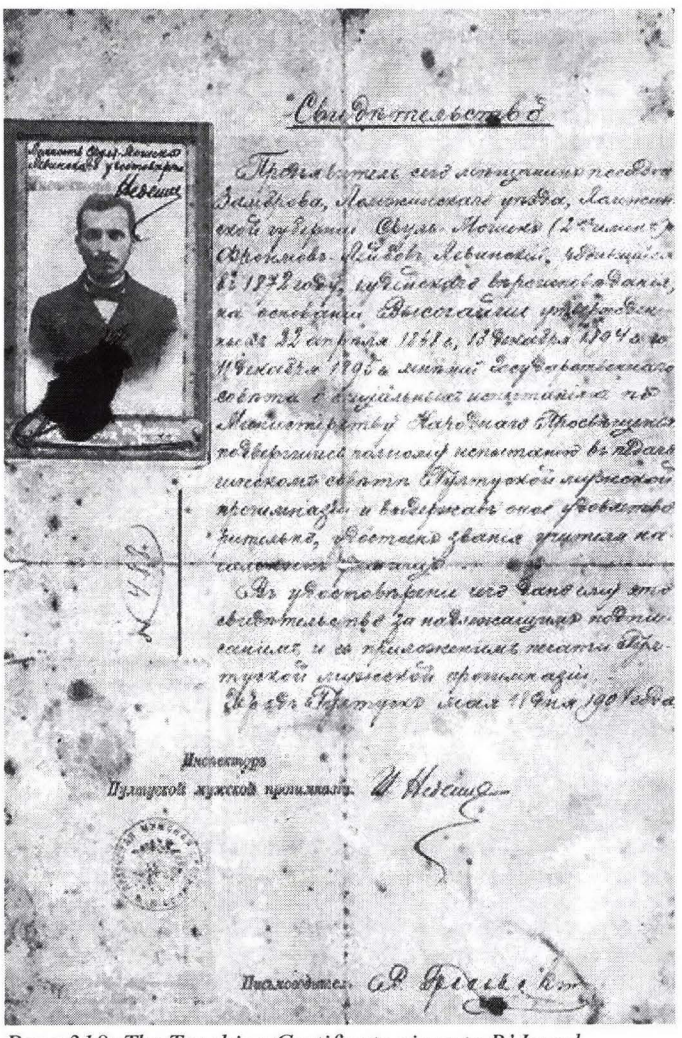
In Israel, he was the Honorary Chairman of the Lomza Society, devoting himself to literature, translating a number of scientific works in astronomy. He published more memoirs and children's stories in the literature for the young, and in journals, and lastly, produced a story, 'Gideon Travels to Cyprus' – which enjoyed a great deal of success. He was lucid up to the last moment, reading, and taking an interest in everything that had a bearing on his people and humanity at large. He was survived by three sons and one daughter in Israel. His last son, Yitzhak, was drowned in the Bug [River] in the year 1934, during an autobus accident. His son, Meir, who was an active member in *HeHalutz*, died in Israel.

From My Diary

By R' Israel Levinsky

(From His Book, 'Thorns and Flowers')

After being discharged from the Russian military in Moscow, I returned home, to my parents, in the village of Kadzidło, which lies between Myszyniec and Ostrolenka. I very strongly wanted to travel back to Vilna, and advance my general education as far as the university. However, my parents stubbornly resisted: A young man, discharged from the military, must get married... and so, I was compelled to accept their proposal. I was married in Zambrow.



My father-in-law, R' Nachman Yankl Rothberg, the owner of wagons, promised me support to whatever extent I wanted. Accordingly, I took to study. My wife, Tzipa-Rachel, a beautiful woman, and also educated – in accordance with the sense of this term in those times, could read and write Yiddish, read Russian and Polish (only the alphabet), knew a bit of arithmetic, agreed with my course of action. I obtained a good comrade with whom to learn: Benjamin Tenenbaum, son of Hona, and Mashkeh, the owner of the carriages. He was capable, and knew how to learn languages, and was prepared to graduate according to Russian standards. He had no friends in the Zambrow of that time, so we studied together.

The first Great Fire broke out, and my house, along with the houses owned by my father-

Page 318: The Teaching Certificate given to R' Israel Levinsky by the Russian Pro-Gymnasium in Pultusk, in the year 1901.

in-law were burned down, and I had to seek some way to make a living. I cashed in my wedding endowment, which was on deposit in Lomza, earning interest – and loaned it out to my father-in-law, to enable him to build himself back up.

As good fortune would have it, a wealthy Jew came to Zambrow, Yankelewsky, who was a building contractor for roads and bridges for the government. His daughter was a daughter-in-law to Grajewsky the Miller. He was looking for a teacher for his three sons, in Vonkhotsk, of the Radom Province, and I had been recommended there for this position. I became a teacher, a profession that I never left.

The Heder Metukan of Fyvel Zukrowicz

The desire to give a Jewish child a traditional Jewish education, and along the way, also inculcate general knowledge, and the central point: a knowledge of the Hebrew language, and general Jewish history – gave birth to the '*Heder Metukan*,' which did not evolve out of the traditional *Heder*, and the more formal schools had not yet attained.



Page 319: R' Fyvel Zukrowicz

The concept of the *Heder Metukan* was an attempt to reform the [classic] *Heder*, and raise it to the level of a *Volksschule*. In addition to learning Hebrew there, as well as Pentateuch with *Rashi* commentaries, arithmetic, history, geography, *Tanakh* and Hebrew, were also taught, along with the language of the country, etc. Fyvel Zukrowicz opened such a *Heder*, approximately in the year 1911. His *Heder* developed a little at a time, and later on became a religious Jewish *Volksschule*. He was a well-informed man in many fields, (educated at the higher Yeshivas in Lithuania), and in general *Haskalah*. He was influential among the enlightened circles in the city, and was redolent with a love of Zion.

Fyvel Zukrowicz instituted a Zionist leaning in his school, despite the fact that the fanatically religious were opposed to it. For many years, his school was a bastion of Zionism, and a place for support of *Keren Kayemet*, a place where Zionist committees met, and a place for worship by Zionists on the Sabbath and Festival days, which had moved over there from the home of Shlomo Blumrosen, and became a center of all manner of national endeavor.

He surrounded himself with good teachers from the local intelligentsia, and from there, he spread the use of the living Hebrew language into the city.

R' Zerakh Kagan opened a second *Heder Metukan*, the son-in-law of Meiram and Miriam the 'Wig Maker' (Bursztein). Kagan instituted the teaching of Hebrew as the appropriate means of oral communication, and was punctilious in his observation of correct grammar.

The two assistants to Fyvel Zukrowicz, Shmulkeh Golombek, and Berl Kawior (the husband of Rachel, the daughter of Mikhul'keh Finkelstein) from Sniadowo, later on opened their own schools of this kind in Zambrow.

In 1923, in Kirov, the *Heder Metukan* of Mr. [Yaakov] Tobiasz of Novgorod was added. Tobiasz was active in the *Tze'irei Tzion* movement, one of the leading activists of the burgeoning Hebrew culture, and was a man of considerable influence in literary circles, and an intensely loved and respected teacher.

As regards the teacher Zukrowicz, his son, Chaim (a member of *kibbutz* '*Ramat HaKoveysh*') tells:

My father was the youngest son of Nahum and Chaya, who were among the Enlightened folk of the city, and of the venerable educators of the prior generation. They raised a generation of scholars, of study, education, and set hundreds of students on the path of the study of Torah, knowledge, Judaism and personal character. He received his education in the Yeshivas of Lithuania. There, he 'strayed' and began assiduously to study the Hebrew language, its literature, the national language, and general [sic: secular] knowledge. He opened the *Heder Metukan* in Zambrow in 1910, in Kirov. He was subverted by fierce opposition from the Rabbi and several of the fanatic *balebatim*. The fanatics ripped off the notices from the walls of the synagogues, that announced the establishment of his school, doing so, even on a Festival holiday. And as soon as he opened the school, the foundations of the building were damaged. The Rabbi and the fanatics threatened the parents who would send their children, to a place like this, with excommunication. However, he was not intimidated by them. His approach to education, his attitude towards the children, and the Torah that he taught them, helped him develop an admirable reputation in the city, and his school was always full of students, with no vacancies. He was a teacher and educator to parents [as well]. By being an ardent Zionist, being active and a worker in the *Hovevei Tzion* movement, he would speak from time-to-time, at Zionist gatherings in the city, that took place, as you can appreciate, in secret – out of the malign view of the constabulary. He instilled his ardor for Zionism in his students, and over time, many of them made *aliyah* to the Land of Israel, as *Halutzim*, and pioneers. He gave his students a national [sic: sectarian] education, teaching them to walk erect, with a straight back, and to take pride in their Jewishness. He also conducted plays and sport at the school, and supplemented them with promenades during the summer months, to the surrounding forests, Wondolk, Czyczurok, and even to Czorny Bor. And the students would frequently lead such walks with a blue and white flag at its head. On one occasion, a policeman wanted to seize the flag and tear it up, but Zukrowicz took the flag out of the boy's hands and did not permit the policeman to touch him. Because of this, he was taken to court, and paid a fine of several zlotys, for disobedience, and resistance shown to a policeman. He paid the fine willingly, but didn't let the policeman touch our national flag.

Every important event in the Jewish world, and especially the Zionist world, and in the Land of Israel, was recognized, and recorded in his school. On the day of the Balfour Declaration, he hung a large sign in school, proclaiming 'Come, awaken, for your light has arrived,' and on the day that the [sic: Hebrew] University opened in Jerusalem, he drew a huge sign saying: 'For from Zion the Torah Shall Come Forth.'

During the Sabbath and Festival days, his school served as a gathering place, in which the Zionists entered to worship, in their own special *minyan*. They spoke Hebrew among themselves, donating to *Keren Kayemet* if they were called to the Torah, or to *Keren HaYesod*, *HeHalutz*, and like causes.

How his heart was pained, when in the second half of the 1930's, he saw the spiritual decline among the ranks of the young. The general Polish school, the '*Szkola Powszecna*' sunk its talons deeply into the young people, and even a Polish gymnasium came into being in the city. These non-Jewish schools [ironically] became filled with Jewish students, from the ranks of the *balebatim*. The students there, attended class even on the Sabbath, and in doing so, not only desecrated the sanctity of the day, but any number of them grew apart from the Jewish experience, and for this reason, he soul silently wept. In the last years before the Holocaust, his school declined, together with the rest of these Jewish schools in the city. Many parents adopted the custom of sending their children from their early childhood training directly to the Polish school, and retained a *Melamed* at home, for several hours a week, to teach them Pentateuch with *Rashi* commentaries, and a little bit of *Gemara.*

At that time, my father was preparing to shut his school down, and make *aliyah*, in order to realize there all of his dreams, from early on, and that he cherished forever. However, he delayed the schedule. On 27 Av 5699 (August 12, 1939), he passed away – after having served as an educator in Zambrow for about thirty years. He was privileged to see his two daughters, and son Chaim, the writer of these lines, make *aliyah* and settle in the Holy Land.

A Teacher and Educator

By Yaakov Tobiasz
(Tzfat)

(Memories)



Page 322: The School of Fyvel Zukrowicz
In the middle, seated, are the teachers, Sh. Golombek, F. Zukrowicz, and Yehoshua Domb

I have faint recollections about Zambrow from my early childhood – but it was only in 1915, we arrived in Zambrow, being homeless, after the expulsion from Novgorod, where I was born, by the Russian army, at the peak of the First World War. Since that time, I have tied my life to

Zambrow. We took up residence on the *Uczastek*. I studied *Gemara* with the Kolno Teacher and Director, R' Yaakov-Avigdor Brizman, also homeless (later on the Rabbi of Jedwabne). He once introduced me to the Zambrow Rabbi, R' Regensberg ז"ל, who gave me a pinch on the cheek, and wished me: that I not be ruined [sic: lose your way into secular culture]. I began to investigate the contents of Enlightenment books. One neighbor, a Russian surveyor, began to teach me arithmetic, and 'Khezki Mark, our neighbor who was a student, drew me nearer to the Enlightenment literature. My father died that very year, during the intermediate days Passover, in the Zambrow military hospital. The Kolno Rabbi and Director came to comfort us as the bereaved. I gave myself over to the study of the Talmud at the *Bet HaMedrash*, and even established a chapter of the youth group '*Tiferet Bakhurim*' there – as a teaching guide for group study, and to maintain oversight of the books: their order, binding, and even acquisition.



Page 324: (Top): A Class in Public School with Teacher Lola Gordon

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Page 324: (Bottom) A Class in Public School

It was first only six years later, in 1921, that I returned as a teacher and director of a Hebrew school. I was recommended by the *balebatim*: Menachem Dunowicz, Avcheh Frumkin, and Israel Kossowsky, as well as the members of *Tze'irei Tzion*,

whom I knew from my time in the area, such as David Rosenthal, Yaakov Jabkowsky, who persuaded me to come to Zambrow. The Rabbi's 'Cossacks' fought me vigorously. The owner of my school building, Pravda, became frightened, and wanted to break the contract with me. However, the *balebatim* stood up for me, parents of my students such as: Fyvel Rosenthal, Leibl Karlinsky, and others, At first, only boys were students, the girls going to the local Polish government school, but little-by-little, the girls also captured a place on the benches. My school earned a good name, with its curriculum, presentations, children evenings, trips, a children's journal, a children's library, etc. he children loved me a great deal.



Page 323: *Yaakov Tobiasz with his pupils*

On *Shavuot*, in 1922, when my mother came to me for a visit – she suddenly died. This upset me terribly. She was buried in Zambrow, beside my father – and this tied me to the city forever. As a mourner, I would lead services in the White *Bet HaMedrash*. One time, when the Rabbi returned, extremely agitated with zealotry, from the *Agudat Israel* conference in Vienna, he communicated an order from the conference, suddenly, between afternoon and evening services at the White *Bet HaMedrash*, bursting into tears, and says: Brothers, do you hear that in the Land of Israel, there is a Dr. Mosensohn, let him be cursed, may his name be eradicated, who teaches his pupils to violate the Sabbath, and to write on the Sabbath, let us excommunicate him. Let us all say, 'curse Dr. Mosensohn, and everyone answer, Amen!' I took this as an insult, and I shouted out: 'Enough, do you know what you are doing?' And a tumult ensued about me, and when it died down, I approached the pulpit, to lead the evening service – the Rabbi shoved me aside and said: '*Shaygetz*, I hereby remove you from the pulpit, and you will get a slap in the face in short order... I left the pulpit, without reaction, out of respect for the Rabbi, who was a great Torah scholar, a *Tzaddik* and honest man. The Rabbi personally went to lead prayer from the pulpit [in my place].

On the following day, members of *Tze'irei Tzion*, on whose head *Tefillin* hadn't lain for quite some time – accompanied me, in the chance that the Rabbi would, once again, not permit me to lead services. The Rabbi enveloped himself in his prayer shawl, and let out a groan. I began to pray, from the pulpit.... In a short while, he sends someone to summon me to him: he wants me to teach Hebrew to his grandchild, Fruma-Liebcheh, the daughter of the Rabbi of Sniadowo, R' A"Y Klepfish. I taught her for several months, Her husband later became the author, and renown Yiddish writer in Vilna, Chaim Grade. She was exterminated.[105]



Page 326: The Pupils in the School of Yaakov Tobiasz

In that same year, my sister died, and I remained solitary and depressed. It is only thanks to my students, the dear children of Zambrow, that I was able to maintain my composure, and continue with my work, and also thanks to the *balebatim*, the parents of the children, and my neighbors, who kept an eye on me, maintaining concern, and seeing to my welfare. Among them, was the family of A. Greenberg, the owner of an ironmongery, who, and especially his genteel wife, who were my good neighbors, looked after me. Not once did I hear her calling to her eldest daughter: Rachel, I think he hasn't eaten anything yet today, he hasn't drunk any milk, etc. And they would hurry, bursting in on me, and taking care of all my needs.

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I remained connected to Zambrow, even after I left it. At every opportunity, I would come for a visit. The Jews of the city were unique in their kind: all diligent, working people, people of action, and taking things into their own hands, far removed from assimilation. Zambrow, which lay on the crossroads between Ostrow and Bialystok – was suffused more that '*Litvak*' Bialystok [with that tradition] and was a far distance from Ostrow, the *Hasidic* city. Before my eyes they stand, and speak to my heart: Leah Zukrowicz, Dina Golombek, with her literary excerpts. Bracha Zukrowicz, Paula Wierzbowicz, with her smile, who along with her father, Hona, the one who intoned *'Mekhalkel Chaim'* so engagingly during the high Holy Day prayers at the White *Bet HaMedrash*, the hearty

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105 Chaim Grade's biography suggests that his wife, Fruma-Liebeh, was the daughter of the "Rabbi of Glebokie."

laugh of the 'I don't care' Moshe'keh Gottleib, in the library hall (in New York, he met me and asked me in a questioning, light, and merry tone: And we never had a library!), the constantly questioning eyes of Abraham Krupinsky, and the juridical voice of David Rosenthal, Simcha Rosenbaum, always so sure of himself, Yaakov Dunowicz, the pessimist – who saw everything collapsing before him. Fishman, who would roll on the white snow, after noon in the marketplace, Nathan Smoliar, the speedy one, with the good, and smiling, eyes, the young midwife, Bikhubowska, so delicate and gentle, the young folk, Slodownik, and Matityahu Gorzholczany, and others — All these, the dear sons and daughters of Zambrow, who will remain in my memory forever for a blessing. And from among the shining *balebatim* of the city there were: R' Abba Rakowsky, the eminent scholar, from whom I was privileged to receive his lore, and to enjoy his illumination, when, late in his life, he returned from Russia, an exhausted wanderer, without anything to his name. Avcheh Frumkin, the perceptive man with the broad heart, Moshe Blumrosen, with the appearance of a Tolstoy, who worked in the municipal administration, an enlightened man who loved to listen, and refrained from making others listen to him. R' Shlomo Blumrosen, his brother, with his magnificent carriage, like the well known generous soul he was, knowing not to step on even a worm while waking, a man of great generosity when it came to Zionist undertakings, never seeking to avoid responsibility or make excuses, R' Yaakov Zukrowicz, fluid in his step and dressed magnificently, who followed the young generation, and did not seek the spoils of following the fanatics, even though they held him in high esteem. Menachem Dunowicz, the punctilious one, one step ahead, and two steps back, the *Gabbai* of the *Chevra Shas*, peering into books from the outside world, and pursuing only the enlightenment of the daughters of the city. Mordechai Ravikov, who constantly dreamt of the Zionist Party first, and was the first to by a raffle ticket from each and every endeavor. And there were many others – whom it is difficult for me to recall after forty years and more.

It is [now] more than forty years [that have gone by]. Zambrow, its youth, its fine library, into which I invested so much energy, its *balebatim* – scholars, ordinary workers, decent Jews – they all stand before my eyes alive, and I will never forget them.

Before I left Poland for the Land of Israel in the year 1946, I also went back to Zambrow. I did not recognize it. Only the cemetery, with the sporadically visibly inscription of פ"נ – *Po Nikbar* [here lies buried].. remain as witnesses, struck dumb, yet shout and scream to the heavens about what was done to the six million Jews, and the sacred community of Zambrow, among them.

From the Words of Students

Naomi Blumrosen

...and the studies were interesting.

The students were drawn to the curriculum. We spent most of the day between the walls of the school, because even after noon, we returned for additional tasks: changing books at the school library, preparations for celebrations and promenades, and like things. The many strolls

we took, in the nearby forests, arranged by the school, were interesting, each previously designed from the beginning to cover some subject in nature, or having to do with literature about Israel. The plays put on during Hanukkah, 20 Tammuz, and others – that the teacher Tobiasz wrote himself – met with success, and the revenues were dedicated to the school library.

And here is a small episode that indicates the great commitment of the teacher to his school: One time, on *Tu B'Shevat*, we were occupied in making preparations for the celebration. The tables had been spread with fruits from the Holy Land, when a telegraph notice came to the teacher: his sister had fallen very ill, and asks that he come to Warsaw immediately. The teacher lowered his head into the palms of his hands, was lost in thought and decided: he did not want to abort the joy of the children, nor did he want to put a stop to their creativity. He will travel the following day. The celebration went off successfully, and with *joie de vivre*. The Land of Israel stood before us that day, in the fulness of its splendor: in the fruit from there, and with the magical spirit found in the heart of a Jew. The teacher did not find his sister alive, and we mourned her together with him.

Aryeh Kossowsky

I entered Y. Tobiasz's school for study at the age of ten. I immediately felt a great change that had come into my life: the approach of the teacher to the student as a friend, no recourse to a switch or whip. And the course of study – Hebrew, taught in Hebrew. We also studied manners and etiquette: how to hold a spoon, fork and knife during eating, to say 'Thank You Very Much' to our parents after a meal, to rise before someone older than you, to give alms to the poor, even if we have no extra money – to then share our piece of bread with them. The room was always well ventilated. The walls were covered in pictures about geographic subjects, nature, and the Homeland. After each hour, there was a brief recess – to catch one's breath. We even once surprised our teacher: on the third day of Hanukkah, which was his birthday, we secretly organized a celebration, that involved a play with songs and palm trees.... from time-to-time, he would read to us from the literature of the Land of Israel, from fairy tales for the young, news from the newspaper, etc. We learned many chapters of the Tanakh by heart, and thanks to that, the Tanakh remains on my lips to this day. On once occasion, the writer Yakir Warshawsky visited us during class hours. He tested us in writing and orally, and found us instructed, knowledgeable in Torah, and fluent in the grammar of the language, and also being attracted to the threshold of the Land of Israel.

Years passed, and to this day, in the Land of Israel, when I follow the plow, or work in the barn, in the garden, or storehouse, I feel and value the Hebrew and national education that I absorbed in his school. As to my preparation for the Land of Israel, I received it directly from his mouth.

The Russian Public School

At the end of the previous [sic: 19th] century, the Russian government founded a public school in Poland for Jewish children, in which the language of instruction was Russian. The objective was aimed more towards the Russification of Jewish masses, and to distance them from Polish culture, rather than to inculcate culture and knowledge into Jewish children. The agenda

consisted of one high school class, at the border of a gymnasium class. The course of study – three years. However, by and large, most of the graduates of this school did not even get to the level of the first grade in a gymnasium.

One teacher taught all three of the classes. The dominant number of the students were girls. Boys were few and far between, mostly from among those who saw no 'boon' in attending *Heder*. There were also few that studied at the Russian school in the morning, and after noon – went to *Heder*. The teachers placed emphasis on knowledge of the 'Motherland.' When the 'Inspector' would arrive from Lomza – the beginning of his examination was: Do the children know the 'title,' that is: the proper honorific with which to address the Czar, his Queen, his widowed mother, the Crown Prince, his heir, and his uncle, the Grand Duke. [They needed to know] when do the holidays of the kingdom fall (the *Galiubka*, or *Prazdnik*); the day of the coronation of the Czar, his birthday, the date of birth of the Crown Prince and Heir, etc. It was this knowledge that the Inspector looked for at the outset, even from the students that attended *Heder*, whom he came to test for their knowledge of the Russian language. During the Sabbath and Jewish Festival Holidays – the school was not open. Teachers, with some feeling of spirit, would sneak in a bit of '*Zakon Buzhi*' – religious instruction in the school, and would tell the older students stories from scripture, and about the portion for the holiday. From among the teachers, I recall the following: *Shapiro* (an urbane Jew, and knowledgeable in Hebrew – who didn't think much of my work), *Sawirsky* (from Vilna), *Szaczynko* (from Rajgród) – an Enlightened man, drawn to Zionism, beloved by the city, but not the régime, because of his progressive ideas. His oldest son, Leib, was the pride of the Russian gymnasium in Lomza, and his young son, Yitzhak, studied in Germany at an agricultural school, for purposes of preparing to make *aliyah* to the Land of Israel. After him – the teacher *Friedberg*, a negative sort of person, who did not become endeared to the people because of his love of money. He worshiped at the White *Bet HaMedrash*, and on once occasion, on a Sabbath, after Passover, he ascended the *Bima*, and announced: If Russian lessons were not given in the *Heders* – he will begin to eat bare-headed, and without washing his hands... The threat succeeded on his part, because the *Melamdim* were afraid of him, fearing that he would send the Inspector to them, and disqualify their *Heder*. After him came Leib, the son of a bookseller from Lomza: lean, tall, and blond, he was more of a Russian official than an educator of Jewish children. With the outbreak of the war – he went over to Russia, as was the case with all appointees of the crown. From that time on, the Russian school ceased to operate, and in its place, as we shall see, came a Yiddish school, and after that, under government pressure, a Polish '*Szkola Powszecna.*'

The Yiddish Public School

In the year 1916, during the time of the German occupation, a network of Yiddish schools began to be opened in Poland. The German authorities viewed this with favor, because they saw 'Yiddish' as being close to German, and also a barrier against Polish assimilation on one side, and against the influence of Zionism on the other. In Zambrow, those who stood at the head of the battle for such a school, namely, that Yiddish be the language of instruction, and a firm national tendency toward it, were: Yehoshua Domb, and Nathan Smoliar. Domb was an idealist and a gentle soul, possessing a very broad amount of Russian Enlightenment, which he had acquired in Odessa,

and was also educated in Judaism and Hebrew culture. He was fluent in Hebrew. He was drawn to *Poalei Tzion*, and had a leftist outlook. His comrade in this was Nathan Smoliar, a pedagogue from Dolfuss, and educated in the Zambrow *Heder* [system], a graduate of the municipal school in Ciechanowiec, and the Teachers' Institute in Vilna, and was also an ardent member of *Poalei Tzion*, to the left. Together with Lola Gordon – a graduate of the Russian gymnasium in Lomza, who was drawn to the ordinary Jewish folk, even though she was distant from them [sic: in outlook] since the time of her education.

It was these, who successfully opened the Yiddish public school in the city. Rachel Mark, a teacher possessed of kindness, also joined up with them afterwards, to teach general studies. The school was set up in premises within the house of Sziniak, on the Bialystok road, and its principal was Nathan Smoliar, to who other teachers were added, and changed, among them: Nadler, [and] Gutman.

After a while, in which the Poles rotated in their government, they changed this school into a government school but – the language of teaching was Polish instead of Yiddish. Nathan Smoliar did not agree to remain on as principal in this school, and establishes a new Yiddish school, called 'Borukhov,' as an extension of TzYShO (***Tz**entrale **Y**iddishe **Sh**ul **O**rganizatzia,* Warsaw). His place, as the principal of the previously mentioned school, that was transformed by the 'benefactors' of the régime, into a '*Szkola Powszecna*,' was taken by Lola Gordon – a teacher of tradition to the Jewish children, a good and talented educator – but subordinated to the demands for Polonization by the régime. After her, her sister led the Polish school – Niuta Gordon-Wilimowsky (today in Israel). After a while, when the reputation of Nathan Smoliar spread, as a successful teacher, and an experienced pedagogue, a trained principal, and a talented organizer – he was taken away honorably to Warsaw, to be the principal of a '*Borukhov*' school there, also by the left-leaning *Poalei Tzion*, and here too -- he was outstandingly successful, to the point that he was considered as one of the best of the Jewish pedagogical resources in Warsaw.

The Volksschule Named for Borukhov in Zambrow

The Yiddish *Volksschule*, named for Ber Borukhov, was founded with great difficulty in the year 1921, by the *Poalei Tzion*, with the help of parents and friends: The school was located on the '*Platz*' (going to the *Koszaren*), at the house of Moshe-Lejzor Sokol. It opened with only two classes. Most of the students (boys and girls) were the children of working-class parents, and even though they should have paid tuition, which they only were able to obtain with difficulty, nevertheless, they sent their children to the school with a great deal of commitment. The school provided a Jewish-worldly education. Much room was made there for Jewish literature, for the classic Jewish history, etc. A love for Jewish traditions was also implanted into the children. At each Jewish Festival Holiday, the teachers, and the children, prepared their lovely presentations, using scenery created by themselves, including recitations, song and dance. These presentations, in which the children were transformed into birds, angels, little trees, and snowflakes, had a great success in the *shtetl*. The Fire-Fighters hall, where these presentations were held, would be filled to overflowing. Primarily, the school had a reputation for its children's choir. Which would sing many

beautiful children's songs, in three or four voices, and also pieces from classical music, Beethoven, Chopin, Haydn, and excerpts from operas.

The Yiddish *Volksschule* was a second home for the children, and for others – literally their only home; because this was where they were able to forget all of the troubles and worries that beset their real homes. The relationship of the teachers to the children was extraordinarily of a full heart. The teachers worked under their difficult material circumstances, barely making a living, but despite this, they were dedicated to their work with all of their heart. They were paid with the love and loyalty of the children.



Page 330: The Borukhov School

The teachers used to be engaged with the students even after classes; they would lead discussions, explain matters to them about social life, about the struggle between classes. During the summer, and on Saturday mornings when the weather was good, they would organize expeditions to places in the vicinity of the city. An important event was the publication of a journal by the children, written and edited by the children themselves, containing poems, stories, characteristically about educated people, and reviews of books by Yiddish writers.

Those circles, comprised of religious-fanatics, looked with disfavor on the Yiddish *Volksschule.* They held that the children were being give too liberal an education. They went so far as to have one of the teachers excommunicated.

The *Volksschule* existed for barely six years. During that time, it demonstrated the capacity to rally all the progressive elements of the *shtetl* around itself. In the school, there also existed evening courses for workers. Speakers came from Warsaw, who gave interesting lectures. But this was not in accordance with what the official authorities wanted. And so, on a nice day in May 1927, a policeman entered the school, and advised that the school was being closed. This was a terrible blow to the children. They were being deprived of the very thing that they valued and treasured the most.

Those few students, who are still alive, recall with sorrow, their dear school, and their teachers, who are etched into their memory forever. Let us show respect to our exterminated teachers and fellow students.

Here is a group of former girl students, who are living in Paris today:

Chana Sokol-Zilberberg
Esther Smoliar-Szlewin
Faygl Stupnik-Astrinsky
Baylcheh Stupnik-Kwiat
Zlatkeh Sosnowiec-Rothstein



Page 331: *Kindergarten*

The Yiddish-Polish Volksschule

The Polish authorities laid an eye on the Yiddish *Volksschule*, which in its view, was a revolutionary fortress, and on one fine morning, closed the school that had been in existence for six years, and in its place, opened a Polish-Yiddish *Volksschule*. Its objective was to Polonize the Jewish children, tear them away from Jewish culture, and implant a love of Polish into them. At the beginning, a special teacher taught them 'Jewish religion' 2-3 times a week. Later on, this too was discontinued. The '*Szkola Powszecna*' openly applauded assimilation, and opposed a Jewish national upbringing. In its ranks, there worked not a few clandestine communists, who held themselves equal to the Poles, with their hatred for *Yiddishkeit*, and national education.

Of the 20 *Heders* in Zambrow, during the time of the Russians – barely 3-4 remained in those last years before the Holocaust. This is because the '*Szkola Powszecna*' swallowed up the children, after the authorities compelled the children to attend this school, and a little at a time, closed the *Heders*. Also, the Yiddish-Hebrew schools could not continue to exist, because of harassment by the authorities, and also because of the bad economic circumstances of the Jews in the city. The Polish school was free of charge, depending on taxes, while the rest of the schools required that tuition be paid.

A small part of the parents would send the small boys from the Polish school to an afternoon *Heder,* or an evening *Heder*...

Before the Holocaust

In those last years, a religious school for girls was also founded, '*Bais Yaakov*,' under the aegis of the Rabbi. The head teacher was the Rabbi's step-daughter. The school was in the 'wood house' of the White *Bet HaMedrash*. The 'Centos,' which was concerned with the welfare of the poor and weak children, turned over the food allocations for the schools and the Heders to '*Bais Yaakov*.'



Page 333: A Class in the Yiddish-Polish School - I

The fanatic Jews, who a half-generation before, fought every reform in national-religious school, and harassed the teachers for their 'liberal' view of education – now bowed their heads for the assimilated-gentile school...

During the short Russian occupation in the last [sic: Second World] War, a sort of permission was granted to found a Yiddish Volksschule in Zambrow along with a Jewish gymnasium. But in a short time, the Russians pulled back, and left the city to the Germans.

The Spinoza of Zambrow

In 1938, there was a frightful winter. There were immense frosts, couples with childhood illnesses. Accordingly, a search began for transgressions in the city: who is it that is the cause of such intense suffering in the city? And they discovered that the teacher of the Yiddish school, from the TzYShO network (the Central Jewish School Organization) – was teaching the children to be against Yiddishkeit, telling them they should write on the Sabbath. People observed how he would tear off the *mezuzahs* that were on doorposts, and trample on them with his feet... and it was then left to the Rabbi and his followers to make an end to these troubles, and place the teacher in

excommunication. So Binyomkeh the *Shammes*[106] ran, and brought the sinning teacher to the Rabbi: a skinny and tall young man, pale, dressed in a thin coat, shivering from the cold.



Page 334: A Class in the Yiddish-Polish School - II



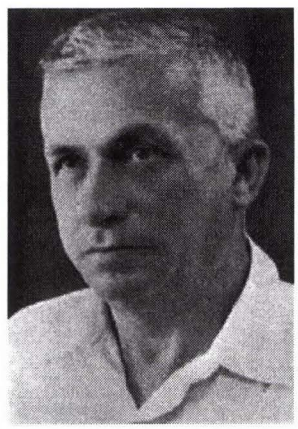
Page 335: A Class in the Yiddish-Polish School - III

106 From prior references, we take this to be Binyomkeh *Schuster*, the Shoemaker.

The doors were sealed. The Rabbi lit two black candles, and one person blew the *Shofar*: *Tekia, Shevarim, Teruah.*[107] And the Rabbi turned to him, asking him nothing: 'Be advised that we are excising you from the body of the Jewish people! May you be cursed both in your coming and going! And may he be cursed, who will come in contact with you, or have anything to do with you!....'
And so the Rabbi finished, and the door was pried open, and the accursèd Jewish teacher, as pale as the wall, even scrawnier than before, and taller than before, silently shuffled out, barely able to stand on his feet...

The Polish Gymnasium in Zambrow

By Zvi Zamir (Herschel Slowik)



Page 336: Zvi Zamir – Herschel Slowik

In 1918, with the new independence of Poland, a Polish gymnasium was established in Zambrow. Quite a number of Jewish children were students there. They had to put up with anti-Semitism, and having their parents harassed by the Rabbi ז"ל and several of the *balebatim*, who looked at the school, where the children were compelled to write on Saturday, as if it were an apostasy. And so, a few of the parents became fearful of the Rabbi's threats, and took their children out of there. The Rabbi especially took issue with Berl Golombek, who was a prominent member of the *balebatim*, among his people in the Red *Bet HaMedrash* -- threatening to excommunicate him, if he does not take his daughter out of the gymnasium. All the Golombeks were upset by this, and came out against the Rabbi. The Rabbi was compelled to transfer over to the White *Bet HaMedrash*.

Studies at the gymnasium were on a high level. The director, Mayewsky, a well-known pedagogue, and an educated man, did not like Jews, and referred to the Jewish students as 'foreigners who speak Polish only in school' – yet, despite this, he would often hold up Jewish students as role models, in contrast to the gentile ones, noting their understanding and style, understanding and diligence. As to the Jewish students, part of them were inclined to assimilation, and saw their future in the new Poland. The larger portion however, was Zionist in its orientation, from all parts of the spectrum. For example: M. Baumkuler, a talented and outstanding student in school, was an ardent Marxist outside of school, and was a member of the leftist *Poalei Tzion* Youth, and founded a student group for the laboring classes in the Land of Israel.

He invested a great deal of his strength and energy into this group, and thanks to him, many Jewish students who were diligent in their study of Polish literature, were saved from a spiritual assimilation and gave themselves over to the concept of our national rebirth, studying Jewish history, reading Hebrew and Yiddish literature, and taking an interest in everything that transpired in the Land of Israel. As a result, no small number of them ended up coming to Israel, some sooner, others later.

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107 These are the three traditional soundings of the Shofar that are part of the Rosh Hashana ritual.

Apart from the Polish gymnasium in Zambrow, no small number attended the Yiddish-Polish gymnasium of Dr. Sh. Goldlust in Lomza. Others pursued study in Bialystok and Warsaw. Of these, some did so in the '*Takhkemoni*' middle school, and in other schools. Together, they brought credit to Zambrow youth, and brought culture into its ranks.

The gymnasium, even though it was anti-Semitic in its cast, was for us, the children of *Heder* and *Gemara*, a ray of light and education.

Alter Rothberg



Page 338: Alter Rothberg

He was a gifted child, the only son of his father, R' David, the Wagon Driver (born in the year 1896). The *Melamdim* constantly spoke highly of him. At the age of about 13, he traveled off to study at the Yeshiva in Lomza. He studied there for about three years, and then transferred to study at the Yeshiva in Telz, that enjoyed a high reputation for its scholars. There, he 'went astray:' he began to diligently study subjects outside the *Gemara*, *Tanakh*, grammar and Russian, read pamphlets by Enlightenment authors, and became active in Zionist endeavors. When the First World War broke out – he returned to Zambrow, but he was a different person by then. His father had already given up on the idea that his son might become a Rabbi. He continued to acquire an education. He made his debut as a teacher in his uncle's school, his mother's brother, Fyvel Zukrowicz. During the establishment of the Polish Republic, he became a teacher in Bialystok. There, he married a genteel woman, Rivka Halle, and built a Jewish national house, and relentlessly taught himself worldly subject matter. Later on, he became a teacher in the Jewish gymnasium in Suwalk, and becomes one of the principal intellectual forces there. He then returned to Bialystok, settles down there, and later on, becomes a teacher in the Yiddish-Polish gymnasium. During the vacation months, he sits for the government examinations and earns a Polish diploma, as a Polish gymnasium teacher, preparing himself for an academic title, and afterwards – to go to the Land of Israel. In this time, his three children grew up. For this entire time, Alter was active in Bialystok, on the National-Cultural front. He was beloved by everyone for his merriment and *joie de vivre*. He was reckoned as one of the best pedagogues in the city, and he was killed, with his entire family, in the Bialystok ghetto on that Black Friday (August 20, 1943).



Page 339: Kindergarten in Zambrow



Page 341: (Top) A Class in the Volksschule - I

The Library

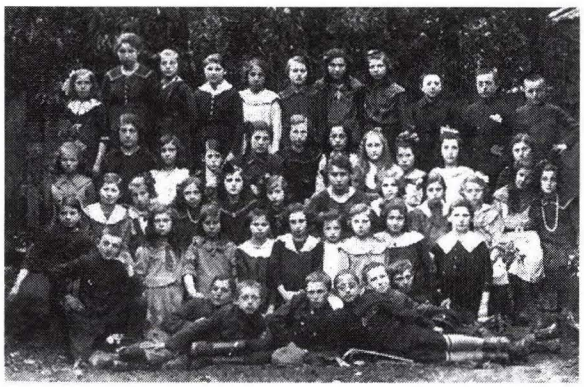
Before the First World War, Zambrow has a small Zionist library, consisting of Hebrew and Yiddish books, and was called '*Toshia*,' named after the prominent publishing house in Warsaw, whose agent in Zambrow and its vicinity was Benjamin Kagan. The library was located in the house of Yochanan Feinzilber, a member of the Zionist organization. All three of the brothers, Yochanan, Chaim and Joseph, along with their sister Rachel (now Lewanda, in Israel) committed themselves to the library, and would trade books. You understand that this was done on a voluntary basis.



Page 340: The Teachers' Committee of the Borukhov School
Standing: Moshe Eitzer, Lindenheim, Shimon Rubinstein
Sitting: G. Fishman, (Rachel) Mark, N. Smoliar, Sarniewicz, Yudl Rubinstein

A second library, of Yiddish books, could be found at the home of Meir-Fyvel the *Melamed* and baker of honey cake. His son, Alter Zarembsky, a very aware older boy, an old-time labor activist, committed himself to this library with heart and soul. Alter had spent some time in Bialystok, and there, familiarized himself with labor doctrine, and brought it back with him to Zambrow. He would be able to attract working young people to the book, explain to them what they should read, introduce the author and his work, and later, after reading, carry on discussions with them. He was sickly, suffering from a lung disorder, but despite this, committed himself to the education of workers and encouraged them to read. The library later was transferred to Mr. Pszysusker – a gentle and educated young man from Pultusk, who, together with his well-educated wife, from the Kuppermintz family, ran a paper business, commencing on the Kosciolna *Gasse*.

The circle of readers grew larger – despite the fact that the Rabbi and his fanatic accomplices, engaged in attempts to place the library under excommunication. An attempt was even made to set it on fire. The library eventually acquired its own premises, expanded the number of books, with Hebrew, Yiddish, and Polish books. When the circle of readers was large, and the reading room unused – the library management would arrange literary evenings, putting on informative lectures, discussion evenings, etc.



Page 341 (Bottom): A Class in the Volksschule - II



Page 344: Evening Courses for Workingmen 10.6.1921



Page 345: (Top) A Class in the Volksschule - III



Page 345: (Bottom) A Class in the Volksschule - IV, Nathan Smoliar, the Teacher (center)

During the German occupation, in the First World War, the library was under the influence of the '*Bund*.' When the '*Poalei Tzion*,' and the *Tze'irei Tzion* grew strong, they undertook to spread their wings and obtain control over the library. After lengthy discussions and fights, the library passed over to the control of the Zionist workers. It was formally decided that the library should be non-partisan. Elyeh-Mottl, the son of Yaakov Schaja (today in Argentina), was nominated as a neutral party to be the librarian, and let us remember him here for that, favorably. He was very much committed to his position (you understand, without financial compensation), and even during the fairs held on market days, he would leave his store full of gentiles, and run off to fulfill his obligation in the library, exchanging books, and advising the young people on what to read. While the library was neutral [sic: non-partisan], the friction did not cease. Each side suspected the other of a biased

approach to acquisition of books. This continued until a certain evening, in which a referendum was passed with a large majority, deciding that the library should pass to the control of the Zionists under the name of '*HaTekhiya*.' This name, which came from legal Zionist societies, protected the library from undue suspicion, that there were communist elements within. The government attempted to close the library more than once, thinking that here is a nest of ant-government parties. The library struggled, and existed for close to three decades, spreading knowledge and culture among the masses, until the Nazi-Fire consumed it.



Page 346: (Bottom) A Class in the Volksschule - V, Lindenheim, the Teacher (center)



Page 346: (Top) The 'Bund' Drama Circle

In speaking of the library, in each *Bet HaMedrash*, in the *Chevra Shas*, and the *Hasidim shtibl*, a 'library of religious books' could be found. Small groups of 'book-buyers' were organized in each house of worship. People would pledge sums of money, donate their own books, or books they inherited from their father. Children would often commit to saving a set sum of money from their pocket change they used to buy candy, in order to buy a set of the *Shas* for the *Bet HaMedrash*, a set of the Pentateuch, *Maggidim* (The Prophets and Later Holy Writ) and similar initiatives. These religious libraries also were consumed and went off in the smoke, together with those who were the ones who perused their books.

Drama Circles

Even before the first Great Fire, a theater was set up in Zambrow. The interested young people of that time had put on the play, 'The Selling of Joseph' on Purim, in the Women's Synagogue, with the female parts also being played by men... Despite this [accommodation], the local actors were roundly cursed.

On Purim, the Yeshiva students would often 'perform' [the play of] 'David and Goliath,' 'the Selling of Joseph,' etc. Fyvkeh the



Page 347: The Keren Kayemet L' Israel Drama Circle Front Row, second from left, is Adele Rubinson, née Chaya Sarah Wierzbowicz.

Shoemaker with others of his friends, poor working people, with good Jewish hearts, once put on a Purim '*Spiel*,' an Ahasuerus-spiel, for the benefit of raising dowry funds for indigent brides. In the last 7-8 years before the First World War, the young people would get together and study a [sic: theatrical] piece, such as '*Shulamis*' by Goldfadn, 'The Binding of Isaac' and would prepare to put on a performance at the Fire-Fighters' headquarters, on a Saturday night, or after a Festival holiday, for the benefit of some worthwhile cause. From time-to-time, they would have to put up with a great deal of trouble from the Rabbi and his adherents. And not once, did they have to deal with intervention by the Russian authorities which took a certain amount of glee in disrupting an evening arranged by Jewish youth...

In the final years, before the First World War, in the year 1912 approximately, the Zambrow Amateurs put on '*TzeZayt un TzeShprayt*'[108] a drama in three acts, by Sholom Aleichem, which portrays the conflict between children and their parents. Outstanding performances were turned in by Ephraim Wilimowsky, Abrahamkeh Rothberg, and others.

[There was] a drama circle in Zambrow that put on '*Hasia the Orphan Girl*' – for the benefit of the 'Ladies Society,' This was a non-partisan circle, including *Bundists*, and Zionists together. However, in 1919, party loyalists emerged victorious, and in 1919, the *Bund* created its own drama circle, and the *Tze'irei Tzion*, its own drama circle... Theatrical pieces were often performed in Zambrow, with fragmented resources, and with minimal revenues. In the year 1924, Feinzilber's son-in-law, Lewanda (today in Israel) returned from Russia, who was formerly a professional artist, and he was able to set up a non-partisan drama studio in Zambrow. [He advertised that] anyone who demonstrated any talent for the stage, whether from the right or left, *Bund,* or *Poalei Tzion*, should present themselves. With great success, and with appropriate artistic talent, they produced the operetta, '*Liovka Molodets*'[109] two times. And so, they got themselves ready to put on added pieces... the drama circle of the Poalei Tzion put on the 'Village Youth,' which was successful.

Small drama circles also existed in the synagogues. From time-to-time, Hanukkah and Purim, at the end of the school year, these small artistic groups would invigorate the audience and hope was placed in that little boy, or that little girl, that they will grow up to be 'stars' of the Zambrow theater. The teachers encouraged the children, feeding them high hopes for when they would grow older...

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108 A Yiddish metaphor meaning 'sown and spread out,' as an allusion to the dispersion of the Jewish people in the Diaspora.

109 Russian for 'Leo the Young.'

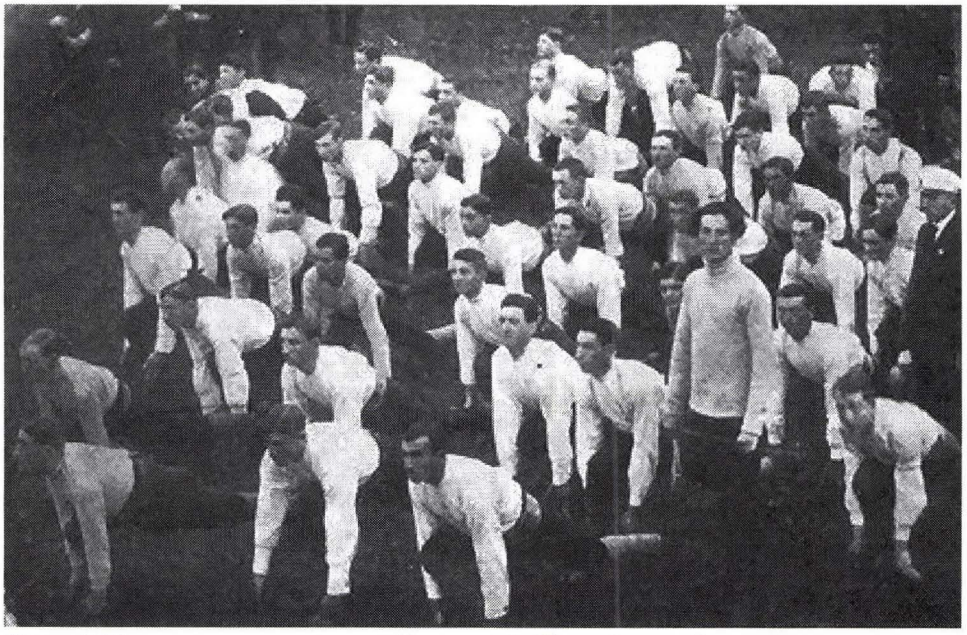
Maccabi



Page 349: Sh. Gutman

This was one of the brightest and most beloved institutions in Zambrow, and served as a model for the entire region.

In 1916, at the time when Jewish Poland was able to breathe free a bit, Jewish sports clubs began to be established. Zambrow did not miss this opportunity either. The Germans, who occupied Poland at that time, did not prevent this from happening. At that time in Zambrow, Mr. Hurwitz was designated as the representative of a society for providing wood for industrial purposes. As a sportsman, he could not abide seeing the Zambrow youth without sports. He therefore called for a meeting of several young people, Leibczak Golombek at their head, and he clarified the goals of the Maccabi sport club for them, of which he was then a member in Warsaw. His plan appealed to the listeners, and the Maccabi organization was temporarily set up. The group developed vigorously, and it grew from week to week. The principal virtue lay in that the club, from its outset, was non-partisan politically, and it accepted each young person, whether he was a Zionist – or a *Bundist*. The language of discourse was Hebrew, in accordance with the orders from the central authority in Warsaw. Of particular note was the celebration of the 'dedication of the flag' in honor of the new standard, which was indeed tall and very appropriate – more beautiful than the flags of the surrounding towns. Every month, tens of new members joined up, men and women, and all stood out with their white and blue hats, and their sports clothing. Drills and exercises were held in the location of the 'Gardlin' brick works, which belonged to Shlomkeh Blumrosen. The gentiles viewed this Jewish military [sic: cadre] sternly, and even suspected it of harboring evil intent towards the Polish state. However, they could do nothing. The commandant of Maccabi, for this entire time, was Leibczak Golombek, a tall and skilled sportsman, who was committed to Maccabi with his life and soul, and he defended its interests with pride. Later on, the chair was taken over by the lawyer Czerniawsky. Maccabi demonstrated its power and discipline not only once in the city. Maccabi received the Cantor Sirota, with fanfare, and celebrated the holiday of the Balfour Declaration; everyone completely decked out in full uniform with the banner held high, in a stiff cadence, standing erect, with heads held high, they marched through the streets of Zambrow with song and rhythm. The gentiles kept shouting: '*Zydowsky Wojesko*' – Jewish Military…



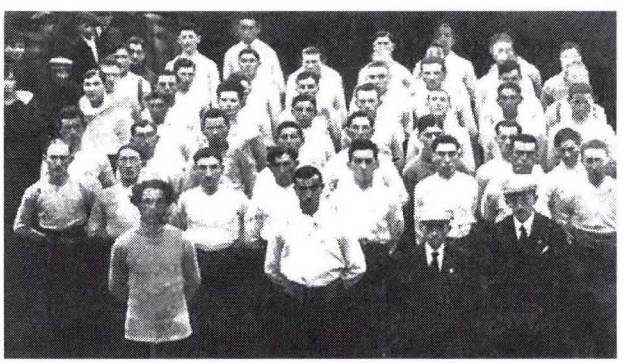
Page 350: *Gymnastic Exercises - I*

So clouds closed in over Maccabi. The mobilization of the best of the youth into the Polish military, the majority of the Maccabi membership, literally ruined its ranks. Apart from this, the Polish authorities looked askance at this Jewish sports club, and robbed it of its rights. Many emigrated – to the Land of Israel, Argentina, the United States, etc. Not a few contested the internal political frictions; at that time in Poland, there already existed sports clubs on the right and on the left, from the *Bund* and *Poalei Tzion*. The authorities did not permit the use of the name 'Maccabi' that was a symbol of Jewish rebellion, but rather the 'Jewish Sport Club.'

The last leaders of the club were Beinusz Tykoczinsky and Hillel-Herschel Sziniak.

A. Shmuel Gutman/ Maccabi

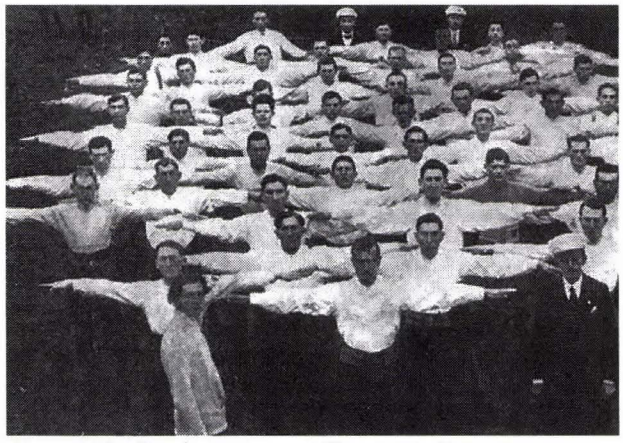
In the year 1916, the Germans employed no small number of Jewish workers in the barracks, Jewish recruits, and the officers in the German army would treat us especially well. There was a German-Jewish officer who helped us to organize the sport activity, apart from the good instructor from Lomza.



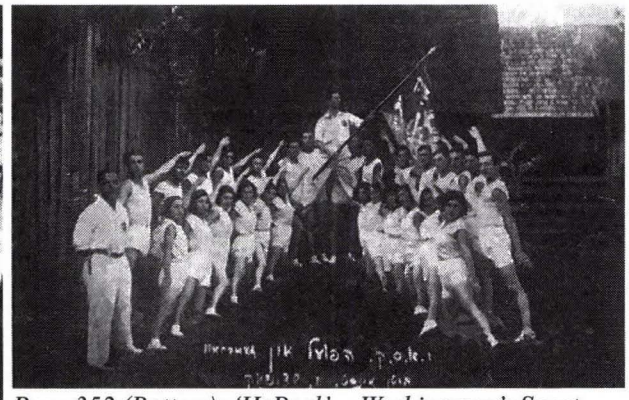
Page 351: *A Maccabi Group*

I will never forget the big tour festival, very early on Sunday morning, with our blue-white banners, when we marched through the streets to the *Uczastek*. The Christians looked at us askance. The young toughs would shout" *'Zyduzy do Palestiny*!' 'Maccabi' and 'Maccabi Youth' then secured the

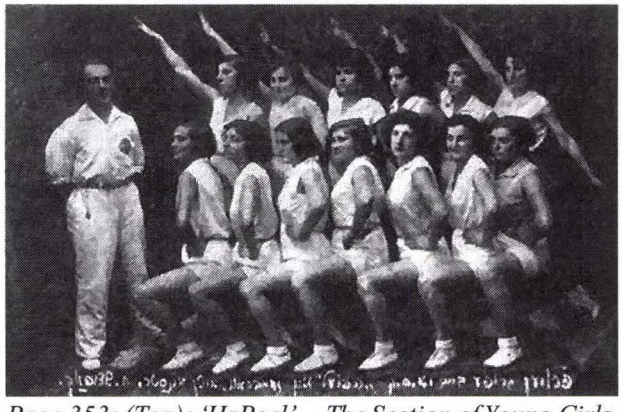
Jewish street, and thanks to this, the political parties began to organize themselves, right and left, religious and secular.



Page 352: (Top): Gymnastic Exercises



Page 352 (Bottom): 'HaPoel'— Workingmen's Sport Organization



Page 353: (Top): 'HaPoel'— The Section of Young Girls



Page 353: (Bottom): 'HaPoel'— The Section of Workingmen's Sport



Page 354: (Top): Maccabeans on an Excursion



Page 354: (Bottom): A Group of Girls In Athletic Exercises

Folklore
פולקלור
פאלקלאר



Page 356: (Top): Grandmother Shafran with her Grandchildren and Great-Grandson, Joe Zukrowicz



Page 356: (Bottom): At A Banquet
Standing (from right to left): Baruch Surowicz, Elazar Wilimowsky, Simcha Rosenbaum, Chaim Kaufman, Aviezer Kaplan, Zerakh Gottleib, Ephraim Wilimowsky, Yudl Tykoczinsky
Sitting: Elyeh Cybulkin, Fishman, Yitzhak Gorodzinsky, Max Tykoczinsky --- Chaim Gorodzinsky, Itzek Cybulkin

From My Childhood World

By Yom-Tov Levinsky

A. Words, Songs and Folk Expressions



Page 358: Chaim Shmuli's Covered Wagon with Passengers
A Painting by Zeidenstat, Lomza, Poland

Here, in alphabetical order,[110] I bring only a part of the expressions, words, and bits of song, that I heard during my 10 childhood years in Zambrow, approximately between 1901-1911. The larger part of these I have never heard in any other place. A part of these I have indeed heard elsewhere, but often with a different meaning, with a verbal explanation giving it an opposite meaning. I present this material as I heard it, and the way it was articulated in Zambrow.

***

Ot Azoy Nart Men Op a Khosn! אט אזוי נארט מען אפ א חתן!

Many times, a prospective bridegroom was promised a dowry and financial support – and after the wedding, he was given nothing, because there was nothing to give. The newly married husband would then go about insulted and angry, with his head lowered. Groups of people would then sing along:

Ot Azoy, Ot Azoy, In this way, in this way,
Nahrt Men Arayn a Khosn! A bridegroom is taken in!

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110 The Hebrew alphabetical order has been retained.

M'Zogt im tzu, a sakh nadn — He is promised a large dowry
Un m'Git im nisht kein groschen! — An not a groschen is given to him!

Iberrufekhitz [Nicknames] — איבערופעכיץ

Here I record only a few of the names that used to be appended, when the people in question were called to mind:

Abraham Berl Klinn (A Village Idiot) – *Nemt dem Tukhes un Loyf Ahin!*[111]

'Agter' – *Alter Shpalter Kryzl Killeh,*
Makh a Brokheh Ibber der Mekhileh![112]

'Moshe' – *Moshe – Tshysheh, Tshimtsham, Tshaysheh.*
Козак молодчина![113]

(The second half has its roots in a Russian tune, where a Cossack of low rank is encountered).

'Abraham' – Abraham = *Kopovrom – Lokshn Drovrom!*[114]

'Baylah' – *Grobbeh Baylitseh!*[115]

'Mendl' – *Mendl-Fendl!*[116]

(Along with the sobriquet:

Hayst er Mendl – Meg Men Essn fun Zayn Fendl
Hayst er Nissl – Meg Men Essn fun Zayn Shissl) [117].

'Berl' – *Berl-Shmerl, Boncheh-Tzitzeh!*
Makh a Brokheh Ibber der Metzitzeh![118]

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111 Pick up your rear end and run there! Its value lies in the rhyme in Yiddish between *Klin* and *Ahin*..

112 A nonsense rhyme: Old, splitter, curl, hernia/Make a blessing over the forgiveness!

113 A 'Cossack' – brave and good!

114 A nonsense rhyme with '*Avrom*' the Yiddish pronunciation of the name.

115 Fat lady Baylah.

116 Nonsense rhyme of *Mendl* with *Fendl* – a pot.

117 A rhyme of: If his name is Mendl – it is permitted to eat from his pot/If his name is Nissl – it is permitted to eat from his bowl. Often used as a way of validating the ritual appropriateness of eating food prepared by someone else, possibly not familiar to the party involved.

118 A nonsense rhyme ending with the racy line of 'Make a blessing over the sucking of the blood after a circumcision.'

'Yankl' -- *Yankeleh, bankeleh,*
Flesheleh bronfn, bul-bul-bul![119]

Itcheh Meir איטשע מאיער

An added name for a Jewish man who is a *Hasid* and who has no means of making a living, a sobriquet especially popular among *Mitnagdim* in Poland. Among the Ger *Hasidim*, this name was utilized very extensively, after the Ger *Rebbe* R' Itcheh Meir ז"ל.

'In Bod Arayn!' "אין באד אריין"!

This would be called out in the streets by someone when the baths were being heated (see further on: '*Montik in Bod Arayn*').

Aynlaygn di Velt איינלייגן די וועלט

Do whatever is possible in order to salvage, or carry out anything that is difficult to accomplish.

'In Shul Arayn!' "אין שול אריין!"

The *Shammes* would call this out every Friday, at candle-lighting time, in the middle of the street, so that Jews hurry up to participate in the welcoming of the Sabbath.

Alef-Beyz אלף-בית

Children would sing the following, when they began to learn the alphabet:

'Alef – Beyz, Alef-Beyz,	'Alef – Beyz, Alef-Beyz,
Kokh mir op a topp flaysh!	Cook a large pot of meat for me!
Nisht kein sakh, nisht kein bissl,	Not a lot, not a little,
Nor a fulleh shissl'!	Just a full bowl!

This song also comes from Lithuania, where the poem is known as: '*Alef-Beyz – A Teppl Flaysh.*'

Ahmol iz Gevehn a Mayseh אמאל איז געווען א מעשה

When telling stories to little children, if one wanted to gull them and thereby amuse them, one would say:

Ahmol iz gevehn a myseh,	Once there was a story,
Mit a kelbeleh a vyseh,	With a white calf,
Mit a ki'eleh a roiteh –	With a little red cow –
Du bist a groiser shoyteh!	You are a big fool!

Ahmol Hot Er Gefiert אמאל האט ער געפירט

In the fifth year (1905) the revolutionaries ('strikers') would tell of the well-connected nature of the capitalists in Russia, the newly rich, the Governor General, and like persons, as follows:

Ahmol hot er gefiert a vegeleh mit mist Once, he wheeled around a small wagon with excrement

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[119] A nonsense rhyme, with the call for a small bottle of strong drink.

Hynt iz er gevoren — Today he has become
Der grester capitalist... — The greatest capitalist...
Oy vey – Долойй *Полицеи!* — *Oy vey* –down with the police!
Долойй самодержцеб России! — Down with the autocrats of Russia!

Ahmol hot er gefiert — Once, he carried around
A vegeleh mit koyln, — A small wagon with coal,
Heint iz er gevorn — Today he has become
Der hersher ibber Poyln. — The ruler over Poland.
Oy vey – Долойй Полицеи, etc.

Ahmol iz er gevezn — At one time, he was
An Opgerissener Nahr, — A complete fool,
Heint is er in Russland — Today, in Russia, he is
Nikolai der Tsar — Nicholas the Czar
Etc.
Children would sing it differently,
'Oy vey – Dalai Politsei – Lokshn mit farfl ohn an ei!'[120]

Ohmar Abaye אמר אבי

Children would make fun of the boys who studied the *Gemara*, and using the sing-song of *Gemara* study, they would say: [121]

Ohmar R' Meir – Hot Er Tzebrokhn di Eier! — R' Meir said – He broke the eggs!
Ohmar R'Eliezer – Tzebrokhn di Glezer! — R'Eliezer said – He broke the glasses!
Ohmar Abaye – Hot Men Gekoyft Nyeh! — Abaye said – They then bought new ones!

Onbysen אנבייסן

The first cooked meal in the morning. At about eleven or twelve in the morning, the *Heder* children would go home to eat their '*onbysen*.' The morning food and drink, on an empty stomach, was called: '*Ibberbysen*,' and the evening meal – '*Vechereh*'.[122]

Osobeh אסאבע

A beautiful, tall woman, who had an attractive figure. From the Polish, *Osoba.* Rarely was this term used to describe a handsome man (see *Parshayn*): '*Zi hot genumen a mann an osobeh.*'[123]

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120 A nonsense rhyme for: 'Oy vey – call the police – Noodles and farfel without an egg!

121 A nonsense rhyme that makes sense only in Yiddish.

122 From the Russian word, 'Вечер,' meaning 'evening.' '*Wieczera*' in Polish.

123 'She took a handsome man as a husband.'

Opgenahrt! אפגענארט!

If someone was deceived, the entire group would leap to its feet singing: *'Opgenahrt, kishkeh-nahrt, Moshe Yokhes, kish mir in tokhes....'*[124]

Opgesukhniet אפגעסוכניעט

Made scrawny and dried out, from the Polish word *suchy* – meaning dry. One would hurl an imprecation: '*Opgedart, opgesuchniet zolst du verrn.*' (May you become dried out and scrawny).

Akvit – Whiskey, from the Latin, '*Aqua vita*'. אקוויט

Okravkehs אקראוקעס

Referring to very young children before they reach *Heder* age, from the Polish *okrawki*—bits and pieces, cut off?

'Bazolyet' – Wet. When a child wakes up wet from [being asleep in] bed. 'באזאליעט'

'Bozhetsa' 'באזשעצא'

A *golyuba* (a royal holiday) in which all the *Heder* children would be assembled in the *Bet HaMedrash*, and later, when there was a Russian school for Jewish children – the students of that school [as well]. The *Hazzan* would sing the Russian National Anthem with them on the *Bima,* [beginning with] 'Боже, Царя храни! ' – God Watch Over the Czar.' The children, as well as the adults would shorten this to '*Bozhetsa.*' The '*Bozhetsa*' was also sung when there was a reception for a governor or a general. At the singing of this piece, the 'Старший-Стражник' (most senior police officer) would always bear witness, and he would perform 'Честъ,' This means: he would stand at attention, and with sword in hand, he would place his right hand on the right side, in salute, by his ear.

Batronchik (or Patronchik) באטראנטשיק

This is an added name for a Yeshiva student studying away from home, and who requires support in the form of daily meals. It is derived from the word 'patron--' indicating the need for a sponsor, or ombudsman: such a dependent Yeshiva student would retain the child of *balebatim*, for a specific salary, to be his 'Patron.' – to impart to him acceptable forms of religious observance, and behavior, and to study a page of the *Gemara* with him. One would sing: *'Az Okh und Vey Tsum Batronchik's Yorn/As Er Darf Fun der Haym Avekforn/ Oy Vey, m'Vert Farlorn/ Shoyn Besser Az m'Iz Nisht Geborrn...'*[125] and so forth – following the alphabet. I no longer remember the remaining verses.

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124 'Deceived, deceived in the gut, Moshe Yokhes, kiss my ass...' A rhyming taunt that is effective in the original Yiddish, but loses its impact on translation.

125 'It is woeful and painful to the life of a Batronchik/That he must travel away from his home/O, woe, one can become lost/It would be better already to not have been born...'

Botchan באטשאן

A stork (in Polish, *Bocian*). When the *Bocian* would come flying, in spring, and settle on the roof to build a nest – the children would sing: '*Kalleh, der Bocian vet kinder brengen'*.[126] [The sentiment comes from] the folk superstition that a stork augurs the coming of children. However, this too was modified: '*Kalleh der Bocian – Kinder Brengen…*' from [Isaac Bashevis] Singer's book, 'A World that No Longer Exists' (p. 215), he documents another version: '*Bocian HaMelech – Di Nest Brennt!'*

Bolbot באלבאט

Someone who talks too much, from the Russian '*Bolbotukha.*' *'Er iz a Bolbot. Di moyl farmacht er nisht.*'[127] A woman is a '*Bolbotukheh.*' One would engage in the witticism: *Ven er iz a 'Baal Bitokhn,'* (saying little and trusting in God) then she is a *Bolbotukheh….*'

Banumenish באנומענish

A comic description of a small gentile child: '*A banumenish, nokh nisht fun dr'erd oyfgevoksn*!'[128] The term '*banumenish*' was often applied to the Devil, or any one of his emissaries, not wanting to utter his real name.

Bankeh באנקע

A small closed copper vessel, with a small opening on top, with ears by which it could be held. It was used only for preparing tea. From the Russian '*Banka,*' – a tin can.

Bakn Bagel… באקן בייגל...

If you wanted to curse someone, one said: 'go to hell and bake bagels!' This is derived from what a bereaved person ate, upon returning from a funeral: bagels.

'Barshbier' 'בארשביר'

Bavarian Beer, a type of beer that was obtained from the beer brewer, in bottles.

Borshtz mit kartoshkehs בארשץ מיט קארטאשקעס

Zambrow children would line themselves up like soldiers, go out into the street, imitating and singing like the Russian soldiers, as they used to march through the streets.

Once would sing:
Ay sil, zakusil! (I have eaten and stuffed myself).
The others would respond in chorus:
Borshch mit kartoshkehs!

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126 Bride, the stork will bring children.

127 He prattles constantly. He never closes his mouth.

128 A shrimp not yet grown up out of the earth!

Bashventslen בּאשוועניצלען

A comic expression referring to the Christian rite of sprinkling holy water, considerably altered from the Polish, *uświecić*.

'***Burkeh***' – A kiosk in the marketplace, where soda water was sold. 'בּוּרקע'

Bulbeh בּוּלבּע

An ink stain on the paper. Also, a '*bulbeh*' was a potato, as in Lithuania, where it became known in the folksong, '*Zuntig bulbehs, Montig bulbehs*...etc.

Baym Vant Un In Mittn בּיים וואנט און אינמיטן

Children would fight over who would sleep up against the wall, and who – in the middle. So it was said:

Ver es ligt bei der vand	Whoever sleeps against the wall
Vet hobn a goldeneh land!	Will have a golden land!
Ver es ligt in mitn –	Whoever sleeps in the middle --
Vet hobn a goldeneh shlittn!	Will have a golden sleigh!
Ver es ligt beim eck	Whoever lies at the edge
Vet hobn a shissl mitt...[dreck].	Will have a bowl full of....[shit].

Ba'agalah uVizman Kariv – בּעגלא ובזמן קריב

Oyb ba'agalah = it is then a wagon[129]
Iz bizman koriv – a sleigh!

'***Bekker***' 'בּעקער'

A liar, because he is always 'baking up' fresh lies. 'He managed to bake up this lie on a cold oven.'

Brudero ברודערא

A gentile brother, with the Hebrew suffix 'ra' – someone who is wicked. *'Di shikseh hot a brudera – iz er ehrger far ihr. Zoll em die erd araynnehmen un tsen mohl aroysvarfn.'*[130]

Boruch Ata! – If someone began to recite a blessing, but could not proceed, people would reply: '*Fiddl Data*.'

Gut Morgn Korev!.. A deaf Jewish man, who sold dairy produce was traveling confidently from the village to the city to sell butter and cheese, at the time his wife had given birth to a baby boy. Another person encounters him and says: '*Gut Morgn Korev*! The deaf man replies: I am traveling into the city! – Is it far from the city? – He replies: My wife had a baby boy!

-- Will you give me a good price?
He replies: Three Gulden a pound.

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129 A nonsense rhyme.

130 The gentile woman has some kind of brother – he is worse than she is. The earth should take him in, and eject him ten times over.

Gimzhet – A light rain is falling.
גימזשעט



Page 361: An Outing on Tisha B'Av – Notice the covered heads, which serve as a protection against the age old custom of youngsters throwing prickly nettles into the girls' hair on that day.

Glokn-Lidl! גלאקן-לידל!

The [sic: Jewish] Zambrow children suffered the greatest trouble from the priest and his servants, who would incite the gentile hooligans, and would sic their dogs on the Jewish children. If a Jewish child should happen to draw near the priest's woods, he could not be sure of his life. The fat-bellied priest would seize the child, pull on his ear, and often knock off his hat. As a result: when the [church] bells would ring, for a holiday, or a gentile funeral, the Jewish children would take revenge by saying, in time with the pealing of the bells: *A kraynk, a kraynk, zoll lygn, zoll laygn, dem galakh, dem galakh, in ponch (belly) arayn!*[131]

Glugleh גלוגלע

A foolish girl, from the Old German 'Gluka –' a cackling chicken, that sits on her eggs! '*Zi iz a groyseh gluka, farshtayt nisht fun danen biz ahin.*'[132]

'Gelkhl' 'געלכל'

Literally: the yolk of an egg. In the shtetl, however, it was a term applied to a blond Jewish man.

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131 An illness, an illness should lay him low, right in his belly.

132 She is a big fool, and doesn't understand anything from hither to thither.

Geleh Tshatch געלע טשאטש

A blond girl. Rarely, this term might also be applied to a blond boy. This comes from the Russian '*Tchetcho*' – a doll, a sensitive child, or from the Polish, *caca-cacko*!

Geshmadeteh Haldz געשמאדטע האלדז

A nickname for a glutton, who cannot control himself, and eats everything – '*Zyn haldz is geshmadet!*'[133]

'Gerirt di Meryneh' 'גערירט די מריינע'

Insulted someone. It is an alteration of '*Morenu*.' Once there was a '*Morenu*' who did not have the honorific title of a 'Scholar.' When he was called to the Torah, he was not accorded the courtesy of being called '*Morenu haRav*...' – so it was said that his '*Morenu* dignity had been touched.' Also, with irony, it might be said of an individual, who is unworthy of the formal courtesy extended to him: '*A Shayneh Meryna*!' It is from this, that the children's song is derived:

'Shayneh-Meryneh Ketzeleh:	'Pretty little honorable kitten:
Bak Mir Op a Pletzeleh!	Bake me a small flatbread!
Shayneh-Meryneh Kotz,	Pretty honorable [big] cat,
Bak Mir Op a Platz!'	Bake me a full-sized flatbread!'

Geshmoltsener Shtern געשמאלצענער שטערן

Someone with an inflated opinion of himself. It is possible that this is derived from the ancient practice of anointing the King or the High Priest with oil. Accordingly, their forehead was 'lubricated.'

'Grobbeh Kopchekheh 'גראבע קאפטשעכע'

A nickname for a woman or a man, who is thick-headed, and cannot grasp what is being discussed. This name, in the city, was applied to a specific lady cook, a widow. It is possible that it was her husband, who was called the 'Grobber Kop!'[134]

Gramzhet – He is eating without appetite. He chews, and chews, but does not swallow. גראמזשעט

'Griner Shavuos' 'גרינער שבעות'

Used to describe someone who looked bad, and was green and yellow. On *Shavuos*, the house would be decorated with all manner of greens.

Gesirkheh (Gesrokheh) – A bad odor, bad behavior, that denigrates a person. געסרחה

'A kind ohn a mann	[To bear] a child without a husband
Iz a groyseh gesirkheh,	Is to make a big stink,

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133 The word '*geshmadet*' in Yiddish means to have converted away from Judaism. The inference here is to the lack of discipline and control of a gentile, i.e. his gullet has become like a gentile's gullet, and is insatiable.

134 The Fat Head.

Hot zi farshemt — She brought shame upon
Di gantseh mishpokheh!' — The entire family!'

(From a folk song, which was sung in Zambrow about 50-60 years ago, quite possibly when such an incident occurred).

Gret –dirty underwear. '*Mann vasht gret.*' גרעט

Grekhecheh גרעכעטשע

A '*gragger*,' used on Purim to smite Haman, that the children would fashion out of metal or wood. The older children would make a sort of rifle out of thread spools, or make a shingle gun out of a roof shingle.

Didkeh (Ditkeh) דידקע (דיטקע)

Three kopecks, from the Latin duodecem = 12. This means 12 half-*groschen*, which would make 6 whole *groschen*, or 3 *kopecks*. The poor people in town would receive a half-*groschen* as alms. However, half-*groschen* were in short supply, so the *balebatim* would buy 'a *didkeh*' from the *Gabbai* out of the *Tzedaka* – this would be 12 chits for 6 *groschen*, with the stamp of the community affixed on them, along with the writing: 'Half of a Large,' meaning a half-*groschen*. The poor person would collect these chits, and exchange these '*didkehs*' for 6 real *groschen*. In time, the 6 *groschen* piece also became known as a '*didkeh*:' girls would say to the musicians: 'Have a *didkeh*, and giver me a dance.'

Direh Gelt דירה געלט

This is rent, which also was paid in Zambrow. Not once did poor Jewish people have trouble with the landlord for not paying rent. Because of this, children would sing:

'Kumt arayn der baleboss — The landlord comes in
Mit der groyser khaliapeh, — With his big mouth,
Git men em nisht kayn direh gelt, — If he is not given the rent,
Shtelt er aroys di kanapeh!' — He sets the couch outside!

And then the entire *Heder* of little boys would chime in:

'Oy direh gelt dem baleboss, — Oh, pay the rent to the landlord,
Direh gelt dem Часовой (Watchman) — [Pay] the rent to the watchman
*Oy direh gelt, oy, Боже Мой (*My God) — Oh, the rent, oh my God'
Oy, oy, oy, oy oy! — Oh,oh,oh,oh, oh!

This is a phrase from a well-known folk song, which comes in different variations. In Lomza, instead of saying '*khaliapeh*' (= big mouth) – they would say '*shliapeh,*' from the Russian, шляпа (hat).

Dreibeh (Dribkeh) דרייבע (דריבקע)

The leftover parts of a bird, which the poor would buy for the Sabbath meal: the head, the guts, wings and feet, or a small scrawny diminutive chicken. This is what the Russians called the Polish eagle, which to them, looked like a sawed off scrawny chicken, when compared to the double-headed

Russian eagle. It is from here that the '*Litvak*' pejorative is derived, used to belittle the dignity of a Polish Jew: *'Poylisheh Dribkeh!'*

Drengenish – A special descriptor for diarrhea. דרענגענישׁ

Halb-Shulzeit האלב-שולצייט

The recess in the *Bet HaMedrash*, between *Shakharit* and *Musaf* services, especially on the High Holy Days. Women, who would go to synagogue to pray on the Sabbath or Festivals, would take their *Halb-Shulzeit* break when the reading of the Torah was commenced, and they would go home to feed the little children.

'Hakn' 'האקן

To gorge, to eat quickly, by taking large bites: '*Er hot arayngehakt a ganzen lebl brayt.' 'Moishe und Ahar'n zitsn beim tish, hakn bulkehs, essn fish.'*[135] (From a Yiddish-Russian folksong).

'Haktsehs und Broktsehs' 'האקצעס אוּן בראקצעס

Cut him up and break him into pieces. When someone has stubbornly refused to give in on a matter, one said: '*khotch haktsehs und broktsehs*,' meaning that if you cut him up and broke him up into pieces, he would still not go along.

Heint ayns, morgn tsen... ...היינט איינס מארגן צען

Gentiles would stop to make a mockery of a Jewish funeral procession, when everyone else was crying and wailing. Because of this, Jewish children would retaliate: at a gentile funeral, the Jewish children would say:

Heint aynem – morgn tsen	Today one – tomorrow ten
Alleh teg – zoll men ess zehen!	May we see this – every day!

Avadeh iz gevehn a vasserfirer... – א וודאי איז געווען א וואסערפירער

If someone said, among other things, '*Avadeh is er gevehn*!' then the rejoinder would be: '*Avadeh iz gevehn a vasserfirer*[136] (a play on the Polish word *woda* – meaning water).

Vu – Voss – Vehn? ? וו – וואס – ווען

a. If one of the children would interrupt a conversation and ask: '*Vu*?' Where?

He was answered by:

'In tokhes bei der ku!' In the cow's ass!

This would cause him to fall silent.

b. If another boy would ask '*Vehn?*' When?

The answer returned was:

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135 He wolfed down a whole loaf of bread. Moshe and Aharon are sitting at the table, wolfing down rolls and eating fish.

136 For sure – he was a water-carrier.

'Der tateh hot dir geshmissen, 'Your father whipped you,
Kh'hob alayn gezehen!' I saw it myself!'

c. If the question was '*Voss?*' What?
The reply was '*Voz iz a gandz.*' (Russian-Polish) '*Voz*' is a goose

d. If one said '*Mali-Voss?*'

The reply that came back was: '*Malyi voz*' is a small wagon (Russian-Polish).

Vi Azoy? One would ask: '*Vi Azoy*?' The answer returned: *Lamcheh derei*! ווי אזוי?

Gei in kutseh[137] – Lay an egg.
Heint ayns, morgn tsvei, Today one, tomorrow two,
Un farbeiss mit a gomulkeh shnei! And have a snack of a ball of snow!

Ver vill? וועך ווילן?
When a group of children would be asked: *Ver vill*? – they were all supposed to remain silent. The one who blurted out and said '*Ikh*,' caused all the children to mock him with the refrain:

'Ikh? Gay in kikh, I? Go to the kitchen,
Farbren di shikh, Get your shoes burned,
Ikh vell essn lokshn mit mikh (milkh), I will eat noodles and milk,
Und du vest essn proshakehs mit khazer. And you will eat baking powder with pig.

Wojtek – The name of a simple gentile, and often used to describe a young boy attending Heder, that does not want to learn. Fun would be made of an ignoramus, who in reading the Shema, would say '*veAkhalta veSawojtek*' instead of *veAkhalta veSavahta*.'

Vyser Polk וויסער פאלק
This was the way the dead were referred to, because they were all dressed in white shrouds, as if in uniform, like soldiers. '*Er iz gegangen in vysen polk arayn*,'[138] indicates that the individual being referred to has died.

Zokhn – Tribulations. A Jew is sick, or a gentile perpetrates '*zokhn*,' or 'he is sick.' When a wealthy person falls ill, and distributes tzedakah, so as to earn some consideration in heaven, it would be said in the shtetl:

'Az der noggid toot kreynken und zokhn, When the rich man suffers illness and tribulation,
Hot der oriman voss tsu kokhn!' The poor man has something to cook!

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137 Author's footnote: a warm nest under the oven where a hen might lay an egg, from the Polish, kucza

138 He has gone into the 'White Division.'

'Zokhenish' – A satirical reference to a daughter. Especially a gentile daughter. 'May his '*zokhenish*' be the redemption. She is already 12 years old.'

Zoress Shpiln זאַרעס שפּילן

The trumpeting of the military guard in the barracks, at night – as a signal that it is time to go to bed, and also before dawn – that it is time to get up (from the Russian заря – reveille, tattoo). The reverberation of the trumpets at night, would serve as a timepiece for the Jews: a signal when to go to sleep. The pious would rise in the morning with these signals, to attend the first morning prayer *minyan*, or go to open up shop.

Zunero – A little gentile son, with the suffix 'reh', meaning wicked (in Yiddish 'ro') is the way all the members would be counted out in the family of a wicked gentile: der *tatero* (or *fottero*), di *mamero*, der *shvoggero*, der *brudero*, di *shvestero*, di *shviggreo*, etc.

Zyreh -- see Yayreh

Zhomb – A frost. '*S'hott gekhapt a frestl, und shpetter gevorn a zhomb.*'[139] זשאמב

Zellner Gehen... זעלנער גיען ...

There were three brothers. One had affected eyes, so the doctors ordered him not to rub them. The second had an elflock[140] and so he was forbidden to scratch himself. The third has polyps, and he was not allows to pick his nose. One time, soldiers were going by. The first then remarked, rubbing his affected eyes: soldiers are going by! The second then asks, scratching his head: Where? Where? The third then answered, picking his nose, right and left: There! There!

Khaliapeh חאליאפּע

A big mouth, '*Er hot ge'efent di khalipeh un ongehoybn shiltn.*' See above: '*Direh Gelt dem Baleboss.*'

Khalaytsehs (Khalaytsehs) חאלייצעס (כאלאיצעס)

Large bread loaves made from white flour (*Challah* flour), often four-sided like a long brick. This would be sold to the gentiles, when they would come for a fair or a market, or be going to church on Sunday. The name comes from the Yiddish, '*Challah.*' If the *Challahs* in the oven didn't come out right, one would say: 'those are *khalaytsehs*, not *Challahs.*'

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139 A bit of a frost settled in, which later on became more intense. Polish: *ziąb*

140 An elflock, also known as the Polish plait usually results from deficient hair care. Uncombed hair becomes irreversibly entangled, forming a matted, malodorous and encrusted or sticky moist mass. It may be caused by or accompanied with lice infestation (pediculosis) and lead to inflammation of the scalp. The disease may be easily prevented by standard hygienic practices, such as washing and combing of the hair. Treatment involves cutting the affected hair.

Khashliero חאשליערא

The wedding of a wicked gentile, having the suffix 'reh' appended, and intended to reflect the sound of '*khaleria*' [sic: cholera](see *tatero, mamero, shvestero, brudero*).

Khalleh-Bandeh חלה-באנדע

A small *Challah*, which would be baked either on Fridays, or before Festival Holidays, for children. This would also be shortened as '*bandeh*.' It comes from the Latin root, '*bon dia*' meaning 'good day, i.e. *Yom Tov* – a Festival Holiday. In the *shtetl*, it also served as an 'added name,' There was a woman, a seller in the market, who was called by this name (see: '*Matzo Zu!*').

'Khatzi-Gadol' חצי-גדול

A half groschen, in the parlance of the charity organization (see *Didkeh*).

Tatero – A gentile father, with the suffix 'reh' meaning he was wicked. Similarly: *Mamero.*

Tokhtero – See *Tatero, Zunero,* etc.

'Tatulu Mamulu' 'טאטולו מאמולו'

Winter, during the nights of Christmas (*Boże Narodzenie*), the observant gentiles would blow small trumpets at night. The Jewish children would then sing along with the same tune and cadence: '*Tatulu, Mamulu, ess dem kugelu!*'

Tomer Iz Gevehn a Yiddeneh! טאמער איז געווען א ייִדענע!

If someone expressed doubt by saying, for example: '*Tomer vet er nisht velln?*'[141] Another person might wittily reply: *Tomer (Tamar) was a Jewish lady!*

Tantz- Klass – In the Zambrow dance class, the dance master would admonish the boys and the girls, who were not dancing well, and said to them in the tune and cadence of a waltz:

'Herrn und Damen, a klog tzu eikh! Ladies & Gentlemen, woe unto you!
Goyishe keplakh vaksn auf eikh!' You are developing gentile intelligence!

The girls would then retort, using the same melody:

'Hot nisht faribl, mir gehen nisht gikh, Please don't blame us for not moving spritely,
Vyl mir hodn tserisseneh shikh!' Because we have torn shoes!

(Heard from my mother)

Az Di Maydlakh Gehen Tantzen... ... אז די מיידלאך גייען טאנצן

Once in a while, a significant amount of time would go by, until the girls would save up money, [to pay] for the musicians, and they wanted to go dancing. A short dance cost a *ditkeh* – three kopecks. Occasionally it would happen that the girls barely made it to get the money together – and the

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141 Maybe he won't be agreeable? A homonym play on the Yiddish *tomer* (טאמער) and the Hebrew *Tamar* (תמר).

musicians would suddenly vanish. So they would say: *'Di Maydlakh Gehen Tantzen – Geht der Klezmer fi…*[142] (See *tzvantzig kopekehs*). This would also be used in the *Bet HaMedrash*, when the congregation was already present – and the person supposing to lead the service, or the *Maggid*, went off elsewhere…

Topp Tsimmes Flieht! טאפ צימעס פליט!

A 'recognition game' used to be played. Each one would lean a finger against the hip of the leader. The leader would ask various questions. What flies – or not. He would raise his finger at each question. The players, however, needed to remain alert: 'A little bird flies!' – pick up the finger; a stork flies – pick it up: An air balloon flies ! – pick up the finger. A pot of *tsimmes* flies – do not pick up the finger. Some, however, would raise their finger also, when they were not supposed to, and would be fined with '*pitkehs*' (a sort of penalty [see below]).

Torakh טאראך

Someone who tears things. Someone who quickly tears a garment or a shoe, *'Er is a groyser torakh.'*[143]

'Toyber Yash' 'טויבער יאש'

A nickname for someone who is half deaf, who can hear a little, but doesn't quite hear it all. It is derived from the name Tuvia, which in Polish is Tobiasz, which was then modified into '*Toyb-Yash'* – *'Toyber Yash.'*

Tifleh טיפלע

A cloister. A parody of the Hebrew Tefilah [sic: prayer]. *Tifleh* is from the Hebrew – meaning something unseemly (Job 1:22).

'***Tshamzayger***' 'טשאמזייגער'

An epithet for a fool. There was a foolish young man in the *shtetl* that was given that nickname, because instead of a '*vant zayger*' [i.e. a wall clock] he would say '*tshamzayger.*' On that basis, other fools were called by that name as well.

'***Tshukhchak***' 'טשוכטשאק'

A diminutive and scrawny little boy, who is not qualified to be a soldier. It appears to be a word that comes from the Russian barracks.[144]

Tshifshukh – Szczypior (Pol. A Green Onion) טשיפשוך – שטשיפיאר

The green leaves of onions, which were sold at the beginning of the summer, from which a sort of salad was made to be served with meat (with vinegar, sugar, and hard-boiled eggs). Children would make flute-like whistles from the '*tshifshukh.*'

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142 The girls are going dancing – the band is playing.

143 He is very hard on everything.

144 Possibly from чучело, meaning a scrawny bird, scarecrow, or bugbear.

Chelyemok טשעליעמאק

A deranged fool. '*Er is a chelyemok!*' '*Mok*' by itself was also used by the Galician Jews in an expression: '*Kyreh Mok*,' where 'KYRH' is the acronym in Hebrew for '*Keysar YaRim Hodo*' [The emperor, may his glory be exalted].[145]

'Yavnik' 'יאונעק'

Someone who is cunning, who does not let himself be deceived, but leads others around by the nose.[146]

'Yoloss' 'יאלאס'

A clumsy, ungainly young man, especially a tall over-nourished [sic: fat] young man, who is a *grobber yung*, a *zhlub*.[147]

Yaleshkeh יאלעשקע

Equivalent to a calf, that matures quickly into a young cow. In the *shtetl*, however, this is what a cello was called, the large bass fiddle of the musicians, because in Polish, '*czelo*' is the same as '*czelica*' – a calf, a *yaleshkeh*.

'Yaireh' 'יירע'

Signifying Jewish children, a modification from '*Ihreh = Ayereh*' [sic: yours], in contrast to gentile children, who were called '*Zyreh*' – modified from '*Zeyereh*' [sic: theirs]: Three '*Yaireh*' went for a stroll outside the city, and they were assaulted by four '*Zyreh*,' with dogs and clubs.

'Yengalkehs' 'יענגאלקעס'

Wild-growing small pears, that grow in the forest, or near the road, and become ripe to eat at around *Sukkot* time. The gentiles would sell them by the sack. The same name was derisively applied to the gangs of laborers, who during *Hol HaMoed*, would come down from the nearby villages and towns, to look for work, and hire themselves out for a period of time.

'Yendikehs' 'יענדיקעס'

Equivalent to '*Endikehs.*'[148] In secret code language, used in the *shtetl*, this was used to identify immigrants attempting to get to America illegally, without government passports. Agents from ship companies, or '*makhers*,' would conduct them over the border into Prussia. There, they would acquire a ships ticket to travel on further, as far as Hamburg, Bremen, Antwerp, etc., to the [sic: trans-Atlantic] ship.

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145 A possibly hybridization between человек (a man) and the ending 'mok.'

146 Possibly derived from '*Yavan*,' the Hebrew name for Greece. There is a documented Yiddish epithet, '*a Yovn*,' referring to a Russian soldier.

147 Someone uncouth, ill-mannered.

148 Not to be confused with '*Endekists*,' who were members of an anti-Semitic Polish political party in the 1930's.

'Der Yosseml' 'דער יתומל'

Children used to sing a song about a little orphan, who suffers tribulation at the hands of a stepmother: *'Shikt zi em nokh mehl – zogt zi es iz gehl;' 'Shikt zi em nokh tsuker – zogt zi es is bitter,'*[149] etc. A cradle-song was popular, about a baby orphan, that mothers would often sing beside the cradle, to cause their babies to go to sleep:

'The mother lies on the ground,
Her feet already splayed out,
The little orphan lies in the cradle
With eyes all cried out.
There is no more mother,
There is no solace!

Who, my child,
Will smear butter on your bread,
Who, my child,
Will take you to *Heder*?
There is no more mother,
There is no solace!

Who my child,
Will polish and adorn you,
Who, my child,
Will lead you to the wedding canopy?
There is no more mother,
There is no solace!

Etc.

'***Kalleh, der Botchan***' – See '*Botchan*' above.

'Kalleh'leh, Kalleh'leh, Vayn, Vayn'! 'כלה'לע, כלה'לע ווין, ווין!'

Children would twist the word and mimic the '*badkhan*' at weddings and say, using the same tune that he would use to sing to the bride:

'Kalleh'leh, Kalleh'leh, Vayn, Vayn,	Bride, Bride, cry, cry,
Der Khossn vet dir shikn a teppeleh khrayn.	The Groom will send you a small pot of horseradish.
Vest du farrotzn dyneh yoongeh tsayn...'	And you will redden your youthful teeth...'

When a girl would burst into tears, passers-by, or neighbors, would sing this to her, but instead of '*Kalleh'leh'* they would substitute her name.

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149 When she sends him for flour – she says it is yellow; when she sends him for sugar – she says it is bitter.

'Kholyen' 'כאליען'

Sleeping, especially applied to a gentile or general to a ne'er-do-well: *'Er kholyet a ganzen tog, und toot gornisht.*[150] See '*poffn.*'

'Khlayen' – Drinking hurriedly, and in large amounts. ' *A Yid trinkt, a Goy khlayet.*'[151] 'כלייען'

Kapporeh-nik, Kapporeh-nitseh כפרה'ניק, כפרה'ניצע

A gentile youth, or gentile young woman. It is derived from: '*Mein kapporeh zoll er zein!*' '*Er hot geshikt zein kapporenik koyfn mehl.*'[152]

Lahd – Disorder – '*Bei mir iz a groyser lahd, nokh heint di shtub nisht farkehrt.*'[153] לאד

'Lokshnbrettl'[154] 'לאקשנבערעטל'

A collar that was called a '*Hertzl*,' starched and hard-pressed, that was worn around the throat, instead of an outside shirt.

'Lieb dir dein gast!' 'ליב דיר דיין גאסט!'

This was the wish extended to people who were obligated to host a guest for the Sabbath or a Festival holiday, such as: A daughter's prospective bridegroom, an in-law, etc. Usually, a child was sent with a small bottle of wine, beer, or soda water, to a friend, or neighbor, for the Sabbath, after the traditional nap, and the child was instructed to say: My mother sent this along and said" '*Lieb eikh eyer gast!*'

Livereh לוועדע

A *kaluża* (paddle) of water, modified from *riviera* – a water (or as it was said in Zambrow: 'Lirn' instead of 'Rirn.' 'A fliask,' instead of 'a frask.')

Leibtsunak – *leibsudak, leibtsudek*[155] לייבצונאק

A word equivalent to the '*arba kanfot*' *Tzitzit* garment, called a '*tallit katan.*'

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150 He sleeps away the whole day, and does nothing.

151 A Jew may drink, but a gentile guzzles.

152 May he go in my place! He sent his stand-in to purchase flour.

153 I have a big mess on my hands, I haven't swept the house out yet.

154 Literally, the board on which noodles were rolled out.

155 Literally, a skin covering.

'Likhtl' 'ליכטל'

A euphemistic description for someone with a runny nose, like the frozen drops of water that hang down from the roofs and eaves of a window. [Literally: a small candle].

'Lyekken' – Drab singing of no taste. *'A Yid zingt zmirehs, un a Goy lyekket.'*[156] 'ליעקען'



Page 367: On the Bank of the River

Mordeven – Meisterven מאדרעווען

This would be said in connection with someone who doesn't have mastery of a skill, or about a youngster, who was trying very hard to fix something: '*Er mordevet shoyn a gantsen tog, un t'gornisht farricht.*'[157]

Mazhgolehs מאזשגאלעס

Sort of a large potato, which cooks up quickly, but does not taste good. It would sometimes be said of a fat young woman, '*Zi is a mazhgoleh.*'

Mazhen, mazhgen – Being sloppy. Not writing either cleanly or legibly. מאזשען, מאזשגען

156 A Jew sings songs, and a gentile just brays.

157 He's been working at this, for the entire day, and repaired nothing.

'Mazhepeh' 'מאזשעפע'

An ugliness. One would say of a particularly unattractive girl: '*Zi is dokh a mazhepeh!*' This is derived from the name of a Cossack[158] in the time of Chmielnicki[159] or Gonta,[160] who was known as a hater of Jews, and had an ugly face.

'Matchek' (pol. Maciek) 'מאטשעק'

A popular name for a gentile. This also served as a synonym for a dissolute youth, who was not observant, and does not want to study (see further on). If one did not believe someone, one would say: '*Motchek zoll azoy lebn, vi s'iz emess!*'[161]

'Matchek's Gram' 'מאטשעק'ס גראם'

An ill-formed rhyme or song, like a gentile ('*Motchek*') trying to speak Yiddish. '*S'hot a za taam, vi Motchkeh's gram!*'[162] was a retort, when someone gave an inappropriate, or inadequate reply.

'Motchkeh Tepper' 'מאטשקע טעפער'

The name of an unfamiliar person in the *shtetl*: '*Ba Motchkeh Teppern oyf der khasseneh*' – meaning: it never will happen. It appears that there was once a *tepper,*[163] an old bachelor, who never got married.

Mokhchak מאכטשאק

A young, impoverished youth, someone straitened, who would go around [soliciting alms] from house-to-house. His mother would be called a '*Mokhchekheh*' and the entire family – '*De*

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158 Possibly a reference to Ivan Stepanovych Mazepa (1639-1709), Cossack Hetman of the Hetmanate in Left-bank Ukraine, from 1687-1708).

159 Bohdan Zynoviy Mykhailovych Khmelnytsky, commonly transliterated as *Khmelnytsky*; Polish: *Bohdan Zenobi Chmielnicki* (c. 1595-1657) was a hetman of the Zaporozhian Cossack Hetmanate of Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth (now Ukraine). He led an uprising against the Commonwealth and its magnates (1648–1654) which resulted in the creation of a Cossack state. During 1648-49, his anti-Semitic rampage resulted in the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Jews. In 1654, he concluded the Treaty of Pereyaslav with the Tsardom of Russia, which led to the eventual loss of independence to the Russian Empire.

160 Ivan Gonta (died 1768) was one of the leaders of the *Koliyivschyna*, an armed rebellion of Cossacks against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

161 Motchek should live so long, if there is any truth to this!

162 A rhyme in itself, saying: It makes as much sense as a rhyme by *Motchek*.

163 A potter.

Mokhchekhehs.' It is from this, that the expression is derived for those who have been abandoned, who walk about in tatters: '*Er zeht oys vi a mokhchak.*'[164]

Makhn an 'ahver' מאכן אן 'אוועי'

Fetid air. From the Hebrew '*avir*' – air. If one desired to identify which boy in the *Heder* had passed wind, they would walk around and tap on the 'lamp' (the ear lobe), and stop at the one whose lamp was 'lit (or was hot),' which was cause to pull hard on his ear.

'***Makhraam'*** (*The Hebrew* מכוערת?) 'מאכראם'

An ugly girl, and it would be applied sometimes extra specially to a gook-looking girl, so she not fall victim to the 'evil eye.'

Mamero – See *Tatero, Zunero*, etc. מאמערא

Montik in Bodd Arayn! מאנטיק אין באד אריין!

Occasionally, a special messenger would be sent out to announce in the streets: '*In bodd arayn!*' at those times when the baths would be heated up in the middle of the week. When the revolutionaries would end there singing with the refrain:

'Mutik un mutik in kampf arayn!' Into the battle with spirits high!
The little boys would sing afterwards:
'Montik un montik in bodd arayn! Into the baths on Monday, and Monday!

Mashgareh מאשגארע

A mask, which was especially applied to a mask worn at Purim time, which was made by the Heder children themselves. Sometime the word would be transferred to describe an ugly face: *'S'iz dokh a miuskeit, a mashgara!'*[165]

'***Mayvin kol Dibbur***' 'מבין כל דיבור'

A gentile, who understands Yiddish, comes into the store, causing one person to warn the other, in folk-Hebrew, not to blurt out anything derogatory: '*Der orel is a 'mayvin al dibbur, kol oyss!*'[166]

'Ma Nishtanah?' 'מה נשתנה?'

'*Mah'* – why. Children would wittily translate the *Haggadah* as follows:

Farvoss, ikh bin gevehn oyfn groz, 'Why, I was on the grass,
Iz gekummen a hoz, Along came a rabbit,
Un mir opgebissn dem noz And bit off my nose,
Un kh'vayss nit farvenn un farvoss?' And I have no idea why?'

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164 He looks like an abandoned waif.

165 Such ugliness, like a grotesque mask.

166 He understands everything being said, to the letter!

'Makhar Tamuss' 'מחר תמות'

'You will die tomorrow.' When impolite youths would encounter a wicked peasant, working in the field, they would jokingly wish him: '*Dai Bozhe, makhar tamuss*,' instead of '*Dai Bozhe, na pomoc*.' May God help you! Uncomprehending, the peasant would reply, as was customary: '*Pan Bog Zaplac*' – may God repay you in kind. The better type children would not engage in this sort of attempted banter.

'Miuskeit' 'מיאוסקייט'

A euphemism for a small mouse, not wanting to call it by name, while eating.

A Myshev א מישעוו

From the word '*moshav*.' Not rhymed in, '*Bei im in shtub iz a myshev*.' One would joke: In the Pentateuch, it is already written that Jews have a *myshev*: '*And the time the Jews dwelt...*' (Exodus 12:40).

Mishimonkeh מישימאנקע

A '*sumatokha*' or a tumult. 'He cooked up a *kasha* and made a whole *mishimonkeh* out of it.' One would also say, relating to the water in a running brook which was sandy, and had not been allowed to stand: There is, after all, a *mishimonkeh* in the quart [bottle]..

'Malka Meirkeh' 'מלכה מאירקע'

A special name for a Jewish lady who talks a great deal, and it is impossible to get rid of her [incessant] tongue. It is possible that there was a woman, of this sort, who had that name.

'Meskeh' 'מעסקע'

A dead person. Plural is '*meskehs*.' Children would tell: '*Meskehs'* would come into the wreckage of the burned down synagogue, to pray. When they read from the 'Torah' they also call the living to an '*aliyah*' from among those passing by in the street. Children believed that such an individual, once called, did not emerge alive again from their midst.

'***Matzo Zu***' 'מצה זו'

When this was recited in the *Haggadah*, and especially on *Shabbat HaGadol*, one would respond: '*Khalyibondes koo!*' (see *Khalleh Bondeh*).

'M'ryneh' – Modified from '*morenu*.' (See '*Gerirt di M'ryneh*'). 'מריינע'

'***Mnogie lieta***' [Многие лета] (Traditional Russian birthday song) 'מנוגיליעטא'

On official government holidays ('*Goliubka*') when the representatives of the Jews would have to assemble in synagogue to extend respect to the Russian authorities, and children had to sing the Russian anthem along with the Hazzan, the '*Mnogi lieta*' was also sng from time-to-time. That is, 'многие лета, многие лета, православни Цар!' (Many years, many years, Russian Czar of the True Faithful.) Using the same tune, the children would add the following verse:

'Moshe mit Aharon'en zitsn beim tish, hakn bulkehs, un essn fish!' Or,

Moses and Aaron are sitting at the table, gorging rolls and eating fish

'Alleh Yiddn in Yerushalayim, essn lekakh, trinkn L'Chaim!'

All the Jews in Jerusalem are eating honey cake and toasting *L'Chaim!*

Nu – Nu נו – נו

If someone said 'Na!' the rejoinder was: Na-The-Na! If someone said 'Nu!' the reply would be: 'Make a *Motzi!*' This was because whoever had washed his hands, and wanted to make a *Motzi*, and found no bread on the table, would shout at his wife, 'Nu!' – not wanting to break the discipline of uttering a word that was not in the Holy Tongue. It was because of this, that he was answered in this way.

Svorakh – A runny cheese, from the Russian 'творог' (curds). סוואראך

Svarbeh סוואַרבע

An elision of the Hebrew words, '*Esrim v'Arba*' (twenty four), referring to the 24 books of the *Tanakh*. 'He is studying *Svarbeh* already' – he is studying the Prophets. The implication is that he is in an upper class, having completed his study of the Pentateuch.

Stinkehs סטינקעס

Little fish, which was bought mainly during the winter, chopping them up and making '*halkehs*' from them. They were also cooked whole, without heads, in sweet and sour. They would make fun of a cross-eyed woman by saying: She looks at pike fish, and buys *stinkehs*. A skinny and small man would be called '*stinkeh*.'

Siskehs סיסקעס

Elided from '*shishkehs*,' which were prickly fruits that had thorns,[167] which on *Tisha B'Av* would be thrown at the heads of girls, and into the beards of the older men. It was also called '*berelakh*.'

'Smoleh Kop!' 'סמאלע קאפ!'

A shoemaker that would butt into everything, was called a '*smoleh kop*,'[168] because the cobbler's thread was treated with pitch at the tip, so that it would be able to negotiate through the hole that he made with his awl.

Podvereh – Podwórek פאדווערע

A backyard. In the folk argot, the expression: '*B'kitsur haDovor – a podvereh a myseh!*'[169]

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167 In Polish, a *szyszka* is a pine cone.

168 Pitch head.

169 In short, it wasn't much of a story!

Poczantek פאטשאנטעק

The beginning, the start (Polish). If one bought, or sold something on a Saturday night, which brought a substantial profit, was called: '*Makhn a gutn poczhantek.*' This was considered a good omen for income to be earned during the rest of the week. In Lithuania, they used to say '*poczatek.*' In Polish, this would also be elided to '*pierwszy poczatek.*'[170]

Ponts פאנץ

A folk descriptor for a big belly, from the Italian '*pancho.*' '*Er hot bakummen a ponts.*' (See: '*A Kraynk dem Galakh.*')[171]

Poncewkeh פאצעוקע

A stomach ache. In the summer, when one would stuff one's self with unripe cucumbers, one got a '*poncewkeh.*' – stomach cramps, which was very similar to dysentery.

Poplon פאפלאן

A big 'pletzl' [sic: a boardlike bread] made from wole wheat flour, with onion shaken over it, which was baked over an open flame fire, when the oven was being heated to bake bread. From the Polish – *Podpłomyk.*

Poffn פאפ'ן

A vulgar way to express the act of sleeping too much. 'He sleeps until the day is half over, and does nothing.' See '*Kholyen.*'

Poppehs פאפעס

A folk or children's expression for small potatoes, approximately the same as '*bulbehs*' in Lithuania.

'Pakn Tsitrinen' 'פאקן ציטרינען'

To shiver from the cold. '*Tsitrin*' from the [Yiddish] word '*tsiteren*' to shiver.

'Farvorfen' 'פארוואארפן'

To have died. It is an expression used when a wicked gentile dies. '*Der orel is farvorfen gevorrn.*'[172]

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170 It would seem this subtle difference in pronunciation is attributable to the difference between the Polish letter ą (with a trailing 'n' sound) and the more familiar Latin 'a.'

171 Related to the English 'paunch,' which itself comes from the Anglo-Norman '*paunche*,' and Old French, '*pance*'. Hence the connection to the Romance languages.

172 The uncircumcised one kicked the bucket.

Fort a Khossidl tsum Rebb'n פֿאָרט חסידל צום רבין

Children of *Mitnagdim* would make fun of a *Hasid* who travels to his *Rebbe,* leaving his wife and children without anything to eat:

'Fort der Khossid tsum Rebb'n – And so the *Hasid* travels to the *Rebbe* –
Nishtduh di kinder broyt tsu gebbn, There is no bread to give the children,
Fort er mit aleh khassidokehs He travels with all his *Hasidic* claque
Lozt der vyb un kinder – makkess!' Leaving his wife and children – plagues!

The gentile toughs would sing:

Jeszcze Chasyd do Rabina Again a Hasid to a Rabbi
Dzieci krzyczą ni ma! Children yell: there's not!
Oj-Oj co to jest, Oy, Oy, what is there,
Czy to Chasyd Is it a Hasid,
Czy to pies? Or is it a dog?

Farsarget – Farpachket, Farflekt: פֿאַרסַרגעט, פֿאַרפּאַטשקעט, פֿאַרפּלעקט:

Soiled. '*Di hoyzn zynen farsarget mit blotteh.*'[173]

'Fartsoygn'[174] 'פֿאַרצויגן'

Speaking Yiddish in a Polish accent, in contrast to the Zambrow Litvak-Yiddish: 'She is from Poltusk, so she speaks with the vowels stretched out.' '*Ni kim shoyn,' gai shoyn, levooneh, ekh*, etc, instead of: *Nu kum shayn, gay shayn, levoneh, ikh*,

Farfelneh Hittl פֿאַרפֿלנע היטל

A Barashkov winter hat that looks like it had *farfel* shaken over it.

'Parshayn' 'פֿאַרשיין'

a. A passenger in a wagon. The wagon drivers would say thus: '*In der boyd forn 13 parshayn.*'[175] The root for this is the word 'person.'
b. A handsome man. '*Er iz a parshayn, shayn vi di velt!*'
c.

Poshliadkehs פּאָשליאַדקעס

Small plump *pletzls*, baked from a cheap, dark flour, which was called '*poszlienda.*' In the *shtetl,* there was a renown elementary school *Melamed*, who was also my *Rebbe,* R' Israel Chaim Fleischer, who was called: '*Yisroel Chaim mit di podliashkehs*,' apparently because he was fond of eating them.

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173 The trousers are soiled with mud.

174 Stretched out, as the vowels in the words.

175 There are 13 passengers in the covered wagon.

'Pitkehs' 'פיטקעס'

These were blows that children would administer to those who lost a game. A handkerchief was rolled up in the form of a '*nagaika*'[176] and then used to hit the victim.

'Pitch-Potch' 'פיטש-פאטש'

An expression used to belittle someone's doing. In folk argot: '*Pitch-potch umafli la'assot.*' This was as good as: *'Hot opgetohn, gevashn di hent, gezogt, 'Asher Yotzar,' un poter'.*[177]

'Faygl' 'פייגל'

A Russian Ruble, a *kerbl.* This is how we talked among ourselves, so that gentiles would not understand us: it is worth 'a *faygl*,' a 'half-*faygl.*' There was a Russian eagle printed on the Ruble note: a *faygl.*

Faynbroyt – This was how a loaf of bread was called if it was half-black. פיינברויט

A Flok Arayn... א פלאק אריין...

Children would overhear a variety of old-wive's tales in the *Bet HaMedrash*, between the afternoon and evening prayers, or in the street, in the evenings, while they were playing. After the story was told, one of them would get up and say: 'A fleck goes in – a fleck goes out – the story is finished!'

Floyderzak[178] פלויד ערזאק

Someone who prattles incessantly, or someone who can't keep a secret. (See *bolbet*).

Fliokh – Fliokendreh פליאך–פליאכאנדרע

A female busybody, who runs around, and does not sit at home.

Prukhneh פרוכנע

The powder from rotten wood [sawdust?], that is used at the time of a ritual circumcision, to stem any bleeding from the cut. The *Shammes* would bring *prukhneh* to the home where a *Brit Milah* was to take place.

Psharniyeh פשארניע

A kennel for dogs. During winter, when it would be intensely cold in the house, one might say: it is as cold as a *psharniyeh.*

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176 The riding crop of a Cossack.

177 The sense of this is that 'he did what he had to (i.e. used the bathroom), washed his hands, recited the proper blessing (*Asher Yotzar*), and was done with it.'

178 Literally, a gas bag.

'Fichmoomkeh' (Pitchmoomkeh?) 'פיטשימומקש'

An expression applied to a woman who feigns piety and goodness, but in truth she is being false.... possibly from Hungarian?

Tsalaput צאלאפוט

A scatterbrain that does something hurriedly, or, words uttered that were not properly thought out.

Tsushteln a Benkeleh צושטעלן א ביינקעלע

To tell to a father that his son is going in a bad direction, so that he will lay him across a bench and spank him: '*Ikh vell dir shoyn tsushteln a benkeleh farn tatn!*'[179] or, '*Farn Rebbn*!' Children would tremble upon hearing this. On occasions when when the father, or the Rebbe, did put down a child on a bench and strap him, the children would stand around and sing:

'Geshmissener tokhes	'The spanked rear end
Oyf drei brokhes!	Should be for a triple blessing!
Fun oybn a latteh,	A patch on top,
Fun untn a shmatteh,	A rag underneath,
Dos benkeleh shtayt,	The little bench stands,
Der rut shmeisst!	The switch whips!
Der tokhes reist!'	The rear end hurts!'

Tsigeleh Migeleh – We would sing: ציגעלע מיגעלע

Tsigeleh Migeleh, veks in krigeleh	Baby goat, wax in a jar
Roiteh pomerantzen!	Red oranges!
Az der tateh shlogt der mamen	When the father beats the mother
Geyen di kinder tantzen!	The children go off to dance!
As der tateh fort avek,	Should the father travel away,
Geyt di mameh aryn in bet.	The mother takes to the bed.
Az der tateh kumt tsu forn,	When the father travels back,
Vert di mameh a kimpetorn.	The mother becomes with child.
Khapt der tateh a fyertop,	The father grabs a coal scuttle,
Un makht der mameh a lokh in kop!	And makes the mother a hole in the head!
Veynen di kinderlach: oy–vey!	Should the children then cry out: *oy-vey!*
Shrayt der tateh: s'iz gut azay!	The father shouts: it's good this way!

Tsaylomkeh ציילאמקע

A quill that had a cross-shape at its tip, and wrote well. Other quills wre: a '*shiflkeh*' in the shape of a ship, a '*lamed-feder*'' in the form of the letter 'lamed,' etc.

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179 I will place a bench for you, before your father!

Tsaylenish צײלענש

With every game they played, the children used to count, who was to go find the hidden people, who has to locate a place to stand, etc. Accordingly, there were different ways to count:

1. Using a line from the prayers, in which the one 'tagged' with the last word goes free.

2. Using another line from the prayers, in which the one 'tagged' with the last word goes free.

3. The coppersmith: each player puts a finger on the hip of one person, and another person counts: 'Once there was a coppersmith, who had a kettle to hammer out, and he did not know how many nails to drive in. He hammers in one, hammers in two, hammers in three – go out free. And the one on whom the last word falls, indeed goes free.

4. '*Enneh-Menneh, Kuri Fenneh, Otvo Drotvo, Kuripotvo ik Pan – Bobek Frets.*' The one who was designated with '*Frets*' went free.

5. Pulling on knots. We used to bring together the four corners of a handkerchief, making a knot on one of them. The one who drew the corner with the knot – was the one to play, or goes looking.

Tsimmes – I told you and told you and told you: צימעס

Az khassidimlakh firrn zikh b'nimess: When *Hasidim* comport themselves appropriately:
A gantseh vokh, arbeitn zey dokh, They work for the entire week, though,
Un Shabbes essn zey dem tsimmes! And eat their *tsimmes* on the *Shabbat!*

(From a song of the *Mitnagdim* about *Hasidim*)

'Kozholkehs' – Turning somersaults, or cartwheels (head over heels). 'קאזשאלקעס'

'Kozheleh Baran' 'קאזשעלע באראן'

'*Er makht fun ihm Kozheleh Baran,*' He is making sport of him. Taken from a Slavic folk tale.

'Kotcherehs mit Lopetehs' 'קאטשערעס מיט לאפעטעס'

If someone writes, using large and ungainly letters, it would be noted that: *'Er schreibt Kotcherehs mit Lopetehs!'* These are two implements used by bakers. The first is used to shovel out the ashes from the oven, and the second – to seat the bread dough in the oven and to remove it when it is baked.

'Katchkeh Drelekh' 'קאטשקע דרעלעך'

When someone would begin reciting '*El Melech*' – the children would rejoin with: *'katchkeh drelekh*

Mir ohn epply, dir a makkeh in keppl.'[180] [Isaac Bashevis] Singer records another variant: *'El Melech, katchkeh drelekh, mir ohn broyt, dir a makkeh in boykh...'*[181] (from *A World That No Longer Exists*, p. 180).

'Kolats' 'קאלאץ'
This was how one referred to a collapsed and not risen loaf of bread or *Challah*. '*Kolats*' also refers to oil seeds from which the oil had been pressed out, and had been pressed into bricks, and sold as cattle feed.

'Kopvaytik' 'קאפוויטיק'
A specialtype of flower, or leaf, which is drunk, and is steeped in hot water to get '*rumianek,*[182] – a cure used to rinse out eyes that didn't feel well, and especially to drink when one has a '*kopvaytik*' (a headache).

Kapintl – A chapter of Tanakh, instead of '*kapitl.*' קאפינטל

'Kutchkeh Baran' 'קוטשקע בארן'
Carrying a child on one's back, in the manner that one would carry a '*baran*' (a ram) to be sold, There was also a child's game by this name.

'Koykeh' 'קויקע'
A woven basket similar to a trough – in which the fisherman would hold fish for sale.

'KuKeriku!' 'קוקעריקו!'
What dos the little chiken say when she crows at daybreak? She recites song! She says:
'Eier layg ikh, borvess gay ikh, kukeriku!' 'I lay eggs, I go barefoot, *kukeriku*!'

'Kliatch'– An epithet for a fat girl,[183] from '*klacz*' – Polish for a mare. קליאטש

Klyt, Klytl, also *Krom Kreml* (from the Russian клет). קליט, קליטל
In Lomza, this was called a '*boodl.*'[184]

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180 Me without apples, you with a shot in the head.

181 Me without bread, you a blow to the belly.

182 Polish for camomile tea.

183 Translator's note: It is an insight into the values of the speakers that here, the girl is no longer *'a maedel,'* but because she is fat, she becomes '*a moyd*,' an appellation that carries with it a derogatory sense.

184 The Russian is the word for a cage, while the Yiddish is the name given to a marketplace store. In Lomza, it would appear that they preferred a derivative from the word we know as 'booth.'

Kliepak– A coin, worn down from rubbing, that the children would play with. קליעפיק

Kesslgrub[185] קעסלגרוב
A deep depression in a river, from which water flows. It is dangerous to swim near a *kesslgrub*. 'The *kesslgub* near Shimsheleh, every summer, attracts a living thing – therefore, at the beginning of the summer, the custom was to drown a cat, or a dog there, so that it would be possible to bathe in that vicinity.'

Kessl-Kosher קעסל-כשר
Kosher food provided for the Jewish soldiers to eat, who were on duty in the *shtetl*, so they would not have to eat '*trayf*' 'from the *kessl.*' Special emissaries were sent to nearby and distant towns, such as R' Shamehlejzor (Shammai-Eliezer), to gather money to underwrite '*Kessl-Kosher.*'

Kesslpoyk – A large kettle drum in an orchestra. קעסלפויק

'Ketzlmameh' 'קעצלמאמע'
This was the name given to a woman who loved cats, and who devoted herself to them, as if they were little children.

Krok קראק
From Polish, meaning 'a step.' It was used to describe the fly on a pair of pants, that is closed with bottons. 'Your fly is open, button yourself up!'

Kroshkeven קראשקעוון
To crawl around on your hands and feet. Small children '*kroshkeveh,*' before they are able to stand up and walk.

'Royeh Zein' 'רואה זיין'
To keep an eye on the gentile, lest he snatch something away from the store. '*Zei royeh aufn orel!*'[186] – one would say, so that he not comprehend what is meant (see above: '*Mavin kol Dibbur*')

'Roiter Kollner' 'רויטער קאלנער'
Refers to a Russian policeman, a Стражник, who wore red stripes at their collar. He was also called a '*schmirrer*' from the word '*shomer,*' '*shmirah,*'[187] and 'ornament.'

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185 A *kessel* in German is a pot, related to the English word 'kettle.'

186 Keep an eye out on that uncircumcised one!

187 The Hebrew cognate for being a watchman or a guardian.

Reiback – *Reibekhts* רייבאק

A doughy concoction: A grated potato baked in a tin form, the way either *kichel* or *Challah* is baked.

Reibekehs רייבעקעס

Small dumplings made from grated potatoes, that are cooked in water, soup, or milk.

'Reibn' – *Araynreibn* 'רייבן'

To consume, with gusto. 'A bit of bread was left over – so the children consumed it with gusto in the dark' (from a folk song, about a stepmother).

Shvestero – A wicked gentile sister. See *tatero, brudero.* שוועסטערא

'Schuster-Kvass' 'שוסטער-קוואס'

The water in which feet were soaked, that became brown, and acquired a bad odor. This was called 'Schuster-kvass.' The wives of the shoemakers, whose husbands were not making a living, whould say to their husbands angrily:

'Schuster-Kvass, Zoll dir lign a Khalass! Shoemaker's soda Let it lie in your maw!
Schuster-Broyt – Zoll di lign tsum toyt! Shoemaker's bread – Let it lie with you till death!

Shurdeh Burdeh Killeh.... שורדע בורדע קילע...

[A game] played with circles and stripes. Two long lines were scored into the ground, and two other lines were drawn perpendicular to them, crossing them. One side would defend the area, not letting others through to reach the marked area. Should someone get through, his partner would make three circles in all three corners, and he would then lose. He would be called '*shurdeh*' (for the first circle), '*burdeh*' for the second, and '*killeh*' – for the third. If he loses a second time: he is called: '*Kil-noyeh. Kil-yoyeh, bembereh!*' – An elision from the *Haggadah* of *'Ki lo naeh, ki lo yaeh – bimhera beyamenu.*' It would also be used in other games.

Shtulkats שטולקאץ

Elided from *shturkats*. A burning little package that would be carried while singing, leading a bride and groom to the wedding canopy, or on *Simchat Torah* at night, when one would go to the *Hakafot.*

'Shtumeh Lielyeh' 'שטומע ליעלע'

This was said of someone who did not know how to offer a reply.

'Shtunkfass' 'שטונקפאס'

A young *Heder* boy, who was not yet toilet-trained. In the plural it is '*shtunkfasses.*' 'Chaim Reuven the *Melamed* had a *Heder* filled with *shtunkfasses.'*

A Shtroff... א שטראף...

Our *Rebbe* would tell us that in olden times, children would receive severe punishment from the *Rebbe.* The victim's pants would be pulled down, revealing the private parts, with grain sprinkled over them, and the little chickens called in to pick at the grains on those parts. The little boy would

be held down bu the others, not permitting him to move! When the children would act up, the *Rebbe* would threaten us by saying: 'Remember, I will call on the little chickens shortly, and then woe unto you!'

'Shtryker' *(Striker)* 'שטרייקער' (סטרייקער)

A socialist. This is how the organized socialist-workers were called in Zambrow, in the 'fifth year' (1905), because of the strikes that the workers would often call for. In folk talk: '*Stryger.*'

Shitkovaneh Broyt שיטקאוואנע ברוט

A special half-white bread, baked out of sifted roseate flour. In other places (Lomza) it was referred to as 'half-satin bread,' because the flour was sifted through a sieve made of satin thread.

Sholom Aleichem! שלום עליכם!

Sholom Aleichem would be the initial greeting when encountering a stranger, followed by the question: 'And where might this Jewish person come from?' Children would sing as follows:

'Sholom Aleichem, foon vanen a Yid?
(Or, *Sholom Aleichem? A guter Yid!*)
Halber tokhes obgebrieht!

'*Sholom Aleichem*, from where is the Jew?
(Or *Sholom Aleichem?* A good Jew!)
With half his behind scalded!

Shmadalnik שמאדאלניק

A person 'acting like an apostate.' Meaning that he does not wash before eating, does not pray, and even violates the Sabbath.

Shmadpust שמאדפוסט

A derisory term, derived from the the Polish word, '*odpust*,' which refers to a Catholic procession, especially on summer Sundays.[188]

'Shmontseh-Dlonieh' 'שמאנצע-דלאניע'

Trivia, '*Doss un Yents*,' 'He bought a *shmontseh* and a *dlonieh*, and ended up paying a lot of money for it' (heard from elderly Jews).

Shmektum שמעקטום

Someone who is a snoop, who goes about sniffing into everything, to see if there is something not in order. There was a chorister with the *Hazzan,* one of the first members of the chorus, which he had brought in from Odessa, and he was called this, because of the way he behaved.

'Shimshn HaGibber' 'שמשן הגיבור'

If someone would say: 'He is a strong as Samson' ('*Shimshn HaGibber*'), the other party would make a joke of it and say: *'mittn lekhl ariber*' (over the hole).

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188 Using the Hebrew cognate '*shmad'* to refer to the act of leaving the Jewish faith.

20 Kopikehs Kost a Sherl 20 קאפיקעס קאסט א שערל

Boys and girls, at a wedding, would dance the 'Sher' (*a shereleh*), and pay the musicians 20 kopecks for playing it. Little boys, from underneath the window, would sing:

Tsvantsik kopikehs kost a sherl	The Sher costs twenty kopecks
Doss iz dokh gantz tyer!	This is rather expensive!
Az a bokher tantst mit a maedel	[But]when a boy dances with a girl
Brennt in ihm a fyer!	A fire burns inside of him!

'Schmeisser' 'שמייסער'

A wagon driver's assistant, an apprentice, that is learning how to handle a horse and wagon. In other cities,[189] this was the term used to describe a Jewish person who would do a 'deal' with a train conductor, paying him a specified sum, in place of buying train tickets which cost a great deal more.

Shkyakh 'שקיאך'

An elision of '*Yasher Koach*,' being a means of expressing thanks. When a *kohen* would descend from the *Bima* after performing the *Dukhan* (priestly blessing), it was customary to say: 'Shkyakh Kohen!,' to which he would angrily reply: '*Brekh a beyn!'* (Break a Bone) or *'Brokh tihiyeh'* (may a calamity befall you) in place of *'Baruch tihiyeh'* (may you be blessed).[190]

'Tehillim Zogn' 'תהילים זאגן'

Those more liberal sorts, who would afflict themselves by not eating or sleeping, in order to lose weight, would call the nights they did this '*Tehillim Zogn*.'

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189 Author's footnote: From I. B. Singer's *A World that No Longer Exists*. p. 79.

190 The hostility of the *Kohen's* rejoinder is somewhat mystifying, but may lie in a proverb suggested to me by the Yiddishist Chaim Werdyger. The sanctity surrounding the *Dukhan* requires that the priests, offering the blessing, remove their outer footwear (see Exodus 3:5). It is possible that pranksters may have given rise to the following Yiddish saying: 'When the *Kohanim* are *Dukhaning*, their boots are stolen away.' If true, it could explain the angry reply. Another school of thought suggests that this might be a stratagem to divert the 'Evil Eye' away from someone who has just been blessed by the *Kohanim*.

B. The Jewish Agricultural Calendar in Zambrow



Page 382: A Group of Young Girls

When we were driven from our homeland, and became scattered and spread out across the world, we also lost our relationship to Mother Earth. In the lands of the Diaspora, we no longer committed ourselves to working the land. However, a little bit at a time, we acclimatized ourselves to the climate of our surroundings, and together with the Torah portion of the week, and the Festivals, we fashioned a 'green calendar,' meaning: the vegetables and fruits of the season became woven into the Jewish calendar and Jewish customs. I will here recall that 'green calendar,' from my little *shtetl* of Zambrow, in the first decade of the twentieth century.

A. *The Month of Nissan.* Observant Jews go out into the fields to bestow a blessing on the trees that are beginning to bloom.

B. The *Parsha* of *Shemini.* When the *parsha* of *Shemini* is read, the stork comes flying in from warmer climates. This was a sign to the огородникй[191] to conclude their negotiations with the nobility and with the priest, concerning the maintenance and care of the garden or orchard. At the same time, a Jewish man, from deep inside Russia would come to negotiate in the Zambrow gardens. Accordingly, he was called 'The Stork.'

C. *Karpas.* So we would begin to consult with one another what to use for *karpas* at the Seder – which green vegetable is most appropriate of the Passover at hand – parsley, a baby carrot, or a small potato altogether?

D. *Pepper.* The Zambrow Rabbi forbade the use of pepper during Passover, because the pepper merchants would adulterate the pepper with flour, to add weight... but how can you eat fish without pepper? What kind of taste would that have? So we got clever: We brought pepper from Lomza, bearing a *hekhsher* from the Lomza Rabbi, because the Lomza Rabbi permitted the use of pepper on Passover: Moshe Aharon Hefner, the big-time colonial merchant would bring pepper, and personally have it ground.

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191 Kitchen gardeners.

E. On the First Day of Passover, the wagon drivers, and other owners of horses, would send their horses out onto the field to pasture, after the winter days. So it was said: On the First Day of Passover, '*Az m'Bencht Tal – Fihr aroys dem pferd fun shtall'* [192].

In the days before Passover Eve, a type of sour grass would sprout in the fields, that the gentiles called 'Hallelujah' – following the song from their Easter prayers.

F. *Rosh Hodesh Radishes*. After Passover, the small radishes begin to ripen, either red or white. They were called '*Rosh Hodesh* radishes' or '*riebelakh*' – because they become ripe at the beginning of the month. The children of the gardeners would bring the first bunch of radishes as a gift for their *Rebbe* in *Heder*.

G. *Lag B'Omer*. The children would say '*Lakh-Boymer*' because the trees laugh, and are happy when they grow. The teachers would go for a stroll into the forest with their students, and have a good time there.

H. *The Parsha of Emor*. This weekly portion that comes out before Shavuot, always comes when the Jews were shearing wool off of the sheep that they would lease from the nobility. The first of the wool would be used – to spin ritual fringes (*tzitzit*), saying: *'Parshat Emor (Emmer) – shert men di lemmer.'* [193]

I. *Shavuot*. A Festival Holiday of Greens: On the eve of the holiday, we would go to tear up ivy with which to decorate the windows, and to spread out on the floor. Bread was even baked over ivy instead of spreading coal out underneath. A pale girl, a '*grinzukh*' was called a *'griner Shavuess'* in Zambrow.

J. *Akdamot*. The '*poktchorehs*' from the surrounding villages would provide Jewish Zambrow with butter, sour cream and cheese for Shavuot. It was not necessary to buy from a gentile. Those who had goats for milk would tether them near the synagogue, or *Bet HaMedrash*, on *Shavuot* in the morning, so they could hear the recitation of '*Akdamot*,' – this being considered a good luck charm leading to the production of much milk....

K. *The Parsha of Korakh*. It is summer time. The first fruit appears in the city. On this week, the black berries come up in the woods. One would say: Today, the earth swallowed up *Korakh* – and has in turn given us berries. Children would 'make juice:' They would pour berries into a small bottle, with a little bit of sugar, squash it all up with a small piece of wood, licking it, and thereby coloring their mouths and cheeks black. At the time of the reading of this weekly portion, the following would also appear: red cherries, and the horseradishes to be used for *khrayn*. And it was, therefore, said: these three mentioned items are the acronym (in Hebrew) of the portion, '*Korakh*.'

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192 When the blessing for dew is recited (*'Tal'*), lead the horse out of the stall.

193 At the time of the *parsha* of *Emor*, the lambs are sheared.

L. *The Wheat for Shmura Matzo.* At this time, a report was received that the wheat in the fields was ripe for harvest. Accordingly, the observant Jews would organize themselves, travel out into the fields of the gentiles, buy up parcels of land that had wheat growing on them, and they would dry it out and polish it for *Shmura* Matzo for Passover. The Golombeks, who had their own fields, would provide wheat for *Shmura* Matzo for a not insignificant number of Jews, and this was their mitzvah.

M. *Tisha B'Av.* And here comes *Tisha B'Av*. The children would, towards evening, in time for the recitation of '*Kinot*,' go to the cemetery, picking the prickly growth from the bushes, for the purpose of throwing them that evening into the hair of girls, and into the beards of the Jewish men. Accordingly, on *Tisha B'Av*, the girls would go about with their hair tied up in kerchiefs, and the bearded Jewish men would be watchful about their beards.

N. *Little Diaspora Apples.* The black '*Golshe-Eppelekh*' ripen by *Shabbat Nahamu*, from whose juice ink is made for writing Torah Scrolls. We would call them '*Goluss-Eppelekh*' (Little Diaspora Apples) – and this was appropriate for *Shabbat Nahamu*, when we are comforted with words to emerge from the blackness of exile.

O. *Apples.* The best offer of hospitality was a small apple. '*Shabbes-Oybst*' – would mean to be honored with a juicy apple. Sour apples were called 'the apples of Sodom,' and the little apples that grew wild alongside the roads, and on the cemeteries, were called '*Kvoress Eppelakh*' (Apples of the Cemetery). A lout would be ejected from the *Bet HaMedrash* as if he were a sour apple.

P. *Rosh Hashana Apples.* Red, juicy apples would be stored until *Rosh Hashana*, over which the Second Night blessing of '*SheHekheyanu*' would be recited, after which slices of apple would be dipped in honey. In the later years, green grapes and red watermelons would be brought in from Warsaw and Bialystok.

Q. *Small Kol Nidre Pears.* The gentiles would sell sacks of miniature pears, that grew wild in the woods, at the end of the summer. The poor Jews would dine on these. That is why they were called '*Kol Nidre* pears.' Between Yom Kippur and Sukkot, they would be spread out on a bed of straw, up in the attic, and permit them to age. They would turn brown, and were not particularly good to eat, at which point they were called '*Yengalkehs*.'

R. *Skhakh.* The branches of pine trees would serve as *skhakh* for the *sukkah.* Accordingly, these trees were called '*skhakh*' all year round. By contrast, without drawing a parallel, during Christmas, when the gentiles would decorate these trees with all manner of tiny lights, and colored paper, it was then called an 'Idol-Tree' making reference to the gentile deity.

S. '*Zydkowska Wisznia.*' The *sukkah* would also be decorated with the *skhakh* of the *kolina*. This was a special variety that had *kolinas* as large as cherries. The gentiles would bring this for sale at *Sukkot* time and call it 'Jewish Cherries.'

T. *Hoshanot*. During *Hol HaMoed* Passover, the children would make whistles out of the leaves of the willow tree (the tree of *Hoshanot*). The wood would be carefully pulled out of the twig, and make a flute out of the soft core. One the eve of *Hoshana Rabba* – groups of children would go off into the distant fields, near the swamps, cut off the twigs and small branches from the willows, and bring them into the city to sell them as *Hoshanot*.

U. *A Small Garden of Eden Apple.* This is what the gentiles called an *Etrog*. Fyvkeh the Shoemaker would carry around the community *Etrog* throughout the holiday, from house to house, so that the womenfolk would be able to 'bless the *Etrog*' in the morning, and then grab something to eat. He watched it like a hawk (with seven eyes as it were) – so that no pregnant woman accidentally bite off the tip before *Hoshana Rabbah*.

V. *Simchat Torah*. During *Hol HaMoed Sukkot*, the new *Gabbaim* were selected by the various study houses. The new Gabbai would then treat the congregants with wine-flavored apples for the *Hakafot*.

W. *The Parsha of Noah*. We would begin storing up fruit and wood for the winter. The double windows were installed, cellars were filled with potatoes, carrots, beets, and the small windows were plugged up with rags and straw – so that the fruit should not freeze.

X. *Putting Up the Kraut*. The gentiles would bring wagons full of cabbage for preservation. For this purpose, neighboring ladies and members of the family would get together – to help cut up the cabbage for soaking in a large barrel. So we would eat and cook – sauerkraut for the entire winter, and half the summer. The women would not permit the children to eat the 'cores' from the piles of cabbage – believing that it dulls the senses for purposes of learning.

Y. *The Parsha of Miketz*. Very cold frosts. The children, however, would think about the warm fields of Egypt, where the Pharaoh's fat and lean cows took their pasture. In *Heder*, the children would make a translated ditty out of '*Miketz*': *Maczek kup' Czapkeh*' – [sic: from Polish], meaning, Maczek, buy a hat because it is cold. This always falls out a *Hanukkah* time, and the children would further expand the acronym to be: '*Melamdim Kummen Tsum Hoyz*,' – meaning that the students *[melamdim]* from the villages who would return to their homes in honor of *Shabbat Hanukkah*. The *tsimmes* would be made from parsnips.

Z. *Nuts from the Land of Israel.* At about the same time, 'nuts from the Land of Israel' would appear in the stores, also called pistachios – because they are mentioned in the portion of the week. Jacob told his sons to take this, and bring it as a gift to the ruler of Egypt, who is selling them grain.

Children would say that these nuts grew on the cemetery, and when such a nut is opened – you see the head of a Jewish man.

AA. *'Little Hanukkah Candles.'* Under the eaves of a roof, and on windows, little stalactites of ice would form. The children would call them 'little Hanukkah candles.'

AB. *Hanukkah Cheese.* During Hanukkah, especially hard cheese was sold, which was salted, peppered, and covered with coriander. So we called it '*Hanukkah Cheese*,' which Judith gave to Holofernes to eat.[194]

AC. *A Special Entreaty for Trees.* On the Sabbath when blessings were recited to usher in the new month of Shevat, a special entreaty was recited for trees – that they grow and blossom in the Land of Israel, and that they not be harmed by the frost.

AD. *Shabbat Shira.* Buckwheat groats were scattered under the windows for the little birds – as a memorial to the *Manna* that fell in the desert, as is read in that week's portion.

AE. *Khrayn for Passover.* In the same portion, one reads the words '*tishlakh kharonkha*' [sic: send thy wrath] – which served as a reminder to bury the horseradish in the sand, so that it be ready and good for use on Passover for the *Seder.*

AF. *Perlkasheh Cholent.* On that same *Shabbat Shira*, pearl groats [*kasha*] would be put into the *cholent.* Immediately after this Sabbath, one would begin to air out and gather the *shmura*-wheat, pouring it into pristine white linen receptacles, and hang it up on blocks from the ceiling – until after Purim.

AG. '*Fruits of the Fifteenth.*' This was the name given to such fruits as *bokser* (carob pods), figs, dates and raisins, that were bought in honor of the fifteenth day of Shevat [*Tu B'Shvat*]. The fruits themselves were called *khamishosser* [elided 'fifteen']: '*git mir far a kopikeh khamishosser.*'[195]

AH. *Aaron's Cane.* Children believe that this was the week in which Aaron's cane bloomed in the desert and gave forth almonds. In the Land of Israel, this is actually the time when the almond tree does bloom.

AI. *Goat-Bokser.* On the fifteenth day of Shevat, the nanny goat becomes a celebrity in the Land of Israel, because 'Goat-Bokser' is eaten there. We would sing: *'Lamnatsayakh Mizor Shir – Kozheneh Bokser Essn Mir.'*[196] In the cradle song, one also sang: *'Di tsigeleh iz gegangen handlen – Rozhinkehs mit Mandlen.'*

AJ. *An Etrog Prayer.* The *Hasidim* would go out into the woods on *Tu B'Shvat* and offer a prayer there on behalf of the *Etrog,* asking that it grow well, for the rest of the season, and that we be privileged to have a good Etrog become available on the following *Sukkot.*

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194 A tale from *The Book of Judith*, who beheads the Assyrian general Holofernes.

195 Let me have a kopeck's worth of the *khamishosser.*

196 Contrive to rhyme, it combines the Hebrew prelude to a Psalm: 'A song of the Composer' – with the Yiddish ending, 'We are Eating Goat-Bokser.'

AK. *The Very Intense Cold Frosts*. The most intensely cold frosts would come during Shevat, and therefore it would be said: '*Shevat nie Brat*' – 'Shevat is no Brother – It is cold. Also, it was said: 'Shevat halt dem PR"T: *Frest, Regen, Tuman* [Frost, Rain and Fog] – three good icons of the month.

AL. *Shabbat Khazak*. '*Parshat of Vayakhayl-Pekuday – Makht men a Seudeh,*'[197] in *Heder*, because this is the time of year when the young boys stop studying at night. In the *Bet HaMedrash*, when the Reader would conclude the Pentateuch, the reading in the Torah, with the words, '*Khazak, Khazak!*' all the children would respond: '*Kazak, khazak, a shissl pasternak!*'[198] Indeed, on that Shabbat, a parsnip *tsimmes* would be made.

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With the arrival of the month of Adar, the 'green calendar' of my birth *shtetl* comes to an end – a place that to our everlasting sorrow, is no longer green.



Page 388: A Sewing Circle, Operated by a Group of Young Girls

C. Purim in the Shtetl

With the arrival of Purim – everyone in the *shtetl* began to disguise themselves, old and young, the important people in the town from '*Hakhnasat Orkhim*' or '*Hakhnasat Kallah*' would disguise themselves literally as if they were generals: red long trousers, with a wide blue belt over them, as long as the external garment, and a red jacket with gold epaulettes and shiny buttons. A mask on the face, and a tall hat on the head, with a sword at the side. Dressed in this royal garb, they would go from house-to-house, in order to collect monies for the benefit of brides from

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197 *Pekuday* and *Seudeh* are meant to rhyme in this statement, that a feast is made for this portion, ending the reading of the Book of Exodus.

198 A rhyme intending to catch '*khazak*' and '*pasternak*,' referring to a bowl of parsnips.

poor families or for other poor Jewish people. After Purim, they would donate these clothes to '*Hakhnasat Orkhim*,' where the *Shammes,* Binyomkeh *Schuster*, or the *Gabbai* Hershl Tukhman (Hershl Pokczar) would lock them up in a bureau until Purim of the following year. When 'strikers' would appear in the *shtetl*, who wanted to dethrone Nicholas II, the 'Старший-Стражник' (most senior police officer), Bomishov[199] suspected that these people in costume, with their swords, were in earnest, and want to become generals and admirals. He therefore issues a prohibition against costuming. Accordingly, the Rabbi took responsibility, and locked up the costume wear at his own home in the *shtibl* of the *Bet-Din*.

The children would [also] dress up in costumes on Purim. They would tear out a double quarter from a 'koyet' mostly the colored outer pages; they would fold the lower half into a mask, to put under their chin, making two small holes above, for the eyes, a triangular cutout in the middle for the nose, and a small wide cut – for the mouth. Anyone who could draw would add a couple of eyebrows, and a moustache. Others would paste on some cotton or make torches, a beard and side locks – and lo – it became a mask. In the parlance of the *shtetl,* this was a '*mashgara*,' which comes from an Italian word that is as good as mask – 'mascara.' Italian street players, who used to entertain at the fairs in Poland, brought this word [into the country]. Accordingly, the children would put on the *mashgara*, and go from house-to-house, singing:

'Heint iz Purim,	'Today is Purim,
Morgn iz oys,	Tomorrow it is over,
Git mir a groschen	Give me a groschen
Un varft mir aroys..'	And throw me out...'

The Purim actors (*Purim Shpieler*) injected a special form of joy into the *shtetl*. The women in our courtyard would tell us how at one time, a group of boys and girls got together and decided to perform on Purim, in the Women's Synagogue of the *White Bet HaMedrash*, by putting on the play, 'The Selling of Joseph.' The proceeds would be for the benefit of the poor. The men played all the female parts. All the women did was prepare the costumes and the scenery. The singing of the artists reverberated through the *shtetl* for a long, long time. My mother, may she rest in peace, would sing along the words of Joseph the *Tzaddik*, at the time that his father came to him in Egypt:

'Kh'bin gekummen kein Mitzrayim a boymeleh flanzen,	'I have come to Egypt to plant a tree,
Kum tateh Yaakov, lomir baydeh tanzen'...	Come father Jacob, let us both dance'...

However, the women would add, it is not permitted to put on a theatrical performance in a holy place like the Women's Synagogue. Because of this, all the performers were punished. Some of them even died prematurely, and Hershl Tukhman's wife, who sewed the clothes for the costumes, was punished, in that she was unable to bear children...

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199 Because of ambiguity in the pronunciation, this sometimes also appears as Bomishoff.

I recall that, in Purim of the year 1905, when a revolution reigned in Russia, the Yeshiva students decided to put on the play, 'David and Goliath,' in the Rabbi's large salon, as usual – without his knowledge. His son, Chaim-David (today Rabbi and Yeshiva Headmaster in Chicago), took out the special costume clothing from the bureau, in order to dress themselves up as Philistines. At that time, I was 6 years old. I was barely able to squeeze myself into the premises, and saw the first ever play of my life. After the songs of the Jews and the Philistines, King Saul emerges, wearing a golden crown, sits down on the royal throne and sings:

'Ich bin der Koenig Shaul, Har fun der Velt,
Ihr zent meineh yoiatsim, ir zent far mir geshtellt.'

'I am King Saul, ruler of the world,
You are my advisers, you stand before me.'

And then – a large, tall gentile emerges, costumed and moves like Jozef the *Shabbes-Goy*, who lodges in the bathhouse, and heats it up on Friday, living the entire week off the proceeds of earth and clay pot lids, heating them up in the bathhouse oven, and on the Sabbath, going from house-to-house, heating ovens, and getting, at each location, a bit of *Challah* and a shot of whiskey, the first glass of tea, and on Sunday a kopeck as well.

And so, Goliath the Philistine stands there, and sings in front of the Jewish soldiers:

'Ich bin Golyass, gor der groyser held,
Ikh bin der shtarkster fun der gantser velt,
Ver s'vet gayn mit mir milkhomeh haltn,
Dem vell ikh dem kop tsushpaltn,
Dem vell ikh in dr'erd farbaltn.'

'I am Goliath, a truly great hero,
I am the strongest in the world,
Whoever chooses to do battle with me,
I will split his head [open],
And hide him away deep in the ground.'

A deathly fear possesses everyone: who is it that will [dare to] challenge such a great hero? A little boy appears, wearing the cap of a *Hasid,* with curled sidelocks, and a small black kapote, holding a shepherd's sack and walking stick, and shouts into Goliath's ear: You, Goliath, you Goliath. I will do battle with you, I will split your head, and I will hide you deep in the ground.

A shiver runs through everyone's bones: This diminutive David – is he going to assault such a large gentile? So the hero Goliath entreats him going up to him like Jozef the drunkard:

'Klayn Dovidl, klayn Dovidl, avek fun mir,
Kh'gib dir a potch – fliestu tsum tir.'

'Little David, little David, get away from me,
I'll give you a slap – you'll fly to the door.'

And here, Goliath adds a line, unique to Zambrow: '*Ikh gib dir a potch – fliestu kayn Gacz*, – because Gacz is a small shtetl near Zambrow.

Goliath has not yet indicated that he has finished his song, and a stone has already smitten and entered his head. He falls down. David beheads him, meaning his mask, and the Jews are victorious. Saul was at war – and wanted the witch to raise Samuel from his grave. The witch is made up as a '*ketzlmameh*' – a Jewish woman in the *shtetl* without a husband, who would raise a house full of

cats. It was said of her that she was a witch, and had dealings with devils, and in this instance she was called '*Martiszka*' (this is how a monkey is called in Russian). She raises the Prophet Samuel, who comes out of a barrel, all in white...

After the play, one went around from one to the next, with hat in hand, and asked for payment for the play: 'please make a charitable contribution, make a charitable contribution, don't embarrass yourselves in front of fine people – take out a twenty-fiver, we can give you change.'

The following day, the police came to the Rabbi's residence to investigate who here had put on 'revolutionary' theater. It had the appearance that they were informed by David Yudes's the son of the elderly midwife, who was a *Feldscher* and a barber, who was in cahoots with the police, and even legally carried a revolver with him.

D. The Fifth Year (1905)

It was the Sunday of the *Parsha* of *Noah*. I was being taught at Bercheh the *Melamed*, and I was 6 years old. News arrived that the Czar had signed the constitution [sic: into law] and that a demonstration was to take place on the Ostrow Road. Secretly, it was also passed along that Yossl *Mozzik* (a son of Meir-Yankl Modrikman) is making a flag on which will be drawn the head of a pig, over which will be the Russian crown...



Page 391: Three Reputable Workingmen: Shlomo Pekarewicz (a butcher), David Podruzhnik (a house painter) and Chaim Bursztein (a tailor). The children are not identified.

Bercheh the Melamed was, indeed, the spiritual leader of the strikers, the Jewish revolutionaries in Zambrow. He therefore sent out all the children from his *Heder*, to go run and tell all the other

Melamdim, that Heder should be canceled for the day: when the Czar has signed the constitution – that certainly is a time of festival celebration, and one should not be learning in school. I ran along with several other young boys, with Ruvkeh, Bercheh's oldest son, to Pinia the *Melamed*. Pinia rained down a murrain on our heads. His son, however, who was also grabbed up in this event, and sympathized with the revolutionaries, dismissed his father's *Heder*, and told the little children to go tell their fathers and mothers that redemption had come, that – Thank God – we have a constitution.[200]

The streets are redolent with revolution. So we, the little boys, go running to the Ostrow Road, through the swamps, near the bridge, to see how the constitution is being received. The road was black with children covering it, workers, young and old. It was already dusk. A cold wind was blowing. Our teeth were chattering, but I held on fast: I remained to see what was going to take place here. Suddenly, Eli'eh[201] Rosenberg arrives, the older son of Malka Cymbel, a shoemaker, and he takes out a red handkerchief from under his jacket, ties it to a stick, raises up this standard on high, and shouts out: '*Tsar daloy!*' – the equivalent of 'Down with the Czar,' we don't need him any longer, after all, he, Malka Cymbel's son, knows better. Everyone responds with the shout: 'Hurrah, Hurrah!' Another person adds the shout: '*Tson Kedoshim!*' and the throng again responds with 'Hurrah, Hurrah!' The wooden bridge literally swayed. It was as if from under the ground, the '*Oviezdner*' sprouted, the most senior police officer, Bamishov, a squat rotund gentile, who was given the appellation: '*kelberner zodek*'[202] with a red chin, and the nose of a drunkard, holding one hand at the hilt of his sword, and the other on his revolver, and orders the crowd to disperse. He does not know how to deal with this situation: to disperse this illegal demonstration doesn't seem quite right, after all, the Czar has signed the constitution. However, not to disperse it, is also difficult to digest: where is his prestige and might? Meanwhile, a group decided that they would pick up the police senior, and one of them shouted: '*kelberner zodek*!' to which the entire throng responded with, 'Hurrah, Hurrah!'...

The Split into S.S. and S.R.

It was Saturday towards nighttime, and in the White *Bet HaMedrash* the *Maariv* prayers were being recited, and people were getting themselves ready to go outside and bless the new moon. At this moment, a claque of revolutionaries came into the *Bet HaMedrash*: Bercheh the

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200 The time line is interesting. History tells us that Czar Nicholas II signed what is known in history as "The October Manifesto" on Sunday, October 30, 1905, 'pledging a constitution, and extended franchise, and civil liberties.' The news apparently didn't reach Zambrow until one week later, Sunday, November 4. The level of instability is evident in this one – of several – episodes of serious unrest:

Oct. 31: A bloody pogrom breaks out in Odessa - the police stand by while 500 Jews are murdered, and intervene only against Jewish self-defense units.

201 See errata, p. 626.

202 The ass of a calf.

Melamed, Mottl Shafran's son, Israel-David, the son of the *Shammes,* a son of Aharon Luks, Yankl Pravda, his brother-in-law Monusz [Burokewicz], and more and more. A group of them went up to the podium, disrupted the prayer service, banged on the table and called out: whoever belongs to the S.S. should go over to one side, and those left, of the S.R. – should go to the other side... They did this in the *Bet HaMedrash* during worship, in order that the police not seize them. We, the children, did not understand the difference between these two 'world-parties' and we believed that: one was a command to eat *(ess-ess!*), and the second says: he should eat (*ess-ehr!*).

The two parties differentiated themselves in the street: S.R.[203] wore a blue shirt over a white band that served as a belt, and the S.R. – with a red shirt.[204]

Incidents in the Heder of Bercheh the Melamed

Each evening, workers, both boys and girls, would come to learn how to write in Yiddish from Bercheh the *Melamed*, and also learn to read Yiddish, while simultaneously prepare themselves for the great revolution.

On one occasion, a group of secret agents came, and inspected all of the books of the White *Bet HaMedrash* to see if they had been [properly] censored. They found a few books, especially with religious content, without an indication of censorship, and they absorbed the cost, by permitting the books to be tuned over, thereby causing the responsible parties to be set free.

Butchers Get a Beating

Once, on a Saturday night at the onset of winter, a bloody fight broke out between the strikers and the butchers, the so called '*penzhikhehs.*' The situation was as follows: when the *Hazzan* sang, and the butchers listened to him sweetly, Bercheh was carrying on a conversation behind the *Bima* with his revolutionaries, loitering around the *Bet HaMedrash*, here and there. The butchers therefore gave Bercheh a slap for disrupting the *davening.* His followers could not accept this, since it would have impaired their prestige, and because of this, they fell upon the butchers Saturday night, whose custom it was to gather on Saturday nights to settle their accounts.

Blood was spilt, the strikers were splitting heads....the entire city came running...

A couple of days later, Shlomchik the Butcher came to Bercheh in his *Heder*, with his head bandaged, and asked for Bercheh to forgive him for the insult. Peace then returned to the land.

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203 A typo – the intent was to say S.S.

204 The Hebrew version of the text suggest black shirts with red decorations. It also identifies a collective name for both as the 'strikers.'

The 'Prom'

In those years, the government was building a new wooden bridge. The blocks were hammered into the earth, in the water using a '*baba*' – a heavy piece of iron, which was used to strike down on a [butcher] block. In working on bridges, a movable bridge, a '*prom*' was hammered in this way, so that people and wagons could ford the river. The strikers would requisition this '*prom*' each evening, and would go swimming in the river, as far as Pfeiffer's water mill, singing revolutionary songs.

E. The Dance of the Angry

This happened in the year 1905. My grandmother, Rivka-Gittl, was at odds with her elderly *makhatenista*, Chaya Zukrowicz. She was not pleased with the arranged marriage of her youngest son, Berl, with Chaya's granddaughter, Nechama, even though Nechama was also *her* grandchild, but it was to no avail. During the wedding of Berl to Nechama, the two grandmothers were supposed to make up with each other, and they made up with each other through the '*b'Roygez-Tantz*,' the Dance of the Angry, which they danced before the bride was formally covered with her veil (the *badeken* ceremony). My grandmother, Rivka-Gittl, a somewhat stout little Jewish lady, held herself with great pride. The other grandmother, Chaya, was a tall woman, thin, and had a delicate tread. And so the gathering stood around, in a dance circle. Rivka-Gittl stood at one side, full of herself, with her head cast down. The second, Chaya, dances toward her, floating, with a smile on her lips. The surrounding onlookers sing, along with the music:

'*Farvoss binst du b'roygez,*	'Why are you angry,
Ikh vays dokh nisht farvoss?	I really don't know why?
Gayst arum ongeblozn,	You go about full of yourself,
Aropgelozt dem noz?'	With your nose let down?'

Rivka-Gittl does not raise her head, but rather, draws a bit further away, going over to the other side. Chaya, however, chases after her, floating like a little feather towards Rivka-Gittl, with her little smile. The gathering continues to sing. Chaya extends her hand. Grandma Rivka-Gittl withdraws hers, not wanting to make up. So Chaya dances further, approaching from the other side. This causes Rivka-Gittl to soften a bit, and she places her hand over her heart and dances a little, from the other side, towards Chaya. So Chaya again stretches out her hand, and Grandma Rivka-Gittl shakes her head to signal, 'no,' and dances back. The gathering becomes more enthused, and begins to sing, accompanied by the musicians:

'*Lomir zikh ibberbettn, ibberbettn,*	'Let us make up, make up with one another,
Di velt is dokh a kholem,	The World is but a dream,
Lomir zikh ibberbettn,	Let us make up,
Lomir makh sholem!'	Let us make peace!

And so Grandma Rivka-Gittl dances again, forward, towards Chaya, and Chaya towards her. By this time, both are extending their hands to each other: The throng sings: '*zikh ibberbettn*, *zikh ibberbettn,*' and the musicians let themselves go: '*ibberbettn, ibberbettn*,' and so the two sets of hands become intertwined, and each takes the other in their arms, exchanging kisses. And the throng does not hold back, singing vigorously, and clapping with their hands: '*Lomir zikh ibberbettn, ibberbettn*!' The fiddle of a musician from Tyktin helps out with a sibilant sigh: '*ibberbettn, ibberbettn*,' and Goldechkeh's son picks up the refrain on his violin. The juniper branch from Chaya's husband, that was banged uncontrollably, and Shimon the drummer drums along: '*zikh ibberbettn, ibberbettn...*' By now the two *makhatenistas* have broken out into a dance, each with a hand on the other's shoulder... until their two husbands arrive. The groom places the veil over the head of the bride, and Sonya the *Badkhan* (Merrymaker) from Bialystok, gets up on a bench, and serenades the bride, accompanied by the musicians.



Page 394: At the Grave of the Mother

Known as 'the Son of Goldechkeh,' a skilled musician and barber, one of the circle of intellectuals among workingmen, [in Zambrow], standing beside his mother's tombstone.

F. The Exceptional and Challenged

Each *shtetl* had its 'poor souls.' These were people with some defect, crippled, mentally disturbed, etc. – for whom fate had decreed that they would not possess all of the human capacities and prerogatives. The *shtetl* would support them, look after them, and sometimes also abandon them... part of them would become imbedded in the panorama of the *shtetl*, as for example, 'the town lunatic,' like '*kielbasa*' at one time, became an expression for a bad odor. However, without it, the High Priest in the Temple was not able to formulate and present the '*captured*' sacrifice.[205] I am now going to describe a number of these poor souls, from my memory, so that they too, are memorialized in this *Pinkas* of the city. I also ask their forgiveness for instances where I may have caused any of them embarrassment – which was not my intent.

A. Alter Koty

On one fine morning, a cripple crawled into the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, leaning on his crutch. He looked like a pig on two feet, feigning human appearance. He immediately elicited a sense of compassion from everyone, and God-fearing Jews brought him something to eat. Children immediately sensed that they had for themselves an object of derision, and, from their side, began to toy with him. His name was Alter, and he was born to his parents, after several children died prematurely after birth. He was born frail – in the village of Koty, not terribly far from Zambrow.[206] His parents died, and he was left alone. Good people would give him a sack with bread pieces, an onion, a bit of sugar, sat him in a gentile wagon, that makes the trip to Zambrow, to the market, and the asked of the gentile that he be let off at the *Bozhnitza*, meaning the Red *Bet HaMedrash*. The gentile took pity on the cripple, and brought him up to the entrance. And from that time on, Alter Koty became a Zambrow citizen, looked after by the *Bet HaMedrash*, and was even counted towards a *minyan* at every session of prayer.

He was a whisperer, and would clam up when a conversation would ensue. However, he was intelligent, and spoke directly to the point. Children would aggravate him. When he would limp along, leaning on his crutch, with his round belly protruding ahead of him, the children would shout at him from all sides: Koty, Koty! He would then fall into a foul mood, raise his crutch, wave it about, wanting to hit them hard. However, he never succeeded at this – since there is no way he can chase [the children with their] swift, sure feet, and so, he would take out his anger on innocent passers-by, and give one or another of them a whack with his stick. Sometimes, he would burst into tears, and out loud would proclaim in the middle of the street: 'Was I born from a stone? Was I not had by a mother? Why do you torture me, why is it my fault that I was born, not like all other people? Why do I deserve this – seeing as my father and mother have abandoned me? [At times like

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205 See Exodus 30:34. This is the Galbanum plant, and has a disagreeable, bitter taste, a peculiar, somewhat musky odor, and an intense green scent.

206 Roughly 12 km (7.2 miles) due north of Zambrow.

this] women would shed a tear, seek to calm him down, bring him out a white shirt so he could change, a pare of knitted socks to cover his bare feet, a plate of warm food, a small glass of tea with a piece of bread, etc. And did he have a mouth! He would curse by hurling such imprecations that only could be created in the fantasy of a writer. When he was calmed down, and children did not bother him, he would be in a good mood, and would relate what had happened to him, about his family, or just plain tales that he had heard. His home, primarily was in the '*Hakhnasat Orkhim*.' He was then sidelined there, because he could not keep himself clean, and this was a place where other guests would lodge for the night. So, during the summer, he made himself a night resting place under the steps of the Women's Synagogue, inside the *Red Bet HaMedrash*, over the '*Shamos*.'[207] During the winter, good people would give him a corner where he could sleep, or he would bed down in the *Bet HaMedrash*, beside the oven.

During the First World War, the Germans took him out of the city and shot him – ridding themselves of a cripple and freeing up a bread [ration] card. It was as if the *Red Bet HaMedrash* had become orphaned – it was as if the permanent worshiper was missing. A tree had been cut down and out of the panorama of the *shtetl*....

B. Abraham Berl Klinn

He was of middling height, went barefoot, sometimes having his feet wrapped in rags like the peasants would do, wrapped in a sack, with a rope tied around the hips, a head of gray hair, with a roundish gray beard. He would sit at the entrance to the White *Bet HaMedrash*, and tell stories to the children, wonderful stories, about himself, about robbers and demons, and always full of humor. One had to have a literary soul in order to conceive of such stories. He would not rest at night. He has an eccentric sense of humor. He would transfer clothing that hung in one yard, over to a second street, and hang it up there to dry. He would take and transfer boards, that a homeowner might have bought to construct a *sukkah,* to some far, distant yard. He would switch the signs of one craftsman, or storekeeper, for that of another, etc. He always carried around lumps of coal beneath his bosom. And before dawn, just as it began to get light, and there was nobody to stop him, he would draw pictures of animals and people on the walls, small horses, dogs, cats and goats, and who knows what sort of story he was attempting to illustrate? Who knows what sort of artistic talent had lost its way inside this crazy person?

He would sit tranquilly and smile, sing, or be telling a tale. Only if someone, somewhere, would shout out: 'Abraham Berl Klinn!' would he get up filled with a murderous disposition, and would run to hit, or throw a stone.

At a tranquil moment, according to what he would tell, he was a recorder for people who would undertake road construction, and he would record the size of the gravel that the people, who smashed up rock, needed to produce. In order to determine how much to pay for their work, he would measure

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207 These would be discarded texts considered too sacred to be destroyed or burned. Some times a special repository, called a '*Genizah,*' was created for this purpose.

their pile of gravel with a triangle. As a result, he caught any number of people who, at night, would steal from the piles that had already been measured, and transfer it to a new [sic: unmeasured] pile. So he caught and penalized the stone smashers, for which they threw a sack over his head, and beat him so badly, that he lost his mind... He wife was someone called Malkunya, whom the children would call 'Malkunya the Slapper.' She divorced him. He was close to the butchers, and they would give him something to eat, and the change of a short, it appears – he was a family friend of the *Pendzhukhehs.* Children would run after him and tease him by saying:

'*Abraham Berl Klinn*	'Abraham Berl Klinn
Nem dem tukhes – un layf ahin!'	Grab your ass – and run over there!'

This would make him go totally berserk. Summertime, during the intense heat of Tammuz, he would manifest his insanity: he would chase after people, throw stones, cause damage, and it was dangerous to be in his presence. R' Sender Seczkowicz[208] tells of one time, that he was working with his father, Itcheh Mulyar, at the premises of Lejzor the Baker, where there was a need to clean off a muddy area. So Abraham Bereleh was summoned to do the work. So he says: First, give me something to eat! So the wife of the baker gave him something to eat. Now, he says, I want something to drink! So he was given some sweet tea to drink. He then vanished. He had gone up into the attic, laid down, and fell asleep. This caused Lejzor the Baker to exclaim: 'You nut, is this the way one is supposed to behave? You are, indeed, crazy, he replied, I conduct myself just like the refined gentry: having finished eating and drinking – you lay down for a nap... Stories circulated around the *shtetl* about him, just like the ones about Herschel Ostropolyer.[209] One time, he tricked a gentile, in the *mikva*, into emptying his sack of chopped up straw there. When the gentile became severely angry, and began to curse all Jews, he was reproached: 'Abraham-Berl, why did you do this? – He replied, I wanted for this gentile also to immerse himself in the dirty *mikva*....

He either died naturally, or perhaps the Germans also shot him, in the First World War? What were Jewish children to do without Abraham Berl Klinn?

C. Myshel the Cripple

He had a large head of black hair, with deep, knowing eyes, a good grasp of things, and a sharp mind, and spoke Russian and Polish. He had the body of a child with no feet. He was the son of a poor *Melamed*. This was a very fine, but poor family. The father emigrated to America, but did not acquire any significant wealth there. The wife remained alone with a houseful of children – intellectually endowed sons and daughters. But what is to be done with Myshel the Cripple? He made the decision, that he should be placed sitting at the vacant location, on the road to Lomza, where he would sing, and the officers, soldiers, gentiles and jews, who would be passing by will give him some sort of a donation. He would normally beg only from the gentiles, and especially from Russian officers: '*Daitye kopiechku biednomu kalyiku*!' Please give a bit of a kopeck to a poor cripple! He would sit there for years on end. He knew everyone – even if they had passed through

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208 The other evidence in the text suggest that this is the name, 'Seczkowsky.'

209 A prominent figure in the canon of Jewish humor.

that street only once. children could be found sitting around him all the time, listening to his stories, his witticisms. His brothers and sisters loved him body and soul. If it started to rain, they would run to him, regardless of where they happened to be, to take him home, or some sort of umbrella to keep him covered.

A time came, when an older son in America sent ship tickets for everyone. They did not want to make the trip, because how would it be possible to leave Mysheleh alone? After all, he would not be allowed to come into America. In the end, a means to get around this was found: to have him admitted to an institution for invalids in Bialystok, for a specified sum of money. In that location, he fell sick out of a longing for his own family and his home town, and he died. Others told: In Bialystok, they wanted to have him put into a circus, to show the world this sort of phenomenon. With is sharp memory and intellect, his singing, his storytelling, he died of emotional aggravation.

D. Bayrakh the Mute

There were several mutes in Zambrow, one was the son of a carpenter – a handsome lad, with black, knowing eyes, that projected sadness. One, a daughter of Podalczuk the Butcher – a picture beautiful and intelligent girl. So the father returned from America, with money, and made a match for his daughter with Khizok's grandson, a boy without means. and took them all back with him to America.

Bayrakh the Mute was a porter. He was a strong man, who had grown tall, with a broad back, and a dark blond beard, a broad visage, with a pair of understanding eyes. A smile was always 'poured out' over his face, and a consistently pleasant disposition along with that. He understood everything. He would come to worship in the White *Bet HaMedrash* – just like someone who could speak normally. Not having any trade skill, and being as healthy as a horse, he became a porter. He would transport the heaviest loads and boxed. And his house grew: a home full of children, daughters and sons – good-looking and capable, but poverty exacted its toll: how could a porter support such a family? In the city, he was treated with respect.

He understood how to comport himself. He observed the *mitzvot*, the Sabbath and Festival Holidays. In the *Bet HaMedrash*, he would sway back and forth, with his *Tallit* over his head, just like everyone else. He would typically be accorded the honor of '*Hagbah*' – and he would pick up and raise the Torah scroll, high in the air, look carefully at the lettering on the parchment, and turn with it to the left and right, with a great deal of satisfaction. I can recall one time, when the *Shammes* approached him, and called him to the Torah. The reader, a short man, a Jewish fellow who was enlightened, who would lean on the tips of his fingers, and do a little bit of a dance while he read (he was therefor called 'the dancer'), called out: '*Ya'amod R'Bayrakh, br' Jekuthiel*... and the mute man was joyous. With great pride and happiness, he touched the edge of his *Tallit* to the scroll, gave it a kiss, and mumbled: *Mu – hu – hu– hu.* The reader then recited the blessing, and the mute man mumbled after him... everyone felt that the *Gabbai* had done a tremendous thing, a beautiful gesture...

On time, towards Saturday evening, he dozed off in the *Bet HaMedrash* with his mouth open. A bunch of inconsiderate pranksters shook some tobacco snuff into his mouth. He awoke with a start, and with damp eyes, he mumbled: *Mu–hu–hu–hu*, as if one were to say: Why did you do this to me? I am exhausted from a whole week, and I grabbed a nap, is this a reason for you to embarrass me? The *balebatim* took his side, apprehended the pranksters, and began to beat them. Good-naturedly, he waved them off with his hand, as if to say: let them go, they are just kids, and what do they understand.... After much wandering, one of his youngest sons finally came to Israel.

E. 'Katchkeh'

There was quite a character in the city: somewhat taller than average height, with a large head, his face overgrown with a sparse beard, intelligent, penetrating eyes, and would go walking to the left and the right, like a duck ('*Katchkeh*'). That is why he was given the name '*katchkeh*.' He was something of a *shlimazl* in his life, constantly at work, exerting himself, from which he derived nothing, and had no talent for anything. His father, Chaim Shmuleh Levinsky, a decent wagon driver, lived at the Rabbi's house, over the '*Hakhnasat Orkhim*,' across from the Red *Bet HaMedrash*. First off, Chaim-Shmuleh had a covered wagon, and after that, he ran a passenger carriage on the Czyzew Tract.[210] Chaim-Shmuleh was a quiet man, always having a good-natured smile on his face, he would give charity, and would often transport the clergy and religious personnel, such as *Maggidim*, distinguished guests – all without charge, and dreamt of traveling to the Land of Israel to die there...

His oldest son, Yossl, was killed in the First World War, on Yom Kippur of 1914, at the battlefields near Narew and Lomza. He had other fine children.

'Katchkeh' however, was an exception, he mouth kept going like a turning screw, and he would verbally abuse and curse everything in the world, and his mouth would get full of foam. Nevertheless, he was good-natured, and would immediately commence to smile. Swearing was his sole ammunition to use against the difficult people who exploited or made fun of him. He would constantly be found mingling about among the wagon drivers, giving the horses drink, and cleaning up after them. Occasionally he would be trusted to be the driver, and convey passengers. Very early before dawn, his voice could be heard being carried about, when he would go wake passengers for their journey, telling the wagon drivers when was the highest time to travel with the passengers. Not to miss the 'mail bag' that goes from Czyzew to Warsaw or Bialystok, and from Czerwony Bór. Later on, he became the 'expediter' of the soda-bottles, which he would distribute to businesses and private homes. When he was in a good mood, it would be possible to confer with him for advice, and take his opinion seriously, he was a decent sort, and would share his meager pennies with the poor.

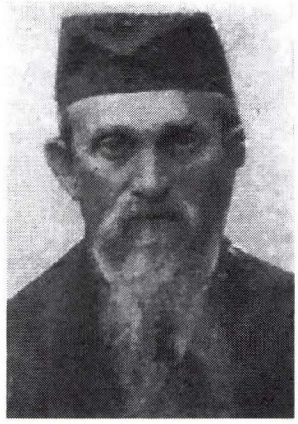
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210 Very likely Czyzew-Osada on the modern map of Poland, south and slightly east of Zambrow.

The City's Daughter-in-Law

By Meir Zukrowicz

It was summer, and the year was 1893.



Page 402: Meir Zukrowicz

God's wrath poured itself out over our Zambrow, when cholera ran through Russia and Poland. Accordingly, we didn't sit by idly: we engaged in repentance, we arranged for cessations of work, recited *Tehillim* for the entire day – and none of this helped.
We began to explore alternative means: we created a 'Massage Committee,' [consisting] of healthy young men, who would rub down the sick with spirits, with hot water, and ply the sick with whiskey, etc. If it helped, then it was good. If it didn't help, and the illness became more aggravated, the sick person was transferred to Moshe Schribner's windmill, on the Ostrow Road. A sort of hospital was set up here, for those who were seriously ill, and mostly for those who never came back again. Apart from this, the kettle in the '*Hakhnasat Orkhim*' was heated continuously throughout the day, and hot water, along with spirits and whiskey were always ready at hand, as well as other medicaments that had been procured at no cost. It did not seem to affect the 'Massage Committee' even though their wives wept bitterly, fearing that their men would become infected. On Yom Kippur, the Rabbi authorized an announcement in all places of worship: whosoever feels weak may eat. Also, it was represented that one should not sit *Shiva* for a deceased person – one also should not go to comfort the bereaved. No minyan should assemble in the home of the deceased, etc.

When we young people saw that none of this was helping, and people were falling like flies, we decided to carry out an important act: on foot, at night, they went off to Sędziwuje, and silently attacked the water mill, tore up the weir, permitting the water to flow vigorously, and they said: with this flood of water, let the cholera be driven away! They took along the door to the weir, returned to Zambrow, in the middle of the night, and buried it in the cemetery....

This, too, did not help, and the cholera ran rampant through the city.

Accordingly, stronger measures were then employed: all the discarded remnants from prayer books (*Shamos*) were collected from the various houses of worship and study, and from private houses, they were packed into containers, and a big funeral was organized – to take these *Shamos*, and bury them in the cemetery. Israel David the *Shammes,* led the funeral cortege. We went at night with wax candles to the cemetery. Everyone tore *'kriya'* and wept. One person recited the '*Kaddish*,' when the *Shamos* were buried. Charity was donated – and still it didn't help.

At this point, we ran to embrace a new approach on how to combat the cholera in the city: there was a pauper girl in Zambrow, an orphan, who was crippled, by the name of Chana-Yenta. It was decided to marry her off to an older bachelor, also some sort of a cripple, who lisped, by the name of Velvel. He would beg from door-to-door. And so, a wedding match was arranged between the two. At

community expense, they were both decked out in the best finery:[211] new clothing, new shoes, a small residence was rented for them, completely furnished. The most dignified of the *balabustas* organized the wedding, baking rolls, with oil *Challah*, cooking fish, and meat, and the wedding canopy was set up in the cemetery. The throng was lively and energetic, and they danced on their way back from the cemetery, and made merry for the bride and groom, just as it is supposed to be.

And so God saw our distress, and caused the plague to desist. This lightened the heart.

From that time on, Chana-Yenta was called the "City's Daughter-in-Law.' The community decided to give them a permanent post, from which they could make a living: she became the municipal water carrier, and he obtained a concession to go from house to house for solicitations, without being interfered with – to a hundred and twenty years.

Chana-Yenta, the City's Daughter-in-Law, was thought of for many years in the *shtetl,* and was considered as one of the 'religious people' among us. She was always spoken of with respect, because many believed that she did something substantive in deterring the plague...

She, herself, often enlarged her own reputation, and traversed the houses with the feeling that the city has something for which to be grateful to her.



Page 406: Ay,Ay,Ay,Ay – Myshekeh is Going Away...
Moshe Granica (Nachman Shammes' son) takes leave of his friends, as he goes off to military service (during the time of the Russians), to serve in the Czar's army.

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211 Employing the Yiddish metaphor of 'honey and vinegar,' implying top-notch ingredients.

A Story About a Convert

By Israel Levinsky

Near my home, in the house of my father-in-law, there lived R' Yitzhak-Leib Ozdoba, with his wife, Chaya-Itkeh. R' Yitzhak Leib was a grain merchant, a very decent Jewish man, one who would accommodate guests in his home. Each and every Sabbath, would find guests taking a meal at his table.

His wife, Chaya-Itkeh, was tall in stature – and thin, with a nose like that of a little bird. She was R' Yitzhak-Leib's second wife. A son, an only son from her first husband, was called Fishl Chaya-Itkeh's. When a distinguished guest would happen to come to town, a Rabbi, or a distinguished speaker, such a guest would take meals for the Sabbath at the home of R' Yitzhak-Leib, who was punctilious in his observance of the mitzvah of *Hakhnasat Orkhim*, and did not let a Sabbath go by without one or two such guests.

One time, a young man, of gentile appearance, was noticed in the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, who spoke a broken Yiddish, like a gentile. He told that he had been born a Christian, to wealthy parents, but convinced himself that the Jewish faith is the better one, and he became a Jew. So his father threw him out. Since then, he wanders about, learning what he can about being a Jew. He was given food and drink, and righteous women brought him a white shirt, a pair of socks, and he would sit in the *Bet HaMedrash*, observing how Jews behave. Well, you can appreciate, that when the Sabbath arrived, this guest was honored with a place for the Sabbath at the home of R' Yitzhak-Leib Ozdoba. He was given the best and finest of everything. On the second Sabbath – he again came to eat at the home of R' Yitzhak-Leib. During the week, the *balebatim*, and young folk, drew close to the convert, teaching him the [Hebrew] alphabet, laws, and they even insisted on making an attempt to have him called to the Torah for an *aliyah*. On that Sabbath morning, when all were at worship, only I sat and read, because I would always pray before dawn, with the first *minyan*. I hears some sort of a sound on the other side of the wall. Initially, this was not clear to me, but later on, I thought it to be either a cat, or a goat. When we returned from Synagogue, Chaya-Itkeh shouted out: *Gevalt!* I have been reduced to destitution! The armoire had been torn open: linens, jewelry, utensils and money, 250 rubles, had been taken out...

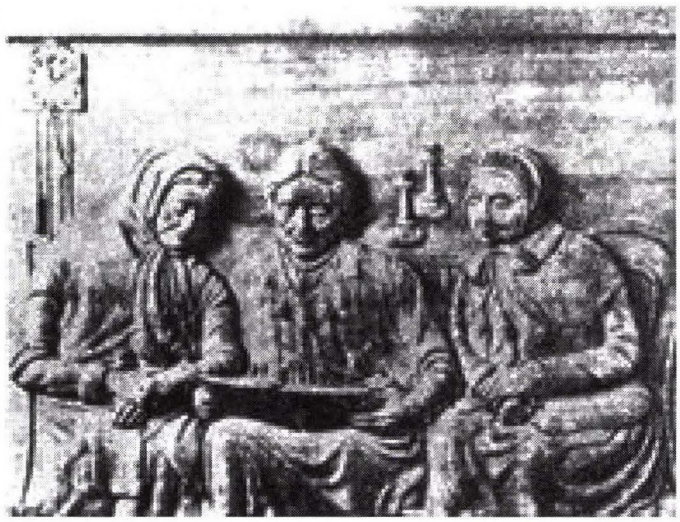
Suspicion first fell on the female gentile house servant, who tended the house on the Sabbath, and later, we became aware that the convert had vanished... we later found out that this convert was a well-known thief, being sought by the police. Having been among Jews, he had learned a little Yiddish, and also Jewish customs and ways, and played the role of a convert...

Kometz Aleph – Aw!

By Mendl Zibelman

(Describing his Teachers in the Zambrow of Yore)

The Melamed from Brok was my first *Rebbe*. He lived at the horse market, near the houses of Lubin on one side, and Moshe-Shmuel Golombek on the other side. Itcheh Kossowsky was a student along with me. The family of the *Rebbe* was refined. He had a son who was a revolutionary, and was one of the founders of the S.S. in Zambrow. He would hold forth with fiery speeches in the forest. Suddenly, he vanished off to somewhere: he married, and acquired some face in the process...



Page 409: Three Elderly Ladies Reading from 'Tzena U'Re'ena'

Abba-Leib who lived directly across from the White *Bet HaMedrash*, was my second *Rebbe*. He also had an intelligent son, who took up residence, I think, in Finland, where he served in the military. Abba-Leib was a well-prepared teacher, who also taught Hebrew from a pamphlet, and the children loved him.

Abraham'eleh Melamed was my third *Rebbe*. His *Heder* was behind the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, by the Lomza Road. He was good-natured, a scholarly Jew, and God-fearing. He had talented children, among them, Myshel the Cripple (who is described elsewhere). His wife was named Elkeh'leh, and was well-known in the *shtetl*. In order to make a living, Abraham'eleh went off to America.

Klutsky was my fourth *Rebbe*. He was observant, and spoke only in Hebrew on the Sabbath. He would teach us using humor: 'So you think he is Myshel the Shoemaker, no, he is Moses our Teacher! So you thought he was Ahar'eleh Nozhlak, Ahar'eleh Frontz, No – he was Aaron the high Priest!' His *Heder* was located on the premises of Lejzor Zaks.

R' Sender Seczkowsky describes his teachers of yore, over 60 years ago (transcribed by R' Israel Levinsky ז"ל):



Page 410: A Group of Tze'irei Tzion with their Chairman, David Rosenthal, in the middle.

My first *Melamed* was Abraham Moshe the Gravedigger. He would bury the dead. But the most significant influence on we children, was his dealing with stillborn babies. He had a special board, as large as a tray, on which he would lay down the little body, wrapping it in burial shrouds, and then carried it through back alleys – directly to the cemetery. And we, the children, would be sitting in the *Heder,* without the *Rebbe*, carrying on, or annoying him, as he was carrying the tiny deceased child. Abraham Moshe was of middling height but broad-boned with a pointed gray beard and heavy eyebrows. From time-to-time, he would instill fear in us, and in grownups – despite the fact that he was not a bad person, and did not hit anyone. The *balebatim* accorded him respect, perhaps because they knew that, sooner or later, they would fall into his hands... I studied for several school periods [sic: semesters] under his tutelage. This was against my will, because my father, Itcheh Mulyar, lived not far from the street where the synagogues and study houses were, and Abraham Moshe the Gravedigger lived across from the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, in the large courtyard where the *'Hakhnasat Orkhim'* could be found. Not once, did I run away from Heder, heading to wherever my eyes looked – and the *Rebbe*, who was in the city more time than in the Heder, caught me not only once either, grabbing me by the collar, and dragging me like he was dragging a corpse, back to *Heder.* He never hit. One time, I became sick, and was bedridden for several weeks. After getting out of my sick bed, I finally took stock, and went off to a different *Heder*, to the son-in-law of Motya, R' Mendl Olsha, who was known to be a good teacher, and was beloved by the children and his students truly were able to learn proficiently. Mendl Olsha gave me a pat on the cheek, and said to me: your father didn't discuss your situation with me, but if you want to learn here, then sit yourself down, and in the meantime, audit what it is that the other children are learning. So I sat, and repeated what all the other children were saying. Suddenly, I feel a hard, hairy hand has grabbed me by the collar, had

picked me up, dragged me off the bench, and out of the *Heder*. I struggled like a fish out of water – but it was to no avail. The new *Rebbe* went ashen and didn't utter a word. All the children fell silent. This was my *Rebbe*, Abraham Moshe. He, also, didn't say a word, but just kept dragging me...

This was the story: when he had returned from a funeral, after burial, the little boys told him, with relish, that Sender, Itcheh Mulyar's [son] is no longer a student with him. He already is attending the *Heder* of Motya's son-in-law. Well, he became enraged, such a disgrace, such a betrayal! He went off, and brought me back, looking at the other children with a look of triumph, and he said to me: You will remain here, and not go off to any unfamiliar teachers! To this day a shudder runs through me, when I recall that scene. [I remained there] until God came to my aid, and my father relocated to another street, and in the coming semester, he enrolled me in another *Heder*.

The new *Rebbe* lisped, and he would stutter whenever he would explain something. But he was a good teacher. In his class, boys and girls studied together. He taught us *Svarbeh*, meaning the twenty-four books – the Prophets. Also, a teacher came in to teach us Russian for an hour a day. Because I had a good grasp, and learned quickly, the *Rebbe* gave me a '*Nograda*,' a mark of distinction: I was to rock his two baby daughters, twins, who would always be crying out that they wanted to be rocked. So I once rocked them so vigorously that I overturned the cradle with the children. So an outcry ensued, and the sound of running feet was heard, and 'the boy isn't there,' – I fled from the *Heder*, out of fear, and never came back. After many years had gone by, when I came to visit my father ל"ז in Jerusalem – he told me that this very same *Rebbe* is living in Jerusalem, with his two daughters, the twins. It appears that they survived the episode of the upended cradle.

My third *Rebbe* was Herschel Kooker. It was with him that I began to study *Gemara*. However, a gentile interfered in this, and disrupted my study. A gentile, named Kowicki, lived in the same house, who made coffins. He knew Yiddish as if he were Jewish, and even knew blessings by heart. When he would get liquored up, he would grab children, and put them in a coffin, which was decorated with crosses, and prevented them from getting out. The children would cry, and writhe in fear and he would roll with laughter.

So I transferred to learn in the elementary school Yeshiva of R' Yehoshua Gorzholczany. He was a good *Rebbe*, a wise Jewish man, and he could project his influence with merely a glance. Later on, I was taught by a *Melamed* from Wysokie-Mazowiecki and the Overseer was R' Moshe-Michael, a tall, handsome Jewish man, who was strict, and who oversaw the study of the Yeshiva students with a cane in his hand. Once, he dozed off at the lectern, and his long beard got tangled in the lectern. So we grabbed sealing wax, warmed it up, and poured it onto his beard. He took out his anger on all of us. His long can flew over our heads, without pity. In the last stage, I went off to study at the Yeshiva in Lomza. I would get a package every week from home: underwear, socks, *kichl,* etc. But then the 'Fifth Year' arrived. In the Yeshiva, a strike broke out against the leadership, which disbursed too meager a 'weekly stipend' to the young men of the province. One time, when the Headmasters came to give a lesson, they were refused admission, but instead, shouts were made to their faces: you take away the best and the most attractive for yourselves, and all you do is throw the bones to us! They became frightened and summoned the police. The Yeshiva was then shut down.

Accordingly, the out-of-town youth from the province dispersed – each to their own home. My father then saw that I had no particularly strong affinity for study – so he said to me: Well, you won't become a Rabbi – but at least be a decent and honest working man....

The Political Parties

מפלגות

פארטייען



Page 412: The Active Workers of the Keren Kayemet, Organizing the 6th Bazaar of 5696 [1917]

The Zionist Movement



Page 413: The Executive Committee of Keren HaYesod

A. Before The First World War

An illegal Zionist organization existed in Zambrow, even before the First Zionist Congress. In the first year of selling raffles – approximately 60-70 raffles were sold in Zambrow. Also, the '*aktsiehs*' of the Colonial-Bank, which cost 10 rubles apiece (over sixty years ago), more than a few were sold in Zambrow. R' Shlomo Blumrosen stood at the head of the Zionist endeavor. With him were: Benjamin Kagan, Avcheh Rakowsky, Israel Levinsky, Fishl Danilewicz, Yaakov & Meir Zukrowicz, Yaakov Shyeh Cohen, Hona Tenenbaum, Ephraim Surowicz, Yitzhak Levinson, Greenberg (a leather merchant), David Smoliar, Jakula, Yom-Tov Herman, Fishl Chaya-Itkeh's (Ozdoba), Meir Meisner, Yaakov Shlomo Kukawka. the brothers, Itcheh-Fyvel & Lipa Blumrosen, etc. Young people also were drawn to Zionism: the brothers, Berl & Abba Finkelstein, Alter Greenwald, Fyvel Zukrowicz, Yaakov Karlinsky, Yaakov-Herschel Zukrowicz, Ziskind Sokol, Benjamin Tenenbaum, the brothers Yochanan & Chaim Feinzilber, Chaim Skocenadek, Fyvel Rosenthal, Yeshaya Rekant, the brothers Pinchas & Zelig Bronack, Shlomkeh Golombek, Leibl Slowik, Israel Rakowsky, Bezalel Rosenbaum, Mordechai Yerusalimsky, Herschel Adaszko, Abba and Noah Grajewsky, Zusza Brzezinsky, etc.

Twice a year, gatherings would take place at the homes of Shlomkeh Blumrosen and Benjamin Kagan, work was done for *Keren Kayemet*, etc. When the Fifth Zionist Congress, in the year 1902 decided to establish *Keren Kayemet*, and to distribute charity boxes [sic: *pushkas*] into the houses of active Zionists, R' Israel Levinsky, and R' Fishl Danilewicz the *Melamed*, could not wait for the *pushkas* to arrive, that were supposed to come to Zambrow from Berlin, by way of Odessa, so, for their own account, the commissioned Leibusz Garfinkel the tinsmith (who was himself a Zionist) to make 100 *pushkas*, with a Jewish Star of David etched into the side, and nailed them up in Zionist homes, and took care to see that they were periodically emptied, until the original blue *pushkas* arrived – after two years – that were then turned over to that dedicated Zionist, Yaakov Karlinsky – to deal with their distribution.

Young people would come together on the Sabbath for study sessions under the supervision of Mr. Israel Levinsky, [in] Hebrew literature, and knowledge, reading journals, etc. We would affix *Keren Kayemet* stamps to our letters. On being called for an *aliyah* to the Torah in the White *Bet HaMedrash*, pledges were made of donations for the benefit of the *Yishuv* in the Land of Israel. On the Eve of Yom Kippur, pairs of members were sent out in tens, to all synagogues and houses of study, also to the women's prayer rooms, to set out 'platters,' near the entranceway, at the time of the afternoon [sic: *Mincha*] prayers 'for the benefit of the *Yishuv* in the Land of Israel.' A national celebration was organized in the White *Bet HaMedrash* at *Hanukkah* time, with the participation of the *Hazzan* and the Tiktin musicians, and sometimes, also a military orchestra. In the *Heders*, the teaching of Hebrew, using principles of grammar was instituted, and also writing of articles for the Hebrew children's periodicals. In Bialystok, Alter Greenwald learned how to do the 'Hatikvah Dance,' – and it was agreed that he should teach this to others, so they could dance it at weddings. Activity continued with full vigor. There were even instances of people from Zambrow traveling to the Land of Israel, and this help to raise the level of enthusiasm further.

This went on until the dark clouds of 1914 drew nigh. The World War broke out. Part of the group – was mobilized. Political party activity was disrupted, and halted.

B. Zionist Endeavor Renews Itself

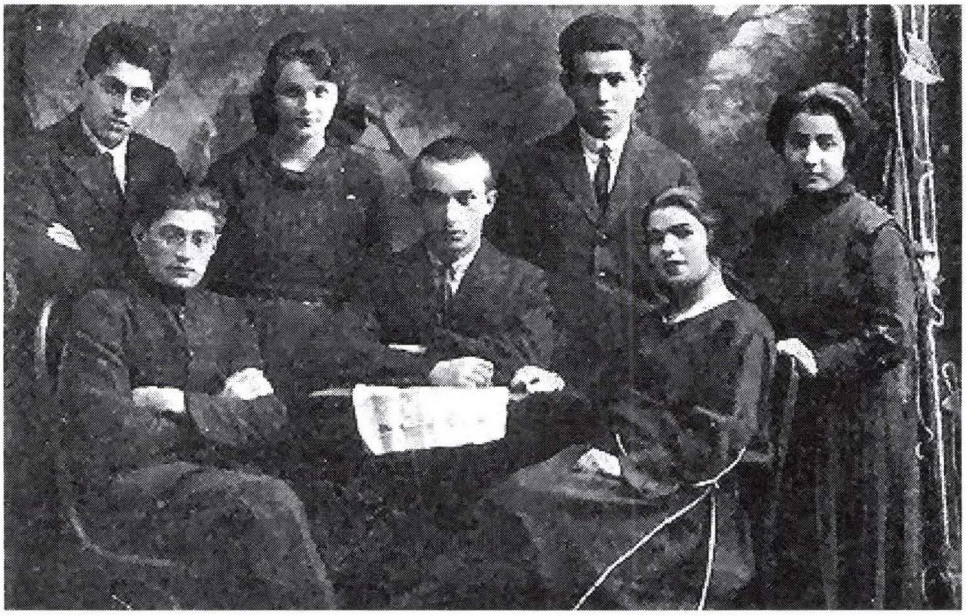


Page 415: *The Keren Kayemet Committee*

Standing: *Shlomo Rotkowicz, Chaim Grodzinsky, Sarah Jablonka, Yaakov Jakubowsky, Moshe Burstein, Ze'ev Marmari*

Sitting: *Abraham Ratoszewicz, Yehuda Slowik, Chaim Zilberstein, Mordechai Ravikov – Zilberberg*

During the German occupation, 1916, the Polish Zionist Central Committee was born in Warsaw – after Polish Zionism had been dependent previously on Odessa, the Russian center. Zambrow was one of the first of the towns that affiliated itself with the Warsaw Central Committee. It was accomplished with the support of the staff member of '*Heint*,' Mr. Goldberg, who would come to Zambrow to visit his elderly father from the homeless of Brisk.



Page 416: *The Youth Committee of Keren HaYesod*
Standing: *Aliza Weinberg, Shlomo Rosenthal, Chaya-Sarah Jablonka, Mikhl Jabkowsky*
Sitting: *Esther-Mattl Golombek, Zvi Slowik, Chaim-Yossl Shafran*

At the time of the first meeting – at [the house of] Shlomkeh Blumrosen, was attended by Benjamin Kagan, the brothers Aharon Leibl and Yaakov Karlinsky, Fyvel Zukrowicz, Chaim Skocenadek, Fishl Chay-Itkeh's, David Smoliar, the brothers Yochanan and Chaim Feinzilber, etc. The young people were represented by: Yitzhak Gorodzinsky (Chava's son), Leibczak Golombek, and Abraham Baumkuler. The work for *Keren Kayemet*, the sale of raffles, collecting membership dues, and land taxes, etc., – was renewed. However, the young people were sparingly involved. Then the teacher Abkewicz from Warsaw arrived, the husband of Esther Kagan, and he founded the *'Tze'irei Tzion'* group, manned by these very young people. The first interim [leadership] committee consisted of Leibczak Golombek (Chairman). A. Baumkuler, Yaakov Jabkowsky, Israel Konopiata, Tuvia Tenenbaum (Secretary) and Matess Gorzholczany. Gatherings usually occurred in the school of Fyvel Zukrowicz, which was open for every form of Zionist endeavor. Later on, it went over into its own premises in a cellar, at the house of Shlomo Tuvia Sziniak. They established a cooperative under the direction of Israel Konopiata, made up of the active members. During the Bolshevik invasion in the year 1920, the Poles plundered the cooperative.



Page 418: *Hol HaMoed Passover 1926*
The 'Keren HaYesod' Committee of Zambrow

Tze'irei Tzion played an important role in Zionist activity, and was the central source of all the Zionist undertakings in the city. [It encompassed] the *Halutzim* movement, cultural endeavors, [work on behalf of] the library, national demonstrations, sport and theater. During the time of the Bolshevik invasion, several of the *Tze'irei Tzion* members 'insinuated themselves' into the municipal action committees, to try and rescue something, and to stand guard. L[eibczak] Golombek, the Chairman of *Tze'irei Tzion*, and of the sport club, '*Maccabi*' – assumed the mandate of acting as the chief of police in Zambrow.[212]

The *Tze'irei Tzion* movement elicited much sympathy in the circles of Zionist youth.

Tens of young people, who went to Israel can be attributed to it, and thereby saved themselves...

Youth Parties

By Shmuel Gutman

A. Poalei Tzion

[This organization] once existed in Zambrow in the 'fifth' year [sic: 1905].

Now it had renewed itself. At its head stood the enlightened and educated Yehoshua Domb (today in Israel). Domb was a Hebrew teacher, a good orator, a man of the people, well-

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212 Historical accounts, of this period, indicate that significant periods ensued, where a power vacuum due to ambiguous sovereignty, led to states of anarchy.

educated, and intelligent. With him [were] the teacher, Nathan Smoliar, Pini(a) Baumkuler, Garfinkel, the son of the tinsmith, [and] among the first of the *Poalei Tzion* from the year 1905, Sarniewicz, Zabludowsky, Bercheh Sokol. Among the female members: Shifra Lifschitz, Elkeh Guterman, Tila Sarniewicz, Menukha'keh Sokol (today in Israel) and others.

The debates that took place in their club were attended by large crowds. They would also invite in prominent speakers, such as Zerubabel, Moshe Erem[213] and others. They established a youth labor organization called '*Jugend*' with the help of students and former yeshiva students, among them: Mendl Baumkuler, Herschel Smoliar, Israel Herman, Shmuel Gutman, Yitzhak Saraczkewicz, and others. Later on, they were joined by: Nahum Sokol, Chaya-Sarah Rekant, Rachel Greenberg, Peshkeh Smoliar, Moshe Heitzer, Lifschitz (Shifra's sister), Faygl'eh Friedman, Chana Bursztein, Chaya Zeitman and others.

The senior members, such as Y. Domb, N. Smoliar and P. Baumkuler, enhanced our level of awareness, and directed [educational] courses and a drama studio. We put on a performance of '*Dorf's Jung*' in which Sarah Sokol, ל"ז and Herschel Smoliar gave outstanding performances. After the performance, the entire leadership committee went up on the stage, and gave Sarah Sokol a kiss and a present – a book.

B. 'Tze'irei Tzion'

They occupied an important place in the city. Mostly they came from the ranks of the families of *balebatim*, who had a proletarian world-view. At their head stood: Leibczak Golombek, Abraham Baumkuler, the brothers Yitzhak & Chaim Gorodzinsky, David Rosenthal, Yankl Jabkowsky, the Gottliebs, Shafran, Zukrowicz, Kaplan, and others.

Their opponents, the *Bund* and *Poalei Tzion*, would attack them often: how can this be a proletarian party that has no workers in its ranks... this was a strong argument on their part. That is, until God came to their rescue, and my brother Mordechai, a needle trades worker, and Simcha Stern, a miller, who worked in his father's mill, joined their ranks...

Out of there ranks, there emerged: '*B'nai Tzion*,' '*Pirkhei Tzion*,' and later on, '*HeHalutz*,' the latter being responsible for carrying out a very practical and important work on behalf of the Land of Israel. They are to be thanked for the tens of *olim,* who were saved by having come to Israel – in the difficult years. Among these young people, the following stood out: Zvi Zamir-Slowik, Benjamin Kszisusker, Paciner, Michael Jabkowsky, Noah Zukrowicz, and others. With all the partisan conflicts, and often sharp attacks of one upon the other – we would nevertheless live peacefully with one another, and would undertake specific Zionist endeavors jointly.

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213 Moshe Erem (born Moshe Kazanovski on 7 August 1896, died 14 October 1978) was an Israeli politician who served as a member of the Knesset for several left-wing parties and factions from 1949 until 1959, and again from 1965 until 1969. Born in Liadi south-eastern Belarus, in the Russian Empire, Erem worked as a high school head teacher in Kaunas. He made *aliyah* to Mandate Palestine in 1924, and worked in building and road construction. He joined the *Poalei Tzion* movement, later becoming one of its leading figures.

C. The Bund [214]



Page 420: The Zionist-Socialist Organization (Tz. S.) (1926)

The *Bund*, also existed at one time in Zambrow, in the year 1905. Now, it [too] had renewed itself: at its head, stood Herschel Sendak, a former yeshiva student. the husband of Pyeh Sziniak, the pharmacist, Szklovin, who was tragically and murderously killed by the Poles, and others. The *Bund* would stand guard, combating clericalism, fighting against assimilation, but most vigorously fighting against Zionism in all of its forms, both left-wing and right-wing. At times, we would engage in discussions, on the eve of the First of May, during a union action, and other such events, but by and large, we would be antagonistic, and strongly fight one against the other.

The drama studio under *Bund* auspices was fully developed, and was in possession of very good talent. They demonstrated the ability to expend a great deal of work in connection with the Yiddish library, which was forcibly taken out of their hands...

D. Communism

A communist party functioned illegally here as well. At its head was a certain Fishman, who worked for Kaufman the pharmacist. and became his son-in-law. Fishman was very circumspect for a long time, and the police were unable to catch him [red-handed]. That is, until the cord was torn... The principal communist activity was being carried out by a few of the gymnasium students, of which Herschel Smoliar stood out. who was studying at Goldlust's

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214 The headings on page 420 in the original appear to have been inadvertently switched. They are restored in the translation to where they belong.

gymnasium, and who was transformed from being a young *Poalei Tzion* member into a fiery communist, with a substantial reputation in the entire Bialystok *Voievode*. He spent a number of years in the Lomza Prison[215] *(Czerwoniak).*[216] Later on, he went off to Byelorussia, where he served with partisan units, being wounded a number of times. He is today the Chairman of the Central Committee of Polish Jews.

The 'Bund' Labor Party

By Pinchas Broder[217]

In the 'Fifth Year' meaning: the year 1905, labor youth in Zambrow had differentiated itself into the S.S. and S.R. and into the '*Bund*' and '*Poalei Tzion*.' Additionally, 'anarchists' could be found in Zambrow, and ironically – among placid young men, who were pleased with anarchy,

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215 **The True Lomza**

Remembering Lomza, Poland before its destruction in World War II - and a commemorative volume that violates the truth

by Chaim Shapiro

This article originally appeared in the Jewish Observer and is also available in book form in the ArtScroll/Mesorah Publications Judaiscope Series. It is reprinted here with permission.

From Prison to the Book

I keep on reading: there is a photo of Herschel Smoliar. Who is he? It turns out that, actually, he is not from Lomza, but from Zambrow (15.5 miles from Lomza - 25 km), but he spent a number of years in the famous Lomza prison for Communist activities. I guess that makes him a Lomzer.

But that's not all. There is more to his "*Yichus.*" The party and the government of the Polish People's Republic appointed him as head of all the Jews in Poland. And in that capacity, like a faithful dog, he followed the party line to the letter, above and beyond the letter. The Arabs were "progressive elements" to him, Israel and its Jews a gang of Fascists. His campaign against Yiddishkeit and against Israel was the most vicious in all of Poland. He did all he could to stop Jews from leaving Poland. He threatened the few remaining Jews into staying to build the new Socialist fatherland. But no decent Jew would want to build a new life on a cemetery. (And what was Poland, if not a huge Jewish cemetery?) So they found a way out, in spite of Smoliar.

Most interesting: when things got too hot for the Jewish Communists in Poland, Herschel Smoliar forsook his "Socialist fatherland" and escaped to - of all places - his "Fascist" motherland - namely, Israel. And Mother Zion opened her arms to welcome her renegade sons, who had spit in her face for so long. All those Communists who were rejected by the party only because they were born Jewish, found refuge in Israel - including the widow of Berl Mark.

http://www.tzemachdovid.org/gedolim/jo/tpersonality/lomza.html

216 From the Polish word for 'red' or crimson,' suggesting it was called 'The Red Prison.' This appears to have been an appellation used in connection with a number of Eastern European prisons of the time.

217 See errata, p. 626.

with the disorder that was to be brought into the country, by the military, the police, and others, as a means to dethrone the monarch [Czar] Nicholas [II], from the throne.



Page 421: A Group of Young Workers, with S. Gutman in the Center.

Who were these *Bundists* of the year 1905 in Zambrow? To this day, it is difficult to remember. Back then, it was said, the revolutionary parties had certain symbols: a black shirt with a blue sash, with blue tassels– would be one party: a black sash with black epaulettes – a second party; one side lock, the left or the right, slightly longer, like a side-whisker – that would be a third party, etc.

If one party gathered with the priest in the woods, the other would 'take over' a *Bet HaMedrash* and, sorry to say, force the pious Jews to listen to them conduct their meetings. Because of this, the police could never apprehend them. And so, a third party would 'co-opt' the '*prom*' – a moveable wooden bridge on the water, which would serve as a link with Ostrowo, Szumowo, and other places on the other side of the river, while a new bridge was being constructed. What they would do, is feign a 'sports-outing' – however what they really did, was to transport their party comrades, male and female, to some field, for a discussion, to engage in song, and perhaps just to keep each other company until late into the night... the general name applied to all these parties was 'striker'– because even if they engaged in conflict with one another, carried on discussions, and sometimes threw each other's transgressions at one another – to the outside world, they were united, and took up a defense of the interests of workers wholeheartedly. The principal tool of operation was the 'strike.' This would continue to such a time that they would make Nicholas a head and years shorter, for which purpose they would call for a strike, by the boot maker, tailor and shoemaker unions, by the bakers. On one occasion, they wanted to organize a strike by the water-carriers. So Reikhl, the lady water-carrier did not carry water for a day, and her husband, Meir 'the revolutionary,' sat in the *Bet HaMedrash* and recited *Tehillim*. The *balebatim* of Zambrow then did without Reikhl, and personally went down to the creek with a bucket in hand... on the following morning, Reikhl again

carried water, for the same price: two buckets for a three-piece. A few gave her a raise: two buckets for a four-piece...



Page 422: The Active Members of 'Poalei Tzion'

The principal 'strikers' were the *Bundists*. They identified with the present plight of the workers. From time-to-time, they would invite speakers down from Bialystok, Lomza, and even Warsaw. Several young people from Zambrow worked in Warsaw, and would come home, decked out for a holiday, bringing with them an air of life and enthusiasm, bringing new songs with them, and in the evening, teaching them during a promenade on the roads. I remember one particularly well, because his mother lived over the *Heder* of Bercheh Sokol, where I studied, and his brother Abraham'keh was my friend, who would teach me his brother's new song – that was Shmuel-Nissl (or Shimon-Nissl) Lifschitz: a needle trades worker, picture perfect in handsomeness, and all decked out in his black jacket, and his black hard hat, and his lacquered cane in hand. One of his feet was a bit shorter than the other, ad for this, he wore an elevated shoe. Girls, who did tailoring, were seamstresses, sewed socks, and ordinary girls around the house, would impatiently await the Sabbath or the Festival, when Shimi-Nissl would arrive from Warsaw. It was said that it was in the home of Mordechai Lifschitz the wagon-driver, that the Bund Committee assembled for its meetings, and the leaders were: His daughter (also who walked with a limp) – an enlightened girl, who read books and mad a living from making cigarettes (her son, a pious young man – came from Russia, and is now in Israel), a son of Aharon Luks, a fiery young man, with black eyes, elegantly clothed, and loved to make jokes. As best as I can recall, the leader of the *Bund* (I was only 6-7 years old at the time), as 'The Gypsy Warrior' – a broad-boned healthy young man, with black gleaming eyes, a full broad face, and long black locks. He was a harness maker, who made saddles, halters and reins for horses. He came from some *Hasidic* shtetl or another, and didn't wants to take off his *Hasidic* cap. He loved to make jokes, and had a great influence on the working youth, which is why he was given the nickname of a 'warrior.' However, since he was a swarthy as a gypsy, he was also called a 'warrior from the Gypsies'....

I remember several times, the police conducted a search at his location, arrested him, but afterwards let him go. They would gather at the location of Bercheh the *Melamed* in the evenings, to learn, read, and write, reading literature and take care of the labor-oriented brochures...



Page 423: A Group of Amateur Theater Players

With the failure of the Russian Revolution – the 'strikers' dispersed and fled. Part of them married, somewhere in an [obscure] *shtetl*, and carried on a normal life, without the revolution. The larger part fled to America. Arranging the trip was not particularly difficult. 'Agents' would transport the '*Yedinkehs*' [sic: *Edinkehs*], (the illegal travelers), across the border to Prostken,[218] the first German town, and would get ship tickets – either bought, or sent by a relative, and then transit through Hamburg, Antwerp or Bremen, to America. A small part of them, later returned – finding themselves longing for home.. The larger part of them put down roots either in Brooklyn or Chicago, in Philadelphia or The Bronx, and they laid the foundation for the Zambrow branch of the Workmen's Circle, of a Help Committee for the poor back in the Old Country – even before the First World War... up to recent years. It was to them, that every new immigrant from Zambrow would come, and he was helped like a brother, with employment, with a residence, with the acquisition of citizenship papers, etc.

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218 Prostki (German *Prostken*) is a village in Elk County, Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship, in northern Poland. Before 1945 the area was part of Germany (East Prussia).

A. The Rejuvenated Bund



Page 424: Committee of the League of Working People in Israel

In the years of the German occupation, 1916-1917, the '*Bund*' reconstituted itself in Zambrow. A member of the '*Grosser-Klub*' arrived from Warsaw, called together a group of workers and members of the intelligentsia, among them the previously mentioned Shimi-Nissl, the pharmacist Zalman Szklovin, Herschel Sendak, and his wife, Paya, the lawyer, Czerniawsky (from the *Maccabi* leadership), Joseph Savetsky, the three talented brothers: Eli, Abraham'keh and Elyeh[219] Rothberg, Shepsl Lifschitz, Elkanah Lifschitz (today in Argentina), Yitzhak Strocz, Zelik Bakshir, and others. These immediately subscribed to the periodical '*Lebens-Fragen*,' received brochures authored by Medem,[220] and rented premises for their '*Zukunft*'-Club in the house of Avcheh Rakowsky.

They were very exacting, and carried out the labor program with which they were tasked. The primary initiative was cultural, to educate the masses. Accordingly, they had was very exacting in evening courses for workers, in the Yiddish school, and especially the [sic: Yiddish] library, into which they put in no small part of their heart and soul. Later on, the library was transferred to the *Tze'irei Tzion*, who had become a majority in the *shtetl*. The *Bund* had a youth group called '*Zukunft*,' that would educate the children of the working class, by teaching them, imbuing them with the spirit of the party, and enlightening them. Apart from this, a Drama Club prospered under *Bund* auspices for a time. From time-to-time they would put on a play – with success, both in morale and financial terms. The principal activists of the Drama Section, were again, the previously mentioned

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219 See errata, p.626.

220 Medem, Vladimir Davidovich (1879–1923), political leader; Marxist theorist; *Bundist*. Vladimir Davidovich Medem was the main theorist of the Jewish Labor *Bund*, in Russia and in the *Bund's* early years in Poland, and arguably the party's most famous and celebrated leader.

Shimi-Nissl Lifschitz, Joseph Savetsky and others. The party gatherings, discussions, and literary evenings would attract a respectable audience. During the elections to the Polish Sejm, the Municipal Council, the community leadership, in professional or social unions, or social institutions – the *Bund* would garner a meaningful share of the votes and had a solid position in the *shtetl.*



Page 425: A Group of Girls, Coming from Well-to-Do Families

Polish harassment, military obligations, unemployment, need and isolation – all conspired to disperse the Bund, just like all the other parties were dispersed. What little youth there was, fled. Whoever could, saved themselves by going to Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and other locations. Very few were ably to directly reach the United States. The nationally inspired young people champed at the bit to get to the Land of Israel. All of these linked themselves to the chain of the Zambrow Help Committee activities, and continue to carry on with this sacred work of assistance, as we saw on the eve of the [Second World] War, and after *The Catastrophe.*

A significant part, the largest, of all members of these parties together, tragically met their end before their time,. in the battlefields, in the ranks of the partisans, in the ghettoes, and in the gas-ovens of Oswiecim...



Page 426: A Group of Left-Wing Workers Being Addressed by Herschel Smoliar



Page 427: A Group of Workingmen, Active in the Trade Union Movement
Third & Fourth Respectively – (R to L): Golombek & Alter



Page 428: (Top): Young Men's Socialist Movement



Page 428: (Bottom): A Group of Left-Wing Poalei-Tzion Members

The Labor Movement

The Poalei-Tzion Movement

By Pinchas Broder

During the times of the German occupation, in the year 1917 approximately, the *Poalei-Tzion* party founded itself in Zambrow, first as a general party, that consisted of workers and intelligentsia, and later – it split, as was the case in all of Poland, into a right and left-wing entity. The left-wing *Poalei-Tzion* party dominated, at the head of which stood Yehoshua Domb-Zucker (today in Israel), who was a Hebrew-Yiddish teacher, Zabludowsky the Barber, Nathan Smoliar the Polish-Yiddish teacher (martyred in the Warsaw Ghetto), Pini(a) Baumkuler, Gorfinkel, the son of the tinsmith,



Page 429: A Group of Poalei-Tzion Members, with Yehoshua Domb, their leader, at center

Sarniewicz, and others. The *Poalei-Tzion* party did much to enlighten its membership, dedicating itself to education and bringing them up, providing substantial explanation of the political and partisan situation, and affording the member an opportunity for development, to find a good social milieu here, and to be able to spend every evening, Sabbath and holiday, in a very homey atmosphere of comradeship, having a glass of tea, with the lady member Shifra Lifschitz would prepare. We would forget all of our economic needs, when we would get together there. Under the direction of Bercheh Sokol, the spiritual leader and teacher of folklore, the young workers learned to write Yiddish correctly, Jewish history, geography, etc.



Page 430 (Top): Young People (not identified)

From time-to-time discussions would take place with other parties, like the *Bund,* etc. The members would actively participate, and would always learn something. From time-to-time, we would also organize 'live news events,' speakers, parties, literary evenings, in which the membership found a great deal of interest. Quite often, we would be visited by members of the Central Committee, such as Gershon Dua, A. Sh. Uris, Taubenschlag, Kroll, and later on Mr. Moshe Medem, and others. Members from Lomza would come often, as well, and from Wysokie-Mazowieckie. One time, before Passover, Mr. Zerubabel was to come and give a literary presentation. For this, we rented the fire-fighters premises, printed up placards, sold all of the tickets in advance, and we all prepared to receive him very heartily. The entire city awaited him with anticipation, and... in the end, a telegram arrived from Warsaw: Comrade Zerubabel will not come.' This news struck us like a thunderbolt. It subsequently became known that Polish hooligans had assaulted him, in Warsaw at the train station, and wanted to cut off his handsome beard. He refused to let them do this, and fought with them. They beat him badly, and he was unable to travel. Zerubabel, however, kept his word, and later on, he did come to us, and had a colossal success.

Our party took part in the municipal elections, and the elections to the [Polish] Sejm, as well as to the Jewish Community [Leadership]. It always was successful, and was substantively represented at open gatherings and meetings.

We worked a great deal on the professional front – explaining things to the worker, fighting for his rights at work, and for a better salary and working conditions. The *Poalei-Tzion* party founded a professional union and indeed, appointed me to publicize it and engage in worker registration.

I was compelled to leave Zambrow in 1919, because of the Polish military mobilization, when it blundered into conflict with the Bolsheviks, and I went off to America.



Page 430 (Bottom): A Group of Young Workers
Standing: Herschel Smoliar, Sokol, Sarniewicz, Gutman
Sitting: Sokol, Mordechai Baumkuler, Menucha Sokol

An Addendum

By Sh. Gutman

At the initiative of the *Poalei-Tzion* party, the organization '*Jugend*' was founded in Zambrow, with the help of a group of students and former yeshiva students, in which the following took part: Mendl Baumkuler, Herschel Smoliar, Israel Herman, Shmuel Gutman, Yitzhak Saraczkewicz, and later, the following joined: Nahum Sokol, Shlomo Scheinkopf, Sarah Sokol, Chaya-Sarah Rekant, Rachel'eh Greenberg, Peshkeh Smoliar, Moshe Eitzer, Lifschitz (Shifra's little sister), Faygl'eh Friedman, Chana Bursztein, Chaya Zeitman, and others. A level of cultural activity was thus initiated among the young workers, with the more senior members of the *Poalei-Tzion* intelligentsia overseeing this activity, such as: Domb, Pini(a) Baumkuler, and N. Smoliar, who themselves were teachers, and were generally involved with education in the city – in the form of the very familiar evening courses.

A drama studio also existed among the *Poalei-Tzion* youth, which would put on small presentations quite frequently, one-act plays, and would organize literary evening get-togethers. On one occasion, they put on [the play] '*Dorf's Jung*,' with great success. Sarah Sokol and Herschel Smoliar stood out in this regard. The Poalei-Tzion party, together with '*Jugend*,' had a very nice headquarters location, with a warm ambience.

The Zionist Youth Movement

By Zvi Zamir (Slowik)

A. Pirkhei Tzion

I will attempt, with considerable abbreviation, to describe the youth movement in which I worked together with many friends, who live with me in *The Land*, and if by doing this, I can contribute to preserving [the memory] of this period, I shall be very happy.



Page 433: Committee of the United Poalei-Tzion

It is 1917, the year of the Balfour Declaration. The Polish Jewish community is full of excitement by the promise of our own national homeland. The believe in the salvation of the people enveloped masses of people – the hope, that the Jewish people would be able to build its homeland as a free nation, among the peoples of the earth, penetrated into all sectors of the populace. In Zambrow, a huge public assembly was convened in the synagogue. Throngs of the aroused marched to that premises – and on the *Bima* inside, there stood the Messrs. Abraham Mizrach from Lomza, Fanusz from Kolno. With great emotion and trembling, that spoke of the people's future. A fund-raising for the redemption of the people was announced. The donations were profuse. Women took off their jewelry and donated it to this fund. Little boys and girls brought their meager savings – and donated them to the fund. Zionist fervor enveloped almost all of the residents of the city. Youth organizations were opened, such as '*Poalei-Tzion,*' in the home of Hona the Butcher, '*Tze'irei Tzion*' – in the home of Aryeh Golombek,[221] and others. I was a lad at the time. I was studying in the *Heder* of R' Yehoshua. From morning to evening, we swam in the sea of the *Talmud*, but the atmosphere

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221 In view of the 'twinning' of Hebrew and Yiddish names, this very likely is Leibczak Golombek.

of Zion penetrated even to us, the young students. Aged 12 – we began to visit the Zionist meetings in the city – we felt that it was incumbent upon us to become partners in this national endeavor to achieve the redemption. A wondrous idea grew in the hearts of many of the young people: let us raise up an institution of young Zionists. A meeting was called, and the '*Pirkhei Tzion*' group was established, primarily of 12-13 year-olds. The children of the *balebatim* streamed to this organization, which etched on its banner, the ideal of effort on behalf of Zion. A young people's library was established for both Hebrew and Yiddish. Lectures, meetings and parties were held, and from time-to-time, a 'Question & Answer' meeting. During their study of the *Talmud,* the students of R' Yehoshua began to sing Zionist songs, and they even brought Hebrew books into the *Heder.* There was an extensive sense of awakening. The temerity of these young people aroused the ire of the ultra-orthodox ranks, most of whom were 'opponents of Zion.' A battle ensued. Parents were summoned to the Rabbi, and to all the 'Institutional Clergy' according to their station, in order to exert influence leading to the dispersal of this group. It was R' Alter the *Maggid* ז"ל who was tasked to do this – and during his sermon that Sabbath day, he spoke in the following language: *whether you are Zionists, or non-Zionists – whether you are Pirkhei Tzion, do not be those who befoul Zion* – this was directed in opposition to desecration of the Sabbath, promenades, and gatherings of young people. However, all of these attempts at opposition were in vain, and day-by-day, membership in the organization grew.

B. Herzliya



Page 434: The Adult Members of 'HeHalutz,' 1926 in Zambrow, In Honor of a pending Aliyah

The second event that drove our hearts into a storm was the Russian Revolution. The reverberations of the revolution encouraged the youth of the city, that held a faith in the liberation of the working classes. A schism took place among the ranks of the young people: the dominant majority went over to '*Jugend*,' and '*Poalei-Tzion*,' and part to the communists. They concentrated a substantial number of the working class youth. The young people's library was

transferred to them. We continued with the work of institutionalizing Zionist youth, without adding anything to our agenda. Our *'Pirkhei Tzion'* organization continued to function for two years. At the end of 1919, before Simchat Torah, the name was changed from '*Pirkhei Tzion*' to '*Herzliya*,' and, in so doing, we affiliated ourselves with the central Jewish youth group in Poland by that name. We established a connection to the center in Warsaw. Our movement continued to grow again. We would join in efforts under the aegis of '*Tze'irei Tzion*,' and they dedicated considerable energies and attention to the direction and management of the young people. Yitzhak Gorodzinsky and Aryeh Golombek would lecture us, as well as many others. A Drama Group was organized. Many members of the group began to study Hebrew, under the tutelage of the teacher, Alter Rothberg ז"ל – already beginning to think even then, of making aliyah to The Land, to settle there, and live. Our 'Zionism' was non-partisan. We especially established our base on the educated youth. In the year 1920, we sent a representative to the Third Conclave of *Herzliya*, in the person of Mr. Pikhowarsky[222] from Kolno. We also organized the young people of the area around us. In the name of our branch, I went to Wysokie-Mazowieckie, and after an effort of three days, a '*Herzliya*' group was organized there. After the Bolshevik conquest, Aryeh Golombek, Yitzhak Gorodzinsky, and several other members of *Tze'irei Tzion*, made *aliyah*. The letters from Yitzhak Gorodzinsky were full of ardor, in his description of the ambience in The Land, and were passed from hand-to-hand among the ranks of the young people, and bolstered our faith in Zion. I will relate here, an incident that occurred involving me, at a memorial service held in memory of Dr. Benjamin Herzl ז"ל in 1921 on the eve of 20 Tammuz, [Tuesday, July 26]. We were standing in the street: Chaim Shafran, Shmuel Golombek, Aryeh Levinsky, and others, and we were selling tickets to cover the cost of the memorial event. Suddenly, a police officer, Plawczuk, attacked us from the side, seized the tickets and forbade us to sell them, accusing us of communist activity. Everyone was let go, except me, because I assumed all of the responsibility for this activity. He threw all sorts of serious accusations in my face for this communist initiative. I was all of 14 years old at the time. All of my explanations were to no avail in trying to convince him otherwise. 'A young communist,' is what he called me, and with the escort of a policeman, I was taken like a person who was a danger to the public, to Lomza. I sat for three days in a police jail cell, along with other people who had been accused of communist 'transgression,' until I was brought before the judge. After explaining to him, and proving that in Lomza such an organization also existed – I was released. They returned all of the confiscated materials to us. My arrest did not instill fear in my comrades, and the work did not cease. We participated in all of the initiatives of the adults, in *Keren Kayemet L'Israel,* and especially in the activities relating to the national education of the Jewish child. We participated in putting on a show for Hanukkah, in the school of Yaakov Tobiasz, at the Golombek home, on the day of 25.12.1921, in which children appeared to sing songs, offer declamations, and readings and presentations on the purity of the Hebrew language. This show left a very strong impression on the young people, and spurred us on to continue our endeavors. We participated in the work of *Keren HaYesod*, in donations, and collecting donations, and we even set up a youth committee to deal with this matter withing the youth group, into which the following joined: the writer of these lines, Malka Greenberg, Chaim Shafran, Rivka Zilberstein, and my brother. We held youth group gatherings, and we distributed explanatory information around the houses. Mr. Tobiasz traveled, as a representative to

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222 See errata p. 626.

the *Keren HaYesod* Committee in Warsaw, in the year 1922, who, together with Ravikov and Meir Zukrowicz ז"ל, stood at the head of that committee in the city.

Our work for *Keren Kayemet* was one of the central activities among the others. Our *Keren Kayemet* 'corner' was decorated, and arranged with all manner of good things, and there was a permanent exhibit there, and in it, you could see the progress of the *KK"L*,[223] its land acquisitions, tables showing its income and activities. A special place was allocated for tables that displayed the competitions that were periodically organized between the various groups, in connection with increasing the income of the *KK"L*. Each and every evening, when I entered the branch premises, I would go over to this board that displayed the competitions – to see which group was leading in generating revenue for the *KK"L*. We were able to take first place in this activity to raise money for the KK"L for many years. in the size of our revenue generation, ahead of all other youth groups, and we took great pride in this.

All of this is the legacy of a past day. These things reflected the life in the Diaspora, and foretold a degeneration and a finality, but none of us could foresee that our sense of the future would be realized so rapidly, and with a cruelty so fundamental.

C. The Tz. S. Youth Organization



Page 435:Delegates of the Lomza District, to a 'Herzliya' convention held in Zambrow

The schism in *Tze'irei Tzion*, into a right and left wing, had an influence on the sentiment of the young people. Various attempts at definition, and explanation of ideas were initiated, difficult conversations – the concept of the liberation of the human being, the synthesis of Zionist-Socialism. Reverberations from what was going on reached us, as to what was going on in the ranks of the labor movement in Israel – the founding of '*Akhdut HaAvodah*.' We decided, in a

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223 The acronym for ***K**eren **K**ayemet **L**'Israel*.

stormy meeting in Sziniak's garden (on the Bialystok Road), based on a compelling majority, after a very difficult conversation among the responsible parties, to implement a change in our movement, with me at the head, and among those following this tack – to set up a Tz. S. Youth Organization (in its first year, it was called '*Herut*'). The minority continues for a time with '*Herzliya*,' until it fell apart.

A new era was initiated for the group. New concepts penetrated our midst: socialism – a Zionist-Socialism, a working Land of Israel, a labor movement in The Land. Working youth joined us – needle trades, and workers from different professions. We ceased being a movement drawn from the *balebatim*. These new ideas did not weaken the ardor that we had for work on behalf of the Land of Israel. Publicity was distributed about our group among the Tz. S. youth movement in Poland, as was clarified in the first national conference (10.11.22) in the central hall (on 11 Dzika Street) in Warsaw, in which I participated as a representative selected by the Zambrow branch. As our movement grew, we rented an headquarters. The list of our supporters grew: David Rosenthal, Krupinsky, and others, and we exerted ourselves to organize walks, performances, celebrations, and gatherings for Q&A. We participated in the elections to the organizing assembly in Poland with great vigor. We organized a Hebrew corner, where Moshe Bursztein was, as one of the leading workers. The objective of this corner was: Hebrew conversation, Hebrew song, and Hebrew reading. We subscribed to '*HaTzefira*,' and '*HaYom*,' – the Hebrew newspapers. An unfamiliar area of endeavor entered our ambit of concern: professional organization. Our members were selected into professional sections. Let us remember here, Mikhl Jabkowsky ל"ז, who invested both his blood and energy into the work of the organization as its representative to the municipal library. On 1.5.23, the First of May celebration took place, with the joint participation of all the socialist organizations: *Bund*, Tz. S., *Tze'irei Tzion*, *Poalei Tzion*, and communists – in a forest outside of the city. When news of the severe economic depression in *The Land* reached us: hunger, unemployment, the abandonment of *The Land* by people from our city, and emigration to America – having two of our city scions go insane in *The Land* – we reacted by being aghast. We walked about with a sense of oppression – had *The Abrogator* ascended over our dreams? We intensified our work on behalf of the funds for the Land of Israel – the gathering of working tools for the labor fund, and Yaakov Jabkowsky stood at the head of this initiative, and we gathered 180,000 marks.

D. HeHalutz

We read about the experience in the training by *HeHalutz* in Lomza – and also in the midst of our comrades, the recognition matured, of the need for such training prior to making *aliyah*. At that time I was a student at the gymnasium. At a meeting of the four friends: Joseph Slowik, Joseph Srebrowicz, Yehuda Szklovin, and the writer of these lines, on 29 Sivan 5684 (1924), we founded *HeHalutz*, in our home, beside the flour mill. We publicized the sign up. Young people, among them many who before they participated in public life – signed up full of the zeal and will to prepare themselves for life in the Land of Israel. We brought all of these, who stood for membership, into a general meeting, and selected a *HeHalutz* leadership. I was selected as the Chair, and Noah Zukrowicz ל"ז – as the secretary. We got in contact with the central *HeHalutz* organization, with the *HeHalutz* branch in Lomza, and we commenced activity. By and large, the parents were not in concert with the idea that their children would transform themselves into

agricultural workers in the Land of Israel, but in the end, they did agree, especially in face of the strong stand of their own children. We held the first public meeting of *HeHalutz* in the library assembly hall. Pinchas Rashish came as a representative of the central organization – today, he is the head of the town of Petakh Tikva. On a Friday, in the depths of a frost and cold, was when Mr. Rashish arrived in a wagon full of wood from Czyzew. His presentation attracted a large crowd – young people and old alike. After his speech, additional members signed up, from various walks of life. My room was transformed into an office of the branch. Evening upon evening, the members would come for discussion, clarification, song and dance. The Christians that passed by would stand bewildered: what are they so happy about, and what facilitated these sorts of meetings? We had evenings of song, *Oneg Shabbat* parties, discussions about Hebrew literature, history, experiences in *The Land*, on *Kibbutzim*, and collective community life. Most of the participants did not know Hebrew. We dedicated ourselves to the study of the language. We participated in *Keren Kayemet* and *Keren HaYesod*, and in the Committee for *Aliyah* to the Land of Israel, in the League of Labor in the Land of Israel, and others.



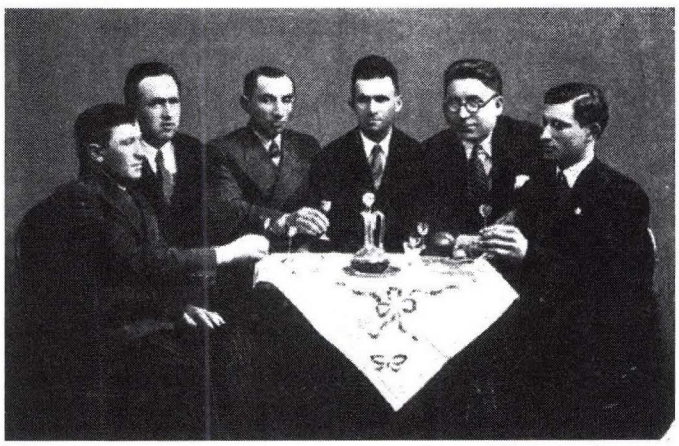
Page 436: Zambrow Halutzim at the Agricultural camp 'Simcha,' near Szczuczyn

E. Training

The city residents divided themselves into two camps in regard to their attitude and relationship towards us. One group was a group that was supportive, believing in our mission, and being respectful – and another group that was derisive of the tribulations of those, believing – that we would quickly return from the difficult labor we found in The Land. Mordechai Jaffa from Ginegar, who had a beard, came to visit us. At a gathering of the membership, he told about The Land, the relationship to the Arabs, and the future of the movement. Mr. Jaffa's personality left a strong impression on all the members. We organized '*HeHalutz HaTza'ir*' headed by Mr. Aryeh

Ratuszewicz ל"ז, and its offspring – '*HeHalutz HeKatan.*' [It was for] little children, who wanted to associate with us, and work with *HeHalutz*, like: Nahum Srebrowicz, Moshe Jabkowsky, Noah Zamir, and others. The work of indoctrination proceeded with full vigor, under the guidance of tens of volunteer members. From the central organization in The Land of Israel, we received the newspapers and the important publicity materials, and we would immerse ourselves into the pioneering and labor movement in the Land of Israel. In 1925 – training facilities were established on property belonging to people in the Szczuczyn area, Dolong, Tarki, and others. Our branch received notification on the taking of our members for training. We knew that this was the corridor in which they would be trained to become pioneers in the Land of Israel. The following were signed up for training: Ahuva Greenberg, Noah Zukrowicz, Isser Jablonka, Moshe Bursztein, Joseph Slowik, Gabriel Marmari, Daniel Koziol, and others. Among the Zambrow residents, a major upheaval in sentiment took place. The derision toward [manual] labor ended. the future of the sons was seen to be in The Land of Israel – this was the talk that dominated the street. It was not only once that I heard the sounds of laughter on the occasion of departure for training. There were escorts with song and dance. When I visited the training camps, I found our members tanned, working from the break of dawn to sunset. They lived in inhospitable dwellings, the food was bad, and despite this, the spirit was good, and there were many cultural activities that they engaged in after work.

F. Implementation



Page 437: A Tze'irei Tzion Group at a Farewell Party for their Member, Tzivan, Emigrating to Argentina

In the year 1925, the first of the *Halutzim* were fortunate enough to make *aliyah* to The Land. [These were: Aliza Weinberg, and my[224] brother Yekhezkiel ל"ז. We put on a party at our premises, with the participation of all members of the branch, the organization, parents and friends. We drank toasts of *L'Chaim*, danced, and escorted them with their parents and a sizeable portion of the city residents to the train station. From there, they traveled to Czyzew. In 1926, our members returned from their training, and were also fortunate enough to make *aliyah* in that same year, going to the working *Kibbutz* at Petakh Tikva. Our work was not in vain. The majority lived off the land, was tied to it, and was faithful to the tenets of the movement. Others passed on. Since that time, forty years have gone by, and I am pleased to be able to bring closure to a specific chapter in our lives. That is, the era of the youth, of yearning and vision. Even after we made *aliyah* to The Land, *HeHalutz* continued its work in Zambrow. However, the economic depression in The Land took its toll. The movement was choked off, and only a few loners carried on. At the head of *HeHalutz* stood Zvi Goren. Chaim Zilberstein and Abraham Raczowicz led and directed the effort. The work of *HeHalutz*, and *HeHalutz HaTza'ir* did not cease for a single day. Nahum Srebrowicz, Moshe Rakowsky and others continued with this endeavor up to the day the Nazi scourge entered the city.

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224 See errata p. 626.

The Founding of the First HaShomer HaTza'ir

By Chaim Ben-David[225]

This was at the end of the German occupation, more or less in 1917. Nathan Smoliar, the ingratiating and enthusiastic teacher, put on [the play] 'the Little Hasmoneans,' by K. L. Silman. I provided no small amount of help. The lead part of 'Judah Maccabi' was played with great success by his younger brother Herschel.

This very Herschel, of warm disposition, energetic and spicy, came to me after a while, on a Saturday afternoon, together with a friend, who was a youth of the same age as him: they wanted to discuss something important with me. I had not yet finished the main Sabbath meal yet, and my father ז"ל sat and was still chanting the Sabbath *zemirot*. They waited a short while. When I finally turned to them, the young Herschel conveyed to me with great ardor: In the entire country, a major movement is coming to life... young people are organizing themselves, it has been committed to doing missions....and also with us: it is a bit of *Maccabi*, a bit of library work – and then it ceased... the older group and the mature members of the community are sitting on their hands... it is necessary to get ourselves organized, and there is work to do: we must organize a '*HaShomer HaTza'ir*.' I was far from *HaShomer HaTza'ir* at that time, and this was before it took on its left-wing character. However, I could not withstand Herschel Smoliar's enthusiasm, and so we founded *HaShomer HaTza'ir*, the first in our city.

Seven Wise Men ....

By Ben-Zion Sendak

(At the Founding of *HeHalutz HaTza'ir*)

They were seven youngsters, almost children... on one Saturday afternoon on 15 Iyyar 5688 (May 5, 1928), at a time when all the young people were passing the respite of the Sabbath in walking, play or sleep – seven young people girded themselves, leaving the table of their fathers and mothers, after the *zemirot,* and went out into the field, over the bridge, beside the priest's woods. They were preceded by three adults, from the ranks of *HeHalutz*, A. Raczowicz, P. Kaplan, and Z. Gorzholczany. At their destination, the youngsters sat down on the grass, and they were: Y. Golombek, B. Zaltzberg, Kh. Tobiasz, Noah Slowik, Ben-Zion Sendak, Kh. Kalesznik, and A. Kagan. Stormy exchanges had been taking place among these for several days now.

On of the members from Bialystok, Heilperin, wanted, with all deliberate speed, to establish a branch of '*HaShomer Leumi*' here. We took the upper hand, and in the end, we set down a foundation for *HeHalutz Hatza'ir*. Witness to this were the waters of the Jablonka River, that flowed languidly, and the trees in the woods, that nodded with their heads. It was then that we made the covenant with

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225 See errata, p. 626.

those working by the sweat of their brow in the fields of Israel. Not much time passed, and we went off to training at Gorkhova to Klosowo. Our comrades were not in their fields of expertise: one – a gymnasium student, one a student at the trade school in Bialystok, on a student of '*Takhkemoni*' and one dyer, one worked in agriculture, and two helped out their parents. However, there was a common concept that had captured their imagination: to get out of here quickly – to be able to create, to fulfill one's self, to the Land of Israel!

Productive Work

Year after year, this was a neglected and overlooked place. Garbage was thrown there, and rags and remnants were scattered about, the pigs and dogs took over the place, and they rooted about and uncovered bones. The place was malodorous, and reeked.

We, the members of '*HeHalutz HaTza'ir* decided to demonstrate our capacity in the city, our desire to transform a wasteland into a flowering garden. And so we descended on this repulsive parcel – we removed all of the stones, cleaned it up, whitewashed it, and cut rows into the ground side-by-side. We planted flowers and vegetable seeds. We drove poles into the ground, and put a fence around it. We befriended the gardeners from the Bialystok Street, and he gave us direction. As it turned out, this was the first example of our productive work. The garden yielded produce: carrots, beets, radishes, onions, lettuce and cabbage. And so, the organization of '*HeHalutz HaTza'ir*' arose in the city. Even those who opposed us, respected us, and even more our intent. Let us go up and forward and succeed.

The Events of 5689 (1929)

By Aryeh Kossowsky

Zionist Zambrow was steeped in mourning. One news bulletin came on top of the other: Haifa was destroyed, Tel-Aviv was under siege, in Jerusalem there were dead, etc., etc. 'The Opponents of Zion' raise their heads: they want to emigrate away from here – after all, America is open, and what will they attain in the Land of Israel? Can they stand up to, and face millions of Arabs?



Page 439: A Group of Working Youth of "The Banner of Youth" Organization

A memorial service is being arranged in the White *Bet HaMedrash*. It is in memory of those who fell, being killed in the Land of Israel. The congregation weeps. The *Hazzan*, wrapped in his *Tallit,* reads from the verses of the *Tehillim*. He recites the *Kaddish* – choked with tears. Bereavement settled on the place. However, from behind the *Bima*, suddenly a powerful voice is heard:

'Tekhezakna yedei kol akheinu, hamekhonenim Afarot artzeinu ba'asher heym sham!'[226]

'Strengthen the hands of our brothers, renewing The soil of our land, being there.'

HeHalutz, the Zionist youth [group] did not cry and did not give up. Its hand was made even stronger. And the blacksmith from the Ostrowo Road raises his coal-blackened hands and shouts: Come. let us make *aliyah*, let us travel to the Land of Israel. We will make war in the gates, and if we fall – we will know what it is we fought for, and where we gave battle!

The 'HaShomer HaTza'ir' Chapter

By Yehuda Srebrowicz-Kaspi



Page 440: Members of the HaSneh Brigade of BETAR (Brit Trumpeldor), at the time of the aliyah of Abraham, 1936.

In a city of approximately 5,000 Jews, no less than 500 young people were organized in youth movements, with about 150 in *HaShomer HaTza'ir*. The atmosphere of the Homeland pervaded everything in the life of this *HaShomer* chapter. Beginning with the songs of *The Land*, and the greeting of '*Khazak v'Ematz*,' and ending with a basic study of the origins of the workers' movement, and the geography of the Land of Israel. For the young people that studied in the schools, run by the Polish government, the various highways and byways of the Land of Israel were more familiar than Polish geography. The more relevant content to us was the 'chapter,' its songs, dances,

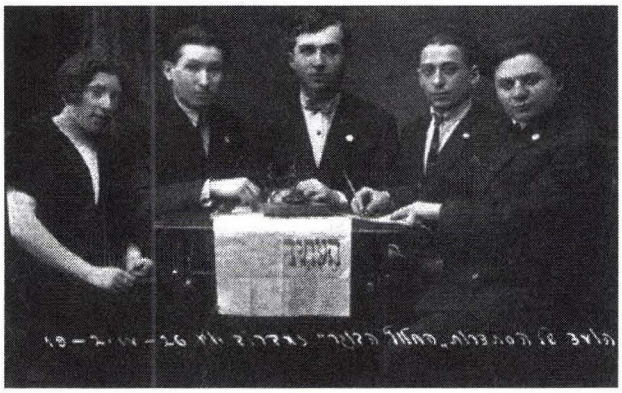
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226 The anthem of Zionist Labor, from the poem, '*Birkat Ha'Am*' by Chaim Nachman Bialik.

and the discussions we would have about life in The Land and what we studies about it. Everything else – life at home and in school were excess baggage. It is no surprise that we neglected our studies. We saw no utility in them. The central thing was to get out to receive training for *aliyah*, and afterwards, to get to The Land and to live on a *Kibbutz*.



Page 441: (Top): The Trumpeldor Branch of HeHalutz HaTza'ir



Page 441: (Bottom): The Adult Committee of HeHalutz HaTza'ir in Zambrow (1926)



Page 442: (Top):A Group of Young People
Standing: Rivka Zilberstein, Chaim Joseph Shafran
Sitting: Zvi Zamir, Zahava Kahn, Malka Greenberg



Page 442: (Bottom): Young People

The opposition of parents was to no avail. Harassment by the officials of the school had no influence. The attraction of the 'nest' was more powerful than all of them. In three tiny rooms, about one hundred and twenty of us children were crowded in. And the sounds of joy, and the happiness of youth would suffuse the otherwise stultified air in the vicinity. In the largest of the room, a stormy *Hora* dance would break out, involving a chain of tens of young boys and girls, dancing with an unbridled enthusiasm, and not stopping, for hours on end. At the same time, different groups would enter the other rooms, along with their leaders, to discuss life in *The Land*, life on a *Kibbutz*, or activities in connection with preparing for a celebration, play productions, or a trip to the camps. The camps were the good days in our lives: preparations began many months before going out to the camp. First and foremost was the battle that took place at home: the worried complaints of the parents were a constant din: this isn't the right time, the spread of anti-Semitism intensifies with

every period, incidents of attacks on Jews, and even very serious assaults, and acts of murder, almost as a daily occurrence. Every time we asked permission to go out to the camp, in the village, without 'adults,' our parents would get all shook up. And after these miseries, the preparations began: laying in a full inventory, an *HaShomer* shirt, a scarf, eating plates, a knife, sacks, tents for each group, basins, etc. For many of us, hunger was a permanent guest in our homes, and it was not easy to get a hold of the few coins needed to fund the camp expenses. We donated here to the cooperative funds that were established for this purpose. Each child made a donation in accordance with his/her means, and in this way needs were provided for in accordance with the requirement. The will was strong among all, and it overcame all obstacles. Commonly, 100 percent of the entire group would go out to the camp. And the weeks that we spent at the camp were like one long holiday. The order of the day was replete with walks, team games, sports, discussions, study, and swimming in the river, followed by evenings of song, and parties dedicated to various subjects having to do with life in *The Land*, the Labor Movement, and the Zionist Movement. The spiritual nourishment, and the experience that suffused us, gave us momentum for the rest of the days of the year, and kept us on our chosen path.



Page 443: A Group of People from Zambrow in Israel
Standing: Noah Zukrowicz, Feldman, Moshe Bursztein, Mikhl Jabkowsky, Zvi Zamir
Sitting: Berger ז"ל, Yekhezkiel Zamir ז"ל, Kawior, Gabriel Marmari, Tova Jabkowsky-Stepner

Torah v'Avodah

By Zvi Khanit

Several students from the Yeshiva in Lomza enlisted in the Zionist effort, and *BETAR*, and they founded a religious Halutz-oriented organization, '*Torah v'Avodah*,' in the summer of 1934. On *Hol Hamoed Sukkot* of 5695, the adherents of this movement entered the movie house of

Gedalia Tykoczinsky, together with the members of the central office in Warsaw, and announced their initiative among young people, to create souls for a religious pioneering movement, and to take the young people out from under the influence of the left-wing *Halutzim*. Thanks to '*Torah v'Avodah*,' a national religious initiative was undertaken in the city, with young people going out for training, and a number of them were even privileged to make *aliyah*, to the Land of Israel. To our sorrow, many remained behind, such as Joel and Rivka Kawior, Aryeh Satran, and others, who were lost in the Holocaust.

Zionists

By Yaakov Garbass



Page 445: People from Zambrow, in 1922, who made Aliyah to Israel
First Row: A. Golombek, Abraham Baumkuler, Meir Epstein, Noah Tykoczinsky, Joseph Golombek, Yehoshua Golombek, Joseph Wierzbowicz-Waxman, Davis Blumrosen, Moshe'l Kwiat.
Second Row: Yitzhak Gorodzinsky, Malka Golombek, Zlatkeh, Zahava Blumrosen, the wife of D. Blumrosen.
Third Row: David Blumrosen ע"ה, Israel Konopiata, Shmuel Gutman, Mr. Gutman ז"ל, Abraham Paciner

I am moved to recollect the following from the Zionist gallery:

Mordechai Ravikov – A dry goods storekeeper in the marketplace (the storekeeper from Brisk). He was sunk into Zionist work from morning to late at night. Nothing happened without him. Every meeting, gathering, consultation, banquet [depended on him]. He was especially punctilious with regard to the elections to the Zionist Congress, to the Polish *Sejm*, and the municipal government.

Yaakov Kawior – An educated man who was self-effacing in his manner. Everyone respected him, and many availed themselves of the opportunity to pour our the bitterness from their hearts to him. With his refined bearing, and wise words, he would draw not a few to the Zionist cause.



Page 446: The 'HeHalutz' Pioneer Group in the Year 1932

Zaydl Rudnik – He had a leather business at the *Koszaren.* He was learned, both in Torah and secular studies, and advocated Zionism to the common people, who would come to buy in his business. He embodied both Torah and decency within himself. He was one of the best theoretical Zionists in the *shtetl.*

Zalkind – Devoted to Zionism with his mind, flesh and life. He allocated part of his home – the second storey – to be used by the Zionist Society. That was where the Zionist prayer quorum met as well. He was the principal activist for Keren HaYesod, and the living breath of all Zionist undertakings.

Yehuda Koczor – A talented public speaker. He would travel around to the cities and towns, at the behest of the Zionist Organization, and would give fiery speeches in support of building up the Land of Israel. It was sufficient to indicate on a publicity poster, that Yehuda Koczor would be opening a meeting, or would, alone, be speaking at the *Bet HaMedrash*, assuring that the location would be full. Many of the *olim,* to Israel from Zambrow, have him to thank directly, or indirectly.

Gershon Henokh Tenenbaum – He was one of the leaders of *Mizrahi* in the *shtetl.* He was one of the founders of '*HeHalutz HaMizrahi.*' He worked diligently in this capacity, and was privileged to come to the Land of Israel.

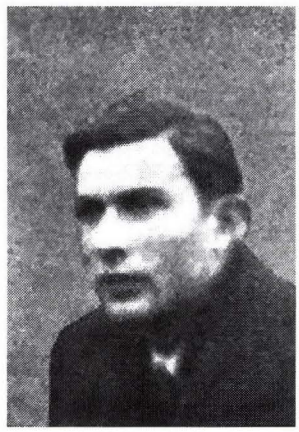
Zundl Taubman – A son of the *Mashgiach* of the *Talmud Torah* in Lomza, and a son-in-law of Sendak. He was a dedicated worker for Zionism, and a role model for his members.

Yehuda Rubinstein – A man full of the vibrancy of life, and a stalwart fighter for Yiddish and a strong supporter of Hebrew. He was highly visible in [community] life.

Yehuda Slowik – The dedicated adherent of *Keren Kayemet* and *Keren HaYesod.*

Yekhiel Ravinson – He was 'married to Zionism.' He would perform all the duties: agitation, distributing lottery tickets, distributing brochures, putting up placards, delivering letters, sending invitations, etc. He did all of this with his complete heart and soul.

The Tree Cut Down in its Prime



Page 447: Yitzhak Sukharewitz – The Tree that was cut down.

He was the son of Sarah Zarembsky.[227] Yitzhak Sukharewitz[228] – the tree that was cut down before its time[229] – was raised without a father, and was nevertheless very capable. He was a man of many virtues, both spiritual and physical: he was tall, imposing, refined in his appearance – handsome and clever. He was educated and was fluent in several languages, speaking perfect Polish, German, etc. He was a talented athlete, a good speaker and lecturer, and he was beloved both in Jewish society in all political circles, and in the non-Jewish world.

He completed the *Volksschule* in Ostrowo and gymnasium – in Zambrow. He read extensively and engaged in self-study – until he became a teacher in the Zambrow military school, where he prepared junior officers for their qualifying examinations. He was one of the first of the leading members of '*HeHalutz HaTza'ir*' and later, a commandant of *BETAR*. In 1934, he completed a course, with distinction, for senior instructors in Zielonka near Warsaw, and returned as a prominent specialist in military matters.
He read a great deal in more languages – literally swallowing up books. He would speak beautifully, always citing metaphors and excerpts from the world literature. He was expert in all matters pertaining to sport. He was the principal spokesman at many political and literary gatherings.

He did not believe that the World War was so imminent, and did not take advantage of the means at his disposal to flee Poland. This went on, until the Soviet authorities in Zambrow arrested him, as a formerly active Zionist, and when they retreated, they did not release him. The Nazis then 'liberated' him, and later had him killed in Auschwitz.

Levi Poziner

By Aryeh Kossowsky

A tailor's son, from a working family who was an elder in '*HeHalutz*.' He was ardent and committed to the ideal, and was a master tailor. He sat and sewed, teaching the young people, incidentally, his sewing from being in '*HeHalutz*,' what was it – *realization*. He fought in the battles for '*HeHalutz*,' knowing what to say to the older generation, and the left-wing youth with an eye set on Moscow.

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227 See errata, p. 626.

228 Translator's Note: This name appears to be different from the name Zukrowicz.

229 See errata p. 626.

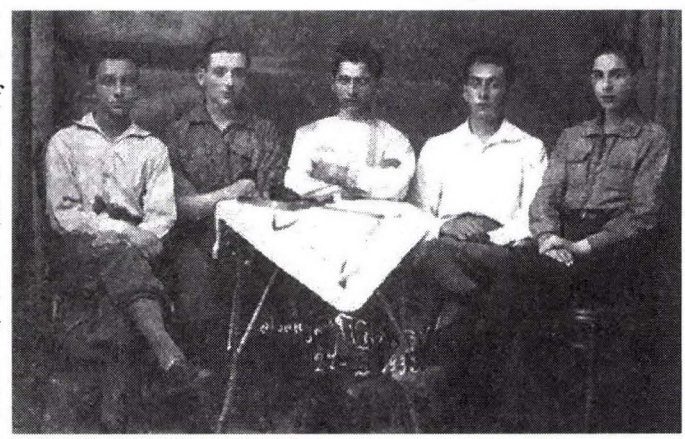
During the events of 5689 [1929] they entered the woods of the priest, to take counsel and to make a decision: what awaits us further? And here is Levi Poziner, taking the right to speak, and with his entire might, he lights the flame of heroism, guarding the flame of he Homeland, so that it never goes out – and all of us, apostles of that hope, break out into an enthusiastic *Hora*.

In the year 1930, when the *aliyah* to the Land of Israel came to a halt, and the ranks of '*HeHalutz*' turned politically leftward – he asked that the archive of '*HeHalutz*' be turned over to him – I, he said, will not sway from this path. I will guard this glowing ember. He facilitated many hearts this way, but himself was not privileged to make *aliyah*.

Abraham Herschel Kagan, ז"ל

By M. Bursztein

He was born in Zambrow in th year 1915, a son of Baylah and the teacher Yaakov-Zerakh Kagan (a grandson of Meiram Bursztein).[230] He received his first education in the '*Heder*' of his father ז"ל (his father, R' Yaakov-Zerakh was the school principal, studied Torah for his entire life, was an enlightened man, knew Hebrew as it was supposed to be, and was thoroughly versed in both religious and secular literature, as well as being suffused through and through with a deep nationalistic pride. In connection with these values, he educated generations of students, suffused with Zionist awareness, many of them privileged to attain completion [sic: through *aliyah*] going to the Land, and participated in the building of the State of Israel.)



Page 449: A Group of Pioneers

He studied at the Zambrow yeshiva, transferring to the '*Takhkemoni*' school in Bialystok, but after two years, was compelled to return to Zambrow, where he was accepted in the local Polish gymnasium. His dedication to community endeavors in the youth movement prevents him from completing his course of study, and he left the gymnasium after completing the seventh grade, despite the fact that he was an excellent student. He ran afoul of the anti-Semitic spirit in the gymnasium, and attempted to fight it with all his might. On one occasion, an attempt was made to collect funds from the students for a Polish institution called '*Bratnia Pomoc.*'[231] He refused to

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230 See errata p. 626.

231 *Bratnia Pomoc* (English: *Brotherly Help*), also known as *Bratniak,* is a popular Polish students' mutual aid organization. The first branch of *Bratniak* was created in 1859 at the Jagiellonian University, thirty years later another branch was opened at the Warsaw University.

contribute, and to the question posed by the principal (a Polish priest), as to the reason for the refusal, he simply let it be known that his father does not want him to support an anti-Semitic organization. This knowledge created a stir: the principal threatened him with expulsion from school, invited his parents, because in this, he perceived a blatant incitement, and an attempt to malign a very distinguished institution. The parents appeared before the principal, and in their concurrence with an article that appeared in a Zionist newspaper in Warsaw, written in Polish, in which the objectives of the organization were discussed, for which the purposes of the fund raising among the students was described, they explained their refusal.

The principal was dismayed to hear these things, and he chose to excuse the contents of the article, arguing that it was the product of a misunderstanding...The issue was dropped and the threat of expulsion withdrawn.

At the same time, he was engaged in indoctrination work among the Jewish students, and organized a group of students named '*HeHalutz HaKatan*,' that engaged in raising funds for, and the explanation of the goals of the *KK"L*. He was one of the principal activists for *'HaShomer HaTza'ir'* in Vilna, and it was those [sic: in Vilna] that did not permit him to make *aliyah* to the Land of Israel – because of the important Diaspora-based work that had been entrusted to him. He dedicated himself to the work in the '*HaShomer HaTza'ir'* movement, for which he was one of the founders of the branch in the city, and saw in it the realization of his soul, dedicating the best part of his energies and time to it, and stood at its head to his last days – the days of the Holocaust, that befell the People of Israel there.

Mikhl Jabkowsky

By Tz. Z.



Page 450: (Top): Mikhl Jabkowsky

He was the son of R' Shlomo Eivnik ז"ל, of the Wodna *Gasse,* recognized as one of the pious of the town. He was born into a family without great means, burdened with many children, but into a home that was suffused with spirit of *Yiddishkeit*, Torah, faith in God and man, and love for the People and *The Land*, as well as a love of work. The children learned the carpenter's trade – helping their parents to make a living. Mikhl entered the trade of carpentry at an early age, with the intent of making a living from it in the Land of Israel, together with his brother Yaakov, to be separated for long life, striving diligently with his brother in working for the Zionist-Socialist movement in the city. He made *aliyah* to the Land of Israel in 1925. He worked hard, and bitterly, often finding himself unemployed, but always satisfied and loyal to the standard of Labor.

Bratnia Pomoc was originally aimed at helping poorer students, providing them with loans, it also supported cheap cafeterias for those who could not afford more expensive places. Its members were also active in educating the population of Polish towns and villages, preventing them from falling prey to Russification and Germanization.

Even under duress, he remained dedicated and committed to '*Akhdut HaAvodah*' and its institutions. He worked in a variety of sectors, in construction, road building, and whatever came his way – never complaining, not growing bitter, accepting everything amicably. In 1929 he relocated to Petakh Tikva, and started a family. He later moved to 'Kfar Azhar,' and worked very hard, together with his wife Sarah, to establish their business. He fell ill, and after a difficult struggle, he passed away in a sanatorium in Hadera in 1940. He was eulogized by many at his funeral, who told of his many virtues, in his voyage from the Wodna *Gasse* in Zambrow to – the burial ground in Petakh Tikva.

Noah Zukrowicz ז"ל



Page 450: (Bottom): Noah Zukrowicz

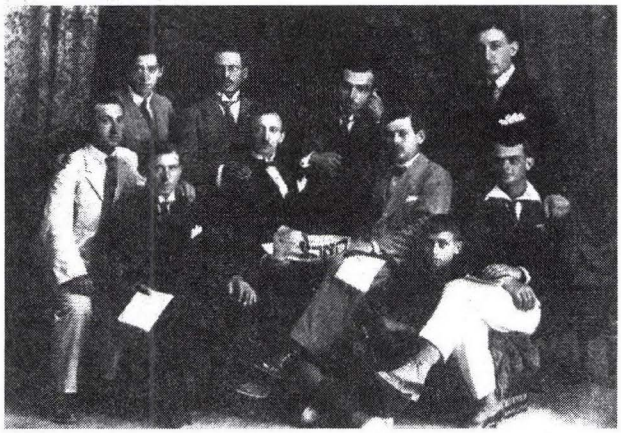
Noah, the son of Meir Zukrowicz, was born in 1907 in Zambrow. He received his education at the *Heder Metukan*, and it was there that he imbibed his knowledge of *Tanakh* and Hebrew language, also studying *Talmud*. At an early age, he joined the Zionist-Socialist movement, and entered the ranks of *HeHalutz* in the town. He made aliyah to The Land towards the end of the summer of 1926, as a nineteen year-old. He went over to Petakh Tikva to work. He assumed the rather difficult circumstances that he encountered at work, from a Jewish orchard manager who was unsympathetic to Jewish labor, and was content with his lot. In 1929 he was 22 year old. He enlisted in the *Haganah*. During the day, he worked at hard labor, and at night – training with armaments, battle tactics, both underground and out in the open. In 1936, assaults against the Jews broke out. At night, Noah stood watch, in addition to his hard day's work. He was lucky in being able to get his sister and parents into *The Land*. He exerted himself to try and extract other members of his family – in vain. He worked at '*Nir*,' and established a distinguished family in Israel. Together with his wife, Sarah, from the Berlin family, may she be separated for a long life, he mastered on step after another during his life, in Kfar Ganim, beside Petakh Tikva, educating his children with a love for the Homeland, and the full range of the culture and its tradition. From 'Nir' he moved to Malvina, where he was one of the outstanding workers: he reached a quota of making one thousand bricks in a single day – he worked three normal days, and one day as a contractor. After twenty-five years of backbreaking labor, and he was forty-four years old – his close friends saw fit to have him transferred to a managerial position, to the office of tax revenue, and here as well, he rooted himself quickly into the scene, and was a wonderful role model to all the staff, in his pleasant demeanor. His aged father, a scion of a noble family in Zambrow, a man of the Torah and good deeds, was blessed in this son of his, who went in his ways, the ways of righteousness and honesty, working by the strength of his hands, with an innocent heart. When he reached his fiftieth birthday, in the year 1957, his friends at work from the office, put on a party for friends and neighbors, that was full of heart during which everyone tried to emphasize his genial nature, his love of humanity, his affection for the Homeland, his commitment to the nation, the modesty that he showed during his life, as well as his other virtues. He possessed a good heart, loved to sprinkle humor into his speech, utilizing some pleasant parable taken from the wisdom of the Sages, literature and life itself.

His fate was suddenly cut short. He fell victim to an incurable disease, and passed away on 4 Shevat 5718 [January 25, 1958], and he was only fifty-one years old.

Yekhezkiel Zamir (Son of Aryeh Slowik)



Page 451: Landsleit in Tel-Aviv meet Mr. Zelig Warszafczyk from the U.S.A.



Page 452: Scions of Zambrow in Israel

He was one of the original members of *HeHalutz HaTza'ir*. He carried out all of the duties that surrounded this movement – organization, recruiting, disseminating publicity, distribution of '*HeAtid*,' expressing [the mission of] *HeHalutz,* etc. He was the first to make practical realization of *aliyah*, in the year 1925. Frail and solitary, he arrived in *The Land*, and immediately threw himself into every sort of work that he found, choosing, rather, from among the difficult ones: smelting, building, carpentry, paving, and his letters were full of encouragement and zest for life, even if he was suffering to no small extent. When I made *aliyah*, a year later – I found him to be solid, radiant, participating in the 'renaissance of socialism' and in the meetings of the *Histadrut*. During the Depression, he went over to Ness Tziona, where he was an agricultural worker, and afterwards as a director of the work in the orchards of Palestine Jewish Colonization Association. He excelled at his work. After a number of years, he returned to Tel-Aviv, and established a family there in the midst of the Jewish community. When work camps were established in the Negev – he moved there from the standpoint of participating as part of the 'security' arrangements. However, the British suspected him, and released him from this duty. He arranged for himself to obtain a position with the Histadrut, and with the rise of the nation – in the communications office. He became much loved by all of his friends both at work and in the community. However, a malignant disease struck him suddenly, and after an inhuman amount of suffering and struggle – he succumbed and fell, on 21 Iyyar 5721 [May 7, 1961].

Noah Zamir

He was a dreamer from his childhood on. He was an independent laborer, and worked for others. He read and practiced a great deal. He probed deeply into socialist and national issues. He joined *HeHalutz HaTza'ir*. He was full of the stuff of life: he wrote poetry in Hebrew and Yiddish, also he drew, loved the surroundings of nature, and would imbue himself with

the Land of Israel. For some days, he gave up on the idea of the redemption of the Jewish people, and immersed himself in the idea of the redemption of all mankind, and it was here that he got involved with the concept of communism, and he committed himself to it with all of his soul. He was the chairman of the communist sports organization, '*Gviozdo*' and on once occasion, he was seized and sent to prison for two years in Lomza. After suffering through this, he was released, and returned to the communist movement. With the invasion of the Red Army,[232] he became one of the leaders of the city. With their departure, he attached himself to them, but was murdered en route.

The Ratuszewicz Brothers

Abraham and Aryeh came from proletarian stock, raised in poverty and want, but developed beautifully into the ways of Torah, and good character, because they thirsted for the lore of the Torah, read, practiced, and learned on their own, and from their friends. Abraham studied at Yeshiva, and Aryeh at *Heder*. They affiliated themselves to the Israel Labor Movement at an early age, and oriented themselves to train for *aliyah*. Abraham married a woman in Radziłów and settled down there. and continued his Zionist work. Aryeh suffered, until he reached *The Land* to live in it, and to re-build it. He was unable to find a suitable companion. He was alone all his life. He was shy by nature, and did not stand out. In the end, he managed to get himself a position as an army officer, but he was consumed by bitterness and was lonely. He constantly longed for the joyous youthful life he had in Zambrow. And one day, the news reached us, that he had died, alone, friendless, without a single comrade or confidant...



Page 453: Aryeh Ratuszewicz

Chaim Zilberstein

He was the son of R' Yaakov the *Hasid* of Radzymin. From his childhood on, he absorbed both *Hasidism* and Torah. He studied *Talmud* extensively in Yeshiva, and along with this, he began to delve deeply into the realm of spiritual knowledge: the writings of Zhitlovsk, Serkin, and others. In the process of researching sociological questions, he arrived at the ideals of Zionism and Labor. He committed himself to the work of the *KK"L*, to the point where the joke went around that he was 'married' to the *KK"L*. His orations and discussions drew an audience of listeners, and there was always something new to be heard in them, and he always sought to base his words on something drawn from science and research. He was in a household of suffering and bitterness, because his parents constantly objected to his chosen path, wanting him rather to be settled and become a family man, as was the 'way of the world.' In time, he married a woman from Ostrow-Mazowiecka and settled down there, but even here, he continued, with the same ardor, in his soul, for national work. He prepared himself to make aliyah, because his soul yearned for the Land of Israel – but he fell into the hands of the *Unclean Ones*, and did not realize this....

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232 While no specifics are given, the context suggest the events surrounding the initial invasion of Poland at the outbreak of World War II in September, 1939.

Pessia Furmanowicz

By Tz. Z.



Page 454: A Group of Activists in the Israeli Labor Movement
Standing: Ratuszewicz, Yitzhak Jakula
Sitting: Joseph Slowik, Chaim Zilberstein, Yankl Jabkowsky, Chaim Pinchas Golombek

She was born into a Zionist family, to working parents (her father, a glazier, her mother, a seamstress), in the year 1919. As a ten year-old, she affiliated with *HeHalutz HaTza'ir*. For lack of means, her parents could not continue to educate her. She was a joyful person, full of life. She did not have the opportunity to prepare for *aliyah*, because her oldest sister, a teacher, was there already, and her parents did not want to be separated from her. As a 17 year-old, she entered the *HeHalutz HaTza'ir* Seminary, and after this, she joined the Kibbutz Tel-Chai that was in Bialystok. Her parents severed their connections with her. She suffered, and bit-by-bit, she got back on a normal path. In 1938, she was fortunate enough to make *aliyah*, but she asked to be able to do so with her friend Monik, who was active in the movement in Krakow, traveling there to him, but returning after side travel to Warsaw, to the fighting Jewish organization, in the combat division of '*Dror*.' In September 1942, she was sent with a 70 man partisan unit from the '*Dror*' combat battalion to the forests of Hrubieszow, and from there, she never returned.

Families

משפחות



Page 455: Towards the Synagogue



Page 456 (Top): A BETAR Group in Zambrow



Page 456 (Bottom): Members of Maccabi
First on the Right: Shepsl Lifschitz
First on the Left (Below): Joseph Savetsky

Mash'keh of Korytk and Her Son, Benjamin Tenenbaum

By Israel Levinsky



Page 459: A Group of Young People

When a family is called after the woman of the house, it is indicative that she is a Woman of Valor. Mash'keh had a very impressive pedigree: on her mother's side – a grandchild of the Lomza Rabbi, Rabbi Benjamin Diskin, and the son of a sister to the Brisk-born Rabbi, R' Yehoshua Leib Diskin, the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem. Mash'keh would correspond with 'Sonya the *Rebbetzin*' of Jerusalem, which, at that time, led the entire Jerusalem orthodox community around by the nose... On her father's side, she was a grandchild of the great scholar and merchant, R' Elyeh Rosenbaum, who lived in Warsaw. Mash'keh married a genteel young man from Kielce, Hona Tenenbaum. As a dowry, her grandfather gave her a parcel in the village of Korytk. However, they could not accommodate themselves to the 'aristocratic country life,' so they sold off this treasure, and relocated themselves to Zambrow. Hona Tenenbaum acquired a concession for selling petrol, from his friend, the Russian petrol king, Chaim Cohen, together with [storage] cisterns, from which barrels could be filled with petrol in Czerwony Bór. He needed to put up with a strong competitor in R' Abba Rakowsky, who also had a petrol concession from another firm. Their house became a central point for charity-giving, and social help: the sick, poor brides, orphans, and just plain needy people would make their way to Mash'keh for help. They had three daughters and a son, the latter being talented, Benjamin Tenenbaum. He studied Talmud and secular studies in Warsaw with his grandfather. He was a Hebrew-Yiddish writer and an editor of the small periodical, '*Die Kopikeh*.' The publisher, Sh. Y. Yatzkon, later founded the Warsaw-based '*Heint*,' and ejected the editor Benjamin. So Benjamin opened hi own announcement bureau, which was very popular in Warsaw. Benjamin Tenenbaum married Zelda, the Rabbi's daughter. Despite the fact that the Rabbi was strenuously opposed to the match, because the groom was a non-believer, Mash'keh's oldest daughter, Toyba, married Yom-Tov Herman, a retail clothing store owner. At the beginning of the First World War, the Russians exiled him to Poltava because he shared a confidence with his good friend the commander of the gendarmes, that he was hoarding coins, at the time when there was a shortage of them in the marketplace. The gendarme immediately detained him, and he was judged to be a 'provocateur.' Herman never came back again. Mash'keh's second daughter, Miriam, was killed in Berlin, and the third [daughter] Lieb'cheh, lives in Israel.

A Chronicle of Three Families

By Berl Mark

(From "An Oak in the Storm")

A. Between Radziłów and Zambrow



Page 460: Professor Berl Mark

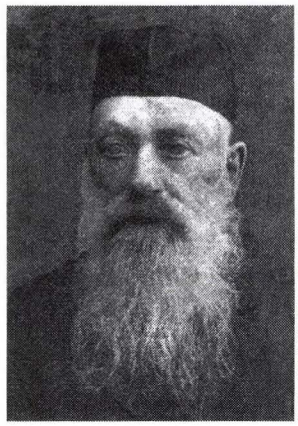
I was born in Lomza, as well as my older brother Aharon. My oldest brother Yitzhak (Itchkeh), had seen the world's in Zambrow, where my mother Rachel-Leah came from, as well as my father Hirsch, who spent his initial years there, while he was being supported.

There were two traditions in our Lomza family: one was derived from Radziłów, a 'puddle' of a *shtetl* amidst a sea of peasantry; the second was – from Zambrow. My father was born in a settlement outside of Radziłów. Thanks to that, I had my old Russian documents recorded: 'сословие крестьянский' – of peasant stock. This 'privilege' stood me in good stead in a variety of circumstances.

The Radziłów tradition was a weak one, hanging in the air. My grandfather, Isser-Azriel, came from very far away, almost from Courland. He was an orphan, and married in a settlement outside of Radziłów, transporting goods to Danzig, and not far from the little shtetl, he had a small works with fields, cows and horses. He was half a merchant, a quarter landed gentleman, and a quarter estate manager. He had some sort of connection with the Polish Uprising of 1863-1864. A nobleman from the rebels hid out in his barn, and my grandfather misdirected the Cossacks in order to save the life of the revolutionary. After this, my grandmother was killed with a daughter in a fire. The number of Jews in this settlement dwindled, and there was a pull to have a *Bet HaMedrash*, upon which R' Isser-Azriel Mark picked himself up, and with the entire family, two sons, and two daughters, went off to the city that had a substantial Jewish population – Lomza.

When he would weigh these two traditions, even while I was still a boy, I would see: The family on my father's side goes back to, but abruptly ends, with my grandfather, and earlier than that is a blank, having never heard of a Mark that was a great-grandfather. And R' Isser-Azriel himself was an admixture of strict observance and good-natured humanity. However, on the outside, he was very, very traditional, always wearing a long *kapote,* always with a *gartl*, and a colored, usually red handkerchief, observant to the highest degree, and in his time, managed to survive the inevitable conflict of fathers and sons, when his two sons, Alter and Herschel, would hide Russian, German and *Haskalah* books in the lecterns on which they studied *Gemara.* Over the two rooms of my Lomza grandfather's residence, there hovered the spirit of a strict *Mitnaged*, with a modest amount of Lubavitch *Hasid* mixed in. On his shelves, he had only Talmudic and *Hasidic* literary works.

B. My Grandfather Abraham Moshe Blumrosen & My Grandmother Brein'cheh



Page 462: R' Abraham-Moshe Blumrosen

Our Zambrow family looked entirely different, especially my grandfather and grandmother on my mother's side. First of all, this was a broad set of roots, with rich, intertwined roots and branches. The Radziłów-Lomza tradition was much like a frail only child. The Zambrow tradition – like an oak, that stands up strong and fast among the people, and reaches deeply into the past. It was first here, in Zambrow, that I would sense my connectedness to the multi-generational extent of Polish Jewry. There was a R' Abraham-Moshe and R' Shmuel and a R' Aharon, a Mrs. Brein'cheh and a R' Mosh'keh and a R' Shmulieh-Ber – there was a grandfather and grandmother, a great-grandfather, and a great-great-grandfather, and a great-grandmother Ziss'l and so forth, going back further, and deeper – I personally, having once counted back ten generations. Today – the side branches, the Shlomo'kehs, Mordechai-Aharons, Abraham-Elyehs, the side branches to the left and right. And these were earthy Jewish people, substantial and folksy, with a lively manner of speech, speaking Polish to the peasants, observant but not fanatically so, strictly religious but also progressive in an enlightened manner. The very start of the row of books in my grandfather Abraham-Moshe Blumrosen's book armoire was taken up by a set of Graetz,[233] and a good novel by Sholom Asch was a welcome guest.

In the center, stood my diminutive, beautiful grandmother, Brein'cheh– with black burning eyes, and humorous eyes. A remarkably active person despite her various infirmities, clean, and well-dressed, even if in her decency and goodness alone. By contrast to her, my grandfather was tall and straight, like a pine tree, with blond hair, clean to a fault and perfect in detail, tranquil and at peace. A typical synthesis of genuine observance and Enlightenment, a mixture of the forest Jew and someone who had book knowledge, someone who knew languages and was skilled in bookkeeping, and an admirer of the finer Polish people in the *shtetl,* and in the corridors of the local municipal building. His Polish penmanship enjoyed a reputation in the area. Between the two of them – Abraham-Moshe and Brein'cheh – and arduous love affair was carried on for their entire lives. They would eat from the same plate, drink tea (and the Zambrow folk could drink tea!), using the same piece of hard sugar, not God forbid, out of some want or deprivation, but rather out of a sense of physical and spiritual closeness.

My grandfather was chronically ill for a long time, and passed away. He accepted the decree of death tranquilly and under control, in the same tranquility that he conducted his life. After this blow, my grandmother stayed with us for a while. Her weeping seemed to have no end. One time, she trusted a secret to me: '*Ber'eleh' oy*, oh was I in love with him, and I cannot forget him.'

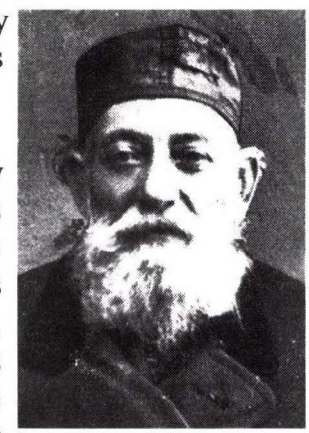
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233 Heinrich Graetz (October 31, 1817 – September 7, 1891) was amongst the first historians to write a comprehensive history of the Jewish people from a Jewish perspective.

My grandmother was not privileged to have so tranquil a death. She needed to survive a war with all of its tribulations. She was surrounded with love and care from those of her children who remained in Zambrow – the Blumrosens and Karlinskys. Her son Yitzhak and Chaya'cheh and her son-in-law Aharon-Leib and Sarah'keh. Her son Yitzhak, and son-in-law Aharon Leib, carried her frail and sickly form on their backs, carrying her through fire and bomb explosions. For the time being, she was saved. Were it not for the war. even with all her problems, she would have lived a long time. In a certain sense, she was a victim of the cruel war. She went out like a candle, surrounded by her daughter, son, and son-in-law, a daughter-in-law and grandchild. who she was not privileged to see live for much longer. Those of her children, who went off to America, Chaya-Freida, Yankl, and Velvel. and her youngest, David, who made *aliyah* to the Land of Israel, she no longer saw.

C. A Visit to Zambrow

The thread to Radziłów was sundered quickly. Two relatives of my father's mother remained there, two Milkewiczs, one a prosperous manufacturer-merchant, and the second a man without means.



Page 465: R' Shlomo Blumrosen

At the same time, the base of our family in Zambrow broadened itself. My father's older brother, R' Alter took up residence there, together with his family. The took up residence on the 'aristocratic' *Uczastek*, opening a store and a 'hotel.' My mother's cousin, Abraham-Elyeh Meisner, lived across from him, a portly and good-natured Jewish man, possessed of sympathy, along with his daughter. In short: when we, the young folk, would come as guests to Zambrow, we were literally torn apart between the market, where the Blumrosens, Karlinskys and Meisners lived (all from my mother's family), and the *Uczastek*.

Snatching a breather in Zambrow, for us children from Lomza, was revitalizing, a bit of present escape along with the real world pleasures that were connected with it.

First of all was the ride itself. We would ride in a wagon or a coach. The air is fresh, and it is either *Hol HaMoed* Passover or summertime. Field stretch away all around us. and the Zambrow wagon driver is totally different from those that come from Lomza. The latter is a crude oaf, but the one from Zambrow – is better mannered, friendlier. He is tied into all of our family issues, loves a good conversation, speaks Hebrew, knows Scripture, and remembers my mother when she was still a girl. Apart from this, he is a sort of Jewish post office, bringing letters from grandmother every other day, conveying prescriptions, and dropping in to grab a glass of tea with us.

And secondly – the ride to Zambrow is tied up with extraordinary events. Here, on the one hand, we have to get off the wagon and have to go on foot. There is the forest of Czerwony Bór, and a Gypsy wagon is passing by. And then, here is the elderly Rabbi of Zambrow, traveling with us, and we have to interrupt the ride because he has to recite the *Mincha* prayer service. And lo, a deer runs by, and

freight slabs, driven by wagon drivers are moving along, with whom a word is exchanged in passing, with a witticism, a whip across the horses – it is a whole world, it is invigorating.

When you enter the shtetl, you get the first 'Sholom Aleichem' from great-uncle R' Mordechai-Aharon Meisner, who sits on the 'little bridge,' in front of his saloon, sniffing tobacco snuff, and smiling at you through his good and handsome cherry-like eyes. This is the brother of grandmother Brein'cheh, and they are very close to one another. Further on, in the doorway, stand great-aunt Sarah'keh, and uncle Aharon-Leibl (the son of Berl Nigubcer), with their daughters, Zisseh'leh and Rachel'eh, and son, Shmulik (the youngest, Ber'eleh had not yet been born) – all as beautiful as gold, happy and full of life; on the second side of the marketplace – Uncle Yitzhak, great-aunt Chaya'cheh and the daughters, like pine trees – Zlat'keh, Ziss'eleh, and Dina – with their only son, and youngest, Mordechai. And here, grandmother is already busying herself, setting out something to eat, and Grandfather is humming a contented tune. Wherever one goes or stands – there are relatives, and relatives of relatives, and phrases like, 'how is your father?' and 'how is your mother?' and '*Kayn ayin horreh*,[234] you have grown into a fine young man,' abound in the air.'

To us, Zambrow meant a sort of rural respite, as well as an opportunity for a lively get-together with young boys and girls. The entire shtetl emanated a sense of being an island of liveliness, enlightenment and warmth.

D. My Mother, Rachel-Leah

This was the kind of family one could truly love from the heart. There was warmth and full-heartedness – this was its principal characteristic.

It was these traits that my mother, Rachel-Leah, brought along with her, coming from Zambrow to Lomza. My mother had a dreamy nature, and was prone to pouring out her soul, expressing in the singing of songs.

The songs were redolent with the air of Zambrow.

She would sing in Yiddish, in Russian and in Polish.

She would sing about nature, work, spring, and the swallow. She knew all the songs of a Jewish national character. She also sang songs of a 'moral' character, about the human condition, and the journey from cradle to grave.

She would sing quietly, mostly in the twilight hours, when no one except myself was in the house. She would hold my head in her lap, curling my hair, and sang.

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234 The Yiddish 'no evil eye,' as a rubric to ward off any harmful effects from uttered praise.

In this way, she would find a path by which to return to her own girlhood years, to the roads of Zambrow, where a row of girls would promenade, in poverty, in those romantic evenings, and sang in the choir, those popular songs that had such a strong emotional social content.

What I remember best of all, is her song about the bomb that was thrown at the Czarist *Starop* Plehve[235]:

Let not the *katzap* think
That this is the last blow,
Yet another bomb will be thrown at him.
Plehve the anti-Semite
Hated the Jew,
His body was blown to smithereens.
He held himself greater than the world,
Japan then stood to oppose him,
Against *Fonyeh,*[236] that 'Great Hero,'
Did the entire sympathy of the world stand.

How such a terrorist song came to my delicate and sensitive mother, I do not know to this day. However, it came from Zambrow, where the stormy events of 1905 also had strong reverberations.

When our Zambrow great-aunt Sarah'keh or uncle Yitzhak, would come to be our guests, it was also possible that they would sit down with my mother and sing songs together.

In our home on the old marketplace, there would be a strong echo off the walls of the melodic verses:

Что ты спишш мужичок Chto ti spisz muzhichok,
Or: 'Srulik'l, wake up!

My mother's soprano voice would blend in with great-aunt Sarah'keh's alto and uncle Yitzhak's tenor, and when my brother Aaron's strong lyrical tenor voice was joined with them – it became a genuine choir, from which not only one of our neighbors derived pleasure.

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235 Vyacheslav Konstantinovich von Plehve (20 April 1846 in Mieszczowsku died 28 July 1904 in St. Petersburg). Russian aristocrat of German origin, Russian official, Interior Minister of the Russian Empire and the head of the secret political police.

236 A Yiddish variant of the Russian name 'Ivan,' used to mock the Russian nobility. Czar Nicholas I was tagged with the appellation of '*Fonyeh Goniff*,' which also stuck to those Czars that came after him.

All three of those siblings, along with their personas, went off in their late youth. However, such moments were, regrettably, very few. Only my mother maintained this singing tradition well into advanced old age.

E. Great-Aunt Sarah'keh and Uncle Aharon-Leib

We children, were very proud of our great-aunt Sarah'keh – first and foremost about her extraordinary beauty. 'I was a lad, and also grew old,'[237] and I have traveled many lands – and I have not ever seen such a harmonious beauty as in our Sarah'keh. She combined physical beauty with an unbounded goodness and gentleness, which was poured out all over her visage. A sort of magical grace, that was not disturbing, but rather it drew you to it – that was my great-aunt Sarah'keh. And no taint of coquetry, not a trace of haughtiness, but rather the opposite – a hard-working, and faithful individual exceeding the bounds of her heart, a loyal and good soul, ready to make every sacrifice for her near ones. If I am portraying an ideal of a Jewish woman, 'from the depths of our people, – this is Sarah'keh. She was very close to my mother, who was the oldest of her siblings, to the point that they were literally one soul. This sort of love and dedication could only arise between two people of boundless good will.

Her husband, Aharon-Leibl Karlinsky, was the very embodiment of masculine handsomeness. Were he a gentile, he would have been a great one to capture and break the hearts of women, or a Hollywood actor, and most certainly a senior officer – that is the way I perceived him through my childhood eyes as a young boy. I loved to hear his stories of the First World War – he was a Russian soldier, and during the course of several years, wandered through fronts and faraway cities. Even if, from time-to-time, he would put on the appearance of being severe, it was evident that it was only a show, because this was the body of a strong man, with the heart of a dove. He traced his ancestry to a scholarly and learned family, but he personally was a democratic man through and through, with a great interest in practical political problems, and an ardent and active Zionist. Like the rest of our family, such as my grandfather, my father, uncle Yitzhak, he was not good in mercantile commerce. And as I recall him, I remember him always to have difficulties in making a living. Despite this, he held himself with pride. I think that he had a romantic nature, and in this way, he was much like many of the Blumrosens. With his imagination, he entered into the stormy past, and often floated along in dreams and plans. And it was because of this, in later life, when I became more aware, and encountered him under other circumstances, in Warsaw and Bialystok, I was especially close to him. I do not like people with dry spirits, and he had about him what is called – a pleasant sort of human fantasy.

Sarah'keh and Aharon-Leib were a couple blessed by God – if only for they physical beauty and spiritual warmth, which radiated from them.

They fanatically loved their children, taking great pride in them, and dreamed of a good future outcome for them. And the children would anticipate coming to be guests in Lomza. In my parents, they felt these were the people closest to them.

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237 Taken from a verse of the Psalms, used in the blessing after meals (*Birkat haMazon*).

We, the Lomza children, had great respect for Aharon-Leibl's brother R' Yaakov Karlinsky (today a Rabbi in America). I must note here, that our home in Lomza, was the central point for the entire Zambrow family, and within that, also Yaakov Karlinsky. We, young people, were impressed by his knowledge of foreign languages. He would go to bed holding a French dictionary on one side, and a German one on the other side. I would sit up until a late hour of the night, and watch how he turned a page in the French book, peered into the dictionary, and then page on further. This was a refined, up-to-date, and well-raised young man. He exercised better self-control than his older brother, but was also a dreamer of dreams.

F. My Uncle Yitzhak Blumrosen

I believe that the greatest dreamer, in the best sense of that word, was my uncle, Yitzhak Blumrosen. But his principal characteristic was – goodness. This was a man 'without a gall bladder [so to speak],' being decent all the way down to the deepest corner of his soul. A man possessed of formidable inner warmth, a man with whom you were compelled to draw close and become familiar with, after your first discourse with him.

Despite the bitter tribulations of life, he was always of good temper, effusive with witticisms and novel ideas, possessing an unfathomable repository of stories about the war years, when he was flung off into the faraway depths of Russia, in Kozlov or Tambov. Stories that we children listened to with great curiosity, just like the heroic memories of the Nikolaevski soldier,[238] Aharon-Leib.

His fate was shared to the end by great-aunt Chaya'cheh, who descended from a well-known wealthy family. Uncle Yitzhak and great-aunt Chaya'cheh were not engaged in political issues, but the task of sending off all their children to the Land of Israel was carried out with quiet pride, despite the fact that the sundering of bonds was painful. They personally dreamed of being reunited with their children. This dream, just like with many others, regrettably did not come to pass.

Great-aunt Chaya'cheh once said to my mother: 'when I lie down in bed, wanting to go to sleep, I think of the children, then I fall asleep peacefully.'

G. My Uncle Alter Mark

And when we entered the house of my Uncle Alter Mark on the *Uczastek*, we fell into a completely other world.

My uncle Alter belonged to the cream of the Zambrow community. Why – I have no idea myself. Perhaps this showed the influence of great-aunt Sarah-Feiga, who descended from the well-connected Drozdowsky family. And perhaps – the 'big' business on the *uczastek*, where there were resonating bells at the entrance, like in the best of the stores in big cities; the clientele consisted of

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238 Jewish soldiers, impressed into the Czar's army for a period of service of 25 years, in an attempt to sever their cultural ties to their own people. Named for the anti-Semitic Czar Nicholas I, who instituted the notorious ukase that started this practice.

prominent Christians and officers. Or perhaps – the two-room very tidy little hotel, which they maintained on the upstairs of their stone constructed little house. In the factory of the blonde Sarah-Feiga, R' Alter's wife, an air of nobility exuded: it was redolent with the smell of the village, in the small but well-kept little orchard, with fresh milk from the red heifer in the tidy little stall, while simultaneously manifesting a festive air of holiday time, which was reflected from the silver-looking, grand and ever-present....cold samovar in the dining room.

It was here that – my brothers Yitzhak (Itchkeh) and Aharon and I – would come from Lomza in the summertime, or during *Hol HaMoed*, as guests, eating fresh apples, and drinking bubbly-warm milk right from the milk-pot. But that time – during the decade of the twenties – a peculiarly distressed mood reigned at Alter's and Sarah-Feiga's, as well as a quiet somberness. Not one of their children had remained in the *shtetl*. The little bird, of their own volition, had flown from the nest. The oldest daughter, Etya, married early, with a prosperous lumber merchant from Riga, Max Meisel (they have been living for many years now in London). Their second daughter, Rachel, studied to be a teacher in Warsaw. The oldest son, Chaim, went off to Bialystok, and married there. And the youngest, Khezki...

It is here that the family tragedy starts, with my deeply religious uncle, R' Alter.

Yekhezkiel (Khezki) Mark was stuck in Russia during the Russian March and October Revolution. He was a student at the Polytechnicum, and as a result of the war, could not come home. And, it is also possible, that he no longer wanted to do so.

In my father's house – close to the decidedly Yiddish-Hebrew culture and *Gemara* intonations – as was the case in many houses, a second culture was present – the Polish one (in the decade of the twenties). At the home of my uncle and great-aunt, this second culture remained the Russian one – even during the Polish era. The second language of the eldest daughter remained Russian. And Khezki was studying at a Russian high school. To this day, I cannot understand how my uncle, who was in general a traditional Jew, and less of a *Maskil* than my father, and my great-Aunt, who was a practical woman – did not impel their children to such income producing professions such as medicine or pharmacy, but rather permitted Rachel'eh to study to be a teacher, and Khezki – to be an engineer, a profession that, in those days was not particularly well-favored among Jews. Because of this, I think, that even as far back as childhood, the four children divided themselves up in accordance with their character and concept: the oldest daughter and Chaim, despite both being educated and intelligent, went off in practical-entrepreneurial directions, during the time when Rachel and Khezki were idealists, inspired by social ideals and striving, both romantic and revolutionary personalities, and it was strictly the circumstances that caused one of them to be led onto the path of revolution, while the second, ultimately capitulated, and remained a wife and mother, as happened with many of her kind.

H. Khezki Mark

Rachel and Khezki had untrammeled characters, with a surfeit of soul. He – a typical revolutionary student, a typical member of the Russian intelligentsia of the period on the Eve of the Revolution; she – a typical taker of courses, and both – the very essence of goodness.

They were very much tied up with the Russian democratic culture – despite the fact that both knew Hebrew perfectly – they also adopted the additional names: he assuming the name Emanuel, and she – Rekhil.

As a student, Khezki joined the Russian revolutionary movement, became a Social-Democrat of the Bolshevist variety, and took an active role in the revolution. Into my childhood memory, a image was etched – of Khezki in the uniform of a student. In later fantasies, I saw him on the Kharkov barricades. Fragmentary news about Khezki in the revolution, about Khezki as a Chairman of the revolutionary tribunal, I think in Yekaterinoslav (Dnepopetrovsk), of Khezki the loyal servant of the revolution – would be brought back by Zambrow and Lomza Jews who returned from those places. The greetings they brought were both sad and uplifting. They were sad because unfortunately it was said what sort of a future can he have;' and uplifting – 'That's no small thing, a son of Alter Mark, has become a real big shot.' These messages caused my uncle's face to become more lined, and my great-aunt's back to bend over even more. But we, young people, my brother Aharon, Rachel and her friends, being sympathetic to the revolution, in our case, our faces lit up – our family too, has a part in this great social upheaval.

During the substantial interregnum between the two world wars, one oppressive, and all-encompassing pall, hung over the Mark residence on the *uczastek*: Khezki. From the side of the eldest daughter and the oldest son, there were no worries. Things proceeded normally as was expected in the home of *balebatim*: making a living, grandchildren, good news. Great-Aunt Sarah-Feiga did not make a big to-do about the inner world of the finely sensitive Rachel. With a firm dictatorial hand, she tore Rachel away from her studies, nailed her down to the shtetl, tore our the feelings for friends from her heart and mind, of which not only one sought her hand in marriage; she did not permit herself to be moved by her girl's tears, forcibly marrying her to a former small-town Yeshiva student, Yehuda Koczor, who subsequently revealed himself to be a Zionist activist, a good speaker, and instructor for *Keren HaYesod*. Pure Rachel then committed her entire warm heart to her own children, and the little Moshe's and Rachel'ehs of the Zambrow school, and remained in their grateful memories as 'Teacher Mark.'

The one unrest that gnawed at Sarah-Feiga's soul was Khezki. And the further he was distanced, because of hermetically sealed borders, the more hopeless the prospect became for family reunification, and this caused the fanatical love of the mother for her son to become that much more inflamed, the chronic yearning became as holes of pain. All corners of the now vacated house called out: Khezki! And the tears with which R' Alter moistened the pages of his *Gemara*, and the sighing at night – all of this came to pass because of the son that had gone away.

His name was not always brought up. After the year 1920, Khezki became a name to be feared among the police of the Polish government. It is not know where the whispered rumors originated, that he was actually here in Poland, that he secretly visits Zambrow, that he is on a secret mission here. We children, were forbidden to mention his name.

In the meantime, Khezki rose there. Here, he was already called to Moscow. Here, he was working in a senior position in Energy. Here, he becomes Ordzhonikidze's[239] right-hand man, and he makes an official trip out of the country. He travels through Poland, and cannot contain himself (because he too is lonesome), and one night, incognito, he sneaks off to see his parents in the *shtetl.* For a while, a completely different spirit seems to imbue the elderly couple. But the joy is merely a small crumb that is blown away by the slightest breeze. A Christian neighbor noticed something, and immediately informs those who need to be informed. In the middle of the night, Khezki must leap from a window, and flee that 'Dark Egypt' thanks to the sedulous watchfulness of his brother Chaim.

And once again, they are separated and torn apart. And once again, there is boundless sorrow and hopeless longing.

Khezki is drafted into the Red Army. Emanuel Mark becomes a *Kompolk, Okombrig*, a Brigadier General. I see his photograph as a general standing before me, with medals across his chest. He is honest, committed without any limits, active and skilled. As a general, he participates in military engineering in the famous battles with the Japanese, and he distinguishes himself at Khalin-Gol. Under his directions, fortifications are built in the Far East. He is loyal to the party, and he participates in the fight against Trotsky and other factions. He also begins to build a home. At a festive get-together in Moscow, he makes the acquaintance of a Russian girl. She is a member of the *Komsomol*, from a venerable family of the Russian intelligentsia. They get married. He lets the family in Poland know. Our great-aunt is somewhat shaken. It was not this sort of wedding, and the implied relationship that she had dreamed of for her youngest child. Our uncle was beside himself, retreating even further into religious observance. And the vigilant brother, Chaim, waves it off with his hand – well, so what if it is a *shiksa*. This too shall pass.

But a son is born to the Mark's family in Moscow. Khezki shares the glad news about the new grandson with his parents. R' Alter demands that he circumcise the child. For this, he will forgive him for all of his transgressions. Khezki answers in gentle, but firm words: he will not violate the precepts of his ideology.

A sorrow descended on the house at the Zambrow *uczastek*. R' Alter rent his garments in mourning, and sat *Shiva,* there no longer being a son, torn out from his heart, God having given him, and the Devil having taken him.

This was my uncle's first and greatest grudge against his wife and Chaim, who did not wish to recognize his rending of garments and sitting of *shiva*. And here, in this tiny Zambrow house, a drama of Shakespearean quality played itself out. With one of the residents, Khezki was dead – but behind his back, Sarah-Feiga and Chaim conspired with Khezki, and later on, even met with him.

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239 Grigol Ordzhonikidze, generally known as Sergo Ordzhonikidze October 24 [O.S. October 12] 1886 - February 18, 1937) was a Georgian Bolshevik, later member of the CPSU Politburo and close friend to Joseph Stalin. Ordzhonikidze, Stalin and Anastas Mikoyan comprised what was jokingly referred to as the "Caucasian Clique."

My father, despite his own pious observance – as I understand it – reached deeper that his older brother, and in this case was in solidarity with Sarah-Feiga. A Jewish soul is not refuse, and it is forbidden to resign one's self from it. And we, the young people – Khezki grew into a hero, to a legend, and how fortunate we were, when we briefly were able to see our hero for a short quarter of an hour with our own eyes.

I. Khezki is Sent to the Far East

I no longer remember which year it was, perhaps 1935, perhaps 1936, on an autumn day – I had already been living in Warsaw for about ten years, and my brother Aharon in Vilna – we obtain a quiet notification that Khezki has to travel through Bialystok on his way to Berlin, where he has been designated as a member of a delegation representing the Soviet Union. Without the knowledge of uncle Alter, all of us gathered at the Bialystok train station. Khezki jumped down from the train, wearing a heavy, unpleasing overcoat, meeting with everyone, exchanging kisses and snatching a brief conversation. I recall how dissatisfied we are with a question that was posed by Chaim. Touching Khezki's overcoat (Chaim was a manufacturer-Merchant), he said: 'Is it worth giving up everything for this sort of impoverished life? Or are you, actually, quite fortunate?' – I recollect how the tranquil and feeling fortunate because of the encounter, Khezki, was ignited: 'People like you cannot grasp this. The good fortune of people cannot be found in fine clothing. I am fortunate in being able to do my part in freeing humanity from oppression and obloquy. I am ten times more fortunate than you with you possessions.'

A different person stood before me. Not that mild, soft Khezki, but rather a revolutionary, that had become hardened through the revolution and civil war, an altruist of the highest order.

A ball of dust blown away – the meeting was over in the blink of an eye. The train went off, and left the bent-over Sarah-Feiga with her hot tears.

We never saw Khezki again.

The storm of war hurled me, my wife, my mother Rachel-Leah and my brother Itchkeh to Bialystok in October 1939. Together, with Chaim, we began to try and find some trace of Khezki. His last letter to Chaim was at the beginning of 1937. After that, the mails remained silent and uncommunicative.

Fragmentary rumors reached us that were not favorable. Emanuel Mark had been sent somewhere. Why, where, when – was hard to find out.

The trying war years, with their tribulations and hopes, diverted my eye and ear to other [sic: more pressing] problems. We managed to survive treks that took us over distances of more than a thousand kilometers, through ravines and steppes, until reaching Kuybishev and Moscow, to the Jewish anti-Fascist Committee, and the union of Polish patriots, sinking heart and soul into help for the front,

for victory over the malevolent Hitlerian Beast, for the Jewish-Polish refugees, those scattered over this huge land, chained to the ever-present freezing imminence of mass extermination and heroic struggle of our nearest and dearest in occupied Poland – in such a roiling and disturbed atmosphere of day-to-day existence, the concern for our cousin Khezki was pushed to into the shadows, and his image even faded away, which before this had lived in the depths of our heart.

J. On Khezki's Trail

In the year 1944,when the victory over Hitler Germany was a certain thing, and cadres of the future People's Republic of Poland were being put together in Moscow – at the intervention of the Polish author Wanda Wasilewska – an initiative was started to gradually liberate Polish communists, who were exiled by Yezhov[240] and his minions, in the years of 1937 and 1938. Those who were liberated were required to travel back to Poland. In the year 1945, the number of people so liberated, increased. They were at the gates of Warsaw – and it was there that they quickly traveled to.

Among those set free, was an elderly Jewish-communist activist, Julek Majsky (Zimmerman), with whom I was friendly. Because of his frail health situation, he detained himself in Moscow somewhat longer.

And so, we were sitting one evening at my hotel, and suddenly he leaps up – Mark... Mark.... Oh, my! For several years, I was interred together with a certain Emanuel Mark.

Majsky had been exiled to Magadan, near Bukhta Nagayeva, at the furthest point in the Far East. He shared the same barracks with Khezki, sleeping in one bunk bed beside the other, having conversed for hundreds of nights. sharing thoughts and bread. Emanuel's '*Srok*' (time of arrest) – Majsky says – has ended, but he is not permitted to travel out of Magadan.

My joyful dispatch immediately went off to the Magadan camp. And immediately a telegram came back from him, from Khezki, and afterwards long, and very moving, letters.

My food packages, especially those rich in vitamins helped him a great deal. My efforts, through Wanda Wasilewska attempted to get him recognition as a Polish communist, so he could benefit from the right to be liberated and to come to Poland.

It was possible to see, from his letters, that he placed great hope on our efforts, but at the same time, he lodged a request with the Soviet régime that he be mobilized for the front. He wanted to

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240 Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov, (May 1, 1895 –February 4, 1940) was the senior figure in the NKVD (the Soviet secret police) under Joseph Stalin during the period of the Great Purge. His reign is sometimes known as the "Yezhovshchina," "the Yezhov era", a term that began to be used during the de-Stalinization campaign of the 1950s. During the beginning of World War II his status within the USSR became that of a political unperson.

personally participate in the battle against the fascist enemy. And, at that time, he was well over fifty years of age.

One fine day, I receive a dispatch from him: at such-and-such a street in Moscow, number so-and-so, is my wife's sister.

I immediately went off there. There, I encountered an elderly woman, in the uniform of a railroad employee. I showed her the telegram and my documents. She called together the family, and both heart and mouth opened up, and a fresh tragedy unfolded before me:

The blow was unanticipated, when Khezki enjoyed the highest degree of confidence in the Ministry of Energy. Despite the fact that he had no connection to Polish communists, he was swept up in the wave. Maligning informers were to be found, who began spreading rumors: Emanuel Mark had secretly been in Poland, carried on correspondence with relatives, in this land of fascists, and he had been to Berlin, and also, were the fortifications he had built in the Far East any good?

And Yezhov's extermination machine, as later was the case with that of Beria,[241] operated pitilessly against the loyal innocent people, and pitilessly against its own country.

One day, Khezki noticed that less and less people were around him, even friends keeping their distance from him. His put off his normal mood, his smile, and his patience. He fell into a black fear.

His fate was sealed.

On a certain night, he was taken away.

He was so badly broken, that he did not even attempt to defend himself. The broken-voiced telling of his sister-in-law falls into the tone of a complaint. Why did he not want to say even a word in his own defense? When his wife saw him for the first and only time after his arrest, she came back in a completely shaken state: this is not the same Khezki! But her love for him did not diminish even by a hair.

She, and their child, remained in Moscow. She obtained work in a factory. She was not bothered. It was only in the second year of the war that Beria's agents first sent her off to a camp, as they did with other wives of people sent away, also in the Far East. It was on the pretense that she had expressed dissatisfaction with the factory. Her request, that she be sent to Magadan, where her husband was, was summarily ignored. Their only son was mobilized [sic: into the army] and he was killed in battle.

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241 Lavrentiy Pavlovich Beria, (29 March 1899 – 23 December 1953) was a Soviet politician, Marshal of the Soviet Union and state security administrator, chief of the Soviet security and secret police apparatus (NKVD) under Joseph Stalin during World War II, and Deputy Premier in the postwar years (1946—1953).

And Khezki has no knowledge of his wife's plight, and she knows nothing of him.

With a spasmodic weeping, the discussion with Khezki's sister-in-law came to an end. I took the photographs, and I went off to my redoubled efforts to free Khezki.

Everything was already lined up, and suddenly, the laconic notification came from the camp in Magadan, that hit me like a thunderbolt out of a clear blue sky:

Emanuel Mark had fallen ill with typhus, and had died.

He died on the threshold of freedom.

My Khezki had died, the one I had longed for.

Only one trace of him remained: the photograph of the Brigadier, that smiling portrait of the fallen son, with the clear eyes of the Marks of Zambrow, the photograph of the young Moscow girl, the wife and mother. Where is she? What has happened to her? Having coursed away over endless snows together with her broken spirit.

When Khezki died in the camp hospital, his father and mother were no longer alive, nor his dear Rachel with her husband and children, not that wise and perceptive Chaim, with his wife and two little sons.

My mother, Rachel-Leah, had already given up the ghost of her tender soul, during the great expulsion from Bialystok in August 1943. My eternally vibrant brother Itchkeh, with his wife Rachel and two children (Isser and Ruth) were no longer alive. My Vilna sister-in-law, Fanya, Aharon's wife, had already been cut down, in the death camp of Stutthof, and their young lives having been sacrificed in Estonia (my father, R' Zvi-Hirsch, and my brother Aharon died before the war).

It was by the brutal Nazis, and their accomplices, that the many-branched families of the Blumrosens, Karlinskys, and Meisners of Zambrow were exterminated.

From these three, through the golden threads of families bound together in life – Mark, Blumrosen, Karlinsky – a new large root remained from the latter two, in the newly erected State of Israel. With their own ten fingers, with hard labor and expenditure of energy, they constructed new homes, and put down new roots.

But out of the Mark family – whether from Lomza or Zambrow – I am the only one left that carries that [family] name.

There was no heir that remained, no one to act as a redeemer to Yitzhak, Aharon, Chaim and Khezki. It is in a cruel way that the root of a family is cut off.

Good Jewish People, Tillers of the Soil to the Death

By Yehoshua Golombek

On the surface – it was a city like all other cities. But anyone who recognizes Zambrow, in its glory, did not once get the unforgettable impression within the ambience of Polish Jewry: a broadly-branched family of Jewish agriculture. We are not speaking here of those people who managed a fruit orchard, that wither the nobleman or the priest chose to cultivate, or a vegetable garden that the Polish owner of a land parcel sowed and grew, and the Jew was at the ready: harvesting the crop and selling it, picking the fruit, and plucked the vegetables for business and profit. There were [Jews] of this type in Zambrow as well, as was the case in every city and town. Rather, here, we are speaking of genuine farmers. In Zambrow, there were families upon families, that coalesced into one large family... that owned fields and gardens. The people of these families went out on a daily basis to work their fields, just like the Christian farmers, from the morning, until the stars came out. But these [Jews] did not comport themselves like the gentiles. With the rising of the sun, with a minyan of the elderly, the Jewish farmers would come to pray, and from there, they parted, each to his own field, that bordered on an array of villages, such as: Wądolki,[242] Cieciorki, Długobórz,[243] Porontnik,[244] and the like. These were sturdy Jews, with straight backs, sunburned and broad-shouldered. The Golombek family of the city stood out in this respect, these being the scions of an extensive family that was among the founders of the city from its inception. Who did not know Getzel Golombek, Eli, Berl (my father and mentor), Yossl, Meir-Yankl, Chaim-Pinchas, Leibacz, Binyom'keh, Abraham'keh, Leibl, Gedalia Tykoczinsky, Beinusz and Yudl Tykoczinsky, others, and others. Who was not familiar with Shimsh'eleh the vegetable grower, and other Jewish farmers of his ilk. Early in the morning, after prayers, these men would go out into the fields, following their wagons, to work at plowing, with a scythe and sickle, in its planting and harvesting. All day they would be in the fields, towards evening – back to the house of worship for afternoon and evening prayers, to study a page of the *Gemara*, and a chapter of the *Mishna*. During the hot summer days, when harvest time would begin in the fields, the entire family would go out into the field, including the children. Some cut, others bound sheaves, and others yet, gathered the bound sheaves up, one by one for the pile. Their work was hard even in the other days of the year: to fertilize, to plow, to make rows, and to plant. After the harvest – threshing and winnowing, ensiling the grain, guarding the produce, and selling it off to grain merchants – all of this required energy and alertness. Agricultural machinery had not yet appeared in the country, and all of this work was literally done by hand, and in a primitive fashion. Despite this – these people were not blessed with riches. All year long, they would make a living off of their potatoes, that had been gathered from the fields and put into special underground caches out in the fields, for this purpose, and from the sacks of grain that they would personally bring to be ground into flour. Left overs from their earnings were unknown

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242 Of the two on the map, this probably refers to Stare Wądolki (Old Wądolki) on the outskirts of Zambrow.

243 Of the two on the map, this probably refers to Długobórz Pierwassy (The First Długobórz).

244 Possibly today's Poryte-Jablon.

to them. They dressed simply, as was the case with all those who worked the land. They raised fowl at home, had a cow for milk, most of which was sold off to their neighbors, and a bit of vegetables that they permitted themselves in a corner of the field. They baked their own bread, and they did so at home, every week, this being a loaf of coarse-meal bread. They lived in wooden houses, within the town. In instances, the floor was not paved over – it was dirt, and on the Sabbath and Festival Holidays, was decorated with a yellow sand to make it look festive. And these people lived among their folk, among the rest of the town residents – diligent merchants, craftsmen, middlemen on market days, and the like.

Today, it is difficult to believe that Jewish farm families like this lived in towns in Poland: they were Jewish in every respect, taking positions in the municipality, who engaged in Torah study and prayer, in observing the commandments, and they participated in the leadership of the community and engaged in providing for the common welfare, and deeds of charity. And they were farmers in every respect, engaging in every type of work in the fields, going out each and every day with horse and wagon to their work, with their primitive implements in their hands. There were scholars among them as well, people knowledgeable in Torah, and wise in the ways of the world, not like the Polish farmers and landowners, who were generally ignorant, not knowing how to read and write, and also removed at a distance from the life of the group and community.

The blessed and widely branched Golombek family – also raised its children, the young generation, in this spirit, and educated them to continue in this tradition: Be a good Jew and a reliable farmer.

The Golombek family – its roots are in Khoyna. In the middle of the last century [sic: 19th] R' Leibl Khoyner reached Zambrow. His two sons, Monusz and Yehoshua Bezalel, continued in their father's occupation: outstanding farming, and model Jewishness. The two brothers sired generations of splendor. sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters, who, along with their wives, sons-in-law, and brides went in these ways.

And let me also set a marker for my father Berl ז"ל.

My father, Berl, the son of Monusz, was, in the last years, the head of the community in Zambrow, and a member of the town governance. He was a committed public servant for his entire life. He provided aid for the general welfare, and shielded his Jewish brethren from the police and the régime. He earned part of his living in the grain trade, but he was a substantial 'expert' in the building of houses, and in matters of contracting for house construction. He would provision the Russian army in the city with wood and beams for building, and would, from time-to-time, get a contract from them to erect a building, summer sheds from the summer camps of the army in Gunsirowa, and similar things.

He personally was a soldier in the Russian army, and suffered no small amount. Being a healthy sort, and sound of body, the authorities did not spare him, and was always drafted into participating in maneuvers, regular service, and even battle. It was from here that he developed his commitment to be of assistance to the Jewish soldiers in the city. He expended no small amount of effort to arrange for kosher meals during the week (*kessel kosher*), but especially so on Sabbath days, he looked after

finding *balebatim* to host soldiers for a Sabbath meal, or on a Festival, and worked for the benefit of the soldiers' kitchen during Passover, and the arrangement of a community Seder for the soldiers in the community hall beside the *Bet HaMedrash* or in some specific home, or a community premises.

He could not remain silent upon seeing the synagogue burned down for many years, inside of whose ruins scrub trees were growing, and one could uncover the lairs of dogs and cats. He did not rest, or remain silent, until a community committee was formed to restore the synagogue, with my father at its head. He concerned himself not only with the financial side, as with the collection of donations, the selling of 'places' and the revival of 'places' in the synagogue, but also the donation of thousands of bricks if the brick manufacturers, like R' Shlomo Blumrosen, the Brzezinsky family and others – but also undertook, on his own, the implementation of the plan. He was able to find loyal helpers, with the good tailor R' Shlomo Szerzug, the shoemaker, R' Binyom'keh *Schuster*, and others. My father assumed responsibility for the plan, talked to all the *balebatim*, with the builder R' Moshe Aharon Bednowicz at their head, and his assistant, Jozef the Christian, of whom it was said that his widower father was Jewish. My father sunk his attention into the project for many months, even to the point of neglecting his own affairs. And when the building was finally erected and dedicated – they found no one else more suitable to be the *Gabbai* of the synagogue than my father, and he faithfully discharged his obligations in this capacity, at the same time that Binyom'keh *Schuster* filled the position of *Shammes*.

The Golombek Family

Is it a coincidence? In Zambrow, there were people with the Polish family name of birds, such as: *Dzenchill* – a vulture, which in Yiddish is called '*Pickholz,*[245]' *Sokol* – an osprey, *Kukułka (Kukawka)* – a cuckoo, Slowik – a *Soloveitchik,* swallow, *Kuropatwa* – a partridge, *Pawe* – a peacock. This is a theme for research, to determine where it originated – for was it not the case that Jews were torn away from nature? But rather, let us pause at the most formidable of Zambrow families, which was tied and bound to half the city, if not more, the *Golombeks*. Golombek in Polish is a dove,[246] and Jews at one time were considered to be like doves.



Page 483: Berl Golombek

Approximately 150 years ago, two brothers arrived in Zambrow, Leibl and Itzl, from the village of Khonya, near Lodz, and bought property for farming. They were looked upon with wonder: Jews are investing money in a business, a manufacturing operation, a small factory, a building, but to buy land for plowing,

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245 The writer has a humorous mis-perception. The Polish name *Dzięcol* refers to a woodpecker, and hence the Yiddish/German equivalent, is one that pecks at wood (*holz*). He uses the Yiddish '*roybfaygl*' which would indicate a scavenging bird (i.e. a vulture, that 'robs' the prey of other predators).

246 The exact Polish word is *gołąb*, a pigeon or a dove.

seeding, fertilizing fields, and later, to go harvest like the gentiles? And so they went and bought a parcel of land of about 1000 dunams, such that the synagogue, the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, the cemetery and, to make a distinction, Pfeiffer's mill were all located on their property.

Who were they? In line with their appearance – tall, lean, dark-eyed, with eagle-like hook noses – were they descended from Spanish Jews that had come to settle in Poland? The family name 'Columb.' 'Columbus' – which is just as good as Golombek – is to this day familiar among Sephardic Jews. Incidentally, another point to note: the elders of the family, in signing their names on Yiddish documents and letters would sign '*a Ben Yisrael*' – a son of Israel, or was it *'Evven Yisrael'*, a Rock of Israel? What ever happened to Itzl Golombek – we do not know. Leibl'eh Khonyer (his grave could be found yet in the old cemetery, until the city was destroyed) had two sons: Yehoshua Bezalel, or as he was called 'Shitzalel,[247]' and Monusz. Shitzalel died young, and left four sons and three daughters: Moshe-Shmuel, Meir-Yankl, Monusz-Yudl, and Leibl, and: Sarah, Rachel, Dina and Liebeh. Monusz had five sons and three daughters: Yitzhak-Velvel, Berl, Leibl, Eli and Getzel, and: Liebeh-Mir'keh, Faygl, Reizl. These fifteen children established fifteen families, and their children about 50 families, and grandchildren, etc. In this way, the Golombeks became the dominant part of the city. All of them possessed landed assets – fields and gardens, houses and cattle, barns and silos, potato storage cellars, and stands of hay. They lived like peasants, working the fields like peasants, from morning to night, observed the rainy season and the good weather, knew, and perhaps better than most – when the fields need to be fertilized and when one needs to plow, what to sow, and when to sow it. You would have to look far and wide all over Poland to find another family like this, among the mercantile and trading Jews. And in addition to this: God-fearing people, not coarse Jews, who knew how to study, were familiar with laws, involved themselves in community affairs, were *Gabbaim* in the synagogues, *Gabbaim* in the *Chevra Kadisha*, *Dozors* in the municipal government, founders and leaders of charitable institutions, etc. Before dawn, together with the folks who went to market, they would attend the first *minyan*, to pray so they could be in the fields early, to begin work. They were loyal to one another. During the dispute between the Rabbis – the Golombeks were on the side of Rabbi Regensberg, and prevailed. Thanks to them, the Rabbi retained his privileges. About 25 years later, the Rabbi wanted to excommunicate Berl Golombek because he was sending his daughter to the Polish gymnasium, where they write on the Sabbath. All of the Golombeks rose as one against the Rabbi. The Rabbi was compelled to give up his foray against the parents of gymnasium students, and needed to vacate his old 'fortress,' the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, and move to the more liberal White *Bet HaMedrash*, which he had previously routinely attacked.

Let us here recollect a few of the Golombeks, whose visibility in the city was prominent:

Yitzhak-Velvel, lean, with a small beard, a land expert, a scholar, and an engineer who had not received his diploma. He would give advice to everyone: in the matter of building a house, in the management of a business, paying taxes, and family matters. He dressed simply. His joke would be retold: he doesn't have a new pair of pants made, because new pants would require a jacket, and a

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247 A variant of the nickname Shia' 'Tzaleleh.

jacket would require a dresser, and a dresser would then demand a larger house, and how am I going to be able to afford that? He would study *Mishna* with a coterie of Jewish men, in the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, every day, between *Mincha* and *Maariv*. His children emigrated to Argentina, and one of his grandsons is a renown chess player in London.[248]

Moshe-Shmuel. Lead a measured bourgeois life. He lived like a nobleman in a villa on the horse market. He had a lucrative asset in the Colonia 'Hotel' held jointly with Yitzhak David Modrikman. He was skilled at business undertakings, always living, however, frugally, but not stinting on community needs and charity. He died in 1914. He was survived by two talented sons: Yossl and Eizik, and five daughters: Sarah-Dina, Leah, Rivka, Reizl and Shifra. The oldest daughter married Leibl Slowik, a son of David Rokaczer. Leibl's children came to Israel as *Halutzim*, and the eldest of them, Herschel (Zvi Zamir) is the Chairman of the Zambrow Society in Israel, and for a longer period of time was the Burgomaster of Magdiel.

Leibl Golombek was a beloved leader of prayer, especially during the High Holy Days.

Berl Golombek – An ardent public servant, *Gabbai* in the synagogue, and a head of the community (see a separate write-up about him).

Binyom'keh Golombek, someone who undertook responsibilities, a leader of big businesses, and was a major contractor for the Russians, an ombudsman, a *Gabbai*, and a man of weighty opinions. His son, Leibczak was a sportsman, and in Israel, is among the pioneers of the tiling and paving industry.

Gedalia Tykoczinsky, a grandson of Shia-'Tzaleleh, an entrepreneur, landowner, and later on, an owner of the cinema with his son Beinusz. He allowed his businesses to be liquidated, sold off all his assets, and went to take up residence in the Land of Israel. However, he died before his time. His son, Meir (Max) died in Israel. His son, Noah, was among the first of those who made *aliyah* to Israel, and was a policeman for the [British] Mandate, and served Jewish interests.

Leibac Golombek. A landowner and entrepreneur. He managed substantial businesses. His children are in America. His oldest daughter, Shayn'tcheh[249] and her husband, [Abraham] Baumkuler are in Israel.

Getzel Golombek. An accomplished landowner. He was a decent Jewish man, educated, and served his God with love, and also loved to do good things. He had two daughters, Dvo'sheh and Tzirl. Dvo'sheh was scholarly, just like a boy might be, knowing parts of the *Tanakh* by heart, and is in America with her husband, the well-known and scholarly Rabbi, Matityahu Cohen.

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248 Harry Golombek OBE (1 March 1911 – 7 January 1995), was a British chess International Master and honorary grandmaster, chess arbiter, and chess author. He was three times British chess champion, in 1947, 1949, and 1955 and finished second in 1948. He became a grandmaster in 1985.

249 Called Yaffa, in Hebrew.

Yossl, Moshe Shmuel's. A tall person, smart, and a very honest landowner, who was good-mannered. He was well thought of in the area, and had many good friends, even among the Poles.

David Rosenthal, a son of Mend'keh 'of the short hand,' a great-grandson of Shia-'Tzaleleh, husband of Reizl Tykoczinsky, Golda's daughter. His father Mend'keh, an invalid, was a Jewish man full of humor, a lost talent of a writer and poet. He would tell jokes, compose songs about the Zambrow *balebatim* and their wives, made a living from a meager food store, on whose sign was written, as it was told: '*Niema Nitz*' – There is nothing here.... His son David, who was talented, and had red cheeks, and friendly small eyes, studied at the Lomza Yeshiva, and was among the better students, and later on, committed himself to Zionist-Socialist endeavors, was a founder and Chairman of *Tze'irei Tzion*, a stalwart in his undertakings, reading lectures about Marxism and political economics.

Meir Yankl Golombek – A landowner, with a house full of children, he had a pressing factory for making olive oil, and lived frugally. One of his grandchildren, from his oldest daughter Hinde, saved herself from the Holocaust, and today lives in Israel.

Chaim Golombek



Page 485: Chaim Golombek

He was a son of Meir-Yankl. He was inclined to work, and he helped his father with field work, studied, read, and was suffused with Zionism through and through. He strove to emigrate to the Land of Israel, and to work the land there. He was active in the Israeli Labor Movement. Fate would have it that he settled in Mexico, and together with his cousin Shifra, built a model Jewish-national family. He was very active, and a representative in the *Poalei Tzion* movement. He was elected, by consensus, as the President of the *Poalei Tzion* Organization in Mexico. He was beloved in all circles. He died before his time, in the year 1961. All the Jews in Mexico mourned his passing.

Many other families were connected to the Golombeks: Yankl Zukrowicz – the son-in-law of Shia-'Tzaleleh, Meir Zukrowicz – Monusz's son-in-law, the Tzinowicz family, the Burszteins, the Baumkulers, and many, many more.

My Father's House

By Zvi Zamir

My father, Leibl Slowik, a son of David Rokaczer, was born in Zambrow. My grandfather, a big fanatic, fought against every new thing that appeared in the city, that in his opinion, carried with it the threat of causing a falling away from *Yiddishkeit*. My father, raised on *Talmud* and *Poskim*, strove to get an education, but had to put up with a great deal of trouble from his strict and religiously observant father. He therefore decided to run away from home, into the large

expanse of Russia, get an education, and decide on a career. In order to obtain the right to live in Russia (*provozhitelstvo*) he needed to be a merchant of substance, of the First Guild, or a graduate craftsman with a diploma. He therefore learned shoemaking from Binyom'keh *Schuster*, took an examination in Lomza, and got his shoemaker's diploma... he spent somewhat less than a half year in Minsk and other cities – and was compelled to come home, got two slaps in the face from my grandfather, and remained at home.

My father was a sentimental person, and carried on a love affair with the pretty daughter of Yossl Moshe Shmuel's for seven years... [he then] married her and built a beautiful national [sic: Jewish] home. He would read a great deal, constantly holding a copy of *'HaTzefira,'* wrote a beautiful Hebrew, was a Zionist, and engaged in the doing of good deeds. He was a decent sort, following the straight and narrow, never departing from it. During the First World War, when people hungered – he opened sacks of flour, and distributed it to near and far.

When '*HeHalutz*' came on the scene – he opened the gates of his home to it, and all of its meetings and socials were held, and guests and instructors would lodge at home with us. When I decided to leave the Polish gymnasium and emigrate to the Land of Israel – he first wanted to persuade me to complete my studies at the gymnasium, seeing that with this, I would bring more value to my people. However, seeing that I stood by my intent, he gave me his blessing, and wished me a successful future. During the first days of crisis, he offered me encouragement in his letters. He had a complete faith in our ultimate victory in the Land of Israel. He so yearned also to come and settle there, to be able to embrace and kiss his grandchildren, and was on the verge of coming – – – and everything was disrupted, and my father, my mother Sarah-Dina, my brothers Noah and Moshe, my four sisters: Ada, Masha, Yenta and Chava – were exterminated.

R' Yaakov (Zvi) Zukrowicz ה"יד

By Joseph Srebowicz



Page 487: *Yaakov (Yankl) Zukrowicz and Sarah-Rachel Zukrowicz*

He was the son of Yehuda Leib and Henya, born in the year 1867 in Kirov. He was a scholar and also Enlightened, 'the Mecenas' of the city, philanthropic and exceedingly patient, full of the love of Zion, and very straight. He was one of the *Gabbaim* of the *Chevra Kadisha*. He was a merchant [by trade]. He would buy grain stuffs from the nobles in the vicinity, and transport it to Warsaw and outside the country. He also was a merchant that dealt in forest lumber products. Several families earned their living alongside him, as his steady employees, like: Eliezer Zarmowsky and Berl Goldberg הי"ד, and others, and also there were non-steady employees as well. His house was full all week long – Jews of all classes would come in to drink tea, to read the newspaper, and to discuss issues of the day. Regular visitors to our house included: his brother, R' Meir Zukrowicz (who was privileged to make *aliyah* to *The Land* with his wife Reizl, and they passed away there), R' Mordechai Shafran, R' Benjamin Kagan, R' Yitzhak Levinson, the *Gabbai* of the 'White *Bet HaMedrash*,' R' Zalman Kaplan, the teacher of the tenets of the faith, R' Bunim Domb, his brother-in-law, husband of his sister, the owner of the 'mangle iron' used to press laundry. On the morning of the Sabbath, before prayers, many people would gather at his home to drink coffee with milk, taking a taste of biscuits, and to discuss politics. His was a two-story house on the market street, Rynek 2. He lived on the second floor, and on the first floor was the residence and clothing store of the family of R' Shabtai Kwiat.

His wife, Sarah Rachel, the daughter of R' Yehoshua Bezalel Golombek, from the family of the Jewish farmers (her brother R' Meir Yaakov, made a living from farming and self-employment on his own land, to his very last day), stood out for her honesty, charity, and in the measure of her capacity to act as hostess to guests, in parallel with her husband, and thanks to her good mood, the house became renown. On the Sabbath, they would always have guests at their table, to their meals, that were invited from the *Bet HaMedrash*, and during the weekdays, they would provide meals to Yeshiva students.

They had three daughters (a son died shortly after birth): Jocheved (Khev'czi), who married Mr. Gershon Srebrowicz, Dina who married Menachem Berman, and moved to Warsaw, and Bracha, who married Israel Regensberg, the son of the local Rabbi. The daughters received both a secular and Hebrew education, knew Hebrew and several languages. The correspondence of the household was conducted entirely in Hebrew. It was the hope of Sarah Rachel, the mother, to yet be able to make aliyah to the Land of Israel. She was wont to say: 'Just as I was privileged to fulfill my desire to [sic: sponsor] write a *Sefer Torah*, similarly, I hope to be able to make *aliyah* to the Land of Israel.'

However, he did not fulfill her desire, and she passed away before the Holocaust. Fate was not kind to R' Yaakov towards the end of his days. He was negatively impacted as a result of the Polish government economic regulations against the Jews. In 1938, being well over 70 years old, he was assaulted and cut down by Polish thugs, who attacked him on the stairs of his home, when he was on the way down to participate in morning prayers at the *Bet HaMedrash* on a Sunday. In September 1939, when *The Scourge* invaded [Poland], he was taken, along with most of the Jews of the city, to a camp in East Prussia. He survived long enough to return to Zambrow after the Russians entered, but he fell grievously ill from all of the tribulations that he had undergone while in the camp, and he passed away after several weeks. His daughter Jocheved, with her husband, and half of their

children, who remained in Poland, her bride and grandson, as well as his daughter Dina along with her younger child, were all exterminated by *The Scourge*.

R' Yankl Zukrowicz

He was among the most refined and idealistic of the *balebatim* in the *shtetl*. He was a *Gabbai* of the *Chevra Kadisha*, among the first of the *Hovevei Tzion*, had a good heart, donated to charity, and helped everyone. Also, his wife, Sarah-Rachel, the daughter of Shia-'Tzaleleh Golombek, was an exceptional woman, giving to charity, and apart from this, would be every at the ready to invite in guests, and having a table of food prepared for Yeshiva students. Yankl Zukrowicz dealt in grain and forest products. Several families, such as that of Lejzor Zarembsky and Berl Goldberg, would make a living from him, apart from being intermediaries. His house was always full of people, during the week and on the Sabbath, who would come to read a paper, have a warm drink, or just plain to catch up on news. The *Gemilut Hasadim* would make their annual dinner here, at R' Yankl Zukrowicz's expense. He had three daughters. The oldest, Chava'cheh married Gershon Srebrowicz, the second, Dina – with Menachem Berman in Warsaw, and the third, Bracha, married Israel'cheh, the Rabbi's son. Yankl Zukrowicz dreamed of settling in the Land of Israel. In the year 1938, Polish hooligans beat him up severely, and he was bedridden because of this for a while. In 1939, the Germans dragged him off to Prussia. He returned, when the Russians were already in the city, and he fell ill, and died. His two daughters, with their husbands and children – were exterminated by the Nazis.

The Family of Gershon Srebrowicz

Mr. Gershon Srebrowicz הי"ד, the son of R' Joseph and Miriam, was born in Vienna in 1880, to a family of learned folk. He was enlightened and a *Maskil*. He knew [several] languages, and was a Zionist, and very honest man. He came to Zambrow in 1905, and married Jocheved (Khev'czi) the daughter of Yaakov and Sarah Rachel Zukrowicz. He dealt in wholesale and forest products, and afterwards went into a manufacturing line of work. Together with Mr. Berusz Krida, and other partners, he founded the first '*Polosz*' – a textile factory and a facility for the dyeing of wool. This operation (as well as the second one that was built in its place after the First World War, by the Pravda brothers) still made use of central steam power before there was electricity in Zambrow. When the First World War broke out, Mr. Gershon was separated from his family, and remained in Russia until the end of the war. There, he also engaged in commerce, and also in exploiting the sale of coal. When the war ended, he returned to Zambrow, and after the Bolshevik invasion of 1920, Mr. Gershon was seized by rioting Polish soldiers, along with other Jewish *balebatim,* and severely beaten. They were rescued from them by a miracle, and remained alive. At that same time, the Pharmacist Szklovin was murdered by them. He joined the second '*Polosz,*' after it was re-built anew by the Pravda brothers הי"ד, one



Page 489: Mr. Gershon Srebrowicz

of whom, Sholom Eizik, was one of the workers at the first '*Polosz*.' Mr. Gershon engaged in community affairs faithfully, and earned the community's recognition, being elected to serve as the head of the community, and for a period of time, also served as the deputy to the head of the city, while permission was still being given for a Jew to do this (without salary). He was the Chairman of the OZEH institution that maintained oversight regarding the health of poor children.

His wife, Jocheved הו"ד, was thoroughly versed in the *Tanakh* and the general Hebrew literature, knew languages, and was active in the ladies social help organization called '*Frauen Verein*.' Her house was a Zionist one, and her children were educated in the spirit of *The People*, its tradition, and the Hebrew language was constantly to be found on their lips. Three of their sons, Joseph, Nahum and Yehuda made *aliyah* to the Land of Israel. However, fortune soured for the parents and the remainder of the members of the family. Gershon and his wife were incinerated at Auschwitz along with most of the Jews of Zambrow. Their youngest son, Meir also met his end there, who was seventeen years old, and so yearned to make *aliyah* to *The Land*. Their daughter Zippora, a sister who was a graduate, was murdered by *The Scourge* at a place of religious persecution beside the village of Szumowo. Their son Moshe (very well schooled, and a man of spirit, who was first a Zionist and then a communist), together with his wife Chasha, the daughter of the teacher R' Zerakh, as was their little daughter Rachel'eh – were exterminated in the Bialystok ghetto.

R' Shmuel'keh Wilimowsky

R' Shmuel'keh Wilimowsky stands before my eyes, as he did close to six decades ago: He was among the first of the builders of the city and the community. He was a man of middling height and handsome presence. He had a long white patriarchal beard, that covered his broad girth, large black penetrating eyes, shielded by heavy white eyebrows. He was always dressed well, and very clean in appearance, striding with a measured step, to the White *Bet HaMedrash*, accompanied by his loyal only son, Abraham-Yossl – a tall, rangy, dark-colored young man, along with his grandchildren. He was a *Gabbai* for many years, of the White *Bet HaMedrash* which was the redoubt of the more modern element in the city, until he reached a wondrously old age. For many years, R' Shmuel'keh was a *Dozor* in the municipal government. He was also the president of the *Chevra Kadisha* in the city, an ombudsman of the good of the Jews in the city and its environs. His house was the first Jewish house built of cement in the city. Army officers would lodge at his home in the time before the barracks were constructed – representing the government, because there was not another home as pleasant or clean like it, in the city. Among his guests was the son of Baron

Horacy Günzburg [250] from Petersburg, who served as an officer in the Russian army. He ran a saloon, as many others did, because Zambrow had become a center for many highways.

When R' Shmuel'keh was already deeply advanced in age, a 'revolution' broke out in the White *Bet HaMedrash*: the younger generation demanded a younger *Gabbai*. As a result there was an upheaval: shall we, after all these years, remove – in his old age – this perennially dedicated *Gabbai*? The young revolutionaries emerged victorious, because R' Shmuel'keh himself no longer wanted to be elected *Gabbai* – being of such advanced age... Accordingly, the Chairman of the youth group, R' Itcheh Levinson was elected, 'Harlakova's' (Greenwald) husband, as *Gabbai*.

His only son, [Abraham]-Joseph Wilimowsky followed in his footsteps, though he had no taste for getting involved in community matters, despite the fact that he was quite prominent in his tobacco business, in which Jewish folk would sit around discussing world politics. Yet he too, was a *Gabbai* of the *Chevra Kadisha*, and one of the dignitaries of the community. His grandson, Moshe Williams, worked in the printing business in the United States, but later on went into farming, raising fowl on his own property. He was talented with a pen, and one of his poems '*Ich shreib a briv*' is published in this book. Ephraim had artistic talents, and was a printer in Lomza and was exterminated along with his entire family.

The only one surviving from this entire family – Elazar Wilimowsky, is in Hadar Yosef beside Tel-Aviv.

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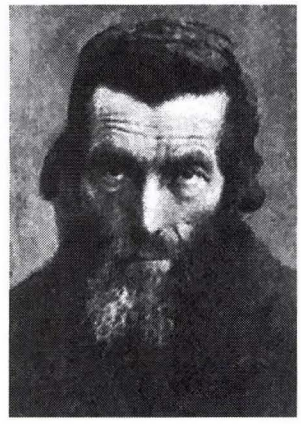
[250] Baron Horace Günzburg (born February 8, 1833 Zvenigorodka, in the *guberniya* of Kiev, Russia; died March 2, 1909, St. Petersburg, buried in Paris) was a Russian philanthropist. He received his education at home in Zvenigorodka. After the Crimean war his father, Joseph Günzburg, then a wealthy merchant and army contractor, settled with his family in St. Petersburg. He is the father of David Günzburg.

Günzburg first came before the public in 1863 as one of the founders of the Society for the Spread of Enlightenment among the Jews of Russia, the only society of the kind in Russia. He was one of the charter members of the society, and after the death of his father in 1878 succeeded him in the presidency. He was the largest contributor to its support and one of its most energetic workers. The work which made him so widely popular among the Jews was his unremitting effort, in which frequent appeals to the Russian government were involved, toward the improvement of the legal status of his coreligionists, and for the securing by legislation, as well as by other means, of their economic and moral welfare.

In 1870 he was summoned as an expert before the commission on the "Jewish Question," which met under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior.

The Home of the Koszarers (Levinsky)





Page 491: (Left): Pesach Yerusalimsky *(Right): Avreml Levinsky – Koszarer*

Five generations ago, a person named Moshe or Joseph Levinsky lived in Zambrow. He had three sons: Leibusz, Herschel, and Yitzhak. Leibusz had five sons and four daughters: Yoss'keh, Ber'keh, Gershon, Moshe, Chaim Velvel (Bialystok), Malka (America), Rivka, Fradl (the wife of Elyeh Rudniker-Goren) and Itkeh. Herschel had four daughters: Sarah Gefner, of these, the wife of Binyom'keh Golombek, Reizl Meisner, Golda Weinberg, and one son. Itcheh had three sons and three daughters: Moshe, Zelig, Abraham'l Reineh Brizman, Sarah Czerwonogura, and one other, the three brothers Leibusz, Herschel and Itcheh bought a large parcel from Shlomkeh the Butcher, where later on, the barracks were built, called '*Koszaren.*' This is the origin of their [family name] 'Koszarer'.

Abraham'l Koszarer, my grandfather, ran a saloon in Zambrow. He liquidated it in 1921. He sold his land property and came to Israel. Here, he fell ill, and died in Tel-Aviv, and was interred in the old cemetery. Before he died, he gave over 300 pounds sterling to his relative Leibczak Golombek, to endow a Home for the Aged on Allenby Street, that was then in the process of being built.

The oldest of the Koszarers is today in America, Yitzhak Levinsky, in Florida.

The Yerusalimsky Family (Yerushalmi)



Page 492: R' Elyeh-Zalman Yerusalimsky (The Winemaker)

My grandfather, Elyeh Zalman, the winemaker, settled in Zambrow in the year 1875, who came from Szczuczyn and was engaged in making raisin wine. Because of harassment by the authorities, he began to make denatured spirits for use in polishes, and also did some smuggling of whisky for human consumption. He wanted to go to the Land of Israel, however the *Rebbe* of Ger did not give him permission to do so. It was only after the *Rebbe* passed away, that my grandfather came to the [sic: new] young *Rebbe,* and asked for his blessing in connection with making *aliyah* to Israel. My grandfather had three sons: 1. Mordechai, who at the age of 15, married a daughter of Abraham'l Koszarer, and took up residence in the Land of Israel in 1936, traveled to Poland before the outbreak of the war there, and was exterminated there. 2. Velvel, who received Rabbinic ordination in Minsk. and was a leader of the Mizrahi in Myszyniec. 3. Pesach – studied in Navahrudak,[251] received his Rabbinic ordination in Volozhin, married there, and came to the Land of Israel before the First World War, was a teacher, and taught at the Bezalel Fine Arts Academy, and returned to Poland. My grandfather and grandmother came to the Land of Israel in 1909, and took up residence in Mea Shearim in Jerusalem, and made raisin wine. He invested his money, 500 rubles, in an unsuccessful loan for a Yeshiva and an Old Age Home. They went bankrupt, and my grandfather was left unwillingly living from handouts, and returned to Zambrow.



Page 493: Mordechai Yerusalimsky and his wife

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251 In Belarus; also rendered as Novogrudok [Russian], Nowogródek [Polish], Navaredok [Yiddish].

R' Abraham Shlomo Dzenchill (Pracht)

By Israel Levinsky



Page 494: R' Abraham Shlomo Dzenchill (Pracht)

It is not without an inner trembling in my heart, that I approach the task of setting down my memories of R' Abraham Shlomo Dzenchill. To begin with, this was a simple Jewish man, a son of butchers, who owned a market store and various trifles priced at a penny: the inventory in his store never amounted to more than a few rubles (during the rule of the Russians), and most of this was not his own, since he would take the goods on consignment from wholesalers, who would consign to him a sack of flour, a cask of oil, a few liters of sugar, on condition that he repay his outstanding loan, when he would come to procure fresh inventory on consignment. And how he would stand out, for example, on market days, when the farmers would bring their produce [for sale] and it was possible to purchase some grain for a passing wagon driver, a sack of potatoes, or even a stand of wheat and corn, in order to sell it at a profit to the steam-powered flour mill – and the poor, with longing and bulging eyes, coming out to do something, with pockets empty, and there is not one penny to put next to another. On Thursday and Friday, when his steady customers, the women, would come to by their Sabbath needs, one buying flour, yeast and other grains for *Challah*, another oil, sugar, candles – the shelves empty, and he still doesn't have the requisite sum in hand, that he needs to pay for the credit extended to him the prior week, and the same suffering returns, and the same running around. And this was the way this man lived for all the years that I knew him, but never once did I hear a complaint from his lips. A gentle laugh, and a smile, always flitted on his lips. There was no shadow of worry on his face. Quite the opposite, he knew how to joke with his customers, using beautiful funny stories, and sayings that would provoke laughter, sharp retorts, and it was with this that he attracted customers. He would stand in his store, despite the straitened circumstances, and was more concerned with his customers on the outside, that is to say: those that didn't come to buy – because of poverty, and it was necessary to provide them with a clandestine gift, to help them with their Sabbath needs. [He worried about] Yeshiva students, or some guest for whom it was necessary to find a place to take a Sabbath meal, and similar sorts of concerns. What should he do first: himself or these others? An intense internal struggle seethed within him, and yet suddenly, he would turn to his dear wife, who was as good as he was, and say: Etkeh, my love, I am obliged to approach a wholesaler in order to provide for a certain individual. With permission from his wife, he was then released to do freely what he wanted to for a quarter of an hour. On his way, he would turn off and pay a visit to someone who was sick, a poor laborer who had become bedridden. In the process of inquiring about his well-being, he looks at the medicine jars, and with his sharp eye, he discerns the straitened circumstances of the family: the house is empty, the children are pale and depressed, they sit dumbly in a corner, not making a sound. The woman of the house is already exhausted, her legs are giving out from her need to tend the sick one, and from walking around the house. R' Abraham Shlomo offers encouragement to the sick person, encouraged the wife, and sends the children to play outside, wished the sick person a complete recovery, and runs quickly to the *Gabbai* of the *'Bikur Kholim*,' rousing him to send this family aid. From there, he strides purposefully to the 'Guardians of the Sick,' and orders that two people be sent

as watchmen for overnight surveillance, to lighten the burden on the woman of the house, so she can rest at night. In passing, he alerts the ear of those women, who have means, that there is a need to bring her some chicken soup, a spoon full of sauce in order to help restore the sick person's disposition. And it is only then that he reminds himself that he has more than used up the time that his wife had allocated to him, and he quickly goes to the wholesalers, standing like the proverbial pauper at the doorway, until such time that the individual in question will turn to him, and lend him that which he is missing.

And here he is back in his store, showing Etkeh'leh what he brought, in order to appease her and engage her approval of the fact that he had spent so much time outside, he takes off his shabby *kapote*, and with the fringes of his *Tallit-Katan*, longer in length that several hand breadths, over his knees, he takes his place behind the table, and sends his wife home. But the needs of the people are many, and the assaults on his time are huge. Here comes a woman, with a babe in her arms, unceasingly wailing – an 'evil eye' has impacted him, according to his mother – and R' Abraham Shlomo knew how to calm her down. A second woman [arrives] – with a swelling that has appeared on her leg, and to whom else is there to turn, but to R' Abraham Shlomo, to make the swelling go down. And this goes on all say, this one leaves, and another comes in to take her place, and R' Abraham Shlomo receives all of them with courtesy, knowing their need, and does whatever is in his power and to whatever extent his capacity extends, 'to heal the broken-hearted, and to dress the wounds of their souls.'

And it is not only that he dedicates his time to the welfare of others, he even puts his own life in danger to save his customers from death. Here was the case of the outbreak of a cholera epidemic in the town. Healthy and vigorous people drop like flies. An outcry and wailing breaks out all over the town. Several men have already died – the plague is spreading. The *Gabbaim* of the city have decided to stand in the breach, and to come to the aid of those who succumb to this illness. They set up a process whereby, all day, boiling water will be at hand, at specified places, so that hot soaks can be made available to those touched by the plague, there will be bottles of spirit and alcohol vinegar, which will be given at no charge to anyone who asks. And R' Abraham Shlomo, who was among those who arranged for these previously mentioned things, leaves his store entirely, and commits himself totally to those who become infected, he and other men like him, of robust constitution, volunteer to be among those who provide hot soaks. When the hands and feet of the stricken person become weak, cold and stiff, he rolls up his sleeves and uses the hot water and clean spirits to wash down the stricken person, warming them up a bit, and thereby saving them from death. And he has work to do. All day long, he rushes from one sick person to the next, literally risking his own life. But it is not possible to save all those who are stricken, and the plague spreads, without any apparent power to stop it. It was then that the dignitaries of the city decide to marry two orphans at the cemetery – a boon that has been proven among us to interdict the Angel of Death. And here, R' Abraham Shlomo runs, looking for an orphan boy and an orphan girl, urging on women to get together some bit of a dowry, a smattering of clothing, charges the rich with supporting the couple, some for a week, others for a month – and the wedding is conducted at night, at the cemetery, accompanied by the sounds of the musicians, and the head *Mekhutan* is R' Abraham Shlomo,

coming out in a dance, and bringing joy to the groom and the bride, and if the Angel of Death was halted and turned away, history is silent.

R' Abraham Shlomo does not fear bringing an infectious disease into his own home. Here, a Yeshiva student, a young man, was a guest that had stayed behind in Zambrow for a set time, suddenly fell sick with speckled typhus, and there is no one who will give the young man a place, and there is no hospital in the city – what is to be done? To leave the sick one out in the street – that is impossible. And here, R' Abraham Shlomo makes a place for him in his room, bringing the sick one inside, who was known subsequently as Abraham Mizrach from Lomza. He tended him as if he were his own son, whom he was trying to return to good health.

And who can tell of all the acts of charity and kindness that this man, R' Abraham Shlomo does day in and day out, week in and week out. R' Abraham Shlomo was also a God-fearing man, rigorously observant, and a keeper of *mitzvot,* and does not overlook even the most insignificant *mitzvah.* On the Sabbath, he does not engage in conversation that is best left to the rest of the week. He also sets aside time for Torah [study], even if he does not have great adeptness for it. He was given the nickname '*Pracht*,' because to everything, he would say, '*Yoh dos iz pracht!*'[252]



Page 496: The Jewish Ladies Society for Social Help

At the outset, he was something of an unbeliever – he read novels, wore the short clothing favored by the more modern. But this period of being a disbeliever only lasted for a few years, and he became transformed, it was said, into something of a returning prodigal. Some spirit passed over him that

252 'That is magnificent!'

altered his direction, and nobody knows what, but from the time that this change came over him, he wanted to atone for the transgressions of his youth, and dedicated himself to work for the common good, to engage in *mitzvot* and good deeds, and also to set time aside for Torah study. From the beginning, he would study a chapter of the *Mishna, Chayei Adam*, which came to him only with difficulty, and a great deal of enervation, and he would have to depend on others to explain it to him. However, with diligence and speed, he reached the *Mishna* and the *Gemara*. And when the local Rabbi volunteered to teach a periodic *Talmud* class, R' Abraham Shlomo became one of his students, and great supporters, even though, prior to that, he was not one of his followers.

He had no sons. It is possible that this fact also served as a brake on his community endeavors. As I have already mentioned, his wife was also a very honest woman, good-hearted, and of giving spirit, and she did not stand in her husband's shadow, and did not object to all that he did, or if he brought several guests home for the Sabbath, after not being able to find a place for them to eat with other *balebatim*, even if she was not predisposed towards them. In the final years of his life, he dedicated himself entirely to the Yeshiva and its students, and was one of the 'Cossacks' of the Rabbi: He would accompany him even outside the country, on his trip to a sanatorium. He became a zealot, and opposed all things that were progressive.

The Pride of the City

By Yom Tov Levinsky

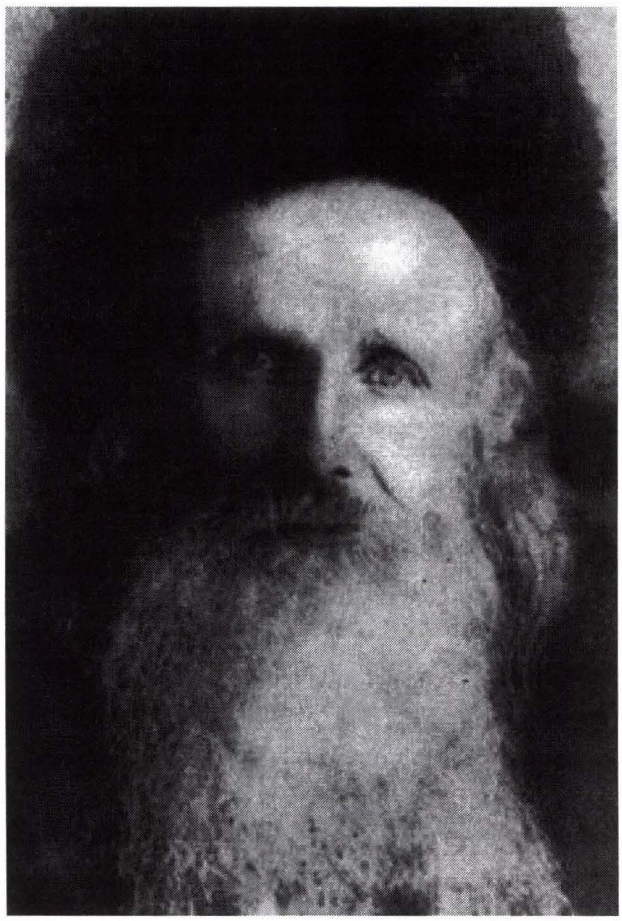
Abraham Abba (Avcheh) Rakowsky

The Zambrow community went on to become distinguished by its distinguished bridegrooms, because of the desire of the *balebatim* of the time to procure a bridegroom for their daughters who was exceptional, well-connected by pedigree, and a man of accomplishment. One such among the *balebatim* was Muszka Bursztein, who was called '*Muszka Poritz*,' because he was wealthy, a property owner, who owned large herds of horses and saloons, and who rode around in a carriage fit for Polish nobility, with three pairs of horses harnessed to it, and a wagon driver, a gentile, sitting behind it. With money, he 'bought' a magnificent groom for his daughter, the son of R' Azriel Leib Rakowsky – Abraham Abba. R' Azriel Leib, the groom's father, had a reputation as one of the great Rabbis of Poland, and occupied the rabbinical seat of Stawiski, transferring after honor, to serve as the Rabbi of Pluck, the provincial seat, and from there, to Mstislavl, the city of the historian, Simon Dubnow, a very important congregation of that time, and also famous for the blood libel that occurred there. His final post was in Mariampol – an aristocratic congregation, replete with scholars and wise men. He died there, on Yom Kippur in the year 5654 (1894) at the age of 75. This '*Yahrzeit*' was observed for many years among the scions of Zambrow, even though the Rabbi R' Azriel Leib was not known there personally – because his son, Abraham Abba, would lead *Ne'ila* services on the *Yahrzeit* of his late father, and his prayer would leave a deep impression on all the worshipers. Abraham Abba did not have a pleasant voice, as did the others who led services during the High Holy Days, but his personal style of prayer was unique, and was not favored by the cantors of the time. He had an 'enlightened' approach to the recitation of the poetry of *Selichot* and The Holy Day. He exhibited special outpouring of the soul regarding the handiwork of The Holy One, Blessed Be He: 'You set humanity apart from the outset, recognizing that it would stand before you' and also in the entreaties: 'Your people have many needs, but their understanding is limited,' and also longing for Zion: 'As I see every city on its hillock, fully built, and the City of God is plunged down to the utter depths,' etc., etc. The White *Bet HaMedrash* would fill up at *Ne'ila* until there was no more



Page 498: Abraham Abba (Avcheh) Rakowsky

room, because, from all of the surrounding houses of worship – they came to hear Avcheh's *Ne'ILA*, that being Abraham Abba. Abraham-Abba had a special privilege, they would say, on reciting this prayer, as the great-grandson of the *Gaon*, author of '*Zera Berekh*,' R' Yitzhak Eizik, one of the children of the saintly 'SHaLo"H'[253] Yeshaya Hurwicz, the *Gaon* and *Kabbalist*, and author of the book, 'The Two Tablets of the Covenant' 1558), may his worthiness serve as a shield over us....and whose pedigree extends back all the way to King David.



Page 500: *R' Azriel-Leib Rakowsky (Avcheh's Father)*

Abraham Abba was born in Mariampol in the year 1854 in Kirov, studied at the Yeshiva of Płock and others, and was renown for his genius in the whole vicinity. While yet at an early age he 'blossomed and was captivated:' he made friends at the Płock Yeshiva with one – Nahum Sokolov, and together with him, began an intensive study in secular studies: languages, and the sciences of mathematics, nature, history and literature. As Nahum Sokolov recalls from his own memories, the core of his studies lay in languages. How is it that R' Abraham Abba learned languages? He had no teacher, and he was first attracted to French. What did he do? He inherited a large dictionary, in this language, and he memorized it, in alphabetical order. As you can surmise, without being able to properly pronounce the words, according to the principles of French grammar, and without the capacity to leave out even a single letter, adhering to what was written in the dictionary... and after this he learned the Polish language – a language derided by the Jewish intelligentsia in Poland, because it was difficult to 'make any career' out of it, in the face of Russian, which was the language of the ruling conquerors, that pervaded all walks of life in Poland. Abraham Abba went so far as to even translate an assortment of works from the Polish literature into Hebrew, especially from the writings of Eliza Orzeszkowa: 'Mirtala,' 'On Alien Soil' and others. Afterwards he learned German – the language that opened gates to the lore of Israel, that was mostly written in this language, and went so far as to even translate a number of books into Hebrew, such as 'Killed without a Trial' – a novel by Philipson about the *Maharam* [Meir ben Baruch] of

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253 This acronym is taken from his renown book, ***Sh**nei **L**ukhot **H**aBrit*, 'The Two Tablets of the Covenant.' It seems the date given may be in error, since the life span of the ShaLo"H is given as (1555-1628).

Rothenburg, who died in prison in city of Kolonia, not wanting his brethren to ransom him for the exorbitant sum that the authorities demanded for him.[254] He translated 'The Dispersed of Israel,' 'The Revenge,' and many others. When he reached the discipline of the English language, Abraham Abba mastered it, by the use of a dictionary, learning it by heart, and then translating, as is understood, to Hebrew, several choice gems from the literature, like: 'The shoot from the stem of Jesse,' or 'David Alro'ee,' – the famous book of the Zionist, Lord Beaconsfield, Disraeli (given a prize, in his time by the subscribers of '*HaTzefira*') and others.

As early as 1872, while still young, he began to publish in '*HaMaggid*,' and a glimpse came to light of his writings on science, and linguistic innovations, and was an assistant to R' Chaim Zelig Slonimsky (*ChaZa"S*), the owner of *HaTzefira*, and frequently published essays on Torah, wisdom, nature, and current events, and afterwards became the right-hand man to his friend Nahum Sokolov, the editor-in-chief of *HaTzefira*, and to the anthologists assembling literary-scientific works, in the collection '*HeAssif*.' The sage *ChaZa"S* exchanged letters with Abraham Abba all the days of his life, and not only once tried to encourage him to leave his town and come to Warsaw, and dedicate himself to science and literature. However, a number of obstacles stood in his way, and he remained among his 'folk' in Zambrow.

In the world of commerce and manufacture, Abraham Abba made himself a reputation with his book 'The Tractate on Notes,' – which to this day is one of the most valued books in our literature. With the acuity of one of the original *Amoraites*, and with a Talmudic nuance that is wondrously clear, he revealed to the Jewish student, who, by and large was one of the denizens of the *Bet HaMedrash*, with this idiom intrinsic to his mouth, all of the ways in which commerce is conducted, and its intricacies, the rules governing borrower and lender, according to the laws of the land, the rules of banking, the laws of charging interest, bankruptcy, and issues involving financial documents, etc. He did not sign this with his proper name, but rather as '*Loh Saifa v'Loh Safra*'[255] – so he would not be a target of religious fanatics. In this book, he took the blinders off the eyes of thousands among Polish Jewry, who had taken their hand and energy to commerce, without knowledge of how it was conducted, nor of the laws of the land. The ultra-religious and fanatics looked upon him with an

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254 Meir of Rothenburg (c. 1215 — 2 May 1293) was a German Rabbi and poet, a major author of the *Tosafot* on *Rashi's* commentary on the *Talmud*. He is also known as Meir ben Baruch, the Maharam of Rothenburg.

In 1286, King Rudolf I instituted a new persecution of the Jews, declaring them *servi camerae* ("serfs of the treasury"), which had the effect of negating their political freedoms. Along with many others, Meir left Germany with family and followers, but was captured in Lombardy and imprisoned in a fortress near Ensisheim in Alsace. Tradition has it that a large ransom of 23,000 marks silver was raised for him (by the *Rosh* [R' Asher ben Yekhiel]), but Rabbi Meir refused it, for fear of encouraging the imprisonment of other rabbis. He died in prison after seven years. Fourteen years after his death a ransom was paid for his body by Alexander ben Salomon Wimpfen, who was subsequently laid to rest beside the Maharam.

255 Aramaic for "Neither the sword nor the book.'

angry eye, because they saw in this a sort of desecration of the Talmud, because it was written with great skill and understanding, similar to the *Gemara,* and there were even fanatics who wanted him excommunicated. When the Chief Rabbi of Lomza, R' Malkhiel Tenenbaum ז"ל passed away, several of the enlightened *balebatim* put forward the name of Abraham Abba, as a candidate for the rabbinical seat of the city. However the zealots and Hasidim organized protest gatherings: the author of 'The Tractate of Notes,' Avcheh the Apostate. He is to be our Rabbi and *Bet-Din* Senior – oh, what a shame that will be!...And they were compelled to withdraw his name from consideration. He was among the first of the Zionists in Poland, and gave much of his soul to this concept, in his writing speaking, and discourses, in Hebrew and several other languages. In 1904, when the news of the passing of Dr. Benjamin Ze'ev [sic: Theodore] Herzl made the rounds in Zambrow, they turned, naturally, to Avcheh, to eulogize the Zionist leader. The Rabbi of the city – a fierce opponent of Zionism, as was the case with the rabbis of that day – oversaw the locking of all gates to houses of worship, in order that this 'apostate' not be mourned. However, the Zionist camp prevailed, and especially the 'satin youth' – the enlightened sons-in-law of Zambrow, who had come from various other towns, headed by my father, R' Israel, the enlightened teacher in the town, and they broke open the doors of the White *Bet HaMedrash*, that was a bastion of the progressive element. R' Abraham Abba, was carried aloft on their hands to the *Bima*, and he stood there, wrapped in a *Tallit*, as if he was one of the religious preachers, and he eulogized Dr. Herzl. As part of a trenchant analysis in Zionist principles, and the work of the founder of 'The Jewish State,' he offered a chapter from '*Khibat Tzion*,' and in his attempt to hasten independence for the Land of Israel, he described Herzl's agonies, his tribulations and journeys that took a toll on his health, etc. When he came to the conventional conclusion of all preachers, 'And may the Redeemer Come to Zion, and Thy Will Be Done, Speedily in Our Days, Amen!,' the entire gathering joined in crying along with him, and the *Mourners of Zion*, together with all other mourners, in the recitation of a *Kaddish D'Rabbanan*... For this *Kaddish D'Rabbanan*, after the eulogy to the 'apostate' Herzl, the Rabbi and the fanatic Jews could not forgive him for many years... R' Abba did not use his schooling and education to make a living, but made a respectable living in the selling of oil and appurtenances for those who work with steel. He received a 'concession,' to bring barrels of oil from Baku to Czerwony Bór – the railroad station closest to Zambrow – and there, transfer it to casks. Several families made a living from this. He had a sharp competitor in this business, Mr. Benjamin Tenenbaum, who also had received a concession from his wife's relatives, owners of the famous 'Cohen' oil company of Petersburg. In the year 1905, during the time of the upheaval and revolutionary movement in Russia, the 'strikers' – the Jewish revolutionaries in Zambrow, members of the *Bund* and the S. S. – came to Avcheh Rakowsky with the entreaty that he stand on their side, and help them in communication, and even more, with his money. As an ardent Zionist – he did not succumb to them, and did not have a favorable view of the Jewish participation in the Russian Revolution. In those days, Avcheh was highly respected, and well received in the regional courts of law run by the government, because he knew all of the laws of the country by heart, and therefore, the influential judges and similarly the lawyers, relied on him for advice and direction. Because of this, he received permission to be a defense attorney in the court, even though he had no formal training in the legal aspects of jurisprudence. This sort of an individual was designated as a 'civilian trustee.' It can be understood that for these reasons, Abraham Abba could not throw his hand in with the revolutionaries. The latter became angry with him, because they knew: If Avcheh were on their side – all of the *balebatim*

would follow in his footsteps. Accordingly, they sent people from the P. P. S., the Polish Socialists, to try and influence him. When they did not succeed – they began to threaten him with 'terror' and 'expropriation.' as was common in those days. Avcheh was not moved by any of this. On one day, this was early on a Friday, the news spread in the city, that the Jewish and Polish revolutionaries had, that night, broken into the oil storage facilities of Avcheh, opened all the casks, and turned them upside down. The oil ran out all night, into the Zambrow river... in the morning, when the news spread, the children of the poor, especially Poles, ran to the river to skim off the top layers of the river, because the oil, which is lighter than water, was floating on the top, and covered a well-defined part of the surface of the river. This incident provoked a great deal of anger in the entire city, and on the Sabbath, it was a subject of the day for conversation in all the houses of worship.

Tens of young boys, from poor families, would come to dine at the table of Abraham Abba on a daily basis, who were students at the Yeshiva, and his wife would personally serve the prepared foods, despite the fact that she always had helpers and cooks.

Abraham Abba represented the Jewish community to the régime, even at a time when there was an Administrative Rabbi (*Kozioner Rabbiner*) in Zambrow, Rabbi Gold, and even after Rabbi Regensberg received this title. If trouble visited the city, through informing, arrest, breaking the law, the levying of taxes, decrees on participating in paving the roads, etc., etc. – Abraham Abba would travel to Lomza to appear before the governor, and to either have the decree nullified or have it lightened. On the eve of festivals or holidays, when the city wanted to have the Jewish soldiers released from the barracks, and to host them in Jewish homes during the holiday – a coach was hitched up for Avcheh, and he, in his cylindrical top hat, wearing a black Sabbath cloak, shod in white spats, would ride off to the military commander who was in the city – to ask for a furlough for the Jewish soldiers, and to even turn over the 'proviant' the food rations for the Jewish soldiers, to the community, in order that the community, or the committee dealing with the soldiers, would be able to procure kosher food in accordance with Jewish law and custom.

When a contingent of raw recruits would arrive at the city barracks, at the beginning of the Fall, and it was necessary to swear them in – it was Avcheh who went, along with the Rabbi of the city, who was not conversant in Russian, to 'swear in' the Jewish soldiers, who numbered in the many hundreds, and to make a 'patriotic' speech to them in Russian. This responsibility was placed on Avcheh. In his talk before the Jewish soldiers, who for the most part didn't understand the language in which he spoke, the national language, it was Avcheh's intent to grab the intention of the Russian officers and commanders, with regard to the Jewish question, and the dilemmas faced by a Jewish soldier, who continues in the tradition of his forbears regarding *kashrut*, Sabbath observance, prayer, and the like, and that there is no contradiction in terms between this and loyalty to the homeland.

One time, a new Provincial Governor was appointed in Lomza, the latter came to Zambrow, in order to become familiar with the extent of his domain. This, as it happens, turned out to be on *Rosh Hashana*. The community Rabbi, and the heads of the community that went out to greet him on this Day of Judgment, bearing bread and salt, invited him into the White *Bet HaMedrash*, which glistened at that time with the cleanliness within, after the *Gabbai*, R' Itcheh Levinson gave it a

facelift, re-plastered, decorated and carved a new Holy Ark, and installed new gas candelabras, etc. As understood, Avcheh was the principal greeter, from the standpoint of the congregation and all the worshipers. The Rabbi of the city also put in an appearance, who routinely side-stepped the White *Bet HaMedrash* – because most of those who opposed and harassed him worshiped here, and it was here that the Zionist leadership also gathered itself, such as Benjamin Kagan, Shlomo Blumrosen, the Bursztein family, Kossowsky, Levinson, Levinsky and others. All of the arriving government guests went up onto the *Bima*, with the Governor at their head, accompanied by his entourage: officers, heads of the police, military commanders, and others. It was a festive occasion full that made a big impression. The *Hazzan* and his choir opened with the Russian national anthem in honor of the Czar: 'Многая лета,' after which R' Abba Rakowsky held forth for about an hour, in a fluent Russian, comparable to one of the distinguished residents of the capitol in Petersburg, and he was merely a citizen of a little town, who doesn't even haven anyone with whom to speak Russian extensively. The speech he gave continues to reverberate in my ears to this day, on the importance of *Rosh Hashana* to the Jews, the Day of Judgment, the Day of the Sounding of the Shofar, the beginning of the New Year, and more important that all of them, 'The Day of Remembrance' in which the King of the Universe remembers us, and makes an accounting of all countries and all living things. The king of a country is like a reflected eye of the King of the Universe, and he also recalls all of its citizenry favorably, making no distinction between one root of origin or another, or between one faith or another, and we, the Jewish citizenry, enter here, and we bless the king in our prayers, especially in the prayer '*Hanotayn Teshua LiMlakhim,*'[256] and he recalled the Czar, the Czarina, the widowed Queen Mother, and the Czarevich. The entire entourage stood by dumbly, as if ossifed. After the singing of Боже, Царя храни by the *Hazzan* and the choir, and the entire congregation – everyone exited extremely satisfied, and with comments of gratitude. The whisper passed from mouth to ear: Avcheh sanctified The Name! He explained to the ruler what Judaism was, and what it was worth, he brought out in relief the nature of Hebrew nationalism, that had been exiled from its homeland, and yet continues to anticipate the coming of The Messiah, to 'the confidantes of the Czar,' etc. And yet, they also told from mouth to ear, that at the time of the singing of Боже, Царя храни, a group gathered around R' Israel Levinsky (the father of this writer, who at that time had been seized as a 'revolutionary' Zionist, and supported the *Poalei Tzion*) and this group sang the '*Hatikvah*' – and the two sets of voices intermingled with each other...

The elections to the national *Duma*[257] did not pass by without the oversight of Avcheh. In large gatherings that took place in the White *Bet HaMedrash*, the community was given a lesson in citizenship, in which, he explained and taught the obligations of citizenship to the government, and the obligations of the government to the citizen, and he stressed the national link that the enlightened Zionists of the time, in Poland, loathed, and for whom '*HaTzefira*' was their platform. At that time, Abraham Abba went so far as to have several articles published in *HaTzefira*, regarding the new Russian Constitution, and what the expectations of Polish Jewry might be under this franchise. These were civics lessons, which were denied to the Jewish community, who were deprived of their rights

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256 The prayer which asks God to bless the ruler of the country.

257 The use of the Russian '*Duma*' rather than the Polish '*Sejm*' dates this as pre- WW I.

as citizens, and left to the mercy and whim of every policeman and official. In fact, Avcheh was selected by the régime as one of the overseers responsible for the conduct of the *Duma* elections, in the Lomza District.

After the Second Fire in Zambrow, the city declined. Those that received insurance funds began to build and erect their houses anew, on a more esthetic and grandiose scale. However, funds were lacking to complete the building. Additionally, craftsmen needed to fall back on loans, both large and small, to upgrade their workshops, buy new sewing machines, packing material, and the like.

And it was at this juncture that R' Avcheh called for a community gathering, on a Saturday night in the White *Bet HaMedrash*. He proposed to establish a *bank for craftsmen and merchants in need of funding*. It would be a source of loans and current savings. 'If I am not for myself – then who is for me?' – R' Abba issued his words like a fire. Those with means would deposit their monies and savings in the bank, those in need of funds – would receive loans of short tenor, guaranteed by two *balebatim*. Everyone would be encourage to take advantage for himself, and neighbors, and the benefits would accrue to the city as a whole. His loyal student, R' Yaakov Shlomo Kukawka, the Shoemaker, took it upon himself to 'raise funds,' meaning: he went from house-to-house, to engage in negotiation, that asked of people to deposit money in the bak, that would serve as a capital base for the needed loans. The bank developed quite nicely, sanctioned by the Head of the Czarist Treasury, and continued its work until the First World War, in the year 1914, when the government froze all deposits, and transferred them to Russia.

On one of those days, he received a Jewish delegation from London, with a proposal that he accept the Rabbinical seat of their congregation. The idea of being the Chief Rabbi of London was very enticing to R' Abba, but family matters kept him from accepting – and the offer was postponed.

Abraham Abba also had enlightened sons who were educated. And the same of his daughters – for whom he exerted himself to provide them with teachers that would lead them onto an enlightened and progressive path. He, however, did not derive parental satisfaction from his sons. One son, Mendl, was riding on a bicycle (the first bicycle in the city, at the end of the 19th century!), crashed into a tree, suffered a fatal blow, and died afterwards while suffering terribly. His son Alter, was an ordained Rabbi, was enlightened and capable. He died in Leningrad in 1939, and left a family behind. After Alter, six daughters were born to him, and then a son, in his old age, Israel. The daughters: Chaycheh (is in Russia with a nameless family), Chana, the wife of Horodowsky, who returned to Zambrow, Mircheh (who lived in Lucynow with her family, the Baums, and was lost in the Bialystok ghetto), Tzipka (died in Russia before the war: Her husband Dimschitz was a mathematics professor and a famous chess player in Russia), Pua (Pycheh, wife of the well-known artist Yosseleh Kolodny of Pinsk) died in Zambrow, and Lyuba (lives with a family in Russia). All the daughters were educated, spoke French as their native language, and even knew Hebrew and the *Talmud*. It was not only once that vigorous discussions ensued, on Talmudic subjects between these daughters and Yeshiva students – who came to have their meals at R' Avcheh's table both on the Sabbath and during the week.

His youngest son, Israel'keh was the most talented of his sons, and I remember him as being handsome from the days of my early childhood. He was possessed of an earthy sense of humor and was given to writing. He wrote stories about life in the town, in the style of '*Sholom Aleichem*.' During gatherings of the youth in Zambrow, and in a number of nearby locations, Israel'keh would read from his works. He would occasionally condemn the wealthy of the city, and spice up his subject matter with portraits of typical personalities of the town, using expressions and rhymes about the simple folk, and the entire audience would roll with laughter. I can still hear the echoes of a refrain of parody, from one of his songs, that all the listeners would sing, and spread throughout the city: this came after a dispute between two competing clothing store merchants: Gottleib and Shepsl Kwiatek, who raised their hands, one to the other, in the midst of a heated exchange: One picked up a rod, and his counterpart took off the belt from his pants and whipped with it. The entire city was in a boiling state. At that time, Israel'keh sang, in the manner of how the common folk sing: *'Hoi shepsl mittn ridl, Gottleib mittn pas, shpilt zhe mir a lidl oyfn Zembrover gasse.*' (Oh, Shepsl with the rod, and Gottleib with the belt, play me a song on the Zambrow street). Israel'keh took gymnasium exams in Odessa, and close to the onset of the First World War, was accepted for study at the Montefiore Polytechnicum in Liege in Belgium, to study chemistry. The World War broke out. A contingent of students, who had come from Russia, were drafted to guard the fort at Liege against the German invasion. The entire group, with he amongst them, retreated afterwards to France, together with the Belgian Army. After a number of trials, he came to Paris, where he completed his studies at the university, and worked as a chemist at a number of substantial manufacturing facilities. He was an active participant in Jewish culture, and sunk his entire energy into helping emigrating Jews, in getting their children settled into summer camps and schools. His schoolmate, Nowomaysky, invited him to come and work in the exploitation of the Dead Sea – however, for whatever reason, the matter did not come to fruition. Close to the Second World War, he returned to Zambrow, harried and disappointed, and he was exterminated along with all the other [sic: Jewish] residents of the city.



Page 504: Engineer Yisrael'keh Rakowsky

Let us return to Abraham Abba. As the First World War intensified, Abraham Abba, and his family moved into the interior of Russia. He suffered all of the terror of the revolution, his assets were foreclosed on, his money confiscated, and he was left naked and without anything, ending up as a retailer, selling soap in the marketplace – in order to be able to eat a slice of proletarian bread. When the repatriation treaty between Soviet Russia and Poland was concluded, Abraham Abba also returned to Poland, to Zambrow, an old man, bent, weary from being on the run, and oppressed. With what was left of his strength, he began the process of trying to rebuild his house anew.

The sense of 'and there arose a new king [in Egypt] that knew not Joseph' assaulted him in an awful manner. With great difficulty, and after tribulations with it, the Poles reinstated his privileges. All of the officials and the *Starosta* did not take cognizance of him, and did not properly estimate the man. Nevertheless, they were amazed at the old Jewish man, literally dressed in tatters, a refugee from Russia, speaking the Polish language

with clarity, even better than the Polish Magnates. These same people were surprised to hear from his mouth, that which they were obligated to do, in support of the national and international law, to recognize his rights as a citizen, and his ownership of his property, etc. The father of the author of these columns, who occasionally lived with Abraham Abba, and was his friend for many years, fell into trouble with the office of the *Starosta* in Lomza, on the matter of the issuance of a permit of some kind, and resided for a short while beside Avcheh, and didn't recognize him. This exhausted old man no longer recognized my father. And here, the bailiff announces from the corridor: 'citizen Abraham Abba Rakowsky, is requested to enter the office!' It is not possible to describe the emotion that passed between them, when each recognized the other, after a separation of about ten years. Abraham Abba fell on my father's neck and fainted... this was the last time that they met, because a short while after this, he fell sick with the spotted or intestinal typhus, that was wreaking havoc at that time in Poland, and Abraham Abba took to bed, from which he did not arise. And yet, he had managed, since his return from Russia, to sit for the external Polish law examinations, and was awarded the right too act as a [local] defense attorney in the courts (*Obrońca Sądowy)* and in those days was even able to successfully defend a Jewish soldier that killed a Christian who insulted him on Yom Kippur.

His name, which was held up for praise in the days of Ch. Z. Slonimsky and Nahum Sokolov, as one of the outstanding figures of Polish Jewry, was forgotten and disappeared from the hearts of the younger generation. His place in literature, and as a man of science, a Torah scholar, historian and translator, a researcher, and occasional writer for the press, all vanished from the annals of the Hebrew literature. The memory of him, as a brilliant Zionist, as one of the pillars of the aristocratic Zionist élite in Poland, all declined like a setting sun, in the new Poland.

Despite this, the citizens of Zambrow, scions of the city, will remember him all their lives, as the man who raised the good name of the city, an educator, who educated multiple generations in Torah, and the wisdom of Israel, with love of the general nation, and an orientation towards an unfettered and free life for a citizen, in his homeland – a land for which he always raised his expectations of spirit, and to which only his grandchildren were privileged to reach, to build it, and to themselves develop within it.

Let us here recollect his grandson, the son of his daughter Chana, Menachem Horodowsky, he is a railway man that made *aliyah* to *The Land*, after several mishaps and falling into traps, in the year 1941, and he is serving, from the beginning of 1954, as the general manager of the Israeli Railroad System.

Rabbi Matityahu Kagan, a scion of the city, the Rabbi of Corona (Long Island, New York[258]), saw the will of Abraham-Abba, which he lodged, in the twilight of his years, with his relative, Avcheh Frumkin ל"ז. He cut one of his daughters out of any inheritance, because word had reached him that she profanes the sanctity of the Sabbath. He ordered that one of the heirs of a merchant in Warsaw be located, with whom he was engaged with in commerce before the war, to repay a debt that he had

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outstanding with his father. 'In accordance with the Law of the *Shulkhan-Arukh, Khoshen Mishpat*, Chapter.... Section.... I am obligated to repay this loan – However, the Eminent Master R' Joseph Caro erred in articulating his view, with all respect to him, and it is my obligation to repay the debt, as it says in the *Gemara*...[' He also left behind a marvelous handwritten item with the previously mentioned Mr. Frumkin ז"ל: It was a scientific composition, in the spirit of the Sages of Israel, about the *Parsha* of the Week. After Rakowsky's death, Mr. Frumkin put it into the hands of the Rabbi. The fate of this composition is unknown. The Rabbi recalled this piece of writing several times, in a good way.

Bibliography of the Writings of A. A. Rakowsky

1. From the notes of *Kehillat Yaakov* in Warsaw (according to the minutes that were printed in the local language, *HaAsif*, A, 5645, pp. 142-146).

2. Died without being tried, or Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg. The source is from the stories of Dr. L. Philipson, copied by A. A. Rakowsky (*HaAsif*, A, 5645, Volume 3, pp. 1-17)

3. The night that the Passover was ushered in – A story about something that took place (ibid, pp. 18-22).

4. Secrets of the Microscope – A Comic Story (ibid, pp. 22-26).

5. Money – An Essay on National Economics (*HaAsif*, Year 2, pp. 742-749).

6. Amendments to the rules of the Castillian Communities, from the year 1432, arranged by Prof. Isidore Lab, Secretary of All Israel Friends in France, translated from the handwritten account of the writer, A. A. Rakowsky (HaAsif, 3, pp. 133-147).

7. '*J'Accuse*,' written by Émile Zola, published in '*HaTzefira*' at the time of the Dreyfus trial.

8. The Word of Our Lord Will Stand Forever – Eleven essays in connection with research of the peoples of the past: a) Testimony in Jacob. b) God revealed in Judah. 3) *Lebanon Di Be'er* d) Ammon and Moab. 5) The remnant of the Philistines. 6) the History of Edom. 7) The Story of Nineveh, Babylon. 8) The Story of Zor. 9) The Twilight. 10) The Story of Egypt. 11) The House of the Rekabites[259] (*HaAsif* 5647, pp. 359 - 390).

9. An Old Man and a Boy (a story in the style of the Polish writer Okonsky) (ibid, pp. 658-660).

10. In an Alien Land (a long story taken from the lives of the Jews of Rome), from the Polish lady author Eliza Orzeszekowa, copied into Hebrew by Abraham Abba Rakowsky (*HaAsif* 6, 5655, pp. 1-135).

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[259] See Jeremiah 35.

11. An Anthology of Notes (Laws of finance, and the national economy), 1894, Warsaw, Signed as: *'Loh Saifa veLoh Safra.'*

12. A Shoot from the stem of Jesse, or David Alro'ee, according to Sir Benjamin Beaconsfield Disraeli, translated from the original, a prize to '*HaTzefira*' subscribers. The translator signed himself 'Abarbanel.'

13. Jews Driven to the Margin – according to the stories of Dr. Philipson (Warsaw, 1875).

14. Additionally, he published many tens of essays, matters of criticism, feuilletons, and novel concepts in Torah study and science, under his correct name, and the name 'Abarbanel' – this being an acronym for **Ab**raham **R**akowsky, **ben** Aryeh **L**eib (started in Radkinson's '*KaKol*,' in the literary supplement '*Asefat Khakhamim*,' published by Ben-Netz in the years 1876 - 1879. In a like manner, he would sign his name as A. A. R. in *HaTzefira*, and other periodicals).

For a period of time, he also published in '*HaModia,*' anonymously, these being philosophical essays, and world nationality, in the style of a Talmudic give-and-take. In the end, his previously mentioned writings on the portions of the week, were written during the malevolent Russian revolution, from memory, because he was left without so much as a *Tanakh* in his hands.

My Parents, the Martyrs of Hebron

By A. Shmuel Gutman

My parents, Asher Moshe and Chava, came to Zambrow from Jablonka, after it had been put to the torch by the Russians, during their retreat from Poland in 1915, approximately. My father was a tailor, but very well schooled, and a substantial donor to charity. He would set aside time for study every day, before prayers, that being a page of the *Gemara*, and between afternoon and evening prayers – a chapter of the Mishna with a study group. He was very much drawn to giving charity anonymously.

Our home was always full of vegetables, fruit and grain, because, on our own, we rented fields and plant them, and my father would also get 'concessions' from peasants. When my father went to pray for the afternoon and evening services, he would lecture us: do you see these sacks of produce, the farmer has assured me he would divide it up in accordance with the accompanying list. Take the sacks, and put them by the door, but do it in a way that the resident is unaware, and cannot see you doing it. If you are caught doing this – you should reply that you don't know anything...



Page 506: R' Asher Moshe Gutman and his wife Chava, who were martyred in Hebron by the Arabs, during the period of unrest of Ab, 5689 (1929)

And this is the way we would go about, using the wagon for hours on end, looking for the Jews in question, and taking advantage of the opportunity not to be spotted.

We would come home tired, but satisfied, because we had discharged an important *mitzvah*, as partners to our good father.

After this, my parents left for the Land of Israel, and took up residence in the holy city of Hebron. Here, my father sat and studied the whole day through.

The bloodthirsty Arabs, however, did not spare them in the Great Slaughter of Hebron, in the days of 17-18 Ab, 5789 [23-24 August 1929]. הו"ד.

My mother Chava may she rest in peace, was also one to distribute charity. She would always assist my father in his charitable undertakings. On her own, she would also go about to uncover needy, hungry families, and would send small pots of food, bread, vegetables, potatoes and eggs. She would exude joy when she was given an opportunity to make an anonymous gift.

From Home

By Ahuva Greenberg



Page 508: Ahuva Greenberg

My father, R' Avigdor was a merchant who dealt in building materials and ironware. This vocation had been passed down in the family for generations. He was the son of R' Sholom Greenberg of Wyszków, grandson of R' Shmuel Greenberg of Makow, well-schooled in Torah, and possessor of extensive assets, an owner of forest land, a man of means and a great philanthropist. In the family, it was told that R' Shmuel died at an advanced old age, not in his home city, but rather while traveling in his coach to his *Rebbe*: 'Such that even The Angel of Death would not be so lucky as to get to him in the city of his birth' ... He raised his ten children to be Torah knowledgeable and to do good deeds. Most of them were *Hasidim* of the Ger sect – honest, spiritually complete, and satisfied with their lot. Our father, a scion of R' Shmuel and a son of R' Sholom, was also an ordained Rabbi like most of his brothers, but made a living from commerce. My father was a handsome man, tall, with finely chiseled features, black hair, patted down on his head, ands a brown round beard around his chin, alert, brown eyes, and a constant smile on his lips. Even though his day was taken up with his business, he always set time aside for his children. A particular inclination that he had, was to always find time to help around the house. When he would return from his travels, from Warsaw, we would sit around him, take off his shoes, and we would go draw a warm drink for him from the stove, and our smiling father would kiss us, caress us, and in a mischievous way, bring out the presents. He knew what was needed or desired to each one of us, and my mother would thunder at his profligacy. We had a large family in Warsaw and its environs, a nephew and sisters of my father, and he would constantly be telling us about the big city, the school inside of it, and the Zionism that was at that time on the rise, and similar things. With sadness, he would note the absence of a high school in Zambrow, in which there was no instruction on the Sabbath. It is a source of wonder in my eyes to this day: how could he belong to a *Hasidim shtibl* with these kinds of liberal outlooks? Whenever he had a spare hour, he would be hunched over the *Tanakh*, a page of the *Gemara*, and he would chant in a subdued, sorrowful tone. The rhythm of this intonation became suffused in us during our childhood, and accompanied us into maturity. On the snowy winter nights, he would while away many hours in the *shtibl*, in study and in philosophizing. He was *inter alia*, a *Gabbai* of the *shtibl*, a member of its '*Matzo Shmura*' committee, and treasurer. We recall his High Holy Day melodies, with a serious expression on his face, getting up early – to be among the first of the worshipers. Before he left the house, he would bless us in order of our age: the oldest in their order, and the youngest in theirs. A holy tremor would course through my body, when he would place his spread hands on my head with the quiet prayer in his mouth: 'May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.' By putting pieces of paper in the *Mahzor*, he would indicate to us what we should recite in prayer, and when, but at no time did he ever want to leave us open to confusion, and did not ask 'have you prayed?' He sensed that we were 'progressive,' and grasped the sense of our spirit, despite the fact that never did he ever give us any indication of this, through parental admonition. During festival celebrations, we always had a liveliness in our home, that was expansive, or became expansive: On *Tu B'Shevat,* on *Hanukkah*, *Shavuot* and *Simchat Torah*, or on the celebration day of

the *Rebbe* of Ger – banquets took place at hour home. My father, who only had to taste the wine, immediately would have his eyes sparkle with good fortune, as if he had never once known of any concern for the support of his large family, or from the sorrows of raising children. He would say: Each man is obligated to be content with his lot, to bless the God that gave him the strength to withstand the temptations of the Evil Inclination, and is able to live honestly on whatever it is that his own hands are able to generate, to give charity anonymously, because giving charity publicly is connected with a demonstration of pride, and this – is a bad trait. On *Simchat Torah*, all the worshipers of the *shtibl* would come out in dance into the streets, with a Torah scroll, their eyes shut tight, and their legs in a wondrous light dance, giving the impression they were floating on air, and not touching the ground; their heads are turned heavenward. In these moments of abandonment, of neglect of reality, of sanctity, and spiritual elevation, the world appears to be all good, and it was as if The Holy One Blessed Be He, were looking down upon us, enjoying it, and paying attention. I would stand on the balcony of our home, enchanted and watching. How I loved watching my father from the side, from the other room, when he was bent over a leather-bound book, containing a mass of pages, that appeared to me like the waves of the ocean, that transport you to endless distances. I loved to inhale the odor of the two glass-fronted bookcases full of books, and I would especially search for the volume of the *Mishna,* on whose frontispiece was inscribed the date of birth of each child. He would join us in reading, and tell us about writers and journalists, and we knew them all by heart. On the eve of Sabbath, our table was always set, even to include a guest, and if there was no Sabbath guest from the *shtibl*, my mother would urge him to go look in the White *Bet HaMedrash*, or the Red one, on the chance he might find someone there to invite. My mother was a loyal helpmeet beside him. She was a pleasant woman, tall, pale, with a small nose, a high forehead, and long, blonde hair. She was an only daughter of her parents. Her father, R' Leib Zelazo was an ordained Rabbi, a scion of a scholarly and rabbinic family, who did not rely on their Torah education for a living, but engaged in commerce with forest products and wood. When I made *aliyah* as a young woman, she whispered in my ear, before I got into the wagon: 'remember, my daughter, as the descendant of a family that has more than 30 Rabbis, do not put them to shame.' She lost her father at an early age, and until she married, lived with her mother in Jablonka. She would get up before sunrise, bathe herself, mostly in cold water, even in the wintertime, dress carefully, and pray. After this, she turned her attention to waking up the children, to feed them, and send them off to school. She gave birth to nine children, and up to the war, there were only six of us. Two of the brothers – came in old age, and I left them in Poland being before Bar Mitzvah age. From their letters, I could tell they were gifted with intelligence. My mother was the one who stayed around the house: she was perpetually surrounded by a klatsch of women, and she found some way to help out each of them. Left abandoned, because their husbands had emigrated to America, the Golden Land, they were forgotten, and received no indication of being alive, and she would write letters in her beautiful and poetic style. Her letters were always answered.



Page 509: Avigdor and Alta Greenberg

We lived on the market square (*Rynek*) as neighbors of the Rabbi. Later on, we moved to a different house, beside Zukrowicz, while the store remained in Tykoczinsky's house. My father never once wanted to buy merchandise. My parents moved to live in Zambrow after they were married. The old-timers in the town knew very little about them, but my parents quickly engaged themselves in the life of the community. My mother was a member of the Ladies Society in Zambrow. Their meetings frequently took place in our house, under the direction of Mrs. Gordon, and Mrs. Mark. She was cognizant of all the needy: On the Hubar Street, there was a needy widow, and on the Yatkowa *Gasse* there was a populous family without so much as a slice of bread, and the like. My mother knew of, and remembered them all. On Fridays, several baskets were readied for purposed of distribution. How I loved those missions! I carried this out following all of my mother's directions: before you enter the house, knock on the door, to see if there is anyone in the house, ask on my behalf, and tell that you are leaving this basket, and that your mother will come by to pick it up, and you know my daughter – it is forbidden to shame another person, especially in front of others. Yeshiva students would eat 'days' at our home, On Mondays and Thursdays, they would eat in groups of 8-10 boys. While still early in the morning, my mother would set the table. I will not be embarrassed to say: I envied them, those Yeshiva students. For the midday meal, she would prepare a package for each of them, for their evening meal, since they would not be returning for that third meal of the day. Her reputation spread among the Yeshiva students – the table of Alta Greenberg was famous. My parents lived modestly, without aggrandizement, a characteristic of a large, well-branched out family, doing good deeds in anonymity. As we grew up, we also rebelled. However, in the depths of our hearts, we respected them.

Zambrow was a small town in the Diaspora, and on first glance was not very different from many towns in Poland. However, as a scion of that town, after I had resided in *The Land* for longer than I had resided there – it remained with me as it was then, at the time that I left it, having not changed over time, or been altered by destiny. The life of the city, and that of its people, its environs, roads, the natural scenery that changed with the seasons, remain pleasant within us, and live on in our hearts, and full certain aspects of emotion that are understood only to us. These are aspects of wealth and poverty, of culture and pitfalls, images of both shame and honor. The higher-storied houses on its principal streets, hid behind them, the small houses that were at risk of falling dawn, the workshops, the working people, and the children of the majority of the houses that during snow and freezing days, would go about in small shoes on their feet, and large items of clothing wrapped around their bodies, but they absorbed love and warmth from their homes. And who does not remember our helper, the water carrier with his pails, who, in summer and winter, would fill the

heavy earthenware casks. Who does not recall Dvora the little girl, who was 12 years old, with her outstretched hand? She did this on a scheduled basis: On Tuesday she would receive only wood, and by contrast, on Thursday – only potatoes. [And who does not remember] the washerwomen at the side of the river with hands reddened and swollen from the freezing cold. The large rocks in the marketplace could tell stories that could not be counted. Stories of the bi-weekly market days, that were to provide sustenance for the entire Jewish populace for the other days of the week, amidst their struggles among themselves and with the gentiles. The days of mud and snow, during which no one left the city, and no one came in. Days of explanation on our historical homeland, that were required before the young minds would grasp their meaning. The melodies of 'Between the Tigris and Euphrates,' and '*Tekhezakna*.' Like in a dream, I can remember the two large tears streaming from my mother's eyes, when she learned of the opening of the university on Mount Scopus. That very evening, our father told us about the Land of Israel, about the Balfour Declaration. Two years then went by. On one evening, when he had returned from a trip to Warsaw, he told me that one of the sons of my uncle, whom I did not know, had gone off to engage in training to become a pioneer, and make *aliyah* to the Land of Israel. I did not sleep that night. In my imagination, I saw myself so near to that creative and colorful story that I had heard from my father, and simultaneously – felt so far from it. From that day on, I could find no peace for myself. On one occasion, I got up the nerve, and revealed to my parents that I was going off to find out if we had a chapter of '*HeHalutz*' near us. In passing, I asked: 'What is a *Halutz*?' And so my father took out his *Tanakh,* bound in brown leather, and showed what was written in Joshua 6:13: 'The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord went on continually, and blew the trumpets; and *the armed men went before them...*' It is hard today, to explain to myself what a change and transformation took place in my young mind, after reading this chapter. We always had a teacher for Hebrew and *Tanakh*. But I have the impression that their explanation of the fall of the walls of Jericho became clarified in all its splendor on that evening. Nowadays, when I analyze the meaning of '*HeHalutz*' in my mind, I am struck by how close this concept is to *Hasidism*, how aligned the lofty idea of both were, to overcome many obstacles. Our house was suffused with Zionist ideals, such that on the same day, I felt them to be an organic part of me, and it was then that the transformation came that brought me to Zvi Zamir on the morrow, confused and embarrassed, with the question in my mouth: 'Do we have a *HeHalutz* among us?' But I knew, and replete with confidence, I was able to cite the entire chapter by heart. I received spiritual nourishment at home – it was always open before us: a place for sittings and meetings. I integrated myself from that time on, into the community life and their movements, in the city, especially – in the *HeHalutz* movement. By any measure, Zambrow was a small city, but it had movements from all spectra of the rainbow, as if it were a metropolitan city. Accordingly, all the initiatives would overlap one onto another, taking in an active youth. that knew how to get things done, motivate others, how to divide up and how to unite. Many of the initiatives were on behalf of the Land of Israel. This was done by means of communication, and hard, burdensome work, by means of going door-to-door to gather money by all means, and even on the Eve of Yom Kippur, by placing a collection plate in either the White or the Red *Bet HaMedrash*. I loved sitting in the White *Bet HaMedrash*. It was my impression that the worshipers there were more Zionist than those in the *Red Bet HaMedrash*. In the former, they were more interested and attentive, despite the fact that in both people were always in a hurry, and there was no time to listen. It is possible that I had this impression, because my mother prayed at the White *Bet HaMedrash*. Movie

days, and party evenings, days when emissaries would come from the capitol, from the *HeHalutz* central office, from the Israel Fund. One fund-raiser would come on the heels of another fund-raiser, and there were many preparations to be made, with our house being like a busy hive for the preparation of refreshments, baking of rolls, and all this was done with the consent of our parents and their support, which seemed to us to be in a different world. My mother, my sister Malka, and I, would oversee, and the little ones in the house would act as our helpers. In the organization of our beautiful library, there was no bound to our endeavors: the creation of lists, invitations, the creation and organizing of catalogues, etc. Every new delivery of books, before they were delivered to the library, brought about competition, to read them until daylight broke, or until our father or mother would come into the room and extinguish the light.

My parents knew that I was planning to make *aliyah*, but when I decided to go for training, I fell victim, this for the first time, to a very strong opposition. My father said – you are putting me to shame, and I will not be able to raise my eyes in the *shtibl*. Their pain caused me considerable sorrow and pain, but in the end, they agreed, and upon arriving in Szczuczyn (the training camp was at the village of Dluga near the German border) I learned that our Rabbi and *Rebbetzin*, who was a loyal friend to my mother, wrote a letter to the Rabbi of Szczuczyn, with the request to 'keep an eye on her.'

I never expected that, with my *aliyah* to *The Land*, I would never again see my parents, who were in the prime of life, and my younger brothers, so skilled and handsome. Our entire well-branched family was exterminated. Just my uncles and their sons numbered about 200 people. I was the first to make *aliyah*, and was able to bring my sister Malka, and we both – [brought] our little sister Rivka. The oldest, Rachel, reached *The Land* with her two children, Sholom and Leah (named for my grandfather and grandmother) after the tribulations of the Holocaust, when her husband Shimon Rubin, was murdered at the hand of the Poles, on the day of the liberation of Poland, by the Russians...

The Aliyah of R' Yehoshua Benjamin Baumkuler

(Recorded by Israel Levinsky from the description given by his son)

When my father, R' Yehoshua Benjamin Baumkuler ז"ל, decided to go to the Land of Israel – he came to the *Bet HaMedrash* on the Sabbath, ascended the *Bima*, and announced: I am taking my leave of you, after the forty years during which I have lived amongst you. I will be traveling to take up residence in The Land of Israel. If I owe anyone anything, let him come to me, and I will pay him off. He made this same announcement in all the houses of study and the synagogue.

On the following day, in the morning, Nachman the *Shammes* came and called my father to the Rabbi. What is the matter? Avcheh Frumkin has a complaint: He helped my father to sell his house – and he is owed a commission, even though he was not present at the sale. The Rabbi made a compromise – and my father made the payment [required]. Other small claims materialized. One person came and claimed: it was because of my father that he had to pay a fine because of unsanitary conditions. The Rabbi ruled: if you want to travel to the Land of Israel, without any encumbrances – pay! And so forth. My mother then mixed herself in: what are you doing, you will be left without

so much as a groschen to make a journey to such a faraway place! However, he did not heed her. On one occasion, he deposited his golden watch with the Rabbi. when he did not have the ready resources to make a payment, and one time he even came back from the Rabbi, on a cold day without his fur coat – he had left it with the Rabbi as security.

In the end, he paid out all the people to whom he owed money, and everyone went along to escort my father and mother on their journey to The Land of Israel. He would say, it is better to be in Jerusalem on a Festival Day, when he radiated out of joy, that to be in Zambrow – in a formidable building, with a store full of clothing merchandise.

Benjamin Kagan

He was the son of the Rabbi of Zabludow who married Shlomo Tuvia Sziniak's sister in Zambrow, and took up residence in Zambrow. He was a refined young man, a scholar, and knowledgeable in worldly education. He was an ardent Zionist, and illegal Zionist meetings would take place in his house, and he would fight against the fanaticism of the Rabbi and the *Hasidim*. He was a salt merchant. He emigrated to America in 1924, to Brooklyn, to his children, Hona, Yankl-David, and Michael. His family – was exterminated. His granddaughter Penina Hildebrand saved herself and came to the Land of Israel, this being the daughter of Esther Abkewicz, who had left Warsaw in 1939, and had arrived in Israel after extensive wandering, being in Bet-Shemen, and then moving together with her husband to Kibbutz Kiryat-Yearim, in the Jerusalem corridor.



Page 513: Benjamin Kagan

Yaakov Shyeh Cohen

A scion of Tiktin, Enlightened, and a man of broad acquaintance with the *Talmud*, knowing the *Tanakh*, grammar and the language, also knowing Russian, and a man of good deeds. He ran his own business – an ironmongery, in a sensible way, and successfully. His wife – Malya from Courland, was a relative of the Rabbi, and she too, was Enlightened, to the extent that it was difficult to find a peer to her in the entire area. She was fluent in German literature, read books of poetry and song her entire life, floating in aristocratic circles, and could not acclimatize herself to the provincials in the town. Yaakov Shyeh was respected in the community, his words were heeded, and he was even selected more than once, to serve as the head of the community.

He had two sons: Eli-Mott'l and Asher. Eli-Mott'l was a philanthropic man, studied in Yeshivas, and also absorbed the precepts of Enlightenment, helped his father in the store, the ironmongery, but he also worked with the progressive element of the young people. He was dedicated with his entire heart to the public library, that made available the concepts of the Enlightenment to the masses. He was its librarian, for a number of years, and it was not to receive any prize, and everyone praised him. He married a woman who was the daughter of his uncle, and emigrated to Argentina. Asher – died in Poland, before his time.

The Tzinowicz Family

By Rachel Salutsky-Rosenblum

My father's grandfather, R' Chaim-Hirsch Tzinowicz ז"ל was a righteous man and a scholar. He was engaged in Torah study day and night. After several hours of study in the morning, when he was enfolded in his *Tallit* and *Tefillin*, he would take out shards of pottery from a crack in the ceiling, and put them over his eyes – in order to bring one's day of death to mind. He fasted for intervals, and eat usually after the afternoon prayer. For a while, he studied at the Yeshiva in Zambrow. From much stress, his body was broken, and he died before his time. His wife assumed the burden of making a living for all her life, in the business of manufacturing.

He had four sons: A. R' Shlomo, a wondrous scholar, who spent all his days in Torah study. His son Nachman, who was taken in the bloom of life, was intellectually exceptional, and one of the best of the students at the Lomza Yeshiva. B. R' Joseph-Abraham, who was the headmaster in Ostrow for twenty years, and for the next 35 years – in Lomza, a Rabbi, well schooled, wise and good-hearted, one of the first of the Zionist Rabbis in Poland, devoted to constant study, Enlightened and progressive. C. Noah – A merchant and creator of bleach for washing, lived in Brok and then returned to Zambrow. D. Mott'l – An Enlightened scholarly individual, energetic and lively, a writer of 'requests' and an expert in the law. The farmers of the vicinity would throng to his door, and ask his advice, as if he were a lawyer. He liked to tell the legends of Rabba Bar Bar-Hana, and was a man of humor.

Lipman Slowik

By Kh. B.

Six and seven year-old boys, and even older ones, studied in the *Heder* of Meir Fyvel. From all of the children that were members of this class, one image stands out in my memory, like a contrast to a dark cloud, a boy always chosen by all of the children to be 'the king' of the class. He was a pale, tall boy, who stood straight. His name was Lipman Slowik, the son of R' David Rokaczer. In remembering him, and talking about him, the power of his influence over all of his classmates rises in my mind. It never occurred to anyone to contest his orders, much less what he had to say. It never occurred to anyone to propose anyone else to be 'the king.' I do not recall the source of his influence: his penetrating eyes, his age, his height? – No, and no! It was precisely children of this type that they liked to ostracize and call names. But not Lipman: he did not intimidate with his frail body, and he did not instill fear with a strong hand. His voice was low, and he spoke gently. He was moderate and composed. A pernicious disease subverted his health from early childhood onwards, and it was as if he sensed that he had no time for the distractions of childhood, and therefore behaved like an adult. When he grew up, he learned the art of photography from Gordon, however, death claimed him in the bloom of youth.

Baruch Surowicz

[He was the] son of Ephraim and Fradl, a grandson of Mikhul'keh Finkelstein.

His father was Enlightened, and a modest, taciturn man, son of R' Baruch of Tiktin, who gave his children a secular education, in generous quantity. Baruch studied in a number of *Heders*, and afterwards, in 1912 approximately, entered the high school of M. Krinsky in Warsaw. He did not see any reward from his studies, even though he was an intelligent person. He returned to Zambrow and was one of the leaders of the progressive young people. He possessed a good mood, was alert and prone to action. He had a family home that was exemplary. At the time that all the Jews were taken to Auschwitz, he could have escaped and remained alive, but he went after his child, who had been taken from him to be killed, and he too, was lost. He was 42 years old when he died.

Abraham Rosen

He owned a store of woven goods and a house on the marketplace of the city. His origins were from the vicinity of Ostrolenka, because he was called 'Krup,' this being the name of the farmers that are there. He was the son-in-law of Shlomo Tuvia Sziniak, and brother-in-law of Benjamin Kagan. He had three Enlightened daughters. He was a loner, and tended to keep hidden, and didn't pay much attention, leading to him being branded as a miser. But people erred in this assessment. He was a wondrous scholar, Enlightened, completely fluent in modern literature, astronomy and mathematics – but he didn't want to be visible, and only few of his closest relatives knew his real worth. The books that he had in his bookcase, among the volumes of the *Shas* and *Poskim*, among the books of the Enlightenment and science – could be found to be full of ideas and explanations, and references to other sources. And all this became known.... after he died. His young daughter, Sarah, being of good intellect and also Enlightened, was active in *Tze'irei Tzion*, a member of its Committee, and dreamt of going to Israel her entire life.

Elyeh Rudniker-Goren

No personal community initiative ever took place in which he did not have a hand, and in which he wasn't one of those putting in an effort. He came from the Rudnik territory, where his father Ber'cheh came from, who was the land agent. Elyeh was tall, handsome, an Enlightened man and a man of ideas. If a dispute erupted between partners, of a family quarrel came to light, or like matters – Elyeh Rudniker was the one who intervened and restored the peace. He was the only arbitrator in court cases and disputes, and was successful in finding a compromise, and a way of preserving the honor and tranquility of the opposing parties. He loved to visit the sick, and fill them with good tidings, and occasionally with deeds. When the cholera epidemic erupted in the city, and the flour mill of Moshe Schribner was configured to be a hospital for those infected with the disease – Elyeh Rudniker was among the leading organizers of first aid. He was among the excellent masseurs, who took his life into his hands in order to perform massages, and the delivery of all manner of help to the sick, paying no mind to the possibility that he might personally contract the disease and be laid low. He was the firstborn son of a firstborn, and he know the secret of

'whispering,' and because of this, he was summoned to the ill, especially children, who appeared to have been struck by The Evil Eye – to remove all sickness from them. He had a difficult time making a living, in a partnership in a factory that produced soda water and *kvass*, and he was an agent for ship tickets to the United States, for those traveling illegally, meaning those who were compelled to leave the borders of Russia because of political harassment, compulsory military service, etc. Because of this, he was once seized, and was punished by the régime by being 'exiled' to the town of Sokolov. But even there, he didn't hide his hand, and engaged faithfully in community affairs. After the First World War, he returned to Zambrow, and during the time of Polish hegemony, once again, immersed himself in community affairs. There was a *Gemilut Hasadim* Bank in Zambrow, that supported the granting of small loans to small-scale merchants, craftsmen, in order to enable them to buy merchandise, or work materials, and to sell their goods on fair days and in the markets. However, the bank was perpetually short of funds, because of the plethora of loans that the needy required, and Elyeh Rudniker would literally pass over all of the doors of those that had means, to gather donations, both small and large, for the benefit of the *Gemilut Hasadim* Bank. And on Saturday night, once again, the needy would enter his home, to begin with the wish for 'a good week,' and Elyeh would allocate the small loans, take in notes, and turn a blind eye on those occasions when their were loans due according to their notes, in order to 'aid to the poor.' And he had yet another endearing quality: he was concerned about the Jewish soldiers, and arrangements to have them accepted into Jewish homes during Festivals, or to organize a separate kitchen for them.

He was assisted in this work by Yankl-David the *Hasid,* the son of the Gać shoemaker.

He was a lover of Zion and a member of '*Mizrahi.*' He urged the young people to make *aliyah* to The Land. He did not permit his son, David, to travel to his brothers in Argentina. He waited, and said to him, 'Your time will come to make *aliyah* to the Land of Israel, and you will build there, and make *aliyah* with me'. In the last years, his fortunes declined. He was one of those who worked on automotive transportation between Ostrow and Bialystok, by way of Zambrow, Rutki, or by way of Wysokie-Mazowieckie, Sokoly. However, the Polish authorities confiscated the rolling stock, and transferred it to the P.K.P. (the railroad authority), and Elyeh and his partners were left with no way to earn a living. His son, Dov, made *aliyah* to the Land of Israel during *Aliyah Bet*. However, he was unable to get his father there along with him. Together with the holy Rabbi, he too was taken, at a time when he was over seventy, and taken away to an unknown place in a freight truck, from which he never returned... He was killed in the *aktion* near Szumowo together with the Rabbi.

Dr. Joseph Feinzilber

He was the youngest of the three brothers: Yochanan, Chaim and Joseph. He ran away from home, with the help of his teacher, R' Israel Levinsky ז"ל, to Odessa, and he worked and studied there. He was not particularly gifted, but he had a strong will to learn. He struggled in Odessa for many years, until he got his diploma in university study of medicine. He completed his studies during the First World War, at the time that the Germans occupied the Ukraine – returning to Zambrow, and practiced there as a Doctor of Medicine. He fell ill with typhus, and his weakened body succumbed...

Lighting Candles of the Spirit[260]

By Chaya Kossowsky

At this time, let me light several candles of the spirit to my parents, my sister, also my brother and friends, all who dreamed of reaching The Land, whether living at home, or in the process of training, some in the military, and others in battle along with the partisans. They dreamed and fought, dreamed and fought, about the enchanted land that they did not reach. They dreamed, and are no more....

My grandfather Zalman Kossowsky, was one of the founding elders of the city. His building, made of concrete – in the center of the square, contained the police station, stores, and residences. His manufacturing store was known in the entire area.

My father, Israel, his firstborn son, was not drawn to commerce. Rather, he showed talent for the law, and was expert in the law and its regulations. People would come from near and far to seek his counsel, to clarify issues concerning inheritance, commercial transactions, matters of distress, overstepping, etc., etc. In a number of instances, when there were land disputes between villagers, my father would travel, do measurements, and set boundaries, and all the interested parties heeded him, and accepted his judgment. People streamed to him, for the preparation of applications on their behalf to the ruling official, or the head of government, the supreme court, and the like, and in many cases, for lack of ability – he did not want to take a fee for his effort. His penmanship was exemplary in its beauty, and he was a Zionist – but did not believe in the concept of a *Halutz*. He was opposed to my brother Aryeh, making *aliyah* to The Land. He found it difficult when I left, the daughter he loved most. 'If you are making aliyah to The Land,' he said – 'it is a sign that I also will follow you there.' My father was beloved by all of the people in the city – no one dared to challenge my father: they accorded him the respect due to a learned Jewish man. During the last Russian occupation – he worked as a financial auditor.



Page 516: Berl Ptaszewicz, and his wife, who were buried alive by the Nazis, in the village of Szumowo, in August 1941.

My mother, Esther, was a scion of Lithuania, the daughter of a wealthy family, aristocratic, a refined soul, and indulged. She acclimated herself to her constrained life, and educated me to be independent and to be oriented to work. She was

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260 A metaphor, for what we have come to know as a Yahrzeit candle.

knowledgeable in Hebrew, and urged me to affiliate with a youth movement.

I am indebted to *my brother Yitzhak* for being able to make *aliyah* to The Land. It was he who influenced my father to send his little sister to receive training and then make *aliyah*. He was both active, and alert to the concerns of the *kibbutz*, and worked a lot for *HeHalutz*. He studied a lot of Hebrew and also general knowledge, and was a living, walking encyclopedia – to the point that the Polish students and officers would stand amazed and unmoving – before his extensive knowledge. He wanted to make aliyah, but could not because of military treasons. The movement itself also detained him: they needed him.

At the outbreak of the war, he was in the Polish army. From the time he returned home, after the retreat of the army – he too worked in the accounting administration, under the oversight of the Russian authorities. After this, he went over to the partisans... and was lost.

My brother Moshe was a revolutionary in his ways. He studied at the Polish gymnasium and excelled. However, as a consequence of the open anti-Semitism – he decided to abandon his studies, to study carpentry. My father objected with all his might, and wanted him to complete his gymnasium studies, but he held his ground. He joined '*HeHalutz HaTza'ir*' and he was the light of the group. He moved to Warsaw. He wanted to travel to Bolivia, and from there to the Land of Israel. The household members opposed him, and he remained in Poland. He entered the Polish army, suffered for being a Jew, and was severely punished for his resistance and rebellion against anti-Semitism. Despite all this – he excelled in the army, and even received promotions. He attempted to leave Poland, my uncle in America undertook to send him an invitation – but the war broke out, and he remained stuck in the ghetto. He fled that location, and hid himself as a Christian. Riding on a horse, and having grown a mustache, he would steal into the ghetto, and bring sacks of food for his relatives. However, it appears he was killed by Poles...

My sister Yenta was the oldest in the house. She assisted my mother and us. She was educated and loved to do community work. she loved literature, music, and dreamed of making *aliyah* to The Land, and to change her name....

My brother Zalman belonged to *HeHalutz HaTza'ir*. He studied a trade at a place that was considered Enlightened, that our father had already consented to – times had changed. In the year 1938, he wanted to make *aliyah* as part of *Aliyah Bet*. It is perhaps my fault that he did not come at that time: I wrote home – to shed some light on the difficult events that had overtaken me and my brother Aryeh at Bet-Shemen – indicating that this younger brother should continue to stay with parents, and concentrate on his studies, and then the war broke out. During the war, he was among the partisans, and rose to be the head of a division. He knew no fear, and not once put his life in danger, and prevailed. He was full of confidence that he would stay alive. When the city and its environs were destroyed, he saw himself as the last of the Jews. He was able to joke, even while being in the shadow of death: After the war [he said], they will put me in a museum – a survivor. He was captured and taken to Auschwitz. He died of dysentery – because of malnutrition and unsanitary

food. Koszczawa, a scion of our city, was with him to the last minute, and he even was able to convey his last words to me...
Let me put a limit to what I have to day... this concluded the tribute to our family. Let me now light a number of candles to the memory of friends.
Male and female friends. Who will count them?

My female friends of the neighborhood: Feiga Sosnowiec, Lieb'cheh Granica, Civia Tykoczinsky, Chaya-Faygl Dzenchill, others, and others...

My male and female friends of the movement: Kanowicz, Litewka, Ratuszewicz, Lakhovar, Stupnik, Ukrainczyk, Zisk, Krulik, Chaimsohn, others, and others...

My male and female classmates: Peszka Furmanowicz, Rothberg, Kozacky, Gittl Zisk, Shayn'tzeh, others and others.... young and good, pursuers of what is good and just, [taken] before they could taste life, enveloped in hope for the future.

Chaya-Faygl Dzenchill – was planning to make *aliyah* after training at Częstochowa. Peszka Furmanowicz, came of age in the Bialystok *kibbutz*, and was among the first of the fighters in the Warsaw Ghetto.

All held out much promise to their people, their families, They were exemplars of a budding younger generation, that passes by the camp and offers a salute. All were prematurely cut down...

May my words serve as a Memorial Candle to glorify their souls.

Work & Industry

מלאכה ותעשיה

ארבעט און אינדוסטרי



Page 520: (Top, Left):Isaac Koziol the Baker



Page 520: (Top, Right):Moshe-Aharon Bednowicz (The Builder)



Page 520: (Bottom): Abraham Moshe the Mortician, with his wife and Grandchildren, Chaim ben-Dor

Small-Scale Industry in Zambrow

Today [after the Holocaust] the Poles pride themselves on the level of industrialization in Zambrow. The barracks have been transformed into a large kerchief factory. It was here, that hundreds of kerchief weaving machines were dragged from the Jewish kerchief industry in Bialystok, and in bringing them, built up an enormous kerchief factory employing hundreds of workers. The new train line, Czerwony-Bór – Zambrow conveys raw materials, and takes away finished goods.

At one time, without the involvement of the government, and with their own primitive methods, often with the resistance of the authorities, a small-scale Jewish industry grew in Zambrow.

The Jewish steam mills purchased grain from the peasantry, and distributed sacks of flour to the surrounding cities.

Jewish windmills in both borders of the city, on the Ostrow Road (Moshe Schribner) and on the Bialystok-Cieciorki Road (Leib'keh Millner, Abraham Schwartzbard), would turn in the wind, and grind the grain for the peasants.

Jewish kasha mills, smaller ones, larger ones, would bang away in the early morning hours grinding kasha, buckwheat, oats, tillage produce, etc. The kasha would go from Moshe Kashemakher,[261] from Abraham Tzedek, to the train, to Tyszowce and from there, further on.

Jewish oil makers pressed and squeezed oil from flax seeds for the entire vicinity. Shmulkeh Cohn squeezed oil, Hona Wierzbowicz fabricated oil, as did Joel Gershonovich, Meir Yankl's son-in-law, and Yossl Cohen.

Yoss'l Cohen would also 'burn' pitch. Every summer, gypsy caravans would come from Hungary, and buy up the pitch.

Kvass and soda-water were fabricated by: Chaim Velvel Tyszkewicz with Dov'cheh Smoliar, Leibusz, and later Leibusz'icheh Levinsky, and others.

Years ago, the Jews distilled whiskey, and dealt with the spirit merchants of Cieciorki and other nearby villages.

Jews of Zambrow fabricated bricks, and to this end, Shlomkeh Blumrosen and Danziger built a large brick works in Gardlin, on the road to Bialystok. Abraham Schwartzbard also built himself a brick kiln on the Cieciorki Road. Everyone around then built their houses out of these Jewish bricks.

The dyeing plants in Zambrow were a substantial undertaking. It was the Jewish dyeing houses who would do the dyeing for the peasants.

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261 The text does not clarify whether this was a formally adopted name, or a 'trade name' of someone who engaged in preparing kasha.

And so, Jews, with Berusz Krida at their head, built a dyeing plant – the *Polosz*, beside the river, not far from the bridge. There, machines clanked away, and there was a constant stream of raw materials coming in, with wool, etc. Gershon Srebrowicz, Koczak from Jablonka and others [were involved]. After the First World War, it passed to the Pravda brothers – these were nouveau riches, and very diligent people. The gentiles from all sides would bring their skeins of linen to be combed and dyed.

The Zambrow shoemakers would provide between 70-80% of the boots for the entire area. More than 20 shoemakers would sew cheap and military grade boots. The same was true of tailors and hat makers.

The Three Flour Mills

A. Meir Zelig Grajewsky



Page 524: Chaim Yagoda the Smith, with his brother Hona-Leibl and sisters Fruma and Rachel, at the tombstone of their mother.

Grajewsky was one of the ones who enabled the expansion of the limits of the city, and the growth of the Jewish community. R' Meir Zelig hailed from Grajewo. He came to Zambrow full of vigor and ambition. He surveyed the market days and the fairs in the city, and he found that the farmers bring a surfeit of grain, wheat and rye, and that there is a way to exploit this it the best of all ways: to built a modern flour mill near the city, that will accept this surfeit of grains to be milled, and to then supply the entire vicinity with flour. Flour came here from far distances, and there was the potential for a local flour mill to capture the flour market. Windmills, called '*wietraken*' ground small amounts of flour, and it was coarse, and not properly sifted of rough particles. When the notion of the construction of such a steam-driven flour mill ripened in his mind, Grajewsky looked around the area, and found the Ostrowo Road, on the right, over the river, suitable to his purpose.

A man of action, imbued with a good commercial sense, he succeeded in organizing funds that were derived from cash on hand, and the remainder through loans of varying tenor, and he constructed a steam-driven mill that was pleasant in appearance, and whose millstones pounded away day and night. The farmers inundated the market with grains, and tens of Jews, family men, found a handsome living from this: they bought sacks of grain from the farmer, returned, and brought them, at a small profit

to the flour mill, and Grajewsky paid them handsomely, in cash, and notes, and from a number of merchants he even did this on contingent payment.

B. Ze'ev Goldin

When the Jews saw that Grajewsky had created a gold mine – they grew jealous of him. And one, Ze'ev Goldin, from Ostrow-Mazowiecki or some other city, came to Zambrow, with a sum of money in hand, and he set up a mill right across from Grajewsky, on the left side of the road, this being a steam-driven flour mill that was even more modern, with newer machinery imported from Germany, with an electrical transformer, etc., etc. The competition was great. The number of grain merchants in the city grew, and their income became even more secure: whatever Grajewsky would not buy, Goldin would, and vice versa. Farmers from quite a distance, close to Lomza, or Ostrow – planned to delay their travel to reach the Zambrow market day, because they knew they could sell their grain easily, and for a good price. Grajewsky and his three sons: Shaul (Saul), Noah and Abba, could not withstand the competition, and the shortfalls grew and debts got larger. Grajewsky married off his eldest son Shaul to the daughter of a very rich man from Radom, R' Yankelewsky, who invested his large and substantial dowry into the business, but it didn't help much. This persisted until one day, on a Friday toward sunset, when Grajewsky was out of the city, a fire broke out, and his mill was entirely consumed in flames. Grajewsky got the insurance money from two Russian companies, and from a third French company, and emerged unscathed from the business, and he was left with yet a substantial sum of money...

Goldin's flour mill stayed in business for some time. 'Goldin's Mill' had quite a reputation in the city. From time to time, Goldin expanded his facilities: he put up one building after another, improved, and renovated, and lived well in the residence that he constructed beside the mill. Tens of families made their living thanks to the flour mill, and about twenty Jewish employees worked inside it.

For a while, a competitive shadow, in the form of a German gentile, whose name was Pfeiffer, stood in his way, as we shall see later on. But Pfeiffer's mill burned down one night at the end of the summer, and once again, Goldin remained again as the only one in business, and dominated it with force.

As Goldin grew old, and his sons did not want to continue in his business, he sold the mill to Meir ben Mordechai Aharon Meisner. Meisner, a handsome Jewish man, of good disposition, progressive, even though he was no big expert – sold off his clothing store, that he had owned on the corner of the 'Wodna' *Gasse*, beside the marketplace of Mr. Gottleib. He took on several junior partners, and among them one of the manages of the workplace, the son-in-law of Alter Somowicz, and they made some renovations and improvements to the mill, paved the road that connects the mill to the Royal Highway, and the flour – developed quite a reputation throughout the length and breadth of Poland. During the course of several years, the mill passed through a number of hands, and its partners changed. However, the revenue stream from it was very steady, and it was always a source of income to residents of the city.

C. Pfeiffer's Mill

Pfeiffer was a German gentile, who, it appears, was sent here by his government as a spy. He started out – with a modern Prussian bakery, run by machinery, which he first put up on [*Ulica]* Kosciolna beside the house of R' Mendl Rubin. When the revenues and the farmers increased, during market days, the number of people coming to buy bread from him would grow as well – as a result of this, he set up a large flour mill, run by water. To accomplish this, he was able to acquire a parcel of land outside the city for quite cheap, near the horse market, where the Zambrow River comes to an end. He brought an engineer and an expert from Germany, and that one planned to raise the level of the river, and put a large and wide dam across it. The surplus of water trapped behind the dam, would course through the channels of the dam, and noisily descend like a waterfall, and their force would turn the millstones. The dam was called '*Der Stav*.' Using water power, Pfeiffer was able to eliminate the costs of oil, and he was able to compete in the market in the sale of flour. His operation was also a clean one, and his flour – of the finest. Pfeiffer was an old bachelor, and enjoyed wiling his time away in pleasures, keeping company with the Jews, and he had an open hand when it came to assisting the indigent. In several fund-raising initiatives by the community, he too would participate, and not only once did he donate sacks of flour to charitable institutions.

The business manager was one named Kaspar. He also was a German by birth, handsome, tall, and he had the face of a Teutonic Knight. Kaspar ran the flour mill, and also led the bakery and the sale of bread. He took part in the general community life, and was the Vice Chairman of the Fire Fighters (the Chairman was his neighbor, Skarzynski, the Polish pharmacist). Since Pfeiffer had no heirs, the flour mill and the bakery passed into the hands of Kaspar. A short time later, on one of the nights of Tishri or Heshvan, a fire broke out, and even though the flour mill stood beside water, it was totally consumed. The dam continued to do its work for many years afterwards – beside the burned and destroyed flour mill – and the water continued to flow and fall with force and loud sound. When the First World War broke out, Kaspar was suspected of espionage on behalf of Germany, and together with a number of other German families in the vicinity, like Kaufman, the Dog Killer ('*Koyfman der Rocker*') and others were exiled to the interior of Russia.

D. The Windmills (Wietraken)

For many years, several windmills turned on the Ostrowo and Bialystok Roads, whose four huge sails, in the form of a cross, would move for periods of time. They were owned by Jews, and they were: Moshe Schribner, on the Ostrowo Road, and [Meir] Zelig [Grajewsky], the Miller on the Bialystok Road. These mills served for decades in providing both coarse and fine flour to the farmers, and also served as way stations, and a place of shade to strollers on the Sabbath, we went out of the city to get a breath of fresh air. During the time of the cholera epidemic, the mill of Moshe Schribner was converted to a first aid station. The sick were brought there, and here they got help, and from here, the dead were brought to their burial.

Craftsmen



Page 526: *A Meeting of the Zambrow Society in New York. In the center is Mr. Louis Pav, President.*

It is interesting to note the place occupied by craftsmen starting from the beginning of the city. Among the *Gabbaim* in the synagogue was Chaim the Tailor, from the Kosziuszko *Gasse*. Among the prominent *Gabbaim* of the *Chevra Kadisha* was Mendl Rubin, the Hatmaker, and Moshe-Zelik the Hatmaker. The Torah reader in the synagogue was Binyom'keh *Schuster*. Later on, his son Alter performed this role. Among those who led services were: in the synagogue, Alter the Smith; in the White *Bet HaMedrash* – David the Wagon Driver, Moshe-Zelik the Hatmaker, and Chaim Kalman the Butcher; in the Red *Bet HaMedrash* – Fyvkeh the Shoemaker, Abraham *Schneider*. Among the cantor's choir singers – tailors and shoemakers. Yudl *Shokhet* has two such singers on the High Holy Days: Yankl *Hittlmakher*, and Jekuthiel *Katzav*. The Shoemaker from Gać and his sons, all shoemakers, were the leaders of the *Hasidim* of Sokolov. One of them, Yankl David the Shoemaker, was the ombudsman and provider for all the Yeshiva students. On the Yatkowa *Gasse*, was Ber'cheh's wooden house, where the *Schuster* Rabbi R' Abraham Shlomo lived. He was a shoemaker for his entire life, a scholar and an observant Jew. Among the *Gabbaim* in the *Hasidim-shtibl* were Herschel *Czeszliar*, the father of Yeshea the *Melamed*, Moshe Aharon *Mulyar*, Mysh'keh *Fischer,* and others. In charitable institutions, and later on in political parties, the craftsmen took the lead.

Opinions about the cantor, an interpretation of a preacher's sermon, an idea about the study that took place in the *Bet HaMedrash,* was offered only by the working class Jews, the craftsmen. Every day, you could hear the stirring in the street: the rising of these decent manual laborers to say their morning prayers, to get in a 'day's worth' of Psalms, and sometimes also a page of the *Gemara*. Between afternoon and evening prayers, they would fill up the long tables in the *Bet HaMedrash*, and engage in study.

The Jewish Proletariat in Zambrow

By Lejzor Pav
(New York)

Zambrow had no factories. There was only one steam-driven flour mill in operation, and employed about ten Jewish and gentile workers, and later on the dyeing plant. From time-to-time, a small oil processing facility would arise, from which a blind horse, and an oil worker and a couple of workers would derive their sustenance, there were several small *kvass* and soda water factories, where an owner and his wife and children, together with a couple of relatively cheap extra hired hands, worked during the season, in the hot summer months.

Despite this, Zambrow had a fine working class. On Saturday, before nightfall, the '*Pasek*' was full – this was the center of promenade in Zambrow – the Ostrowo Road, this way, until the iron bridge on one side, and the Bialystok Road – literally as far as the brick works on the other side: Jewish workers, the mature adults and students, masters and apprentices, dressed in their Sabbath finery, with their wives and children, with their loved ones and friends, walked about in a pleasant manner, and inhaled the fresh air of the Sabbath day of rest.

There was no lack of women workers: tailors and seamstresses, stocking makers, wig makers, 'salesladies' in the stores, cooks, servant girls, who would meet with their young men, who were makers of galoshes, apprentice tailors and shoemakers, drivers and smiths, bakers and cabinetmakers, and would get together to heartily pass the time together on the nice and one free day of the week.

In time, all of these 'proletarians' and 'lamplighters' united, and organized themselves into professional unions, strengthened their economic positions, declared themselves to be professional and socially oriented, with each affiliating with a political party, began to read books, a newspaper, signed up for workers education courses, and participating in partisan discussions.

It was in this manner that a nice Jewish proletarian class lived and developed, in the little *shtetl* of Zambrow – which had no factories and didn't mass produce anything. If a speaker arrived from somewhere or another – the hall was packed with hangers on, and party members on one side, and with opposition on the other side. In the *shtetl*, there was roiling and tumult – but Jewish Zambrow was tranquil...

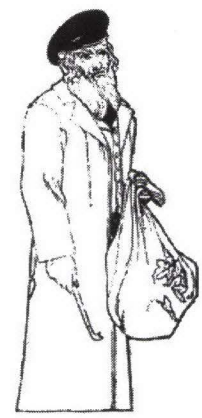
The communists, in Poland today, boast of the fact that Zambrow is an industrial center, where thousands of workers are employed in textile factories, which had been liquidated in the former Jewish towns around Bialystok, and their machinery was transplanted in Zambrow. Machines clank away on the grounds of the former barracks, with smoke and soot belching from factory chimneys, and the song of workers are carried – but not ours! The voice of the Jewish workers from the quiet, not-industrialized Zambrow was cut off and permanently silenced. Their heirs, not local people, often times with blood on their hands, now make a living in Zambrow.

R' Tuvia Skocandek (The Candle Maker)

A scion of Jedwabne – he married the daughter of R' Moshe Hersh Cohn Slowo. He inherited the name 'Candle Maker' from his father-in-law who engaged in candle making, especially *yahrzeit* candles from inedible fat. He was short in stature, self-effacing in his demeanor, entirely holy, being always at one with his Creator. He did not engage in making a living – this was the work of his wife. He sunk his entire being into the study of Torah, and was not distracted into conversations about secular matters. He was a handsome man, with curly side locks, and sunk in his own thoughts. The synagogue was his steady place to be. Early in the morning, upon arising, he would study at home. His sweet voice captivated souls. The sing-song of Gemara study broke from his house, into the heart of the night, and carried for distances. His second station was the synagogue itself. Prayer went on for hours, and when he returned, he would eat a piece of bread, in the manner of a Righteous Saint. Those who were ill would turn to him to remove 'the evil eye' from them. In the evenings, at the White *Bet HaMedrash*, he would sit with tens of the *balebatim*, and craftsmen, at the side of a table, with a copy of the *Mishna* in their hands, and he would teach them, and explain a chapter, utilizing all the commentaries. Complete silence reigned around the table. His explanations enchanted the soul, and attracted listeners. He was held in esteem by all his students, by virtue of his integrity, the goodness of his heart, and the faith that was attached to it. He did not engage in politics. It was even difficult to engage him within his own family. It was only the give-and-take of Talmudic casuistry and argument, that would bring him out of his reverie. He was fastidious in all his manners. In the wintertime, he would go to the river, and in the most extreme cold, he would immerse his body and bathe in the water. In the year 1930, when I came home for a visit from the Land of Israel, the entire family gathered in my grandfather's home. I sang songs from The Land, and he sat for the entire time, focused and listening, and his entire being was suffused with joy, and his face shone. He communicated his desire to make *aliyah*, and took an interest in the condition of religious observance there. He joined the supporters of the *Mizrahi*, and contributed to them.

However, the righteous R' Tuvia, the man of integrity and modesty, was not privileged to achieve the ambit of his desire. He even did not have the privilege of dying a natural death. He was one of the first of the martyrs of Zambrow.

Elinka



Page 529: An Untitled Line Drawing

Elinka was one of the more attractive personalities that became endeared to the community. He originally came from Jablonka. He dressed as one of the simple folk, with a large *Tallit-Katan* under his kaftan, and a broad hat of velvet on his head. He constantly had a small sack thrown over his shoulder. He was of average height, a split white beard, with pleasant, dreamy eyes. I never once saw him get angry, and never once saw him idle. He would cover all of the villages on a daily basis, to sell needles. the farmers saw his countenance as that of a man of God, and they would entreat him: *Rabbin* Elinka, go and tread on our fields and may you leave

God's blessing there, because every place that you walk becomes a holy place! He would always walk alone, lost in his own thoughts, with his lips whispering from the Psalms which he knew by heart. He would rise early, pray '*Vatikin*'[262] study a chapter of the *Mishna,* come home for a morning repast, and set out to the villages. Periodically, he would return from there, with a quarter of corn grain over his shoulder, that one of the farmers would have sold to him cheaply, or compensated him in kind for his merchandise. In the city, he was regarded as one of the '*Lamed-Vov*' righteous men. It would be said of him – 'He is a secret Righteous Man.' He would fast at intervals during the Ten Days of Repentance – sitting in fast until evening. He was a reliable man, and one time his wife made an error, and poured fuel oil into a plate of potatoes, that was on the table, instead of edible oil. 'There is nothing bad in this,' he said: 'whoever said that edible oil to impart a good taste, he will also say this to the fuel oil, and if The Holy One, Blessed Be He wants it to be so – I most certainly will not come to any harm! He then proceeded to eat it, and nothing happened to him. He educated his sons in Torah, to work, and to perform acts of charity, In old age, he resided with his son-in-law, Abraham'l ben David Velvel Golombek. His daughter, Chaya Elinka's looked after him with great love, and his son-in-law showed him great respect. So long as Elinka will be with us – the simple folk would say – no evil will befall us.

My Father R' Moshe Aharon the Builder (Mulyar/Bednowicz)

By Chaim Bendor



Page 530: Chaim Bendor

It is appropriate, in my view, to begin with a few lines concerning the origins and childhood of my father ל"ז, not only as a firmament for describing his personality, but also as an extension to the description of the life of Jews in the towns of that time. (see his portrait on p. 520).

My father ל"ז, was born – according to my calculation – in the year 1850, in Wysokie Mazowieckie – close to Zambrow, or in its vicinity – in a village or on an estate – to his father Baruch Yitzhak, who was leased a brick works, from which he derived only a meager living. My father was the youngest of the family. I knew of two of my father's brothers, the older – Israel Hirsch, who also lived in Zambrow during my days there, and was the overseer of the firing of the bricks at the brick works of R' Shlomo Blumrosen; the second – Issachar, who was a ritual slaughterer and meat inspector in Wysokie, an ardent Jew, of pleasant disposition; and a sister, Miriam Mindl, who it seems was the oldest. I know only a little about the childhood and youth of my father, and even this little I happened to overhear by chance, and garnered from snippets of conversation. It was in this way, that I once heard from him, that his brother-in-law used to carry him as a child to the city, to *Heder*, in a sack thrown over his shoulder, especially on the cold winter days. This was an indication that his father did not have the means to send him in a separate wagon, from the village where they lived, to the city. On one Saturday night, a conversation ensued among us about birdcalls. My father

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262 One who recites the *Shema* just before sunrise and then prays *Amida* with the sunrise is said to have prayed *"Vatikin"*; the sages praised this practiced in no uncertain terms.

told me about the various birdcalls that he heard, while walking through the thick forest all night. He came to this forest, after his *Bar Mitzvah* year, when he had left the home of his parents and 'exiled himself' to a place of Torah study (I think it was Biala). With one shirt, and one meal in his left hand, and a staff he carved by himself in his right, he went the entire long distance on foot, a walk that took several days, to reach the destination of his choosing. How many years did he spend in this Torah study pace, and in other such Torah study places? How did he support himself there, and when did he return home? – I do not know.

He took a wife from a good family in Sokolov, near Siedlice, she being my mother ע"ה Sima (in his letters to her, when he was outside of the city, he wrote her name as Sima, but also sometimes as Cima) of the Tenenbaum family (she died on 11 Tevet 5692 [December 21, 1931] after having a life of sixty-two years with my father). My mother's father – Shimon Tenenbaum – leased a fish pond. Also regarding this family, all I know is that it was related to the *Rebbe*, R' Elimelech of Sokolov. Both my mother's brother in Sokolov and her brother in Wysokie has sons named Elimelech (Melech). It is possible that among the four brothers I had, who died before I was born, there was also one with this name, but it was not the custom to speak of those whose lives ended before their time (of the twelve children that my mother bore for my father, my mother ע"ה, would occasionally recollect her son 'Berish'l,' her favorite, who died in his Bar Mitzvah year. At times like this, my father would look into her face with his soft eyes, both threatening and pleading at the same time, as of to say: 'don't you know that one does not speak of sons that God has given and God has taken away, and do not open your mouth...' Immediately, my mother would fall silent, with a deep sigh.

After they married, my parents lived in 'Wysokie' and my father attempted to engage in commerce. On one occasion, he lost all that he possessed as a result of a bad event. He had invested his capital in goods, that was transported to him in a hired wagon. On the way, the wagon-driver was 'attacked' and they 'took' all the merchandise from him, without leaving so much as a trace. When this bad news reached him, he traveled to Lomza – the provincial capital, to see if it might be possible to salvage 'something,' but he returned empty-handed, just as he had come there. On his return by way of the Wysokie-Zambrow road, the wagon driver stopped to rest and feed his horse. This pause took place on the street of the synagogue, that leads to the way to get to the horse market. Across from them – near the place where, in our time, stood the house of Cybulkin (that is, after the First Great Fire in the town), a large wooden house was built at that time. My father, ז"ל stood there – with a heavy heart, looking at the house being built there. The owner walked over to him, this being one of the founders of the city, R' Shmuel Wilimowsky, faced him [and said]: 'why are you standing and just looking, are you perhaps a brick maker and you are thinking of setting up your ovens here?' 'Yes' the answer fell from the mouth of my father, as if it was forced out of him against his will, and he immediately regretted it. The homeowner would not let him go, and worked on him over and over again to quote his price, and my father was embarrassed to reveal the truth and attempted to change the subject, but to no avail – having no way out, my father quoted him a price, by prevailing standards, and the latter immediately consented (it later became evident that the price drove my father to this goal). in the meantime, the wagon-driver came up to them, and started to bug my father, because the hour of departure had arrived. And so, my father parted company from the homeowner, and the latter reminds him that in a few more weeks, the house will become the center for the work of ovens. When he returned to his city, he told his father and he did not have any luck in trying to salvage anything of his assets, and he continued by adding: 'I really don't know what's going on with

me. As I went through Zambrow, I fell victim to silliness and I am ashamed of it even for myself,' and my father went on to explain the incident in Zambrow. My grandfather proceeded to comfort him: 'What's all the worry? Did you cause anyone harm, God forbid? On the contrary – maybe something will come of it?' On the following day, once again, his talk returned to this issue, and to the issue of making a living in general: 'If I had any idea of some sort about building, I would return to Zambrow and 'set up' such ovens there.' Grandfather opened by saying: 'And what are your thoughts about this? That you think this is so sort of profound skill! Involving esoteric concepts? Take up a hammer in your hand, and a little at a time, take apart the oven in my house – after all, it is summer now – and you will gain an understanding of this great wisdom.' Together, they began to dismantle the oven, one brick after another, and my father learned and understood what went on in the interior, and began to restore it to its original condition. In the proper time, he returned to Zambrow, and completed his work with great success. Immediately, his reputation as a consummate craftsmen spread, and work was offered to him from all sides. And it was in this way that he came to take up permanent residence in Zambrow. It is known, that after the First Great Fire, he rebuilt the entire city almost entirely out of brick, in contrast to the remaining towns in the vicinity where homes were largely constructed of wood. Several times, I heard my mother add to my father's words: that her father in Sokolov did not know about this 'transformation' for a long time. One time, he came to visit them. Immediately upon entering, he said: 'it is almost an hour that I am looking for your house. Every Jewish person I encountered said: 'We do not know any Moshe Aharon a Merchant, but we do know Moshe Aharon the Builder,' and showed me his residence, and my eyes now tell me they were right. Upon hearing this, my mother burst into intense weeping, and he (her father) calmed her with the words: 'Why are you crying, my daughter? Had I heard them refer to Moshe Aharon the Thief, of Moshe Aharon the Swindler, you would then have cause to be ashamed and cry, but Moshe Aharon is making a living from the work of his own hands, and he is therefore an honor and not an object of shame.'

His reputation as a 'master builder' also spread outside of our town. He received from the government – I don't know exactly when, or on what basis – this previously mentioned 'title' and all that comes with it. He was invited not only to build government buildings, but also to pave bridges with brick stones. I remember the construction of a large bridge of this kind, and the work got delayed to such an extent, that it did not stop even during the cold winter days. The mortar, that used to warm him was frozen in his hands. More difficult than this, was provision of kosher food for the Jewish workers, who worked with him, and were received as guests in the homes of the farmers in the nearby village. I remember my oldest brother, Nachman Ze'ev – one of my father's sons that learned the building trade from him– would oversee the food provisioning, l and the hosting. They would come home every Friday. In the construction of one bridge, my father and the supervising architect who was overseeing the work, had a difference of opinion over reading the plans for the bridge. On the plans that had come to them, from the Ministry of Railroads in Petersburg, the two overpasses of the bridge, relative to the two roads it was supposed to go over, had not been specifically marked. My father refused to accept the opinion of the architect, until the chief engineer arrived, who was responsible for the drawings, and he ruled as my father had indicated.

In general, all of the architects in the provincial capitol (as his workers of the same faith, and not the same faith, all his acquaintances and friends), treated him with great respect (his patriarchal

appearance also commanded respect. I recall those days, when my father would come to visit me during those days when I was studying at the Yeshiva of 'Breinsk' my classmates would ask me, after seeing us walking together outside: 'Who was that Jewish man of such height and magnificent appearance that we saw outside?'). The architects would depend on him, and would always carry out his notations and modifications that he would enter on their plans. When they came to our city, they would visit at our house, sit with my father, and immerse themselves in details, and at the same time, would enjoy the 'repast' provided them. As a testament to my father's expertise – and the respect that was accorded him by his peers – let me cite an additional fact, and conclude with that. During the days of the First World War, almost all construction work came to a standstill: new buildings were not built at all, and the builders, as was the case with the members of other trades, suffered from lack of work. My father suffered from the lack of work more than his employees, who had learned their craft from him, because those were generally invited to do repair work, rather than my father, because no one had the nerve to offer him such petty jobs to do.

During these 'difficult' times, we received a visit from the Chief Builder – Kablan from Czyzew, near our city. Because of the 'war' and the various 'fires' that ensued in its wake, many houses were burned down and ruined, among them also the '*Bet HaMedrash*.' Having no alternative, the *balebatim* decided to minimally rebuild their house of study, and gave the contract to this builder. The good fortune was indescribable. Here, the Chief Builder comes to us, and proposes to my father that he consent to be a partner in this construction project. On one occasion, I asked the builder to explain to me the reason and thinking behind his offer to take on my father ז"ל as a partner, at a time when work was so hard to come by. That very builder, Kablan replied and said: 'How can I explain this to you? Believe me that from my part, I could have done without R' Moshe Aharon touching a brick or a building tool, because it would be sufficient for him to show up once or twice a day, for less than an hour, to the construction site, and simply cast a eye about, to share his opinion, because what R' Moshe Aharon can grasp in one glance, other distinguished experts couldn't fathom in many days.'

As I mentioned previously, my father ז"ל, was not in the habit of saying much about his family and origins, only at infrequent intervals, mostly in the nights after the Sabbath, when his relatives in the city would come to our house, like his oldest brother R' Israel Hirsch, his sons and grandchildren, Nathan the Dyer and his family, and others. A number of workers from Wysokie would sometimes come to our city to work for my father, and they would live in our house (at our location they learned the building trade, and he educated a 'generation' of Jewish brick makers). They started as unskilled laborers, and those among them that acquired the skills, were gradually selected for the skilled work, with, understandably, my father's encouragement. These too would come and join the Saturday night festivities, and it then fell to these 'guests' to preserved stories that he told about his origins... And a number of details became known to me also from the tales told by these previously mentioned working men: it was not only the art of building, but all that he had learned he had done on his own. One time, during the years I studied the *Gemara,* he reproached for neglecting my studies of Holy Writ. I tried to defend myself by saying that in the *Heder*, they minimize the study of *Tanakh* (and in the two years before my Bar Mitzvah, they didn't cover it at all). He said to me: And you have to wait for your teacher's instruction and depend on him? At your age, I would regularly read ten to fifteen chapters of Tanakh before morning repast, yes – even before morning prayers... but, as I said, he did not spend much time talking about himself, and during my youth, I did not have to temerity

to approach him with questions of this sort. It appeared to me, at that time, that this was not the proper thing to do, and did not constitute respect. When I went off to centers of Torah scholarship – the yeshivas 'Breinsk' and 'Slobodka' – and we would be frequently exchanging correspondence, I refrained from being bold enough to ask such questions. After I had grown up, I once made a request of him, in a letter, that he make an effort to put down in writing some of his origins and past, about his forbears and their predecessors. In his answer, he replied to me: 'As it happens right now, it is hard for me to write, because my hands tremble and spasm from old age,' and after this, I did not have the temerity to remind him of this, or attempt to persuade him, and I lost the hour. In the process, I missed out on asking him why it is that he does not read from the Torah, notwithstanding the fact that he had a 'franchise' to read from the Torah, in the prayer house, only after the morning service of *Rosh Hashana.*

When he was free of his business activities, on Sabbaths, Festivals, etc., or on winter days during which building activity came to a halt, he would always sit down to study the *Gemara.* In the bookcase that was in our house, apart from the Babylonian *Shas* (as well as a *Shas* in a miniature format with small print), in a heavy binding, and suitable for use when going on a trip), there were many other books: The *Zohar,* Commentaries, the books of God-fearing men, and of '*Hasidim*,' etc. Ponderous prayer books of various kinds (such as the prayer book of the AR"I, of the YAAV"TZ [R' Yaakov Emden]), and others, and he would look into these while eating, upon retiring to bed, and at whatever opportune hour. Ordinary study, for him, was restricted to the *Gemara* and its Commentators. It is understood that every Friday, he would read through the portion of the week 'twice in Hebrew, once in *Targum* (*Onkelos*).' Before each festival holiday, he would set time aside to review the rules and regulations of that holiday festival, especially in the '*Shulkhan Arukh*,' of the '*Rav*' (Schneur Zalman Schneerson, the progenitor of *Chabad Hasidism*). Mostly – when there were no people in the house to disturb him – he would study at home. However, before dawn, and even in the dark of the night, in the long winter nights, he would arrive early at the *Bet HaMedrash* (the Red one), to study there. When he would wake up, in order to get out of bed, before the doors of the *Bet HaMedrash* would be opened, he would read the 'day's worth' of Psalms and various chant verses, *sotto voce*, and occasionally, when I was awake in bed, I would listen to the pleading voice of his. I especially remember the impression made upon me on one occasion, when I was listening to him 'sing' in his plaintive voice, as if he were imposing himself on his Father in Heaven: '*Yedid Nefesh, Av HaRakhaman....*' returning again, and again to the opening refrain, of this famous chant, that had been included into a number of prayer books, to be recited before the start of the morning service.

He prayed in accordance with the Sephardic tradition. On Sabbaths, and Festival holidays, when the time of morning prayer arrived for the '*Ger Hasidim,*' he would leave the *Bet HaMedrash*, and go to their prayer house (the *Ger shtibl*), to pray, because he was one of the *Ger Hasidim*. By and large, he did not travel to Ger, as was the custom of the *Hasidim*. In my days, I did not hear anyone ask him why this was the case, and he, himself, did not speak of it. When the *Rebbe* of Ger passed away, Yehuda Aryeh Leib, who was called '*Sfat-Emet*' after the name of the book he wrote, my father would look into the book on occasions, between the afternoon and evening prayers, and during other periods of recess in the Ger *shtibl.* On one occasion of the First Day of *Rosh Hashana*, when the *Hasidim* would gather to go to *Tashlikh*, he was reading this very book, as was his custom. On the way to the river, he would say to those walking alongside him: *Our Sages, of Blessed Memory*, were correct when they said: The righteous become greater in death than they were in life. When they

looked at him with questioning eyes, asking for an explanation of what he said, he added: 'It is now possible to recognize, through his book more than through his life, the *Rebbe*, of blessed memory, because who could grasp what it was that his soul relied on!' He would go to see nearly every *Rebbe* of *Hasidim* who would come as guests to our city, taking me as well, to hear the lore they dispensed at their Sabbath repasts, and after the Sabbath, I would escort him to the *Rebbe* 'to receive a blessing' from him. I remember the *Rebbe* from Novo-Minsk , and especially the many visits we made to the *Rebbe* Nahum of Bialystok, who was the *Sandak* when I was entered into the Covenant of our Father, Abraham. Always, as I was taking leave of him, he would slip me a coin, in order that it bestow a blessing on me from him. On one summer day, when my father was busy, and could not go see him during work days, he sent me to receive a blessing on his behalf. The *Rebbe* gave me wine to drink from his cup, asked about my studies in *Heder*, gave me a coin, blessed me, and then expounded effusively to his *Gabbai* in praise of my father.

During periods of recess, the *Hasidim*, in their prayer house, would engage in conversation about worldly matters, and not in '*Hasidic* talk.' The house buzzed like a hive especially on later Friday afternoon between the afternoon service and the evening service to welcome the Sabbath. At this time, amidst a deafening noise, my father would sit and immerse himself in a book. His fellow group members, and people who knew him were accustomed to this 'peculiarity' and did not pay him any attention. Never did he complain about the secular din before the welcoming prayers for the Sabbath, and he never criticized anyone because of the common discourse taking place in a sanctuary, on a holy day. And even on the evenings of *Simchat Torah*, before the concluding evening prayer ending the Festival, when the dancing 'burned' with passionate fire, he would sit and peer into his book. From time-to-time, he was pulled into a circle dance, and he would go around for a few minutes, get out of the way, and immediately return to his book, 'after all,' he was no big dancer and singer, it would seem, for all of his days, but why did he refrained from participating in the secular discourses during recesses? Was it only because of his 'thirst' for the book? Many times, on the second night of a Festival, and especially before the *Hakafot* on the nights of *Shemini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah*, on the night antics of the inflamed *Hasidim*, and there I would sit, practically expiring, waiting for my father to shut his *Gemara*, and to go with me to the *Maariv* service, because where would I find the nerve to urge him to do so? 'Why is he different from all his *Hasidic* friends?' – I would ask myself, and the thought of not waiting for him, and going by myself never entered my mind at all at that time. On one occasion, when I reminded him that it was time to go, instead of saying: 'Immediately, right now, in a little bit, we will go,' he said to me: it will be good to wait about another hour, because it isn't proper to leave your mother at home alone in the house, and it was in this way, that yet another facet of his behavior was revealed to me, a facet that would not have come to my attention in the normal ambience of our day-to-day living.

His Conduct Toward His Sons

I am only able to tell about his conduct towards me, when I was the youngest in the family, and younger by many years than my two brothers, Nachman-Ze'ev and Eliyahu, who went off to America when I was six, and he practically never hollered at me, and never raised a hand to me, much less rebuke me in public, as most fathers would do, during prayer, Torah reading, and similar situations. And he never even criticized me in front of members of his household because – as I came to understand, as I grew up – that in everything that he did, and intrinsic to his conduct, there was

a reason, and this included sparing the rod. Apparently, he did not believe in the utility of hollering, rebuking, striking and hitting, and throughout my childhood and youth he would often speak to me on intimate terms. He made an attempt to influence, and leave an impression, but refrained from explicit moralizing, and to this end, he constantly strived to inculcate me in the *mitzvot*, without providing an apparent reason, in order that I not attribute too specific an intent in the matter. From childhood onward, even before I began to attend Heder (I began to study at age 3 ½) he would turn to me – mostly during our feasting on the Sabbath or on a Festival – asking me to hand him one book or another that was on the table, giving me a sign as to which one, or tell me where in the bookcase they were (in the same room, adjacent to the table where we sat), and if I made a mistake – he identified my error, despite the fact that the bookcase was beside the table. And I recollect on one night, when he was sitting in the *sukkah*, that literally stood abutting our house, and was engaged in a discussion about *Halakha* with a young scholar, I nearly collapsed under the weight of the large *Gemara* volumes, whose names I was able to read only by a sheer miracle, and by signs that he had given me to look for (their thickness, their order in sequence, etc.) that I would bring and convey from the house to the *sukkah*, and from the *sukkah* back to the house. He had a special affection for young scholars, and the 'bachelors', with whom he would socialize at every opportune hour, and it appeared that they, in turn reciprocated this search for friendship with him.

Before Passover and before *Sukkot*, I would, at his order, take all the books outside, to clean the dust off of them, and to air them out. Afterwards, he would direct me to order them, and arrange them on the shelves of the bookcase: those that he had more frequent use for, were put in a place that could be easily accessed, and after that – the others, in accordance with a set arrangement, in order that he could remember the location of each and every book.

On the Eve of Passover, I would accompany him – as was the custom – to burn the leavened bread, to stand beside him as he kashered the 'vessels' [and utensils], etc. After the noon hour, I would go with him to the wine seller, and he would ask me to taste all of the wines, and offer my opinion on their taste.

Our *sukkah* was built under the roof of our house, with an opening into the foyer. From the day that I could think for myself, I helped open up the heavy roof (the edge to the *sukkah*), and to remove the '*skhakh*' that had been resting on the *sukkah* for all year, to shake off the dust that was on it, and to cover it anew, in accordance with proscribed ritual. Understandably, there was a bit of danger in climbing up on top of the sukkah, especially for a little boy, but more than helping him, I disturbed his tranquility, and at his work, but my father did not 'pass up' my 'assistance.' After I grew up a bit, it happened that I had gone off to the edge of the river to play, and because of the over-enthusiasm of the players, I was late in getting home. I will not forget his keening voice, simultaneously being self-justifying, with which he greeted me, and his soft look (maybe he was concerned for my well-being): 'You are late today, my son, and here I was waiting in anticipation that you would come to help me in the preparation of the *sukkah*, and in the end, I was compelled to go ahead and do it myself. Oh, dear, what a shame that you were late.' From that time on, there was never an instance when I was late, until I learned to do the work by myself, and there was no longer a need for my father to leave a construction site, since a significant loss was tied up in his absence from the workplace.

Customs pertaining to education, such as these, I suspect, were carried out in many Jewish homes. Most of all, I want to underscore especially two such fundamental customs, two tasks that were allocated to me for each Friday evening, when I was a very little boy, before my *Heder* years (when I had 'grown up' and was six years old, I would go out to play with my friends, and I began to neglect these tasks, until they were forgotten), and these were: a) to clean my father's Sabbath shoes, and b) to sharpen the knife that my father used to slice the Sabbath *Challah*. Understandably, at that tender age, I was not able to carry those two tasks out properly. On short days, my sisters, who were occupied with preparations for the Sabbath, would sometimes want to relieve me of my tasks, and I would steadfastly resist them, regarding my 'franchise:' 'these are my tasks,' I would argue. I was not terribly aware at that tender age, as to how these two customs came into being, and to this day, I have not heard of such a custom in other Jewish homes. Because of this, my heart tells me that my father's hand was in this as well: to inculcate in me two fundamental *mitzvot,* that of honoring one's father, and showing respect for the sanctity of the Sabbath. When I grew to be a youth, I began to suspect that my participation on local tasks was not because my father needed the help, but because of a need to 'educate a lad.' [Here is] another example: In my Bar Mitzvah year, or slightly before then, I was studying Torah with the Baumkuler brothers, Pinchas ז"ל, and Abraham, of the first of those of our city who made *aliyah*, at the end of the First World War, from the mouth of R' Abraham Shmuel – the son-in-law of R' Nahum Lejzor the *Shokhet* who was a very learned man, having received rabbinic ordination, and took over the duties of *Shokhet* in place of his father-in-law. We learned together in the prayer house of the Ger *Hasidim*, and as was the custom at that time, kinfolk would be taken in as guests that were knocking about, had been burned out, and for like reasons. The worshipers there, in the middle of the week, would collect a sum of money, and these guests would then be on their way. The matter was dependent on the donor who was willing to accept the obligation of the mitzvah, and on the number of such worshipers, and regarding the amount, in respect to the capacity of the participants. And here, the idea took root of introducing some sort of order and protocol to the process. Accordingly: all the worshipers will contribute a number of pennies per week, according to their means, and this would go into a 'box' prepared for this purpose, to be available at an hour of need. They turned to me to be the '*Gabbai*' of the box. And why 'me' – the youngest of the three pupils? This question entered my mind, because all that happens is natural and simple to a boy and youth, and there are no questions. Because of this, it never occurred to me to say anything about this responsibility at home, and because, during the week, my father did not go to the *shtibl* to pray, I didn't ask him to donate his share, just as we did not solicit such donations from all those who came there only to worship on Sabbaths (those that could, and wanted to, donated their funds in a lump sum once). And it happened that one of the '*Hasidim*' fell ill with a lingering disease (from which he eventually died), and in a short period of time, was left without food or medicines. It was decided that all the donors would add something special for this purpose only, for the benefit of the sick one, until he could get up from his sickbed. Understandably, it happened that a number of the donors did not provide their part of the donation they were obligated to give. I asked among the worshipers what to do about these laggards, and they responded by saying that it was up to me to remind, and return and remind again, those who were obligated. 'And what if this doesn't help?' [They answered] 'We'll hide their prayer shawls – that they were in the habit of leaving behind in the '*shtibl*,' and you will delay their prayers.' I took this advice seriously, and I hid the prayer shawl of one of these laggards. He wanted to don a borrowed prayer shawl, and I began to argue with him. The latter did not get angry, God forbid, but rather the opposite, it appears that he took some pleasure in how serious I was, and began to complain for others to hear: ' Look at this,

he is not permitting me to pray. Would you not permit a Jew to say his prayers? Here, I have a good proposal, give me my prayer shawl, and immediately after the service, I will return it to you. And we will continue to do this each day, until I pay off my obligation.' This idea found favor in my eyes, and I related the incident at home, and when I left the house in order to return to my studies, my father told me to wait a minute, and we left together. Once outside, he began to inquire about the status of the sick person – because of the extent to which he was busy during the days of summer, he knew nothing about it – and afterwards, he took out a sum from his pocket that to me looked large, and requested that I take it to the home of the sick person, and to turn over the money to his wife. And I, despite the fact that I frequently made trips to the home of the sick person with funds from the '*kupa*,' was embarrassed to be a bearer of 'charity' offered by a single individual, and I demurred. 'What shall I say to her? – I asked. 'Nothing,' he replied. 'Say: my father offers his blessing to the sick person for a complete recovery, and give her the money.' When I refused, he said in a plaintive and soft voice: 'Why would you be embarrassed? Don't you see that I am very busy, and that I simply do not have the opportunity to visit the sick in person!' I continued to attempt to evade the task: 'Perhaps you should send the money, not in one lump sum, but rather to the '*kupa*?' He replied: 'Why are you acting this way? Better that it does not become public knowledge, and the sick one will have an added sum of money.' After many years, it became clear to me that my father really didn't need my help, but rather wanted to give me a lesson in '*Tzedakah*' and in anonymous giving.

While his own father was still alive (he passed away when I was about eight) my father would travel to Wysokie several times a year to see him. Always, almost without exception, he took me along to receive a blessing from him. This was especially for a blessing for long life, since my grandfather was then a frail man, and I always found him bedridden because of advanced age. It is clear to me now, that it was not for this blessing that he took me out of *Heder* for a full day (excepting *Hol HaMoed*) but rather to inculcate me with the commandment 'Honor thy Father and Mother.' And I recall one occasion, when he went out from my grandfather's house, tears began to fall from his eyes. I was taken aback to see my father cry on a time other than Yom Kippur. And when his brothers asked him to explain his crying, he answered while sighing: 'It is for my sins that I have been exiled from the city of my birth, and I fulfill the mitzvah of honoring my father, as it should be done. And I have transgressed against The Lord all the days (in his idiom – *ich farzindik zikh myneh yorn*). The impact of his words will not ever be erased from my memory for my entire life.

My Father, Itcheh Mulyar

Recorded by R' Israel Levinsky ל"ז as told by his son, Sender

My father, R' Yitzhak Seczkowsky (known by the name Itcheh Mulyar), was a simple working man. He was noted for his integrity, his generous heart, and his love for performing acts of charity, and helping those needy who approached him. For his entire life he worked, and earned his living with the effort of his own hands, and when he succeeded in his endeavors, and with his manual skills, and earned a formidable reputation among his craft peers, these same would come to solicit his advice and assistance.

My father learned his trade from Moshe-Aharon the Builder after he returned from the army. He grasped the skill, and went on to round out his capability in his profession, and his reputation went

before him, and he became renown in the entire area as a great expert in the construction of baking ovens, which he would construct in the barracks of the army located in our city, and also in its summer encampments. And who was it that effected repairs at the bathhouse, upgraded the transient lodging, put a fence around the cemetery, and other communal construction projects, if not Itcheh Mulyar, the Builder? As regarding his fee, they arrived at an agreement easily. He would pay laborers out of his own pocket. He would say: 'Zvi and Yitzhak Ze'ev Golombek, respectable people of standing, come each and every day and put in effort on behalf of the community, they bring bricks, and mortar, and clay, not for purposes of receiving remuneration, so it is therefore permissible for Itcheh the Builder to work, together with his sons, without pay.' If a landlord was being perverse, and did not want to repair a broken oven on behalf of his less well-off neighbor, and he and his family are getting frozen by the cold, my father ז"ל would run and do the repair, and arrange for peace to be made between the landlord and his neighbor. Because, who was it that wanted to start up a quarrel with R' Itcheh? For this reason, all the city residents loved him, and when he fell sick, all would come to inquire as to his well-being, and to pray on his behalf – a dear man such as this – they would argue, must continue to live, in order that he continue to do his good deeds on behalf of everyone.

Over time, he managed to accumulate a sum of money, and to buy, in partnership with Israel Sokol, a parcel on the *Ulica* Kosciolna that had previously been entirely in Christian hands, and the Jews purchased one parcel after another from them, and built houses on them. The parcel that my father bought remained vacant for many years: its Christian owner did not want to sell it, however, once when handling a large beam by himself, that he brought from the forest, he was killed, and his widow sold the parcel at a not very dear price. My father himself planned the building himself, which was built with the help of Jewish builders from Wysokie. It was a stone house that was beautiful, not particularly large, but well appointed. It was then that he left the street with the synagogue, and the transient lodging facility, his previous residence, and moved over to live in the new building. Whoever had need of R' Itcheh was able to find him there as well. However, on the Sabbath, he would go to worship at his regular place in the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, where the Rabbi worshiped. After the Second Great Fire, when he upgraded the house, he set aside a place there for the *Chevra Shas*, without charging rent, which became a place of prayer and study. He also served as its *Shammes,* and took care of the oven there, together with Yudl Husman and Menachem Dunowicz. Thanks to them, important *balebatim* came to worship with the *Chevra Shas*. On the High Holy Days, R' Yitzhak Greenberg led the *Musaf* services, and after him, R' Mott'l the Miller.

My father operated in the following way: He stood by every man in his hour of need, and if someone needed a person to vouch for them, they came to R' Itcheh, and he never turned anyone away empty-handed. He would lend money without charging interest or taking security. My complaints to him were of no avail: 'How can you do this?' He could not resist tears or sighing. I remember once, his neighbor, Abraham the Tailor, a diligent and honest man, but one who was poor and impoverished, burdened with children, and unable to pay rent, took in a village lad from Szumowo for the purpose of teaching him how to sew a pair of trousers over the course of three months, and for this, the lad received 15 rubles from my father. But the young fellow was not talented in this respect, and could not acquire the skill in so short a time. The Jew from the village, an arrogant man, didn't want to accept this, and took him to court for 20 rubles and other court costs. However, my father ז"ל implored the village Jew to relent, because the tailor was a poor man, and he, personally, gets no rent

from him – but it was in vain. They came to a public sale of the tailor's furniture. This was on a Friday. The wife of the tailor and his children sat and wept, because they expected that very shortly, the entire contents of their house would be emptied out. And she had brothers in the city, Zvi the Dairyman and Mottl the Smith, but they did not come to help her. Nevertheless, my father arrived with a packet of money in hand, and bought all of the furniture, and left them in place for the tailor. All of the Christians there left bewildered: they thought they would get a bargain at the expense of a Jewish family. They paid off the rich man from the village his money, with the addition of curses from the neighbors.

I could not understand my father's deeds: how is it that a person spreads around his money at a time when he has little sons at home, and the previously mentioned tailor never ever settled his debt.

He never took security, because he lent without such security. He would give away his last penny, leaving himself with nothing, giving the excuse: I receive funds on credit, and the public – does not. During the winter, when there was no [construction] work going on, we would scrimp and deny ourselves, but in the summer, when the work would start up, he would pay off all of his debts. There was an instance that people came from a nearby city to ask for a favor, because whatever Itcheh the Builder gives, succeeds, and they paid him with counterfeit gold coins – my father hushed the matter up and did not seek legal redress.

After the Second Great Fire, a dispute arose between my father and another man, involving a sum of one hundred Rubles. The Rabbi ruled that my father needed to take an oath, and then receive the sum, but my father did not wish to swear, even if it was the truth, and lost the loan.
He had a substantial income, because there was always work to do, and he would be paid the amount he requested, because they feared that otherwise, he might not want to take on the job. When my brother Zelig, who lived in Jerusalem, sent him a proposal to come and live there, many *balebatim* rushed to break their ovens, in order to give my father the work to build them anew, out of a suspicion that they would not be able to find a skilled builder like him, should he choose to leave the city.

Abba Frumkin was the contractor for providing flour to the barracks and my father did the building of the large bakery ovens in Zambrow, and afterwards at the summer camps in Gunsirowa. When the provisioning franchise was turned over to a certain ethnic Russian, who had rented a residence from Moshe Finkelstein, he also turned to my father, ר"ל. When he saw that my father had hired himself out for 100 rubles one week, it aroused envy in him, and when he was obliged to set up an additional oven at a summer camp, he came to my father and said that he would not pay the previously set fee, but rather quite a bit less. My father said: 'On the contrary, I want more, because on the outside, I have larger expenses.' The Russian '*katzap*' became incensed, uttered a Russian oath, slammed the door, and fled. He gave to work to a gentile builder. It turned out that the work was quite lucrative, and there was a requirement to do work on public facilities: In the bathhouse, the transient inn, etc., as usual, without compensation. When I asked him why he had demanded more money, he replied to me that he was certain the '*katzap*' would revert to him, because he will not be able to find a craftsman comparable to him. And as it happened, after three weeks, the Russian returned with a smile on his lips, and said: 'Nu, do you still want the set price that you quoted, so much money? – 'Well have you done the work already,?' my father asks, – 'No, I have not done it,

and I am compelled to give you what you want, and I will convey you (myself and my father) on my wagon, and all your room and board will be at my expense.' Astonished at this miraculous change in attitude, we came to Gunsirowa during the night, the summer military camp. He brought us to a Jewish lodging facility, and ordered that we receive the best of everything of what we asked for. We arose to pray, and the Russian departed. I heard the children talking among themselves, and saying to their mother that we were Jews, and that it was necessary to tell us what is going on here. The woman begins to tell us what had happened, and implores us to leave, and not to work, because the builder who had constructed the oven, a well-known Christian craftsman, was killed in an attempt to take out the internal support boards that served as a sort of closing, and nobody wants to work there – because demon spirits abide, it was said. This matter had already cost the Russian a considerable amount of money, and she advised my father to leave the place. I whispered to my father that we should get out of here. But my father said: 'I have to see this demon for myself first.' In the meantime, the Russian came back and says: '*Nu*, let's get to work!' With a pounding heart, I followed my father, and we saw the broken oven, with blood stains on the bricks. 'What is this?' – my father asked – 'Why did you deceive me?' The Russian said: 'You refused, demanding a large sum, and it was on me to build this oven. Now you are getting more, so just do it.' To my amazement, I see my father go over to begin working, bringing workers to clear away the debris, and finished the oven in the course of two days time, because the foundation of the oven had remained from the part that had fallen. People came from all over town to watch how my father was going to take out the support boards. The Russian advised that they be burned out, in order not to ruin the oven, and the boards were brand new. My father sent him out of the house and I remained to help my father, while my heart pounded inside of me out of fear and terror. My father pulled the boards out intact, and in good condition, and I hauled them outside with glee. The Russian entered. He saw that all of the support boards had been removed from the oven, and he fell upon my father's neck and began to kiss him, and paid him 20 rubles for the boards. They came from all sides to see this magician of a Jew, who miraculously can drive out demons, My father was an expert at this. It was for this reason that my father hired himself out at a handsome rate, and others also derived satisfaction and learned from him.

R' Nachman Yaakov (Rothberg) – The Wagon Driver

By Israel Levinsky

The town of Zambrow sits in the middle of paved road that lies between Lomza and the Warsaw-Petersburg railroad station at Czyzew. The rail network, during the time of the Czar, was limited, and did not have branches. On almost the entire right side region of the Vistula, there were practically no other rail lines except for the one I just mentioned. Connections were haphazard and not orderly. The merchants, storekeepers and just plain ordinary folks in need of transportation to Warsaw, were exposed to all of the difficult vicissitudes of travel associated with the large freight trains that served as the means of connection between the cities. Zambrow, sitting between the two cities, of Lomza and Czyzew, served, at that time, as a sort of transfer station for passengers and freight, from Warsaw to Lomza and its surrounding towns, and from Lomza and its environs to Warsaw. The result of this was a proliferation of wagon drivers in this town, that found a means of making a living this way, and in better cases among the more successful, they even

became wealthy. There appeared to be a sort of agreement among them, to divide up the day driving and the night driving. The day drivers had the mission to convey passengers and freight that arrived early on the morning train from Czyzew – from Zambrow to Lomza, and the night drivers would transport the passengers that came at night, from Lomza to Zambrow – and further on, to Czyzew. In Zambrow, the travelers would transfer from wagon to wagon, stretch out and straighten their limbs, from having sat in cramped quarters in the train car, they would pray, eat a quickly snatched meal in a restaurant, and transfer to a new wagon, that would convey them to the district to which they were going. Each of the day drivers had a designated night driver to whom he turned over his 'people,' and not to any other. This was also the case the other way: the same night driver would turn over his 'people' to his [designated] day driver. This custom was set and kept properly, and no man sought to disturb it, or have the nerve to undermine it. Even in regard to the time of day, this was carefully monitored, observing each individual franchise, meaning, that a day driver would be careful to drive during the day, and not at night. And the night driver knew that it was his place to drive at night, and not to compete with the day drivers.

The Zambrow wagon drivers were not better than all the other drivers in the Jewish Pale of Settlement in Russia. Their means, conduct, and relationship to passengers are well-documented in the works of our great literary personae, like Mendele, YALA"G,[263] and others. They too, would cram in their 'people' like salted fish in a barrel, one on top of the other, and if the sitting board was knocked out of its place by pushing and shoving – one fell on top of the other. Also, in the way they spoke, there was no great difference in their mode of speech: it was laced with cursing, awful imprecations, insults, shameful remarks, and quite gross and salty expressions. The renown among them were: Ziskind-Itzi Malicky, Chaim Shmuel Levinsky, Berl Levinsky, Mordechai Lifschitz, Leibusz Levinsky, Issachar Jablonka, and Nachman Yaakov Rothberg, and his sons, about whom I am devoting special attention, because if he was, indeed, a wagon driver, he was not an adherent to their customs and behavior. On the contrary, he could easily serve as a wonderful example to others and to fulfill the expression that it is not the occupation that debases the man, but the opposite, it is the man who debases the occupation. Shoemaking and wagon driving became stained with a bad reputation, and thought of poorly because, in the main, it attracted boors, people of no substance, and flighty types.

R' Nachman Yaakov Rothberg (earned the honorific R') was a respected and worthy man, well-attuned to his surroundings, loyal and honest, and a competent businessman. R' Nachman Yaakov was short in stature, with broad shoulders. He came from a well-connected family in Sniadowo, an enlightened man, a respected businessman, a doer of good deeds, and an official of the town. Also, his son, R' Nachman Yaakov, was a Torah scholar, and would study Mishna and Ein Yaakov on a daily basis with the 'Torah Scholars,' and he would look into the books of the pious, such as '*Sheyvet Musar,*' '*Menorot HaMaor,*' and others. He had a not insubstantial Torah-oriented library of his own, and he would guard these beautifully bound books with great care.

Nachman Yaakov was orphaned while still young, and because of this, he was unable to attend a yeshiva, and was compelled to find himself an occupation. When he was seventeen years old, he married Rivka Gittl Levinsky of Zambrow, the daughter of a respected and important man, who had

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263 Hebrew acronym of the writer I. L. Gordon.

given a beautiful education to his daughter, in the spirit of those times, and she knew how to read the *Teitch-Chumash*, prayers and *tekhines*[264] and the like. As it evolved, R' Yaakov had no profession, and by chance, after the wedding, he became a wagon driver in Zambrow. He bought a wagon and horses, and he hired a person to drive them, and traveled from Zambrow to Lomza. Quickly he acquired the reputation of an honest man of loyal spirit, and he earned the trust of the merchants and storekeepers of Lomza, and they would exclusively give only him their loads to be conveyed from the railroad station at Czyzew, and it was in his hand that they would transfer substantial amounts of money, in order to release goods that had been received on security, and the Zambrow storekeepers would send money with him to pay off their notes at private and government banks, or to receive a bill for new goods, and the like. His honesty was renown. On one occasion, a package of valuable knitted goods was either lost or stolen from his wagon – and he did not wait to be summoned to a religious trial or a court of law rather, out of his own good will, he approached the merchant and persuaded him to allow him to pay for all the damages in question. And yet on another occasion, one of his sons found a large package of money that had been lost by a Christian passenger, upon transferring from one wagon to another that was traveling to Czyzew. When the Christian returned the next day to inquire of the package of money had been found in the wagon, he did not tarry an instant, and returned the lost item to its owner, and was not swayed by the temptations of one's inclination, refusing even to accept a reward from the person who had lost the package. The Christian, who was a wealthy merchant, donated a sum of money to a Jewish charity – in recognition for the loss that was returned to him.

Because of his loyalty and honesty, the rebels of the 1863 Polish uprising also placed their trust in him. He served as a liaison and communications vehicle between them, and would provide food and provisions to their soldiers who would be hidden in the thick forests between Lomza and Zambrow, such as the 'Red Forest,' which was well known. He was once seized, according to what he told me, by Cossacks, because his wagon was full of food, casks of strong drink, and other supplies. The Cossacks detained him, and cast suspicion on him, that he had some connection to the rebels, and they brought him to their command. There, they buffeted him about, and beat him cruelly, to get him to reveal the place where the rebels were hiding out, but he took the beating and told them nothing. He argued that he was innocent of any wrongdoing, and was simply conveying merchandise to Lomza. He fell sick from the beating he received, and was bedridden for about a month. The nobility knew to value his loyalty, and supported him during his illness, and also gave him a set amount of money with which to feed his family. As he then continued to tell, only he, who was hale and strong, survived the beating by his torturers – from where no one else emerged alive.

All of the *balebatim* in the city respected and welcomed him. He would come and go to the residence of R' Lipa Chaim ז"ל, and also the home of his son-in-law, the young Rabbi, R' David Menachem Regensberg ז"ל.

As to his four sons: David, Yehoshua, Yitzhak and Berl, he gave a traditional education, and did not spare any money in putting them into the hands of good teachers. All of them committed themselves to the same occupation as their father. All were loyal and honest, like their father. Sums of money were turned over to them that had not been counted – and never did they ever put their hand to assets that did not belong to them.

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264 Yiddish prayers of beseeching and entreaty.

R' Nachman Yaakov invested all of his love into his only daughter, Zippora, who was pretty, and as was not usual in those times, was literate, and had studied Hebrew with the well-known teacher Bercheh Sokol, read Yiddish literature, knew how to read a little Russian and Polish, and excelled in handicrafts, sewing and weaving.

When the time came for her to marry, R' Nachman Yaakov sought a Yeshiva student for her hand from a prominent family, promising a substantial dowry, food and lodging in one of his houses. When the author of these lines was proposed to him as a potential groom, he took the two sons-in-law of his sister from Sniadowo, and traveled to assess me. It was only after such an assessment that he decided to engage the parents of the groom in regards to a union, and the conditions attached.

He passed away at a ripe old age, with a good name, in the year 1915.

Goldwasser, the Shoemaker from Gać

[He was] one of the unique personality types in Zambrow, and among Polish Jewry in general.

A father with sons, a dynasty of shoemakers, used merchandise sellers, that fabricate simple, crude shoes for the peasantry, and travel to market fairs to sell them.

The father, however, was an educated Jewish person, and stood at the head of the fanatics of the city. He was a *Hasid* – who set the tone for the *Hasidic* world. The sons worked for the father, and later went on their own – were, like their father, very ardent *Hasidim*, living from their craft, they were all poor, barely able to make a living, but – full-hearted Jews with a warm heart inclined to help the other person, and to serve God with their entire heart and soul. But they were intense fanatics: they fought against every new development, believing that they were doing this for their God and His Torah. If someone opened a school: whether he was an observant teacher or not, whether he taught Hebrew or Yiddish, boys and girls together, or separately– it was not satisfactory to them: they immediately went off to the Rabbi, raised a fuss, and mobilized forces to combat the school, to threaten parents that send their children there, etc. If a speaker would come to town, a group would make an evening event out of it, with a presentation, or if a library was opened – The Shoemaker from Gać and his sons no longer rested, as if the entire fault for this had fallen on their heads. Also, the Shoemaker from Gać was among the daily contributors in the ranks of the *Hasidim*, and his opinion was taken into account. Few cities could take pride in having this type of an individual. Frequently, he would be called 'The Rabbi's Hetman,' meaning: an officer of the Rabbi's 'Cossacks,' referring to all the fanatics that grouped themselves around the Rabbi.

The entire family, this means the sons and grandchildren, were decent, honest people, loved to do a favor, engage in a charitable act, involved themselves in community affairs with a good and pure intention. He married his only daughter to a poor scion of a shoemaking family, who worked for him, a son of the 'City's daughter-in-law' (see the writeup of Meir Zukrowicz), despite the fact that he could have done a 'good' match, because of what the *Gemara* says, he would say: When your daughter comes of age – set your servant free and giver her to him as a wife.

This fervent and multi-branched family was entirely wiped out... only one remained (see page 206).

Kukawka The Shoemaker

Yaakov Shlomo ben Moshe-Leib Kukawka, a shoemaker by trade, was a tall, strongly built person, and was typical of the community activists of the city. In his youth, he studied in Yeshivas, and knew how to learn a page of the *Gemara*. He was a Jew that was sensitive to his environment, was enlightened, and progressive. He made his living from shoes, and like the other shoemakers, he would make up cheap boots, fit for 'second-hand' sale, travel to fairs in the nearby towns, to market them, unlike his older brother Abraham Zvi who was a master craftsman at shoemaking. He was of quiet temperament, contenting himself with less, and did not overindulge when it came to food and drink. One time, it is told, he had returned from a fair and was hungry and tired, at an hour late at night. His wife had prepared food for him – something cooked in a pot, in the oven, and lay down to sleep. However, in the darkness, he made a mistake, and took out the wrong pot, in which water was being warmed to wash out the burned residue of a *cholent*, in which there were twigs for seasoning. Mistaking this for food, he drank these fatty waters, chewed on the twigs – until he ate it up, satisfying his hunger, and nearly choked himself.... he had access to the houses of the enlightened and the revered of the city. He was a member of Abba Rakowsky's household, and learned much from him. He was a Zionist, and partook in the work of Zionist gatherings that, in those days, took place at the home of Benjamin Kagan or Shlomkeh Blumrosen. Once a year, he had the job of amusing the children on *Simchat Torah*. Perennially, he would, on that day, dress up in rabbinical garb, put on a broad rabbinical hat, put a belt on his trousers, and canvass the houses of the wealthy to gather candy, apples, nuts and the like – on behalf of the children – Jewish children from all over the city.

He would traverse the streets of the Jewish section, and attract tens of children about him. Suddenly, he would shout out in a weird voice, half hoarse: 'Holy Flock.' And the children would respond to him: 'Mehh, mehh!' And then he would take out all manner of goodies from his trouser pockets, that he had gathered for the children, and rain it down upon them. The children would fall on the candy and the fruit, and he would stand there and smile, stand there, and derive pleasure from watching them. He was among the first to establish the secured lending bank, that was under the presidency of Abba Rakowsky. He would come to the bank frequently, check the accounts, arrange notes, and even direct the younger people in doing the calculations in accordance with the chart of accounts that needed to be reconciled. Everyone loved him, and trusted him. He was one of the outstanding members of the fire brigade, and even the gentiles accorded him respect – because when a fire would break out in the villages, he would be the first one to put his own life in danger to rescue others, with all the gentiles after him.

Binyomkeh Schuster, the Shoemaker

He was a good shoemaker, literally an orthopedist. However, you had to tear up two pairs of shoes running to get to him, because he was constantly involved in doing community work. He came from Goniądz, beside the German border. He served in Zambrow as a musician, fell in love with a Zambrow girl, Shayna, and subsequently remained here after his military service. He lived across from the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, where the Rabbi had once lived. He was the *Shammes*, and the overseer of *Hakhnasat Orkhim*, which came along with his residence, and he was a Torah Reader in the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, and later became the *Shammes* and Torah Reader at the

synagogue. He would look after poor people, and would arrange plates on the Sabbath for poor folks, and 'days' for Yeshiva students. There was not a community issue that Binyomkeh *Schuster* (his family name was also Schuster) would not be involved in. In his last years, he also was a gravedigger for the *Chevra Kadisha*. Today, it is possible to understand the fate of a pair of shoes that someone left with him. He had two talented sons. The older, Abraham, studied at the Yeshiva in Lomza, and received rabbinic ordination, and for a short while, was a secretary to the Rabbi, and went off to Berlin to study with R' Chaim Heller. Later on, he was the *Rabbiner* of Sopot, a community near Danzig. He was killed by the Nazis, who had, at first, extended him privileges. His second son, Alter – today is found in South America.

Moshe Joseph, the Street Paver

By Sender Seczkowsky
As Transcribed by Israel Levinsky

He was a powerful Jewish man, who himself did not know the extent of his own strength. He paved the streets of the city and its environs – to the satisfaction of the régime. He was a taciturn Jewish man, sitting in the *Bet HaMedrash* during evenings – studying a chapter of the *Mishna* and reading Psalms.

Yet, a strange and unusual thing happened to him once. A nobleman from one of the villages, who had been born in Zambrow, took him to his estate to pave the roads. He received a fee for each square foot, and also food: dairy products, eggs, bread, vegetables and fruit. Being the only Jew in that location – after work, he would walk a distance of several kilometers, on foot, to a Jewish inn that stood beside the road, turn over the foodstuffs to the woman there, for her to cook him his supper, and he would lodge there. One time, on an autumn day, after a hard day's work, before the rains came, he came back to the inn exhausted, and laid down to sleep. At that same time, two Russian soldiers came into the tavern asking for food and drink. The lady tavern keeper brought it to them. They asked for more, and then more, and at the end of the matter, having stuffed themselves and drunk to excess, they did not want to pay. Being suitably confused, they even started a ruckus – capsizing tables, breaking vessels, and began to curse the Jews as suckers of Christian blood, and they had the nerve to even physically assault the woman. She raised a hue and cry, because her husband was not in the house, and even the children began to cry. The paver was awakened from his sleep in the adjacent room, and he entered the place where the noise was coming from, grabbed one of the soldiers who had raised his hand to the woman, and punched him a number of times with his fists. The soldier collapsed onto the floor, with no sign of life in him. The second fled as if fleeing from death itself. The paver ran after him in the dark, but his spoor vanished. To his great fear, and the fear of the lady tavern keeper, the fallen soldier did not rise again, because his soul had departed. What to do? If this became known – he would be arrested, along with the lady tavern keeper, and who knows what will be done with them? But the paver remained in control, and he ordered the woman to keep silent, not to ask too many questions, and he grabbed the body of the soldier, put it on his shoulders and vanished into the darkness of the night. The paver carried him, not on the usual footways, as you understand, for about eight kilometers, until he reached the railroad lines in the vicinity of Czerwony-Bor, and he laid the soldier down on the tracks... harassed and spent, he then returned to the tavern. However, he could not lie down and go back to sleep – fearing that the matter would be discovered. Early in the morning, the woman found the soldier's cap in the hallway, in

which his name was inscribed, and his division number. The paver was quick to throw the hat into the flames of the oven. The woman returned trembling, to her work, and the paver arose to say his prayers. After some time, a detachment of military police arrived to look for the soldier, and with them was the drunken second soldier. The paver explained: yes, indeed, he was here, did not want to pay for what he ate, and even had begun to hit the lady of the house and me. When I returned the blow – he fled along with his drunken comrade, and we locked the door after them. They looked around, and found nothing suspicious, and even the second soldier – did not deny that they ate without paying, and that they had even begun to hit the lady of the house, and he was the first to flee... the police searched other nearby houses, and then went out to search the forest. The paver was uncomfortable to remain here, and even to return to his work for the nobleman. He forfeited the money he had earned for his work to date, in the courtyard of the nobleman, and returned empty-handed to Zambrow.

After a few weeks, he returned to the Nobleman – but by then the work had been completed by a different paver, and the nobleman did not want to pay him, because he had abandoned his wok in the middle, and as a punishment, he set his dogs on him. After a quarrel and exchange of words, in which the paver justified his action by claiming that he had suddenly taken sick, and was compelled to return home, and take to a sick bed – the nobleman paid his share. And from that time on – the paver said, I swore not to raise a hand against anyone, or to test my strength...

Nosskeh (Nathan), the Painter

On the Lomza Road, opposite Munkasz's smithy, there was to be found a large wooden house with a large courtyard, belonging to Nosskeh Wierzba. Nosskeh enjoyed a reputation in the area as a good painter, and more importantly – as a painter of carriages. He had very beautiful daughters, all committed to one another, and diligent workers. His only son, Israel'keh, left for Argentina years back. Several of his daughters also got out to America and Argentina. In the Holocaust, Nosskeh Wierzba and his wife, Liebeh were killed, along with their beautiful and talented daughters: Dvorakeh, Faygl, Laytcheh and Sheva.

Here is a short excerpt from Faygl's last letter to her brothers and sisters in Argentina:

Zambrow. 22.8.39

> ...we received your letter today, and I will indeed immediately respond because we simply do not know what tomorrow will bring. We are like guests at a wedding, waiting for the groom. Every minute is decreed, and we anticipate being made homeless. The important thing is that the situation is so tense that one does not know what is happening to the other. Please do not be confused, because whatever will happen to all Jews will also happen to us. If our fate is to remain alive, then we will remain alive. At this point, I am so indifferent, because having survived one war, it is no big deal for me to face a second war, so let what will be, be. It is not possible to think about America, no papers are being issued, and one has no idea of which world one is living in. May God help so that things will change for the good, and that we will have only suffered a fright, in which case, we will sell the house, and all three of us will set out into the larger world, but in what direction, we do not know: [we assume] it will be in the direction that is easiest to procure papers. Sheva is asking me to come to her for *Sukkot*. Who knows where we might yet end up before *Sukkot*. People rush about as if they knew what was going to happen... Zambrow has become like a ghost town. I hope for it to remain still, and that we will be here to receive an answer to my letter. We cook, and mother is good,

she does not hear... she does not understand, all she does is ask why we are engaged in so much conversation? Father sits constantly at the home of Domek Proszenski listening to the radio. If you go out into our yard, it looks like after a war – the shire has disintegrated, and the roof has fallen down. But who, at this time, is concerned about such things?

Israel'keh Poyker (The Drummer)

By Yaakov Garbass

He was a short Jewish man, with a small gray beard, perpetually self-confident and good-humored. He lived on the Kosziuszko Street, and dealt in fruits and vegetables. He had a table [for this] at the marketplace. On *Hol HaMoed* Passover and *Sukkot*, he would place himself at the marketplace, near the pump, with a sack of nuts. Children would put in a kopeck, and take out a number. One out of 5 or 10 would win a plate of nuts with which to play.

By trade he was a 'musician,' a drummer. He learned this skill from the drafted soldiers, when he did military service, At every wedding, whether musicians were brought from Tiktin or Lomza, or if a local ensemble played – it was Israel'keh who was the drummer, and strode with pride to the wedding canopy, beside Gurfinkel the barber, who was the fiddler, or Gold'echkeh's son with the viola.

On Friday, if there was a wedding ceremony in town, Israel'keh *Poyker* would hurriedly liquidate the merchandise on his table at the market, run to the baths, wash himself, put on his Sabbath finery, and go off to escort the bride and groom to the wedding canopy.

During the time of the Russian régime, Israel'keh *Poyker* also played an important role in the *shtetl.* During the time of fairs, and market days, important official announcements were read out loud for the merchants and peasants: information concerning someone who had lost a piglet, or a calf, someone who had found something, government notices about taxes, the senior military, etc. At that time, Israel'keh would place himself in the middle of the market, and drum. When a crowd would assemble, the appointed individual would then call out what he had to, and Israel'keh would add a 'bombardment' on his drum, and then move on to the next corner.

At one time, he was also in the orchestra of the fire brigade, and also at May Day celebrations, and other musical undertakings, in which Israel'keh would participate with his drum, dressed in a black worn cap.

'Oneg Shabbes'

The name given to a merry Jewish man with a small yellow beard, who had only one eye. He was called '*Eyn oyg Shabbes*,'[265] which sounded like '*Oneg Shabbes*.' He was not a particularly observant Jew. He was dressed like a pauper, but was always full of life, and never complained. He never had any time.

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265 One-eye Sabbath.

Even on the Sabbath, he would come to pray at the first *minyan*, and then run off home. During the summer, he would deal with orchards and gardens. He would take hold of all the good orchards in the vicinity, and every summer, he would occupy such an orchard with his children, in a booth. In the winter, he dealt in whatever he could: fish for the Sabbath, a small keg of herring, eggs, fruit – so long as he could make a living from it.

Baylah the Dairy Lady

By Aryeh Kossowsky

She was tall, and lean, and there were always two pitchers of milk in her hands. For many years, she delivered milk to the houses. Early in the morning, she would distribute milk, and so as not to awaken anyone in the house – she would enter by a rear door, and quietly would take out the milk container in the kitchen, fill it with milk, and quietly steal out, like a cat, [being careful] not to awaken the children who were still asleep. Poor families, who no longer had the means to pay, would ask her to stop bringing milk, to which she said, with a smile: and is it because of this that small children shall be left without milk?... when you get any [money] then you will pay me.

One time she didn't come, and so my grandmother sent me to inquire as to what might have happened. I found her in bed. She had over-exerted herself carrying the heavy cans for a whole day. In her house, hungry pale children loitered about, without a drop of milk. [I asked] why do your children not drink any milk, they are not worse than any of our other children?... [She replied] if I give them milk, who will give me money for bread? My children can make do without milk as well....

Shlomkeh-Zerakh and Zundl

Shlomkeh-Zerakh – was short, with one foot shorter than the other, and walked as if he were dancing. He had wise, sharp eyes, and a goatee of a beard, and downward Russian-curled mustaches. His deaf wife would 'speak' with him, with special sorts of sounds, and he could understand her, and would answer her in *Mameloshn*, and she would understand. He was a sort of '*Fishkeh the Storekeeper*' one of Mendele's characters. He would call on all the houses, and everywhere was treated like a member of the family. He would recount news, tell jokes. If someone in town died, he would be asked: who, God forbid, was it? With a broken-hearted voice, he would then convey the identity of the deceased, and when the funeral would take place. On the Eve of Passover – he would clean kitchens in Jewish homes, and thereby earn money for holiday expenses.

'Crazy' Zundl – Actually was quite sane. However, he was constantly lost in thought, and plagued by misfortune. He lived in the White *Bet HaMedrash*. He was always dressed in torn clothing, and would sustain himself from those *groschen* he could gather from charity. He was talkative. Both children and adults would listen to his stories, and always get a laugh.

These are isolated personalities from our town whose memory I have been able to dredge up. Indeed, it is a sorrow that so many of them went on to be exterminated – without leaving behind any name, or trace of memory.

May their memory be for a blessing.

And These, I Recall

Zvi Khanit

A. *R' Yehuda Honya's*, my father and mentor, returned from the First World War, as a worn-out Russian soldier, spent, and unable to recover his strength. He died in 1921. He left a widow, my mother Heni-Rachel, and three orphans: Shayna, ten years old, me – age seven, and a little brother, Moshe, aged three. An uncle in America supported us. I studied at the Yeshiva in Zambrow, and afterwards in Lomza. In 1933, I entered the *Mizrahi Halutz* training program. In 1936, I made *aliyah* to The Land. My brother Moshe, after random wanderings, returned from the Red Army, and made *aliyah* in a shipload of refugees.

B. *R' Alter Dobrowicz*, the master of the *mikva*. He was an honest, loyal Jewish man, to his Maker and his people. He suffered a great deal in his life: His three sons: Moshe, Chaim, and another were plucked in the bloom of life, and he accepted it with grace, saying: God had trusted these precious pearls into my hands, and has taken them back – let His Name be blessed....

C. *R' Eli Portnowicz* and his family. He was a *Shammes* and a gravedigger for the Red *Bet HaMedrash*. He was a simple Jewish man, dedicated to his people. He wept at all funerals, and his heart never hardened in all the years of his life, being a gravedigger. Each *Rosh Hashana*, he was deeply moved during the recitation of '*u'Nesaneh Tokef*' – 'Who shall live, and who shall die,' because every death touched his heart.

D. *Chaim Stalmokh* and his family. A many of 'the people.' He observed the commandments, and gave of his money to charity. He was attentive in listening to each sermon giver, and also donating to these from his own funds. He was a lover of Zion, and supported the *Keren Kayemet L'Israel.*

E. *Myshel Stoliar* (The Carpenter). He worked to a remarkable old age, and did not want to derive anything from others. He donated benches and tables, his own handiwork, to the *Bet HaMedrash*. He permitted his wife, Chashkeh, to engage in community endeavors, in charity work, and in dealing with the needs of the poor and the sick.

F. *The family of Kawior the Melamed.* An honest and upright man, involved in Torah study, and led young people into doing the right sorts of things. He was a warm-hearted Jew, committed to doing God's work. His son, Joel, spent a number of years in Halutz training camp, and waited for a certificate [to emigrate]... until he was lost in the Holocaust. He has one surviving son in *The Land.*

G. *R' Yudl – the Headmaster*. He was immersed in his *Talmud* day and night. He withdrew in an ascetic manner and distanced himself from the everyday world. No event in the town could take him away from his study. He died with his *Talmud* in his hands.

H. *Yitzhak Rothstein the Tailor*. He would traverse the villages and return with work: sewing of garments for farmers. He was paid with village produce. He was an honest and wholesome Jewish man. He was lost, along with his entire family [sic: in the Holocaust].

I. *The Family of Levitan the Smith.* These were smiths that had a reputation [for their work]. Honest and straight. they made their living by the labor of their hands, and gave to the poor from their own bread, and also to charitable causes.

J. *Zundl the Pauper.* He would go over all door entrances to gather donations. However, all of his neighbors knew that he lived in straitened circumstances, ever hungry for bread, and the money that he gathered, he divided to charitable institutions, and sent food and money to poor people and the sick, crippled people, who were unable to provide for themselves.

K. Yankl David the Shoemaker,[266] son of the Shoemaker from Gać. He retained a journeyman to do the work, while he personally went about days on end, to gather money for the Yeshiva, 'days' for the students, and lodging places to spend the night. He would spend his evenings in study.

My Zambrow People

By Mendl Zibelman

A. Yudl Cossack

Approximately in the year 1900, a watchmaker named Yudl Cossack lived on the Kosciolna Gasse in the building of Berl Leibl Finkelstein, across from the drugstore. He repaired watches, and occasionally would sell a watch as well, a finger ring, or just plain jewelry for a bride. He went off to America because he didn't make much of a living, and he settled in Chicago. Here too, he opened a small kiosk for repairing watches. Knowing that in America there was no great love for Cossacks, he changed his family name to Ritholtz. When he had saved a couple of thousand dollars, and learned the native language, and the mind set of American business people – he fell upon the idea of how to become rich: many people need to wear glasses, but they don't change their reading glasses because of the time and expense, or just plain laziness in taking the time to find an optician after work. So he went and presented himself to a variety of large newspaper publishers, who have millions of readers, indicating that he would mail reading glasses for a rather minimal price. All that is required is to send him the number, or send the prescription from the doctor. Tens of thousands of requests began to arrive. He joined up with a factory that provided him with the reading glasses for a very low price, because it was worth their while for the thousands of orders. Orders grew to the extent that the factory no longer could keep up, because it could not produce at that level. So our Yudl opened his own factory for reading glasses.... and he became a millionaire. Today, his five sons run this well-branched company all over the country, and no one is able to compete with them...

B. Herman Yagoda

Yankl Yagoda, a Jew from Zambrow, took up his wandering staff, after the First Great Fire, and went off to America. He was constantly missing his family in Zambrow, and he traveled

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266 Omitted in the Hebrew text, and sixth in order in the Yiddish text.

back six times. This went on until the year 1914. He understood that there was no longer any purpose in staying in Zambrow – and in the end, he decided to take over his family to America, and permanently remain there. In the very week that the war broke out, he arrived in New York with his family: a wife and four children. One of his children, five year-old Herschel, or Herman, came to school, a year later, and excelled there, and also completed middle school. His father did not have the financial resources to enable him to attend university. Accordingly, Herman worked during the day, in a shop, and during the evening – studied, until he completed the course of study to become an engineer. He threw himself into researching what was current in this sphere. As a man of science with in the American Air Force, where he has already served for 15 years, it was his privilege to be able to participate in important discoveries in this area, the latest being the successful launch of a military-based 'satellite' into the stratosphere, and its successful return to earth, full of much data about the upper atmosphere, which are very important. Yagoda today is the pride of the American scientists, and most recently, was sent to Russia to give lectures about his findings in the stratosphere.



Page 553: Herman Yagoda

C. Senior Justice Markowitz

He was born in Zambrow with the family name Markhevka, and came to America as a nine year-old boy, and changed his name to Markowitz. He studied for, and completed preparation as, a lawyer, excelled as a judge and became a judge in the highest court of New York City.

He was close to his kinfolk. Immediately after the First World War, he organized a committee of *landsleit* to help needy brethren in the '*alter haym*.' To this end, the Zambrow Help Committee bought 1000 tickets to a theater performance, and sold them to *landsleit* and relatives for a higher price. During the performance, when the hall was full of people from Zambrow, Justice Markowitz, who had just returned from a visit to Europe, went up to the stage, and especially his home city of Zambrow. In a very emotional way, he portrayed the plight of our kinfolk, the burgeoning anti-Semitism, the incident of how the Poles had cruelly murdered the pharmacist Szklovin, and other Jews. His words had the intended effect, and awakened hearts, prompting them to offer help...

D. Bezalel

He was as gifted as the first Bezalel in the Pentateuch. Whatever he undertook to do with his hands resulted in a success. He was a natural-born carpenter, having acquired the skill without instruction, he could repair watches, etch writings, carve flowers out of wood, make a Holy Ark, carve creatures, arabesques, he could draw, outline with dyes and pens, and could sculpt. And all of this, he never saw at the home of his observant father, nor could he learn this from the artisans of Zambrow. His parents never took any joy from him, and constantly expressed their consternation: he has no head for the study of the *Gemara*, and they could not grasp how a young man like this could play around like this for days on end: drawing, making statues from clay and

gypsum, taking apart and putting watches back together again, mechanical things, in short, does everything in order not to study. If his parents would have understood him, or if the good community, or a wealthy patron discovered his talents, he would have become a world-class artist. However, he was not given any encouragement. On one occasion, a director of the Wahlberg Technical Institute in Warsaw took an interest in him, and it required Bezalel to learn some additional mathematics, physics and chemistry. They wanted to admit him to the Technical Institute without taking an [entrance] examination, and without any recommendation for six gymnasium classes, as was required. But his observant father and other good and religious people butted in, that is to say: Bezalel will go about without a head covering among gentiles? Many Jews studied in Wahlberg's school, and it had been founded by the very rich Jewish man, Wahlberg, with the objective of uncovering and developing technical skills and talents among Jews and non-Jews alike. Later on, Bezalel could have, for a nominal price, could have purchased the machines and equipment for the liquidated manual trades school in Lomza, which had been run by the Jewish-Russian Society to propagate manual craftsmanship among Jews – but he lacked the requisite money...

And so Bezalel was left with his dreams, and artistic striving to become a master artist... he married, and then divorced... embittered and disappointed in life, resigned from human ideals, he emigrated to America after long bitter years, becomes a peddler, 'finds himself,' and together with his Negro wife, get a place somewhere to set up a kiosk in a market to sell small combs, pins, thread, socks and handkerchiefs. For a long time, he broke off contact with his family in Zambrow, and with *landsleit* in America. His aging, fanatic, father constantly mourned his talented eldest son, and nobody knew if he was alive or dead. This writer once ran into him in the market, after a long, long search in a variety of address bureaus of the populace, beginning with his first address of many years back.

He was dressed simply and somewhat disheveled. He tried not to be recognized, and replied that he was not a Jew, and not the person that was being sought. Even when told that his father lay on his deathbed, and would like to hear something from him, as to whether he was still alive...

It was first only later, when his black wife walked away, did he break out in tears and reveal himself...
After that, he vanished yet again, along with his kiosk – apparently traveling away to some other town, on the marketplace...

Community Social Assistance

By Yom Tov L.

In writing about the institutions that offered community social assistance in Zambrow, it is not possible to pass over mentioning the institutions and people such as: *Bikur Kholim, Linat HaTzedek, Gemilut Hasadim*, and *Hakhnasat Orkhim*.

At the head of *Hakhnasat Orkhim* stood Zvi Tukhman (Herschel Pokczar), from the Yatkowa *Gasse*, who had a dairy store, and who fulfilled this mitzvah with is entire person and his money. He dedicated over 50 years to *Hakhnasat Orkhim*. He would look after poor people, assuring that they

would have a place to lodge, and would allocate 'plates' for the Sabbath, making sure everyone had a place to eat for the day. All itinerant paupers could find a place under his roof. An important guest, such as an itinerant preacher, or a Rabbi – he would billet in his own home. If a half-groschen for a pauper could not be had, he would give out a paper half-groschen with the stamp of *Hakhnasat Orkhim* on one side, and the words 'half a big one' on the other side.

Mones'keh was the most active worker on behalf of the indigent sick. He was the *Gabbai* of *Linat Tzedek* and *Bikur Kholim*. His house on the Yatkowa *Gasse* was full of poor people that had come to beg for assistance. He would personally run about to find people who could stay up nights with the sick.

Bunim Domb, a *Hasidic* Jew, was the head of the *Gemilut Hasadim*. The office was in his house on the Szwętokszyska *Gasse*, and he would be directing its efforts for days at a time, taking no compensation for his effort in doing so. Whether there was money in the treasury or not – every needy person left his presence comforted and encouraged.

Hakhnasat Orkhim

This was a venerable municipal institution, and at one time shared the Rabbi's residence. The Rabbi lived upstairs, across from the Red *Bet HaMedrash*, and *Hakhnasat Orkhim* – was downstairs, together with the residence and workplace of Binyomkeh *Schuster*. Binyomkeh was the *Shammes* of *Hakhnasat Orkhim*. It consisted of two large rooms, with about 6-8 sleeping beds and tables, with hay mattresses and blankets. Poor people, itinerant preachers, and ordinary guests, who were poor, would be able to get a place to sleep there. Every guest passing through, would receive a note from the *Gabbai,* Herschel Tukhman, or someone else, and was given a place to lodge on the strength of it.

Cleanliness was less than ideal, since this was not a consideration in those times. The important thing was, a guest was passing through, or an itinerant preacher was coming – he then gets a bed on which to sleep, when he brings a pass from the *Gabbai,* Herschel Tukhman. Binyomkeh Schuster occupied the two lower rooms, one of which was for sleeping, and the other for his work.

Hakhnasat Orkhim often served as a 'second home' for worship. On the High Holy Days, *Simchat Torah*, and regular Festivals or special Sabbaths. The *Hakhnasat Orkhim* was cleaned up, arranged for the guests to go to a host house early on, put the large table in the center of the room, covering it with a white tablecloth and – presto – a *minyan*.

We, the young folk, had our eye on something else there: there was a special closet there, kept under lock and key, in which hung the colored uniforms of 'officials,' such as Hussars, Cossacks, Generals and Admirals, with blue trousers, and red stripes. With French Hussar Caps, swords, and boot spurs, and a drawer full of masquerade paraphernalia, meaning masks, woven from a fine fabric, with beards, outsize noses, and red cheeks.

When a wedding would take place in the city, and the bride and groom were escorted through the streets to the synagogue – designated people, dressed in these costumes would be stationed to amuse the passers-by. The young people, who masqueraded in this way, did it to fulfil the mitzvah of gladdening the bride and groom. Yet, the parents would pay the group that did this a fee, called '*Hakhnasat Kallah*,' which was set aside for brides without means [or dowry]. Those so designated would proudly march in front of the bride, clanging their spurs, and waving their swords like real generals. They would never speak, so that they could not readily be recognized. They would signal each other by codes, which they would whistle to one another. This was why they were also called the 'pranksters.' The costumes and masks, however, belonged to '*Hakhnasat Orkhim*,' and Binyomkeh *Schuster* was the one responsible for their safekeeping. These costumes were borrowed from *Hakhnasat Orkhim* for a variety of festive occasions, for a fee, that was applied to other charitable purposes.

Purim was the day for these appointed young folks, special workers, who would come to act, to traverse the houses with a *Gabbai* or two *Gabbaim*, to gather donations for charity: *Hakhnasat Kallah, Hakhnasat Orkhim*, poor mothers, lying in confinement, orphans, and the like. For this purpose, the costumes would be rented from *Hakhnasat Orkhim*, for a fee which was then applied for other charitable purposes.

Medical Help

Everyone knew a bit of the healing arts back in the *alter haym*. If one caught a cold, and a soreness developed in the throat – the *Feldscher* swabbed the throat. One called special 'old crones' who applied *bonkes*. Everyone knew how to apply compresses on their own. As well, they could do similar things – massaging one's self with oil, with French turpentine. If 'bloodletting' was required, or incised *bonkes*, to allow the bad, black blood to be drained off, this was done on Friday towards evening, at the bath house. And Jews regained their health, thank God. If someone experienced stomach pains, one obtained a helping of *'ponzuvkeh'* – in the summer, when the fresh cucumbers came into season, then one made an enema, drank digestive leaves, and quite often took a small glass of castor oil. And thank God – one got better. For headaches, one had '*rumanik*,' (the little *rumanik* flowers were therefore called 'headache'). For an eye ache, one used *kvassborneh*, or strong extract from tea. To protect little children from an eye ache, the eyes would be rubbed with a fresh, just-laid egg. If a finger hurt, or a foot became swollen, God forbid, almost every home had an onion flowerpot, from which the leaves of the onion was torn off, and plastered in a way to allow its sap to exude. and then applied it to the bump or swelling. If one became hoarse, one made a *guggle-muggle*,[267] sucked on a sugared candy, or just drank plain warm milk, freshly milked from the nanny goat. Medicines were obtained from David Itch-Eizyzeh's in his store, or from Shlomo Pracht, etc. If that was not possible, one then went to the pharmacist. It is told that the oldest drug store was on the Czyzew *Gasse*. The pharmacist was named Baszensky, a Russian. His premises were not very orderly. Medicines were not recorded, and neither was the name affixed to the

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267 A Jewish version of egg-nog, involving heated milk, with raw eggs beaten into it, sometimes sweetened with sugar.

container, nor the name of the patient. Sometimes, as a result, very bad things happened. My mother, of blessed memory, when she was still a small girl, had her prescription switched, and was given eye drops instead of an internal medicine. Because of this, she nearly departed this world. Later on, the pharmacy was moved to Khaczynsky's house, where Benjamin Kagan lived afterwards. Later still, it was moved to the house of Yankl Bursztein. Also, the ownership of the pharmacy changed hands, until a young gentile from Żbreznica took it over, Skarzynski, was a man of means, who had studied at the Warsaw School of Pharmacy. He bought Khoniowsky's house on the *Koszaren*, and he set up his pharmacy there, which stood for many years. He was no great friend of the Jewish people. He did, however, act courteously, and was tolerant, because his entire income was derived from Jews. For years, he was the commandant of the Zambrow Fire Brigade. It was only, close to the First World War, that a Jewish '*sklad apteczni*'[268] arrived, Mr. Kaufman, who came from the Lithuanian *shtetl* of Vasiliski, and the Jewish pharmacist Mr. Szklovin. Both of these Jewish pharmacists and their families introduced progress to the Jewish community of Zambrow.

Feldschers

Among the oldest of the *Feldschers* in Zambrow, one remembers the gentile, Wyszynski. He was a specialist in maiming Jewish and gentile young men, in order to have them rejected by the military draft. He would make 'leeches' in the ears, induce ruptures in the abdomen, bend fingers out of shape, extract teeth – and similar things, so as to avoid having to serve the Czar. A gentile once informed on him: he had taken five Rubles, inflicted a sort of rupture on his son, and '*Fonyeh*'[269] took him any way. Accordingly, Wyszynski fled the country, and his lovely house on the horse market was bought up by Moshe Shmuel Golombek.

A Jewish *Feldscher* once lived behind Alter *Brievtreger's*[270] house, on the Ostrowo Road. He was a good friend of the nobleman Sokolewski, to whom he would apply *bonkes*, let blood, cut his hair, and give him massages – and thanks to this nobleman, this *Feldscher* began to deal in forest products and grain, which the nobleman made available to him. He became wealthy, and abandoned his medical practice.

A second *Feldscher* arrived, Yozhombek, a clever and good-natured gentile, who made a nice living from the Jews, and lived like a nobleman, in a beautiful villa, on the '*Powszwanta*.' When his wife died at an early age, many Jews came to the Roman Catholic church, to pay their respects and to follow her funeral cortège. Jews had a better opinion of Yozhombek's medical treatment than that of a doctor. He was a specialist in surgery, would operate, open wounds, and truly sew them up very well.

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268 Drug store.

269 A Yiddish variant of 'Ivan,' used by the Jews to derisively refer to the ruling Czar. Also, sometimes '*Fonyeh Goniff.*' It was an indication of their contempt for the Czar.

270 A Yiddish trade name, indicating this was 'Alter the postal letter carrier.'

At the same time, a Jew named David 'Yudises' also took on the practice of a *Feldscher,* whose family name was Rutkowsky, because he came from Rutki. His mother Yehudis, was the well-known midwife of Old Zambrow, who delivered almost all of the newborns there.

David 'Yudises' was a hygiene officer in the Russian army, and taught himself to speak Russian, play cards, and tend to the sick. He opened a 'shaving parlor' in Zambrow, and with an assistant, later on with his son, Chaim, he would give haircuts and beard trims to the Jews, and shave the faces of gentiles during fairs and market days. However, he would also go to apply *bonkes*, swab sore throats, cut [ingrown?] toenails, and rub the sick with turpentine, that is to say, give them a massage. David held himself as a great person, even though he was not much loved in the *shtetl,* because he was, so to speak, assimilated, and associated with the gendarmes and the police. In the fifth year (1905) he was suspected of being an informer, and that he informed on Jewish strikers (revolutionaries). Accordingly, Jewish young people, on one dark night, beat the daylights out of him. Because of this, the authorities gave him permission to carry a revolver. One time, on Purim, during an instance when noise was being made to assault Haman, in the White *Bet HaMedrash*, where he worshiped, he whipped out his revolver and shot into the air, and made a hole in the ceiling. From that time on, people were afraid to start up with him. A short time later, the Rabbi excommunicated him, because of a suspicion. In time, he left Zambrow, and went to Warsaw. I recall two things about him that I personally saw: on one occasion, the Warsaw Governor General, Skolon, came on a visit to Zambrow to inspect the military region. An honor gate was erected in honor of his visit, close to the barracks, and the Zambrow Rabbi, accompanied by several of the prominent *balebatim*, rode out in a carriage to greet him with bread and salt. Beside them, David Rutkowsky also rode in a carriage, dressed in a black coat, with white gloves, with a cylindrical top hat. He looked like a *Graf*, because he was a handsome, tall figure of a man. Accordingly, the Governor General took him to be the representative of the Jews, and shook his hand. The Rabbi and the *balebatim*, without white gloves, were shunted to the side, and the Governor General did not receive them. Well, this gave the *shtetl* something to talk about...

On a second occasion, I recall, it was on the Sabbath, and David Rutkowsky ascended the *Bima,* in the White *Bet HaMedrash*, and held up the Torah reading, not permitting the reading to continue. What was this all about? Early that Saturday morning, he had gone to apply *bonkes*, or leeches, to a gentile, who lived behind the cemetery. There, he spied dogs rifling graves, and dragging out bones. He raised a hue and cry to cause a higher fence to be erected for the cemetery. The public was aroused, and gave him justification: the *Chevra Kadisha* extracts so much money from the dead and the living, and there is no money for a fence. This went on, until the old *Gabbai* of the *Chevra Kadisha*, of long standing, R' Shmulkeh Wilimowsky, agreed to call a special meeting that Saturday night, to enable a fence to be built around the cemetery. The fence was constructed. And it was for this reason that David 'Yudises' was always recalled favorably.

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A *Feldscher,* who had a graduate diploma, used to live at Yankl Bursztein's house. This was at the expense of the Jewish community, who had an interest in having a Jewish 'doctor' in the city. The

Jewish *Feldschers* did not last long: if a *Feldscher* was good, he would be grabbed up by a larger city, and a bad one would be driven out. In the end there was a *Feldscher* (whose name I have forgotten), who had a large nose. His son, who also had such a nose, was raised, and married in Zambrow. He was a barber.

Doctors

There were two Jewish doctors in Zambrow in those years. One – Gordon, a good doctor, who rapidly became beloved in the city. So he was grabbed away by Ciechanowiec – a larger city. The second, Dr. Hendel, was a card player, and didn't last very long.

Among the gentile doctors at one time, there was Mikhailowski, who later became renown in Lomza as a gynecologist, and Czaplicki.

Czaplicki was a good and popular doctor. He lived on the Bialystok Road, in a nice villa, near Brzezinsky's house. Jews had respect for him. After many years of a good practice, he went off to Ostrowo, or some other city. In his place, Dr. Dombrowsky came, who came from a peasant family, of one of the nearby villages. In the first times, he was not well thought of, and experienced women understood medicine better than he did. A little at a time, he developed a practice, and remained in Zambrow for a long time. However, he never earned any great trust. Because of this, several families would get together, who had members that were sick, and brought in Dr. Landinsky from Lomza, a convert, or Dr. Katzenellebogen, Dr. Mikhailowski and occasionally an especially famous doctor from Warsaw. Many of the sick would gather together in one location, and that house assumed the appearance of a Polyclinic. Often times, the outside doctor would be paired with a local doctor for a consultation. The *Feldscher* would play the role of assistant or hygienist. On occasions, the sick might be taken to Lomza, to the doctor, or to the hospital.

It was rare to use the military doctors who allowed themselves to be well paid. During the First World War, the '*wojenny*'[271] doctors would render medical assistance free of charge.

The 'Hekdesh'

Near the bath house. was a small house, maintained by the Jewish community, and it was called the '*Hekdesh*.' There, the poor that were sick, were hospitalized, who had no place where they could be accommodated, people with infectious diseases, so they not infect their other family members, itinerant paupers, and those Jewish soldiers that had become critically ill, and wanted to die among Jews – they were brought to the *'Hekdesh*.' The '*Hekdesh*' played an important role in the *shtetl* – even though the premises were always not clean, and became a part of the expressive folklore as: *'dirty as a Hekdesh*,' or '*from the Bath to the Hekdesh*.'

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271 Military.

The Society of Brotherly Love

By Israel Levinsky

In the year 1899, a street paver came to Zambrow from Ciechanowiec, and took up residence in the *shtetl*. Seeing the difficult plight of the laborers and craftsmen, when they need medical help, he called a meeting of about 15-20 *balebatim*, and put before them a proposal to establish an assistance society, called '*Ahavat Akhim*' (Brotherly Love), that would help those in need while they were ill. I remember a number of those founders: Yom-Tov Herman, who had a tailor shop, Abraham Shlomo Dzenchill, the community activist, Ephraim Surowicz, the son-in-law of Michael Finkelstein, Bercheh Sokol the *Melamed*, and the writer of these lines. The burden of creating the statutes was placed upon me, involving the 20 points that a member needed to fulfil, such as: paying membership dues, staying up nights with the sick, looking after the medicinal requirements of the sick, etc. With the first of the funds, rubber *bonkes* were bought in Warsaw for our use, ice bags, thermometers, baths, and salves for rubbing on, castor oil, Burow's Solution,[272] English salt, carbolic acid for disinfection, enemas, etc. Yom-Tov Herman was elected as President, and also as quartermaster. In my cellar, shelves were built in, and a small pharmacy was set up. Against a pledged security – each member received whatever it was that they required.. Non-members had to bring a note from the management, and paid a small usage fee, along with pledging security, in case the item in question was broken while in his possession. I kept the security pledges in a special drawer, for a number of years, and a portion of them remain unresolved to this day... when the pharmacy got larger, and the number of sick grew larger, God forbid it should happen to you – I turned over this function to R' Abraham Shlomo Dzenchill, who, together with his wife, Et'keh, devoted themselves to the assistance of the sick among the itinerant poor. In the year 1905, approximately six years into the existence of the society, a delegation of 'strikers' came into my home, meaning they were organized labor revolutionaries, and demanded that I turn over the old medical instruments to them – for their 'Patients' Inventory.' I did not agree to this, because I possessed only one individual opinion, and after all, there was a committee that should decide this, despite the fact that in my heart I felt their request was justified, since they were fighting for a better tomorrow, and have a greater need for this assistance. In short, they came every day, in the evening after work, and confronted me with all manner of troubles – that they would suffer, if they would not receive this aid. The committee did not meet, for a variety of reasons, and each of them managed to squirm out of it, pointing to me. This went on until I was able to extract a minimal agreement from the principal activists in the group, and one time on a summer's evening, several of the strikers came to me, with boxes, under the direction of one of them, a man named Herschel from Sniadowo, a wheelwright (a distant relative of mine) and the 'Gypsy Tough Guy' a harness maker (I have forgotten his name) and took out the entire pharmacy of the group and transferred it to some other location.

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[272] Burow's solution is a pharmacological preparation made of aluminum acetate dissolved in water. It was invented in the mid-19th century by Karl August Burow, an ophthalmologist.

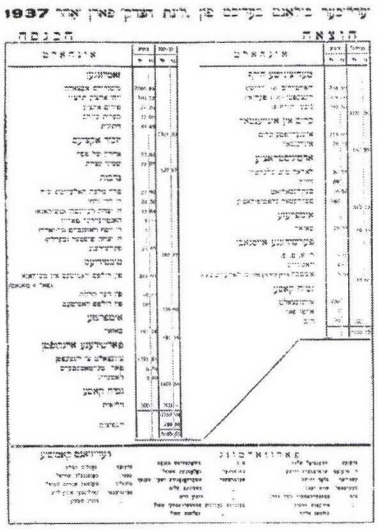
The preparation has astringent and antibacterial properties and is used to treat a number of skin conditions such as insect bites, rashes caused by poison ivy and poison sumac, swelling, allergies and bruises. Burow's solution is traditionally applied in cold compresses over the affected area.

Help for the Homeless

When the First World War broke out, in the years 1914-1915, Zambrow was transformed into a central point for homeless Jews. Truly, it was located between two strategic points: Czerwony Bór and Czyzew. In itself it was not strategic, and the shtetl lay to the side, at a distance from the front, and was generally secure from German air attack. There was only one occasion when a German plane was downed, on a field, near Kaufman the Coat Maker, in which the pilot showed himself to be able to set fire to his craft. At that time, Zambrow was full of homeless people from Jedwabne and Nowogród, Myszyniec and Ostrolenka. When the Germans later bombed Lomza, tens of families from Lomza fled to Zambrow. The young people organized themselves, together with the delegation from the 'Society of Russian Cities,' who sent a lady doctor here, a lady *Feldscher*, and also foodstuffs with which to provision a free kitchen, medicines, etc.

Among the organizers were the student Zusmanowicz from Lomza, the student Gutman from Lomza, Khezki Mark, Yehoshua Domb, Eliezer Wilimowsky, Shimon Sokol, Alter Rothberg, the writer of these lines, and others. At night, young people would be hanging around the unpaved Lomza-Zambrow road, with 'permissions' in hand, because one was not permitted to be out in the streets at night, to receive newly arriving homeless people and giving them a night's lodging and something warm to drink. The free kitchen, in the school building – would distribute about 300 midday meals a day. In the bakery, beside the White *Bet HaMedrash* (at one time Nachman the Baker and *Shammes* used to live there), matzos were baked for the homeless and the poor, and all of the Zambrow youth would come together there. The work was allocated, and everyone participated: pouring waters, flour mixers, dough rollers, oven heaters, etc. We would go to lodge at the home of the sick at night, carry out disinfections among the homeless, who lived under terrible crowded conditions – several families to a single room.

The entire cadre of young people worked for the needy, giving help to the homeless.



Page 563: The Annual Balance Sheet for 'Linat Tzedek' for the Year 1937

'Linat Tzedek'

The sick that should have gone to a hospital needed to remain at home for lack of a hospital in the *shtetl*. In order to alleviate the distress of the family, who had to attend to the sick person day and night, or the difficulties imposed on a craftsman or laborer, who needed to sleep the night, and could not maintain watch at a sickbed – '*Linat Tzedek*' came to offer help. Its members were largely laborers – craftsmen who worked a long, hard day, and spent the night with the sick. *'Linat HaTzedek'* had a storage facility with medicines, medical instruments, and was

connected to doctors, pharmacists, *Feldschers*, etc. Anyone who needed help got it, without any difficulties. The Zambrow Aid Society, in Chicago and New York, would regularly contribute their help for this.

R' Yehoshua the *Melamed* stood at the head of '*Linat Tzedek*.' During the last ten years, or more, its President and leader was R' Shlomo Dzenchill, and he was committed to the undertaking. From an accounting of the year 1938 we read:

1270 instances of illness. 2340 medical instruments were distributed, medicinal help in the mount of 5,179.47 zlotys was given out. Medical instruments, that were valued at 815.11 zlotys were purchased.

Shlomo'keh Dzenchill

He was one of the nicest sorts of person in the city, serving as a bridge between the common man and the intelligentsia. He was the son of Lejzor the Butcher and Taiba-Shayna. Handsome, of middling height, he was a man full of humor. By trade, he was a carpenter, a carver – a student of Berl and Myshel Stoliar. Together with his father, and brother David Leibl, provisioned the Russian barracks with meat. He was an accomplished man, being versed in accountancy, a fire fighter, and an active member in a number of organizations. As a principal activity, he committed himself to '*Linat Tzedek*,' for which his home became the office of the organization. Everyone came to him for help, and he was tireless in extending such help to everyone. He stood in contact with the Zambrow Society for Help in Chicago, and almost every month, he would receive a set sum of dollars from them at his address, in the mail for '*Linat Tzedek*' and other groups. He earned the greatest trust from everyone.

He had a food store on Wilson *Gasse* in the last years.



Page 565: Entrance to the Photographer's Studio, used mostly in taking pictures to be sent to sons and husbands in America.

The Ladies Auxiliary Society

During the first days of the German occupation, the shortage of foodstuffs intensified. Prices rose from minute to minute. The Germans confiscated all things required for sustenance, grains, flour, dried corn, woven goods, hides, potatoes, oil, honey, meat, etc. Hunger in the city intensified. Active women organized themselves, who in their undertakings had provided help to the needy even back under the Russian régime, and they devised means by which such assistance could be rendered. They provided aid to the sick, poor women who lay in confinement, poor brides, and provided for orphans, etc. In the meantime, the occupation administration brought cohorts of refugees from the areas around Pinsk, Brisk, Telekhany, and Baranovich. They billeted them in the barracks previously used by the Russian army, that had been displaced from their residence. [These women] would organize 'flower days,' concerts, theater presentations by local amateurs and from outside, whose revenues would be applied to their worthy purposes. Their watchword was: 'Let there be no one among us who goes hungry, and suffers.'

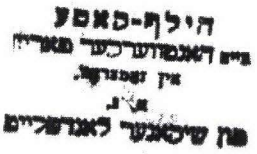
After the war, their work became further branched out. The Society remained active until the Holocaust, and even in the Holocaust years, it spread its protective wing over the city, organizing help, and standing on the watch. The ladies, Esther Gordon, mother of Lola and Niuta, Sarah Mark, Jocheved Srebrowicz, Mrs. Szklovin wife of the Pharmacist, and others, were the dedicated workers of the Society, and dedicated days and nights to their sacred undertaking.

They were in constant contact with our brethren in America, who consistently sent funds and showed an understanding about their work.

Excerpts of Correspondence



Page 566: (Left): Esther Gordon



Page 567: Stamp of the Relief Branch of the Handworker Union

Here we record excerpts from a number of letters from Zambrow to America, during the last year of its existence....

10.2.1938

To the Zambrow Help Committee in Chicago

A List of the Needy

We are sending over to you, a list of those needy people whom we have been able to assist each month, with your help:

Yaakov K. A young man under nursing care, 10 zlotys.
Shimon R. For the ride to Lomza to the hospital, 10 zlotys.
Fy'cheh B. A sickly young woman, under nursing care, 10 zlotys.
Shakhna P. Under nursing care, 5 zlotys.
Pearl G. Under nursing care, 5 zlotys.
Rivka K. Convalescence, 10 zlotys.
Chana Ts. Sent to the Warsaw Hospital, 20 zlotys.
Freida G. An operation in Bialystok, 20 zlotys.
David G. Under nursing care. 15 zlotys. etc.

A list of 30 additional brothers and sisters who were ill. It is signed by the Chair, Esther Gordon, the Secretary Rachel Gottleib, Treasurer, N. Finkelstein.

11.10.38

... it disturbs me that we are always writing to you about want and those who are sick. What can we do? When the dear summer arrives, we must care for a part of those who are sick, to send them to a dacha in Czerwony-Bur, and when winter arrives, we have to be concerned for nursing care, wood, coal and clothing, the need is great and we are accosted on a daily basis by those in need, sick, or sapped of strength. What can we do, since the government provides us with no support, and we have to do everything for ourselves. Please forgive us, and understand us. You are the one and only hope of the sick – first there is God, and after that, you brothers and sisters from Zambrow in America.

Esther Gordon, Chair

20.12.38

We received the 78 zlotys through Mr. Shmuel Finkelstein. We are moved by this donation, which was provided by the wife and children of my unforgettable brother-in-law Shlomo Zalman Goldman ז"ל, that has been given for our impoverished here in Zambrow. On the Saturday night of the *parsha* of *Vayigash,* all of the aid institutions will gather in the *Bet HaMedrash*, and we will mourn and eulogize him at a memorial.

We were unable to have this memorial earlier, because of Hanukkah. With consideration, his sister-in-law, Sarah Mark, Vice Chair.

A Support Fund at the Handworkers' Union

In the last years, the fund of the Handworkers' Union was active, while it is true that the 'Savings & Loan Bank' existed, where one could go to borrow money to purchase goods and materials, etc. But this was a bank, and it had to be run like a bank, with notes, guarantees, interest, discounts, etc. The working man could not always easily or quickly receive the necessary required assistance. The Support Fund therefore came to him with help sent from America, and could offer him the loan and thereby help him.

Here, we bring excerpts from correspondence that clarify the nature of its activity.

The Support Fund at the Handworkers' Union in the name of the Chicago Landsleit



Page 568 (Top Left): 'Tzal'keh Yelen



Page 568: *(Bottom): Kaplan the Shoemaker & Wife, at the Mother's Tombstone*



Page 568 (Top Right): Yitzhak Golombek

2.1.1938

[To] Our Best Friends and Landsleit in Chicago

We are sending you the balance [sheet] of our Support Fund, which records what we have done with the money that you have sent us. From the central office (Warsaw) we have received, in accordance with your instructions, 250 zlotys. On the spot, we collected 78.50 zlotys from the following 21 people: Leibl Gorodzinsky (Watch Maker), Moshe Stupnik (President), Baruch Szturman (Miller), Abraham Naimark (Locksmith), Chaim Rothstein (Watchmaker), Herschel Sosnowiec (Treasurer), David Miszkowsky (Committee Member), David Kadzidło (Baker), Yaakov Granica (Merchant), Chaim Golombek (Merchant), Chaim Bursztein (Tailor), E. Bonenfeld (Tailor), Abraham Rothberg (Tailor), Eli Rothberg (Tailor), Mordechai Freedman (Baker), Abraham Krupinsky (Boot Maker), Nathan Krupinsky (Baker), Yaakov Yellin Mane's (Boot Maker), Yehuda Lakhower (Boot Maker), Yitzhak Blumowicz (Secretary), Yitzhak Leib Dzenchill (Carpenter).

Up to 1/1/1938, we have received from you – 576.35 zlotys, and our seed capital is now 879.85 zlotys. In this past year, we have given out 74 loans, each at the rate of 25 zlotys. Every week, the [borrowing] members bring back to the fund a small sum, without interest, and in this manner we help get them on their feet, and literally save their lives. Please send us funds in zlotys, because we have great difficulty if the funds come in dollars... Signed by:

M. Stupnik – Chair, Sosnowiec – Treasurer Abraham Rothberg – Committee Member

Y. Blumowicz – Secretary.

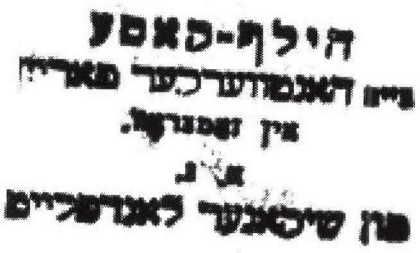
Dark Waves Pursue Us Relentlessly

The Eve of *Rosh Hashana*, 5699 [273]

Dear friends, your money, [in the amount of] ten dollars, has arrived, and was immediately distributed: two loans were given to needy people. We are closing the old year with oppressed spirits, feeling abandoned, and in need, hungry, and under confiscation, and a deficit in life itself. What will come with the new year? We live in fear of the very present, with a fear of death – that might come tomorrow. Dark waves pursue us relentlessly, assaulting us from all sides, and we like poor lambs, stand by and simply watch, waiting to see what they will do to us. One ray of light shines into our field of view – the help of our brethren in America. [Because of this] we do not feel so abandoned... a new year is approaching, and we wish you a year of blessing, success, and may you be inscribed and sealed for a good year, and may our Union be a sacrifice for you, and our suffering an expiation for our loyal *landsleit*.

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[273] September 13, 1939.



Page 567 (Bottom, Left): The Stamp of the Relief Branch of the Handworkers' Union.

Who Knows What Will Become of Us...

1939

We thank you for the 79.50 zlotys. At our general assembly, with the participation of 102 members, we accepted a resolution of gratitude to the Chicago Help Committee. During the assembly, we listened to the memorial for the Zambrow philanthropist, R' Zalman Goldman, and thanked his wife and children for their contribution benefitting our treasury. The audience was so inspired, that one of them, a member, leapt to his feet and recited the *Kaddish* in memory of the deceased. New decrees keep on coming. Events taking in place in Germany do not augur well for us. Our situation becomes more and more grave with each passing day, and weaves a catastrophe over our heads with an increasingly rapid tempo. [Dear] brethren, see to it that we are not left to abandonment like prickly thorns in some corner of desolation. All of us suffer hunger. Jews, who were *balebatim*, come and beseech us for a loan to buy bread for their children...

Centos

(Care of orphans, protection of children and the young)

In accordance with the initiative of a few community activists, teachers, doctors and ladies, the head leadership in Bialystok decided to establish a branch in Zambrow. [This was done] in December 1936, aimed at rescuing tens of Jewish children from the ravages of tuberculosis and other diseases. Until July 1, the food center provided nourishment to 130 Zambrow children, and disbursed 763.75 zlotys. The extra money required was generated by Jews of Zambrow. In July, the head office in Bialystok was supporting 200 Zambrow children for fresh air, and provided a subsidy of 1,750 zlotys. In November, a fund-raiser for shoes was held, raising 200 zlotys, etc.

Here, we include excerpts for the letters of the Zambrow 'Centos' to the Help Committee in Chicago, that shed light on its work, for the benefit of the children of Zambrow, in the final years before the Holocaust.

To the Zambrow Friendship Society of Chicago

26.11.37.

We have received the $40 that you sent us, at the rate of $10 per month.

What have we done with the money? And, what are we doing in general?

First, we organized a colony for half the summer for 200 poor children, who are exhausted and hungry. They received good food, fresh air, and were under the supervision of competent pedagogues. This cost us close to five thousand zlotys. Accordingly, we were left with a deficit of 505 zlotys. We covered this through our own efforts, and partly with the help you provided to us.

We are implementing, for the second winter, an initiative to feed 120 poor school children and *Heder* students. In the morning, they get a warm breakfast, which cost us 225 zlotys a month. We receive 100 zlotys from the head office of 'Centos' in Poland, and 52.5 zlotys from your society. The remaining 70 zlotys we cover on our own. This is hard for us: the Jews of Zambrow hunger, and do not have enough to buy bread for themselves, so how can they support us?

We are now embarking on creating a day home for 40 young children, up to the age of 7, and rescue them from certain oblivion. Well, then, how are we to take money for this?

This week, we carried out a fund drive for clothing, and made 30 new pair of shoes for barefoot school children, and over the winter, this came to 215 zlotys. We write little, but do a great deal...

For information purposes, we wish to record for you the names of those of our active members:

Chair – the teacher A. Dan, former President of the Cooperative-Bank, Dr. Zarkhi, Dr. Fakhucky the Dentist, Rothman of the town council, Mrs. M. Regensberg, the *Rebbetzin*, Mrs. Jocheved Srebrowicz, wife of the community President, and the daughter of Yankl Zukrowicz, Mrs. Koczor, a teacher, and daughter of Alter Mark, Albert Glicksman, a merchant and very capable community activist, Mrs. Kolodny, the daughter of Avcheh Rakowsky. Moshe Rosen, a merchant, a member of the community leadership, and of the bank leadership, etc. The Secretary is M. Khodorowsky, a grandchild of Avcheh Rakowsky.

2.8.1938

We have received the 265 zlotys. This year, we have also organized a half-summer colony for 179 children, for 4 weeks duration, being unable to do more. It cost us 80 zlotys a day. On September 1, we are organizing a children's home for indigent orphans, who will be able to receive three meals

a day there. This has to cost us 500 zlotys a month. If we could receive at least $25 from our brethren in Chicago, New York, etc., we could come up with the rest on our own. Secretary, A. Glicksman (See pp. 110-111 above).

Resentful Tongues...

There were resentful tongues to be found, who informed in America about the 'Centos' Help Committee. 'Centos' defended itself [citing that]: it was under the strict control of the central committee in Bialystok. Every month, they send a rigorous accounting for every penny that comes in, and goes out. The Chicago committee then demanded that the 'Ladies Auxiliary,' and the *'Linat HaTzedek'* become part of the 'Centos' leadership – however both sides did not agree: each works in its own sphere... and as a result, suspicion grew even stronger, and as a result, the Rabbi of Zambrow wrote personally to the Help Committee:

> 'Seeing that it was shared with me, that many complaints have arrived [to you] about the local 'Centos,' I must write to tell you that this consists only of malign rumors, perpetrated by those who wish to take over the leadership themselves, for reasons that I do not know, whether for the prestige of the position, or something else. It is for this reason that I am writing, as I am not in the 'Centos' leadership myself; I personally pay dues every month, and what I write – is what I see with my own eyes. Like the '*Bais Yaakov*' [School] here by us, for Jewish girls, there is the White *Bet HaMedrash*, that had previously been called '*Bet HaEytzim*' – there more than 100 girls are students there, and there is a teacher and also an assistant, it was also arranged there to bring for all the school children, rolls, milk and bread every day. I saw this with my own eyes, and it is self-understood that they give the same thing that is given in the public schools, for all students, [especially] the poor. Accordingly, I ask you to ignore rumor-mongering, and like correspondence, which is incorrect. Accordingly, I ask that you donate, since this is a great mitzvah, done for hungry children, and because of this good deed, may we all be privileged to witness a speedy redemption in our times, Amen.
>
> Signed Dov Menachem Regensberg
> The *Bet-Din* Senior of the Sacred Congregation of Zambrow (Stamp)
> (Image of the Original is on Page 240).

The Bialystok central office also received an inquiry from America, from the Help Committee, about the 'Centos' activities – and they replied that one can have the fullest confidence in 'Centos,' and its work is solely for the benefit of hungry and frail Jewish children.

The malign rumors did not have the desired effect. Quite the opposite – on July 30, 1939, a sum of money arrived from Sh. Dzenchill, for the four institutions: *Linat HaTzedek*, the Manual Trades Union, and Ladies Auxiliary in the sum of 80 zlotys each, and for 'Centos' – 360 zlotys, a support for the half-summer colony.

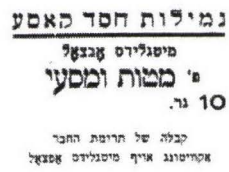
The last letter from 'Centos' was from March 10. 1939: a thank you for the funds to feed 80 children, We ask for clothing for the naked and the barefoot – for Passover. Evidence was shown they were getting ready to organize a summer colony, one way or another. It was immediately disrupted...

The Germans killed the little children.

The Gemilut Hesed Fund

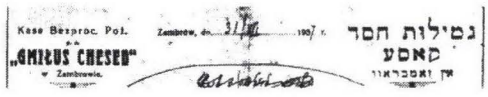
(From a letter to the Zambrow Help Committee in Chicago)

31/12-1937


גמילות חסד מאסע
מיסגלידס אבצאל
מ' ממות ומסעי
10 גר.
קבלה של תרומת החבר
אקחיטונג אויף מיטגלידס אבצאל

Page 571: (Top, left): Receipt for a donation from a member.

As is known to you, the Joint has established a network of *Gemilut Hasadim* Funds throughout Poland, among them, including Zambrow. We are literally providing life sustenance to craftsmen, small businessmen, etc. At this time, the Joint is demanding that you become a partner with us, and that each of you should donate one dollar a year. Other *landsleit* are doing so. We have also been told that it is possible that the Joint may have to suspend its assistance, the Polish government having allocated 7.5 million zlotys to help the small businessman – but not Jews. The anti-Semitic press is demanding that the *Gemilut Hasadim* Funds be shut down entirely, and that the Joint, that is undergirding Jewish workers and small businessmen, be liquidated entirely throughout Poland. We are hoping that you will not abandon us, but rather follow the example of Kolno, whose *landsleit* have created a capital base for their fund in the amount of $500.


Kasa Bezproc. Pol. Zambrow, dn. 31/III 1937 r.
„GMILUS CHESED"
w Zambrowie.
גמילות חסד
מאסע
אין זאמברא

Page 571 (Bottom): Stamp of the Loan Society in Zambrow

Signed: President – – – Secretary: Moshe Levinsky, Committee Members: Hersh Sosnowiec, Elyeh Rothberg, Leib Rosing, Chaim Bursztein.

My Father and the 'Gemilut Hasadim' Society

By Chaim Ben-David



Page 572:(Top Left): Abraham Herschel Kagan

The Pinkas of the Society

This Society was apparently the product of my father's initiative (I do not know if he was also one of the founders and among those who established it). From the day I became aware of my surroundings, two things stand out in my memory about this Society, and they are: the *Pinkas* of the Society was always in our book closet, and was taken out of our house only for the Society's annual meeting; and the Society's annual Sabbath feast (or *Kiddush*), and the meeting on that same Saturday night. A) The *Pinkas*, oh, the *Pinkas*! It was as thick as three volumes of the *Gemara*,

in the format of a *Gemara* that was printed in Lublin, covered in a shaded leather, with large gold letters on the spine of the binding, and the front of the *Pinkas*. I could not remove and lift this *Pinkas* until I reached the age of seven, but when it had been lain on our table, I never grew tired of turning its pages, nor of sating my eyes and heart with its splendor. And what was in the *Pinkas*? Pages of thick paper, bright and as strong as parchment. The first page, the frontispiece – truly a gate. There were two lions on top of the two columns of the frontispiece, and in the gateway, was the name of the Society, etc. And all of these were in different colors, bright and pleasant to the eye, and the faces of the lions – gold, this being my father's handiwork. After the frontispiece – on several of the following pages – the By-Laws and Regulations of the Society, written in large letters by a Religious Scribe, using the script normally reserved for a Torah scroll. There were forty-seven such By-Laws in the *Pinkas*, the numerology being equivalent to the Hebrew word '*Ki Tov*' [It is Good]. Honest – only forty-seven By-Laws. The last section, designated with the number '*ki tov* –' contained, in place of an actual By-Law, a list and summary of the history of the Society, about the first *Pinkas* of the Society, and those assets that were consumed in the 'First Great Fire,'and its subsequent renewal of activity after a number of years of inaction.



Page 572: (Top Right): Yekhezkiel Zamir

The By-Laws were written in a pure linguistic style of the Prophets – as was the custom – and the spirit of a lyric song sang through each and every By-Law. Each By-Law ended with the word '*Hesed*' or '*haHesed*,' or '*Hasadim*,' in large letters. In those places where the context did not make it easy to finish off the sentence with one of these words, a natural ending was appended, comprised of several words like: '*Kakha yihyeh mishpat osey haHesed*'[274], or '*veHaya shalem ma'aseh ha Hesed*.'[275] And years later, when I asked my father who had written these By-Laws, in such a beautiful style, he paused slightly, as if sunk in his own memories, and answered with effacing satisfaction, but not without satisfaction that the style of the writing had found favor in my eyes: I was the one who composed these By-Laws, and they were found pleasing also to R' Abba Rakowsky (a scribe, and a scholar of the Enlightenment period, a resident of our city), who praised him exceedingly. After the By-Laws – a second frontispiece, and after it, pages and pages of the names of the members of the Society. For each name – the name of the member, and the name of his father, but for his secular family name – there is a separate page. The name is rendered in very large letters of print, using magnificent colors, and in differing styles, the products of my father's imagination. Each page differs from that of its companions both in color and style. On both sides of the name, there are decorations of all sorts of flowers, rendered in all the colors of the rainbow. These decorated names were the handiwork of my father. During the cold winter days, when he was free of his usual work, during the long nights when he was too tired to sleep, he would sit and invest a great deal of time, enormous amounts of patience, and a great deal of imagination into this sacred undertaking. And despite the fact that he would engage in this work, after many long hours of tiring study, it is certain that he would not let his time simply idle away, following the dictum of 'glorifying the *mitzvah*.'

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274 Thus shall be the judgment of those engaged in good works.

275 And so the good work shall be made complete.



Page 572: (Bottom): A Group of Adherents of the Bund in Zambrow

Many times, when I would sit and page through this *Pinkas*, deriving pleasure from its beauty, and from the spirit of holiness that hovered over it, his friends from days gone by, especially the 'craftsmen' from Wysokie, who lived in our house, as told previously, would say to me: 'You haven't seen anything, and it is a shame that you never saw the previous *Pinkas* that went up in flames, because had you seen it, you would understand what beauty really is.'

When my father had passed away, and I was in America, a great worry arose in me about this *Pinkas*, and I commented on this concern, in a letter to his friends, and those who respected him, who would come and go into and out of my father's house in the last years of his life, indicating that his books should be willed to his son. R' Sholom Rothbard, owner of a confectionary store (this R' Sholom was present when my father died, and in a letter, described to me the 'death kiss' of my father: on the morning of his death, R' Sh. came to visit him. The man who had spent the night with my father told him that my father had not slept normally, and therefore, returned home after morning prayers, to his home, laid down, and dozed off. R' Sh. sat beside his bed and waited. When he awoke, R. Sh. wanted to serve him a glass of warm milk, but my father said to him: I just had a good, sweet sleep, and I cannot recall such a sweet sleep ever in my life, and I didn't want it to stop. Please allow me to doze off a little longer,' upon which he closed his eyes and ceased to breathe). In my letter, I asked that the *Pinkas* be looked after and treated as a surviving artifact of folk art. And it was my advice to send it for permanent archiving at the National Library in Jerusalem, or to the Jewish Museum in Vilna. R' Sh. answered me in his letter, that were my father still alive, he would be grieved by the proposition of sending the Pinkas to 'places like those,' seeing that the *Gemilut Hasadim* Society still exists, and the *Pinkas* is the property of the Society (and in this he was right). Was the *Pinkas* saved from the extermination and annihilation of our community among all the other ancient sacred Jewish communities? Can it yet be found in the hands of some non-Jew who knows how to appreciate it, and recognize it as a memorial to a Jewish community, to sense its beauty, and the dedication to the *mitzvah* of good works of its martyred Jews?

The Sabbath of the Society

On every Sabbath of the *parsha*, *Mishpatim*, there is a line that reads: 'If it is money you will lend to my people...'[276] and it was this way it was explicitly written down in the Pinkas – all the members of the Society would gather at a spacious home (usually the home of the philanthropist R' Yaakov Zukrowicz, but I can recall, at least, one Sabbath at the home of R' Yeshaya Henokh, the son-in-law of R' Yudl Czerwonogura) for the *Shacharit* and *Musaf* service. Each and every one would be called up to the Torah, and pledge a donation (mostly two or three silver Rubles). From this income, and a comparable sum when a new member was initiated into the Society – initiation dues, secured loans were made, without interest.

After services, a blessing was made over some suitable beverage, '*lekakh*' was eaten, and each person went off to their home. My father and mother engaged in the preparations of the feast. While I was still a young child – and afterwards, as an older boy, and I was allowed to go from one premises to another (as my father explained to me) I would be given the great and important task of bringing the cake and drink, and also my father's prayer shawl, etc. (the Torah scroll was brought by the *Shammes* on the Eve before the Sabbath) to the place of worship. There is no doubt that even in this, it was my father's intent to inculcate in me, and educate me about the *mitzvah*, because otherwise, how would you explain why he would take me on Saturday night as well, to the follow-on meeting?

It is worth documenting a 'terrible incident' that once happened in connection with the 'feast:' Guests that came to our home would also attend the prayer services and the following repast. One time, after the meal, the lady of the house, wife of R' Yaakov Zukrowicz, let it be known that a silver goblet from off the table had disappeared. The *Gabbaim* of the Society, who had not yet returned to their homes, manifested worry and sorrow. Understandably, they suspected a pauper, who had participated in the feast. After the feast, this pauper had gone off to the home of a wealthy man to take the Sabbath meal. They went off to the house of that person, and told him that the goblet had disappeared, and it was decided to search the clothing and pockets of all those who had participated in the feast. The latter responded: in a pleading voice, 'here is my jacket, hung before you, and please search in my pockets and those of the others.' When they performed the search, and found nothing, they asked the guest to permit them to search his pockets as well. The guest refused, protesting vigorously. He argued that it was always the poor who were suspected, etc., and he took it that they searched the coat and pockets of the master of the house only as a formality. Understandably, this raised the suspicion even higher, and they began to feel his pockets forcibly against his will, and here, a clanking was heard in a small sack in his pocket. They took the small sack out of his pocket, but immediately threw it from their hands, because it was full of copper and silver coins, but the goblet was not to be found in his pocket. They asked him why it is that a Jewish man with a white beard, like him, would be carrying around money on the Sabbath? Why is it that he hadn't left the money, on the eve of the Sabbath, in the hands of the overseer of *Hakhnasat Orkhim*? He answered that he didn't trust him. Well then, they asked, why didn't you put the money in the hands of the Rabbi, as was the practice of many other guests? He responded that he did not trust any man. As you

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276 Exodus 22:24.

can understand, they did not return the small sack to him on the Sabbath, because it was considered to be '*muktza*.' [277] and the guest was ashamed, it seems because of this, to demand his money back. On the following day, he left the city, and did not come to demand his money, which most certainly would have been returned to him, seeing that the 'stolen goods' were not found to be with him. The small sack with money, was placed in the Society treasury for safekeeping. Before Passover of that year, the goblet was found in a corner under the sofa in the house of the hostess, in which the prayer had been conducted. My father was deeply troubled (and certainly the other *Gabbaim* were also grieved), that the feast had led to such a debacle, to cast suspicion upon and then embarrass a man innocent of any wrongdoing, etc. My father, who never was appointed as a *Gabbai* of the Society, because he never accepted a formal nomination, made no attempt to shuck the responsibility for this 'terrible incident.' He waited a long time for the return of that visitor, to return the money to him, and to beg for his forgiveness, The end of this 'incident' is not known to me, to this day.

On the Saturday night of the Society, they would gather for the purpose of electing new *Gabbaim*: who will evaluate the worth of presented security, and decide on whether or not to extend the load that was sought, and in whose home the 'money box' of the Society will be lodged (an iron box). The first would issue a note to authorize the loan, and the one, in whose house the strongbox was kept, would place the security and the note in the box, disburse the funds to be loaned, and make an entry in a separate ledger. Also, on the First Day of the new month of *Heshvan* (Accountants/Auditors, in Hebrew, are called '*Ro'ay Heshbon*,' and hence the play on words). And all of this was done for a heavenly cause, to please the senses of the Divine, to demonstrate that his sons we providing an eternal continuity to His honor, and His Torah.

This recognition brought to light yet another discussion, for the sake of heaven, that my father would bring up on *Shemini Atzeret*, in the *shtibl*:

According to the *Shulkhan Arukh*, one begins the recitation of '*Mashiv HaRuakh uMorid HaGashem*' during the *Shmoneh Esray*' prayer of *Musaf*. It was the *Shammes* that would announce this prior to the commencement of recitation of the *Shmoneh Esray*. Well, it appears that , in a few congregations, and perhaps limited to those places of worship of the *Hasidim*, they were not in the custom of making this announcement, and the congregation would begin to recite '*Mashiv HaRuakh*' at the *Mincha* service of *Shemini Atzeret*. My father, as related above, who was in the habit of studying the rules of the holiday before each holiday, was of the opinion, it would seem, that in the place where there was no man (that meaning – a *Shammes*), the responsibility the devolved on one of the worshipers to make the '*Geshem*' announcement, and this is what he did. Having no alternative, all of the worshipers would then begin to say the '*Mashiv HaRuakh*' prayer in their own silent prayer. There were those who protested, arguing: 'By us, we do not follow such a custom, etc.' And my father [would answer]: 'How can you have a custom that does not follow the law? Even '*The Rav*' in the *Shulkhan Arukh* rules otherwise. And who is a greater authority in the customs of the *Hasidim*?' Almost every year, year-in and year-out, this discussion would go on for a long time after *Musaf*, and this 'recalcitrance' on the part of my father, who as a matter of course did not like to participate in conversation, was done out of respect for the holiday, to enliven and make joyful,

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277 The ritual designation of anything considered forbidden to be touched, or carried, on the Sabbath.

his participation in a conversation of heavenly purpose. It is possible that either knowingly, or unknowingly, his so-called 'protagonists' sensed this as well, since they also would engage in a very lively and animated repartee in honor of making joy on the holiday.



Page 576: An Outing in the Cieciorki Woods

My Mother, Alta Sokolikheh

Who, in our city, did not know the charitable woman, Alta Sokolikheh? And who does not recall her deeds? When she built her house, she made a vow, that she would dedicate space in it for the *Chevra Shas*. She honored this vow, and together with her daughters, became the house servant: without any pay, you understand, but only because it was a *mitzvah*! With the growth of those attending, the filth also increased, since people spit on the floor, threw candles stubs, cigarette butts, and like behavior. On the eve of every Sabbath or Festival Holiday, together with our mother, we would draw water from the well, wash the floors, clean the walls, tables and benches, and shine the lamps and candlesticks. We would work hard, not in keeping with our age. But our mother would be satisfied, and say with a smile: 'Let it be for a *mitzvah!*'

It was also our lot to become the permanent cleaners for a neighbor, who sewed clothing, but was not particularly well off. Well, his wife would go to give birth, and as luck would have it, every year right at Passover time, so my mother, every year, with our help, would go there and get the residence prepared for Passover, cleaning and decorating it for the holiday. If people had to come for a *Brit Mila* there – they would enter the house of the sewer as if it were a palace, and didn't even recognize his house. Our mother ran our father's store. However, her [heart and] soul was dedicated to helping the sick and the needy. She could never eat only for herself. Having before her a complete list of poor people who were sick, and in need of some cooked food – she knew which of the sick needed a bit of chicken soup, a piece of meat, which poor woman, lying in confinement had a yearning for a bit of soup, a glass of 'ladies brandy,' with which to fortify herself. Diapers and receiving blankets, little shirts and body coverings for the newborn – everything was her concern.

[In running our father's business], she always kept the needs of the suffering and the needy in mind. Here she would extend credit to one person, and there, lend money for a period of time, and for a third, provide a guarantee at the bank. Once, she pawned her golden chain, to help someone, and being afraid of our father, she bought another one, that was not gold, but just gilded... and our father noticed this on the eve of *Rosh Hashana*, and was actually pleased.... we would constantly be running around with small pots of food, and packages of foodstuffs, to be distributed to the poor. If a girl from poor circumstances needed to have a wedding made for her, my mother simply knew no rest. She would make everything for the bride from a dress to shoes. On one occasion, when I went to the clothes bureau to put on my Sabbath clothing – I no longer found it there – my mother had given it away to a poor bride to use as her wedding gown. However, I became cross with her: what am I to do now? She then says to me: you are a socialist, well, show your socialism now!...

Moshe Klepfish ז"ל



Page 577: Untitled Photo, Presumed to be Moshe Klepfish

Moshe Klepfish, the grandson of the Rabbi, was born 20.3.1915 to his parents, Aharon-Yaakov, and Sarah. He received a traditional education from his father the Rabbi, Aharon-Yaakov Klepfish, in *Heders*, and the Yeshivas of Lomza and Klecko. He later devoted himself to general studies, and also completed a course in *Halutz* training, in the Vilna vicinity, in agricultural management (his brother-in-law, the famous Yiddish writer, Chaim Grade, separated for long life, recalls him many times in his book, 'Sabbaths at My Mother's,' as an idealist, a man with a broad heart, and other good traits, as an idealistic young man). In 1935, he came to the Land of Israel. He becomes a military guard in Jerusalem, serving to protect Jewish lives in dangerous places. He also prepared himself for the entrance examinations to the University of Jerusalem. However, when the war broke out, as a pacifist, he could no longer remain this way. When the gruesome details of the destruction of Polish Jewry arrived, he was impatient to join the battle against the fascists and the Nazis. As soon as the Jewish military formation was established, he volunteered for the Jewish Brigade, despite the fact that he was discharged several times because of his poor eyesight. When he was at the front, he committed

himself to Jewish education in the war zones. After the war, he settled in Menachemya, and devoted himself to with full diligence to research work in agriculture. He actively participated in the Jewish War of Independence. On 27 Nisan 5708 (6.5.1948) he fell at Mount Tabor in the reprisal actions launched against the Arab bands that had murdered seven young Jews in Bet-Keshet (among them the son of the President [Yitzhak] Ben-Zvi ע"ה, Eli Ben-Zvi).

(Cited in accordance with the compendium of the fallen heroes 'Gvilei-Aysh', First Volume)

Chava Sokol-Almog

By Z. Zamir

She was the talented daughter of the leather merchant, R' Israel Sokol. She was one of the best students at the Polish gymnasium in Zambrow. Her knowledge of the Polish language and literature was an example for the gentile students. However, she joined the *Halutz* movement, and came to the Land of Israel in 1926. She worked in Petakh-Tikva and later was a student of Rachel Yanait, the wife of President Ben-Zvi ז"ל, in her school of agriculture. She married Yehuda Almog, in 1933, and worked in Ramat-Rachel and during The Second World War, she served in the women's division, A.T.S. After three years of service, she returned home to Kfar Gileadi. She was an ardent idealist, with a real feel for the work of the kibbutz movement. A tragic incident cut short her life on 4 Adar II, 5722 (10 Mar 1962).

Golda Zarembksy Rutkewicz

Golda, the daughter of R' Lejzor Zarembsky, joined the Land of Israel Labor Movement at an early age. After her father passed away, when the family suffered want, she declined the promise of her friends to help her travel to America, but rather she chose to travel to the Land of Israel as a *Halutz*. She married Yaakov Rutkewicz, a member of the *Jugend*, and settled in Petakh-Tikva, and built a beautiful home there. A serious illness robbed her from us in the prime of life.



Page 578: Golda Zarembsky Rutkewicz

The Smoking Embers, Rescued from the Fire

As is the case in similar instances, this list has ben re-alphabetized in English, with a number indicated for its place in the original Yiddish/Hebrew Text.

Last Name	First Name	Description	Row
Olsha	Israel	Son of the Melamed, Olsha	3
Olsha	Chana	Wife	3
Olsha	Leah	Daughter	3
Olsha	Reizl	Daughter	3
Appelbaum	Simcha	A butcher's Son	2
Arlinsky	Menachem		1
Arlinsky	Chaim		1
Borenstein	Sarah	Berl's Daughter	5
Blumrosen		An Orphan Girl -- Father's name was Friedman	7
Blumstein	Sholom	Shayna Bayl'keh's Grandson	6
Bursztein	Eizik	Chaim *Schneider*'s Son	4
Domb	Yenta	The Pickle Maker's Daughter	18
Domb		Husband of Yenta	18
Finkelstein	Gershon	(Poland)	44
Friedman	Moshe	Ephraim the Hatmaker's Son	45
Furmanowicz	Rikl	Daughter of the Glazier	43
Furmanowicz	Rachel	Daughter of the Glazier	43
Gershonovich	Moshe	Grandson of Meir-Yankl (in Israel)	14
Givner	Khatzkel	Son of Chaim Hirsch	11

Golda	Aharon	Boxmaker's Child	13
Golda	Itcheh	Boxmaker's Child	13
Golda	Chaya	Boxmaker's Child	13
Goldberg	Dvora	Zabikower	17
Golombek	Yitzhak	Son of Joseph Golombek	9
Golombek	Wife	of Yitzhak	9
Golombek	Zalman	Son of the Melamed	10
Golombek	Chaim Reuben		15
Grumazen	Maness		16
Gutfarb	Pesha	Polotka's Daughter	8
Gutfarb	Child	of Pesha	8
Yerusalimsky	Moshe	Son of the Turner	24
Kalesznik	Chaya	Daughter of the Boot Maker	50
Kalesznik	Sarah	Daughter of the Boot Maker	50
Kalino	Anna	The Sour Cream Maker's Daughter	49
Kaplan	Kadish	Son of *'Oneg Shabbes'*	51
Karlinsky	Shmuel	Son of Aharon Leibl	53
Kasztewo	Moshe Aharon		52
Kaufman	Chaim	Son of the Pharmacist (Killed in Germany)	46
Kaufman	Chay'keh	(Died in Israel)	47
Kaufman	Child 1	Chay'keh's child	47
Kaufman	Child 2	Chay'keh's child	47

Kawior	Itcheh		48
Lehrman	Shlomo	Grandson of Eizik Sepper	25
Levinsky	Moshe	In Israel	27
Levinsky	Wife	Of Moshe	27
Lichtenstein	Israel	The Son of the Cloth Storekeeper from Rutki	26
Lifschitz	Lejzor Ber		28
Lifschitz	Wife	of Lejzor Ber	28
Nagurka	S.	Son of Chaim Nagurka, Bootmaker (Grandson of Shammai Lejzor)	29
Pekarewicz	Shlomo	Hona the Butcher's Son	40
Pekarewicz	Shlomo	Yossl the Butcher's Son	41
Planczuk	Chana	Daughter of Yehoshua the Melamed	42
Regensberg	Wife	Grandchild of the Rabbi	57
Regensberg	Child	Grandchild of the Rabbi	57
Remblanska	Regina		55
Rosenberg	Joseph		58
Rosenberg	Wife	Daughter of Joseph Fiontek, *Shokhet*	58
Rosenberg	Child		58
Rothberg	Rivka	Of the Bialystok *Gasse*	54
Rothberg	Husband	of Rivka	54
Rothbard	Reizl	Daughter of Abraham the Sour Cream Maker	59
Rothbard	Husband	Of Reizl	59
Rubin	Rachel	Daughter of Avigdor the Ironmonger (In Israel)	56

Rubin	Sholom	Child of Rachel (In Israel)	56
Rubin	Leah	Child of Rachel (In Israel)	56
Schuster	Abraham		60
Schuster	Miriam		60
Schuster	Moshe		60
Schuster	Mordechai		60
Sendak	Ahar'keh	Grandson of the Cloth Storekeeper	36
Smoliar	Herschel	(In Warsaw)	37
Smoliar	Esther	Herschel's Sister (Paris)	37
Sokol	Esther Shayna	Israel'keh Sokol's from Pliac	38
Sokol	Chana	Sister of Esther Shayna	38
Sokol	Dina	Sister of Esther Shayna	38
Sokol	Menucha	(Israel)	39
Sokol	Mordechai	(Paris)	39
Sosnowiec	Bendet	Herschel *Blekher*'s son	32
Sosnowiec		Brother of Bendet	32
Spivak	Alta	Daughter of Yankl Bursztein	30
Spivak	Daughter	of Alta	30
Srebnik	Mendl	Grandson of the Yendzhever	33
Stupnik	Yaakov	Son of the Żbreznicer	31
Stupnik	Yitzhak	Son of the Żbreznicer	31
Stupnik	Moshe	Son of the Żbreznicer	31

Stupnik	Yankl	Mottl's son	34
Sukharewicz	Sarah	Daughter of the Zaramber	35
Szklovin	Mir'keh		61
Szklovin	Rat'keh		61
Szklovin	Husband	Of Rat'keh	61
Taback	Gershon	Grandson of the Tavern Keeper	12
Tukhman	Zulcheh	Son of Abram the Smith	22
Tukhman	Mordechai	Brother of Zulcheh	22
Tykoczinsky	Max	Gedal'keh's son (died in Israel)	22
Tykoczinsky	Child 1		22
Tykoczinsky	Child 2		22
Wallach	Ruzha	The Contractor's Daughter	19
Warszafczyk	Henokh	Son of Abraham	20
Wilimowsky	Elazar		21
Wilimowsky	Lola	Wife of Elazar; Daughter of Gordon	21
Yismach	Pearl	Daughter of Yudl Shokhet	23
Yismach	Child		23

Zambrow Landsleit Around the World

זמבּרוֹבאים בּתּפוֹצוֹת

לאנדסלייט אין דער וועלט



Page 580: *Chaim Joseph Rudnik*
Representative of the Lomza-Zambrow Society of Buenos Aires, Argentina, standing at the 'Red Mogen David' Ambulance donated by the Society to the city of Tel-Aviv.

Our Brethren in The United States

The Zambrow Branch No. 149, in the 'Arbeiter Ring'

Mendl Zibelman Tells:

Page 582: *Three Generations*



Herschel Zibelman, son Moshe and Grandson Berl
(The Son, Grandson and Great-Grandson Respectively, of Israel David the Shammes, ז"ל)

After the First Great Fire in Zambrow, in the 90's of the past [sic: nineteenth] century, there were 1500 *landsleit* from Zambrow to be found in New York City, and nearly the same number in all other American cities combined. During the first twenty years of the Zambrow immigration, *landsleit* came here to get a leg up: to work, save a bit of money, and then travel back to Zambrow to build themselves a house, open a store, or a shop. Accordingly, they were not organized in America, despite the fact that for support, they came to one another – whether for morale, or substance. The synagogue was the place where they would get together. The small towns of the Lomza *Guberniya* united here, and founded a small synagogue: Lomza-Gać, Zambrow-Rutki, Zambrow-Lomza, etc. It was here that they would meet one another, gladden themselves on the Sabbath and Festivals, at a *Kiddush*, a folksy wedding, or some other happy occasion. It was here that the newly-arrived Zambrow immigrant would come, the 'greenhorn,' to meet with *landsleit* and obtain that assistance that he needed.

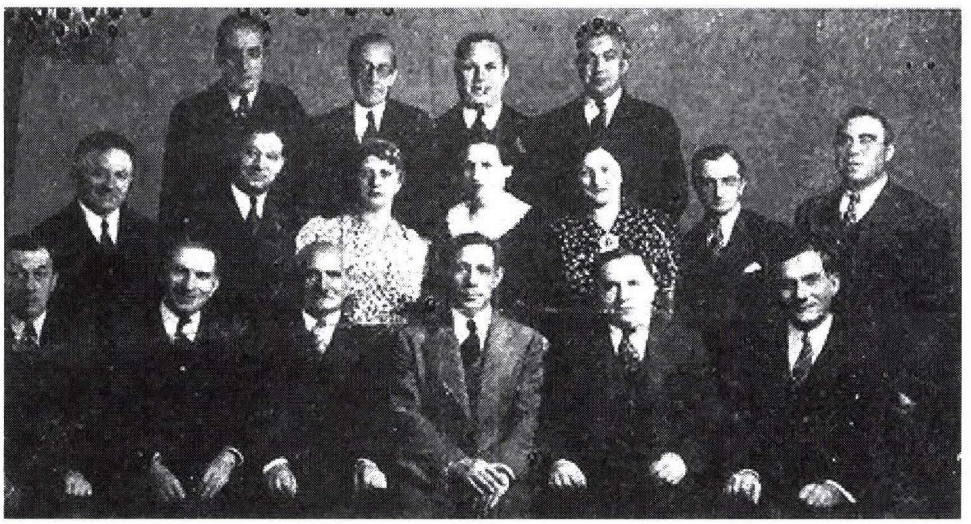


Page 583 (Top):Mrs. Malinowicz, from among the oldest Zambrow landsleit in the USA

After the 'fifth year' (1905), following the first Russian revolution, Zambrow revolutionaries began to stream to America. These were coming to stay, to become citizens of the country. Accordingly,

the question arose about getting organized, and joining an '*Arbeiter Ring.*'[278] Most of the Zambrow *landsleit* found work in the needle trades, meaning, in the so-called 'sweat shops,' in accordance with the sweat-shop system of the times, that prevailed in the garment industry of those times. The work was broken up into all manner of branches: designers, basters, pants-pressers, jacket pressers, makers of buttonholes, button sewers, finishers, 'examiners,' and others. *Landsleit* would accordingly be bringing new 'greenhorns' into the shop, and providing him with work. This engendered a fight among the trade unions, who competed for the unorganized workers, who depressed the wages and stood outside those positions, on the job, that had been unionized. But this is a chapter unto itself. A bit at a time, the landsleit from Zambrow joined the *Arbeiter Ring*, the order that brought security, and which accepted Jewish workers of all trades. It was only in the year 1909, after two years of effort, and the influence of active members, that the Zambrow Branch, with its 60 members auspiciously came into being. In a short time, the membership came to 400 members, and became one of the most influential branches in the *Arbeiter Ring.*

The first leaders of the branch were: Yankl, the son of Notkeh Kaplan. (He died while young); the brothers Benjamin and Shlomo (Sol) Borenstein, the sons of the *Poritz* from Korytk. It is understood that many of the founders are no longer alive.



Page 583 (Bottom): 50th Year Jubilee Arrangements Committee of the Zembrover Progressive Branch 149, Workmen's Circle, New York, October 17, 1939 in the auditorium of the Central Plaza

First Row (From the Right): M. Plafsky, Benny Miller, G. Padnik, B. Bernstein, V. Goldstein, and H. Bernstein. Second Row: Benny Cohen, Goldberg, Molly Muscha Miller neé Rachelson, S. Bordy, Hofnagel, N. Brody and M. Levin. Third Row: V. Zinowicz, B. Epstein, B. Goldberg, and G. Rubinstein.

The current leaders are: Zelig Dzenchill, son of Moshe-Leibl and a grandson of Lejzor the Butcher, and Nachman Pluczenko, son of Fukhaler, who had a 'Tea House' on the *Uczastek*.

In the year 1941, when the 'United Zambrow Society' began to collect money for the benefit of refugees from Zambrow, who were expected to come after the war, the Zembrover Progressive

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278 Workman's Circle.

Branch 149 appointed five of its members to work alongside the Society: M. Horowitz, M. Orschutz, B. Bernstein, H. Shayna, and Y. Goldberg. The Chair was: A. Lev; Treasurer: N. Pravda; Recording Secretary: B. Bernstein; Corresponding Secretary: Y. Walters; Loan Secretary: M. Plavsky; Hospitaler for Brooklyn: M. Horowitz; Hospitaler for The Bronx: Y. Goldberg.

In the last years there was only about 10% *landsleit* from Zambrow in the branch. The Zambrow founders passed away, and new members were decidedly few.

The Zambrow Help Committee in Chicago

In Chicago, there was a meaningful center of Zambrow *landsleit*. They would meet frequently, receiving wishes from home, and sending help to relatives in Zambrow. Immediately after the First World War, they organized themselves into a special Zambrow Relief Committee and continuously sent over money, clothing, packages of food, and even ship's passenger tickets to needy *landsleit*. At first, they called themselves the 'Friendship-Union.' A few years later, when life returned more or less to normal, and the Joint Distribution Committee enfolded all of the needy *shtetl* locations within its ambit, the Zambrow Help Committee gradually dissolved.

Approximately in 1936, alarming letters began to arrive from the '*alte haym*,' reporting danger to life and limb – and a protracted decline. The brothers in Chicago then awakened themselves, and organized the dispatch of speedy help anew.

A crisis meeting was called. The call for help from the '*alte haym*' united the brethren. The Relief Society was renewed. The following landsleit joined the Committee: Hyman Eisenman, a son-in-law from Zambrow, originally from Tyszowce; Oscar (Alter) Meisner, son of Shmuel Ber – Treasurer; Mendl Zibelman, son of Israel David – Recording Secretary; Mendl Stone (identical with Mendl Finkelstein) son of David, Breineh-Pearl's – Financial Secretary (he was the one who carried out the principal work, and stood in contact with Zambrow); Shmuel Bloom, a member of the Kwiatek family; Yitzhak Appel, originally from Jablonka; John Karpin; Ralph Monkasz, son of Leibl Monkasz, the 'Colony Smith' at the horse market. The Monkasz family is very prominent here, and today lives in California. Later on, Mrs. Stone became active in committee work, the wife of Max Stone, in the role of Recording Secretary.

The Committee accomplished a great deal. It sent a regular monthly stipend of money to the needy Zambrow institutions (see above pp. 109-116).

When the terrifying war broke out, and Poland was cut off from the surrounding world, the committee, once again, dissolved.

The History of the Zambrow Society in the United States

By Yitzhak (Itcheh) Rosen



Page 586: Chairman Yitzhak Rosen Has the Floor

A Zambrow Society has existed in New York, for over 70 years, and is tied up and bound to the General Professional Movement of the Jewish street, in the capitol city of the United States. This was at the end of the prior [sic: Nineteenth] century. Jewish workers were generally minimally represented among the ranks of those engaged in metal production, or other technical and mechanical fields of endeavor. All were drawn to the needle trades. The Jewish workers in tailoring, as well as all workers in other branches of the needle trades, were bay and large concentrated on the East Side of New York. Working conditions, in those days, were rather hard, perhaps the hardest that we now are capable of imagining. A 'trade union,' for the needle trade workers as yet, did not exist. One worked for starvation wages, from early in the morning until late into the night, in a manner as depicted in Morris Rosenfeld's 'shop songs:' 'I have a little son... but seldom, seldom do I see him.' The worker-immigrant could not get himself educated after work, – he was exhausted, and out of his meager wages, he had a need to save some to send back home, to support his wife, his aged parents, sisters and brothers, until he would finally be able to bring them over to himself. The worker had no awareness of social or community interests. The environment about him was alien, the whole American way of life, the language.

The typical Zambrow worker would meet with his fellow countrymen in the 'market' (e.g. the place of work) or at a celebration held at the home of a senior *landsman*, who had become something of a citizen already, and one engaged in a discourse [as follows]: It is necessary to create a society comprised of people from Zambrow, so that it would be possible to get together, to enjoy company

among one's own kind, both on the Sabbath and Sunday, provide help to newly arrived brothers, enabling them to stand on their own two feet on this foreign soil. The foundation for such a Society could only be religious, because those from Zambrow, like the majority of other Jewish immigrants of that time, were 'Synagogue Jews,' as they are called here, having come to New York with their *Tallit* and *Tefillin*. So, at first, a Zambrow synagogue was established. It was to this place that one came for prayers, and it was hear that one could listen to a service being led by someone using the familiar prayer chants of the *alte haym*, as well as being able to receive regards from back there. It was here that the 'green' immigrants from Zambrow would first come, who needed help and support – spiritual and material. Should it have happened that bad news would come from Zambrow, about a kinsman who was impoverished, or sick, for example, a collection was taken up right on the spot, and several dollars were immediately sent off to Zambrow. If a misfortune befell someone in New York, the news immediately reached the synagogue, or to the President, and action was immediately taken, whatever it was that was necessary to do: visiting the sick, providing for a bed at a hospital, arranging for a call by a physician, coming to the assistance of a family in need, and, God forbid, arranging for a traditional funeral, if required, etc.

After the First World War, when the level of immigration increased, the *landsmanschaften* became more and more sophisticated, and undertook more of a communal character. Life in America changed for the better: the working man fought for and achieved a shorter work day, and higher wages. Evening classes were opened for the study of English, and for general education. The heavens grew lighter for the Jewish working man. The new wave of immigration from Poland and Lithuania brought with it a better trained element. From Zambrow as well, more educated workers came, members of the '*Bund*,' '*Poalei Tzion*,' '*Tze'irei Tzion*,' and they injected a new spirit of progress and community concern into the Zambrow Union, or 'Society.' Also, the assistance rendered to our brethren and sisters in the *alte haym* was put on a more solid institutional foundation: constructive help was offered through organized bodies, instead of help by individuals, systematic organized help, not accidental, or incidental. This continued until the outbreak of the Second World War, which wiped our *alte haym* off the map.



Page 587: A Jewish Woman in Her Sabbath Finery (Yitzhak Rosen's Grandmother)

Even then, both alarmed and shocked, we the *landsleit* of Zambrow proclaimed, and implemented the speedy assistance rendered to those surviving brethren in the camps and did not permit them to be neglected or suffer from want. As far as possible, we sent packages, money, and connected them with friends, sent them ship's tickets, papers, brought them to America, helping those who had elected to go to the Land of Israel. The Zambrow Society excelled in its help rendered to its own (see above in this book).

With the establishment of the State of Israel, the Society awakened to a new endeavor, work on behalf of the new Jewish State of Israel. Extending its generosity, the Zambrow Society bought 'Israel Bonds,' and this work continues [to this day]. The Zambrow *landsleit* in America are an important force in the community life of American Jewry.

On the Saturday night of *Hanukkah*, December 15, 1953, a very hearty and historic celebration took place in honor of the 60th anniversary of 'The United Zambrow Society.' Chronologically, the celebration was a little bit late. The banquet, under the direction of the writer of these lines, was carried out with great solemnity and spiritual uplifting. We shared memories, and wished each other the privilege of attending many more such anniversaries. The years flew by quickly, and we carried out with even greater emotional uplift, the 70th anniversary of the active functioning of our Society. After the Sabbath, December 17, 1960, on the night of the 5th candle of Hanukkah, at the 'Clinton Plaza' hall (Clinton Street, New York), we celebrated the 70th anniversary of The Zambrow Society. Our great joy, was however tempered with the admixture of joy and sorrow: 'the Mother, Zambrow' no longer existed!...

Occasional ships would still bring us news from the living from that place – and then, none. We find yet one solace in our heart: spiritual Zambrow continues to live among us. We carry it around, with pride in our Zambrow pedigree, having something to remember, and something of which we can be proud.

And another thing: To memorialize the mass immigration of the end of the 19th century, and the first two decades of the 20th century, part of Zambrow [Jewry] was saved in America. To memorialize the wide-ranging Zionist work of both young and old, and especially the significant number of Youth Groups, hundreds of young people managed to save themselves by going to the Land of Israel. We take great pride in them, and we consider ourselves fortunate, that our *landsleit*, the children of Zambrow, helped with the rebuilding of the Land of Israel with their sweat and blood. Also, our Society had taken a significant role in this endeavor: we have, to date, bought 'Bonds' that are worth $13,000. At various opportunities, we have also donated up to $25,000. Together with Lomza *landsleit*, we have donated $5,000 to underwrite the construction of a *Volksschule* in the *Negev*. We have donated up to $10,000 to the United Jewish Appeal, having also donated many times to the *Histadrut*, the *Haganah*, the building of houses, and more, and more. Our hearts and our hands remain always open for the building of our homeland.

Paging Through The Book of Minutes

By L. Yom Tov

For the Years 1943 - 1950

Paging through the thick book of minutes for eight years of work on behalf of the Zambrow Society in New York, I sensed the brush of the bright rays of light, that emanated toward me from this blessed work.

A. Community Functions

The society carried out functions that really belonged to an independent community. Here, we are talking about a synagogue and *Hazzan*, about the High Holy Days, about providing the congregation with an *Etrog* for *Sukkot*, about a *Kiddush* for *Shemini-Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah*, about a *Kiddush* for the *Chevra Kadisha* on the final day of Passover, about providing the

needy with *Maot-Khittin* for Passover, in the old-fashioned manner of home: to give, or to take. They even concerned themselves with assuring that prayer conducted in the Zambrow synagogue followed to old tradition as it was in Zambrow of old, not as it was done in 'progressive' Jewish America. If anyone thought about shutting down the synagogue because of the high expenses, President Waxman would say: the synagogues in Zambrow have been burned down, let this synagogue, at the very least, remain as a memorial. And [consequently], the Zambrow synagogue continued its existence...

B. Chevra Kadisha

The *Chevra Kadisha* here, functions on a very moving basis. Our *landsman*, Morris Borenstein, who was called Mysh'l Bursztein, the frail old-age baby of Yankl Bursztein ז"ל, is dedicated to the *Chevra Kadisha* with his life and limb. For many times, he was elected as the President of the Society, and for the entire time, he was the funeral director. At every committee meeting, at every general meeting, he would, with sorrow present: so-and-so passed away on such-and-such a day, according to the Jewish calendar, in order to designate the *Yahrzeit* date, as well as the date on the secular calendar. Everyone then rises to show respect for the deceased, and he, as *Gabbai* of the *Chevra Kadisha*, says a few words, as an expression of sorrow on behalf of the *landsman* who had left us. The funeral director looks after the funeral, the grave, the gravestone, and proposes a committee to assume responsibility for preparing and carrying out the unveiling of the headstone. He looks after this, and the approach to the cemetery, whether it is 'Beth David,' 'Mount Hebron' or 'Washington Cemetery,' that it be plastered and maintained as it is fit to be. He sees to it that the deceased is accorded the proper rights, and given final homage. He takes it seriously not to permit the cemetery workers to rush their work, and not wait for all of the brother-*landsleit* to gather for the funeral. He takes responsibility for the decision that the *Chevra Kadisha* has no right to move the body from its place without the express permission of the funeral director. He is the one who gets aggravated, and angry, if too few people come to the funeral or to the unveiling.



Page 591: Zambrow Ladies in the U.S. celebrating the 12th Independence Day of The State of Israel. Third from the right is Mrs. Savetsky. Third from the left is Ms. Chaya Waxman. At left is Adele Rubinson, neé Wierzbowicz

He alerts and reminds everyone at each gathering, that one should anticipate the need for substantial fund raising, once the terrifying war comes to an end. He causes a rebirth of the 'Ladies Auxiliary' getting them

to be ready to send substantial and immediate help to our brothers and sisters, who will have saved themselves.

C. Caring for the Sick

As had been the case once, in the *shtetl*, where Jews looked after the impoverished sick, to see that they would have access to a doctor, medicines, visiting the sick, looking after their recovery, this also was the practice in the Society. At each meeting there was always presented: so-and-so was sick. At that time, a brother was designated to visit the sick patient and come back with a report. The committee had special emissaries to be sent to a number of hospitals. In this regard, Louis Zedeck and Willy Rosenblum, were the designees whose job it was to arrange for hospital care in Brooklyn hospitals; Benny Cooper, and afterwards Asher Shark and Noah Dzenchill – in the hospitals of Manhattan and The Bronx. And at each meeting, a report was heard about the state of health of the patient. When the sick person leaves the hospital, the presents the committee with a statement from the hospital, and obtains his sick benefit, which he is entitled to. If one of the brothers falls ill, and is unable to go to work, he presents a certification from a doctor, and gets an unemployment benefit.

D. Fraternity

If a happy occasion occurs in a brother's family: a wedding of a child, a *Brit Mila*, a *Bar-Mitzvah*, he comes to a meeting and 'requests a committee.' Accordingly, a number of members are sent to the happy affair, in order to convey best wishes, in the name of the Society, to the celebrant, and they bring a gift, of $10 or more for the wedding couple, or the *Bar-Mitzvah*.

When a member reaches the age of 50, 60, or 70 years, he is honored with a banquet and he is also given a handsome gift. It was in this way that the 70th and 75th birthday of Brother Sholom-Abner Borenstein was warmly celebrated.

If a brother became financially stressed, he would often be able to obtain help through a loan, which he would get from the 'Loan Fund' (The *Gemilut Hasadim* Bank) for which Joseph Savetsky served as the 'manager' for a long time.

Older members and war invalids were excused from paying dues. If it occurs that a *landsman* is left alone in his older years, a place is arranged for him at an Old Age Home, and *landsleit* do not neglect the obligation to come and visit him. When R' Alter the *Maggid* became old, the 'Ladies Auxiliary' created a pension for him. Prominent *landsleit*, such as R' Alter the Maggid, Reverend [Simcha] Maslow,[279] or R' Yaakov Karlinsky, would eulogize those who passed away. During committee

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[279] Aaron Maslow writes: My grandfather was a very modest man. He had *smicha* but never called himself "Rabbi." In this country, in listings, he would list himself as "Reverend." This was in the phone book too. My grandfather came over by himself in 1924. On occasion he would go back. He brought over the family in 1935.

meetings, and [general] meetings, a celebrant would always bring refreshments. The brothers permit themselves to indulge in a snort of *schnapps*, and some tasty foods.

E. The Preparations after the War

The brethren did not rest while the war was going on: what is going to happen once the war is over? The Chair, Morris Borenstein, once flamboyantly declared: Brothers, one miracle has already occurred – America has won the war in Europe. We are now waiting for the second miracle. When we will subjugate the uncivilized Asiatic 'Jap,' we will have a huge victory banquet for all the members – and we will make merry until the wee hours of the morning... but he almost immediately becomes sad, and adds with sorrow: but who knows, whether we will still have our old and beautiful Zambrow? Who knows what Hitler has done to our brothers and sisters? And like Borenstein, so did brother Itcheh Rosen, Moshe Oytzer and others say likewise. They did not permit anyone to slack off: it is necessary for us now, while the war is still on, organize help, generate funds, packages, etc. for the brethren in the *alte haym*. All the *landsleit* need to be organized, we must find out their addresses, launch 'drives,' collect, and collect, to be ready to help as soon as the hour arrives.

It was decided to create 'Honor Rolls' with the names of the sons and daughters that fell during the war.

F. Relationships

The Society maintained relationships with all Jewish institutions, working with and supporting them: It bought shares, or 'bonds' for the *Haganah*, *Histadrut*, medicines for Russia (during the war), participating in Zionist meetings, meetings for Birobidzhan, inscribed the writer Stefan Zweig in the Golden Book, on the occasion of his 70th birthday, supported HIAS, the Joint, ORT, 'The Federation of Jewish Charities,' the Yiddish theater, Yiddish culture and art, and joined the Union of Polish Jewry.

G. The Annual Purim Package Event

This is carried out with special warmth and feeling. Everyone comes, and everyone takes part. The 'Package Event' raises substantial sums of money for the benefit of the support work of the Society.

In October 1945, no sooner than the arrival of the first heart-breaking news from residents of Zambrow, who had saved themselves, the first 10 packages were immediately dispatched: 5 to Zambrow, 2 to Minsk, 2 to Paris, and 1 to Warsaw. Since that time, the stream of packages has not ceased. Joseph Savetsky and others, answered each and every letter, responded to all requests, and immediately dispatched a package with needed foodstuffs, or clothing and medicines.



Page 592: Nathan Bourg (Nehemiah Golombek)

H. The Active Workers

From among the most active of the workers, documented in the book of minutes, we are obligated to recall the brother, Nathan Bourg, who in Zambrow was known as Nehemiah Golombek, the son of Yossl Moshe-Shmuel's. He was one of the finest and beloved of the brethren. He would install all of the newly elected members of the committee with humor and great tact, always finding a good word to say about everyone, whether it was for the incoming, or outgoing members of the committee. He was loyally committed to the Society, had an open hand, and gave the initial contribution for the 'Old Age Fund,' for the support of the senior brothers. He fell ill, and died young, his younger son, Walter takes his place.

Among the loyal members, according to the book of minutes, it is necessary to recall David Stein, who was the Treasurer for many years, Friedman, Furman, who was the loyal Recording-Secretary for 32 years. He began his work with 85 members and $700 in the treasury, and ended with 300 members and $15,000 in the treasury.

I. The Zambrow Pinkas



Page 593: The Ladies Auxiliary of the United Zambrow Society, Celebrating the 13th Independence Day of Israel.

According to the book of minutes, brother Yitzhak Gorodzinsky, the son of David and Chava, when he returned from a visit to Israel, at the meeting of December 13, 1947, related that Dr. Yom-Tov Levinsky (son of the teacher R' Israel, and a grandson of Nachman Yankl's) was planning to publish a Zambrow *Pinkas*, which will include the history of the city – the congregation, institutions, *balebatim*, workers, culture, economic life, parties, sports, theater, etc., the *landsleit* in Israel took up this proposal enthusiastically. However, a lot of money is needed to carry out this plan. It is understood that the brothers in America are inclined to see this implemented.

Since that time, practically nothing was done, despite the fact that the editor, Dr. Levinsky, did not relent from his work of gathering material. It was our brother, Mr. Chaim Ben-David, who strongly refreshed the interest in this work, and popularized the idea among the brethren.

In the last years, after the visit of brother Eizik Malinowicz to Israel, the matter of the book again became real. The Society sent over a larger sum of money for this purpose, and in this manner, underwrote the principal costs involved, and the book was published. This is one of the most

important accomplishments of the Zambrow Society. The President, Itcheh Rosen, at that time, sent out a call for a special gathering of the brethren, about participating in the publication of this book, and about paying in their share.

J. A List of the Brothers in Leadership for the 8 years 1943-1950 According to the Book of Minutes:

Presidents: Nathan Berg, Morris Borenstein, Joseph Waxman, Dov [David] Stein, Joseph Savetsky.

Vice Presidents: Sholom-Abner Borenstein, Louis Zedeck, Benny Cooper, Harry Stein, Tshol Kotz.

Treasurer: Dov Stein. **Funeral Director**: Morris Borenstein.

Hospitaler: Louis Zedeck, Willy Rosenblum, Asher Shark, Noah Dzenchill.

Loan Fund (*Gemilut Hasadim*): Joseph Savetsky, Dov Stein, Louis Zedeck.

Board of Directors: The three brothers, Shmuel, Dov and Hersh Stein, Joseph Shafran, Counsel Cohen, Sam Stern, Asher Rosen, Abraham David Goldstein, Berl Feinberg, Isidore Rosen, Pesach [Paul] Pensky, Benny Rosen, Meir Zarembsky.

Recording-Secretary: Eliyahu Forman, Y. Koziol.

In the last years, the following were active as presidents: Louis Pav, Yitzhak Rosen.

The United Zambrow Relief Committee

By Moshe Eitzer

A division that dealt with relief has always existed as part of the United Zambrow Society, itself over seventy years old. There was always a fund for help and the brothers stood always ready to help their other brethren in the United States, and most certainly the brothers and sisters, friends and neighbors and Jews in general, from the *alte haym*. During this last gruesome war, Zambrow, as all of Poland, was cut off and sundered from us, and you can appreciate that it was with the utmost urgency that we were motivated to provide every kind of help.

With bated breath and a trembling heart, we all awaited the day, when the news would be communicated to us, that Hitler had fallen, and Europe was liberated. At that time, will we again be able to renew our connection with our home town, a connection that had been sundered for so long?

In January 1944,[280] after the victory of the Red Army at Stalingrad, we knew then, that the day of Hitler's downfall was nigh.

At that time, a man and his wife came to a meeting of the United Zambrow Society, and asked to speak. President Stein gave them the floor. They called out to us and said: Seeing that the Red Army is drawing close to Zambrow, it is now high time for us to rouse ourselves, and begin a fast-moving help initiative for those of our brothers and sisters who remained alive. At that time, we did not yet know of the extent of our great catastrophe. We did understand that terrible trouble had descended on the heads of our Zambrow *landsleit,* and there were not a small number among them who had fallen as victims of the war. We still hoped to come to the aid of our *shtetl*, and come to help it as quickly as possible. The sharp call of these guests from Zambrow touched all hearts. It did not take long, and the United Zambrow Relief Committee was organized, for all cohorts of Zambrow brethren in New York. The Women's Division of the Relief Committee also came into existence, as part of the 'Ladies Auxiliary.'

The help initiative undertook initial action a little at a time. However, at this point, there had been no news form a living person that had been received from Zambrow.

Finally, the first such live news, sad enough, came from one of the brothers, Stupnik (son of the shoemaker from Żbreznica). It was terrifying news, indicating that Jewish Zambrow no longer existed. However a significant number of people from Zambrow, are aimlessly wandering about the ruins of Eastern Europe: those who had run away from the gas chambers and death camps, those left from the ones exiled to Russia, lone individuals, who fought as partisans, those sheltered by gentiles in forests and pits in the ground. It was only now that we first grasped the extent of how great the disaster was, and how swiftly help must be made available from our end. In a short time, we began to hear from other people from Zambrow, those that had been left in the wake of fire and sword, hunger, and forced labor, and from the gas ovens. Every one asked: who remained alive? Where are their friends and relatives? Who will help them with an item of clothing, a pair of shoes, with food, with medicines, with a pack of cigarettes, with a *groschen* of money? And everyone also asks: What will the future bring? Where are they to travel, to who should they go, and using what means?

An initiative was begun to answer letters and to write letters – hundreds, hundreds every month. A fevered initiative was undertaken to send packages. No sooner had an address been received from a Zambrow *landsman*, then we began to send money – through the mail, through the bank, through emissaries. Thousands of dollars were sent over to groups of people, to individuals – in Lodz, in Bialystok, in Zambrow, in Germany, Italy, France, and any place from which we received word from a *landsman* in distress.

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[280] This date is incorrect: The German Army surrendered at Stalingrad in February 1943. However, in reading the subsequent text, it appears that the writer may have taken some license in compressing events. The writer is correct in pointing out that the Red Army had made a substantial advance by January 1944, but this was nearly a full year after the Battle of Stalingrad.

The work, truth be told, was done by individuals. We must give recognition to the Relief-Secretary, Yossl Savetsky, along with his wife, who tirelessly stood by this work for its entire duration. The following also participated in this work, with real commitment: President Nathan Burg, Joseph Waxman, Sholom-Abner Borenstein, Yitzhak Rosen, Dov Stein, A. Zedeck, M. Bursztein, Noah Dzenchill, Harry Stein, Sam Stern, B. Feinberg, Moshe Eitzer – the writer of these lines. In the 'Ladies Auxiliary' the following sisters were active: Pauline Zarembsky (President), Silvia Berkowitz (Vice-President), Pauline Zedeck (Finance-Secretary), Esther Bernstein (Treasurer), Esther Stein, Leah'cheh Savetsky, D. Greenberg.

The hundreds of letters that arrives, the heart-rending and emotionally oppressing replies from those brethren in need, the few words of encouragement, which came to them from us – this was our reward, which calmed our spirits.

In January 1947, the first bulletin of the United Zambrow Relief appeared, in which the memorial service was discussed, that was to take place on January 26, along with a short writeup of our relief activities. And there was a list of the survivors with whom the committee had corresponded (see above, pp. 579-580).

Remarks

By L. Yom-Tov [281]

In actuality, it is very difficult to differentiate between the Relief Committee and the United Zambrow Society. Almost all the same people worked in both places.

But the United Zambrow Society did not encompass all the ranks of people from Zambrow. Apart from this, the principal objective of the United Society was to provide local fraternal assistance: medical help, a hospital, a burial plot after one hundred and twenty years, a headstone, employment, a synagogue with a *Hazzan*, and things of that sort.

The Relief Committee devoted itself entirely to providing help to those of the brethren who has survived [the war].

At each committee meeting, a report was given as to how many letters had been answered. According to the minutes, in one month 115 letters were written to Europe, in a second month – 260, etc. At every meeting, an accounting was given as to how many thousands of dollars had already been sent, and how many families had been searched for, and members reunited. And even when the refugees were already on solid footing, in a place like Israel, or Canada, the support was not discontinued. The refugees, who took up residence in Israel and settled there, kept receiving relief packages and money, for a long, long time afterwards.

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[281] Because of the European convention of putting last names first, this very likely is Yom-Tov Levinsky.

Money was sent ($200 and $500) to the *Magen David Adom* in Israel. Many good books in Yiddish and Hebrew were collected, and sent over to Poland, for the Jewish Peoples' Library named for the destroyed Peoples' Library in Zambrow. An initiative was undertaken to begin assembling material for the 'Yizkor Book' which sadly, was not crowned with much success. Few responded to the request to write for the 'Yizkor Book.'

At each meeting proposals were made on how to increase the amounts of money being gathered. And it was Moshe Eitzer who often was the one who made the proposals. It was in this fashion that a proposal, to systematically provide aid to our brethren in Israel was made. For example, Moshe Eitzer would propose that ten hospital beds be supported in the name of Zambrow, etc.

This relief is an expression of the fraternal help forthcoming from the people of Zambrow, which is transcribed onto an honorable page in the history of 'Zambrow' which was in America.

People of Zambrow in Mexico

By Yitzhak Rothberg



Page 597: Zambrow Landsleit in Mexico City
First Row (Standing from the Right): Shifra Golombek, Her husband Chaim Golombek ז"ל, Shayna-Chana and Chaim Gorodzinsky,
Second Row (Sitting): Yitzhak and Nechama Rothberg, Bracha Lavsky

In general, Mexico was never a focal point for Jewish immigration.

In the 16th Century, Marranos fled the Spanish Inquisition, and a little at a time, found sanctuary in 'New Spain,' meaning the newly discovered lands of South America that were under Spanish rule.

It was very difficult for them to get to Mexico legally, because here, the Edict of Castile of 1511 was in force here: Jews, or Marranos, were forbidden to set foot on The Holy Mexican soil. the ancient history of Mexico also has something to tell about Jews, who were killed in the bonfire plazas of the Inquisition in Mexico.

Despite this, tens of Marrano families managed to survive here in secret, and in time, when the Inquisition was discontinued, laid the foundations of a Sephardic Jewish community, which has survived to this day. There were very few Ashkenazi Jews.

It was only at the beginning of the 20th century that we first see a bit of a rise in the immigration of Eastern European Jews, and an Ashkenazi Jewish community also arose.

But we will return to our people from Zambrow. The honor of being the first of those from Zambrow to immigrate to Mexico belongs to our Avreml Zaltzberg, coming there, approximately, in 1927. A few years later, a number of additional people from Zambrow begin to appear, but who do not believe they will remain here, but rather are waiting for the first opportunity to go to North America, in the United States. At this time, there are about seven Zambrow families that are found in Mexico City, and may they multiply! I will enumerate them alphabetically [in Hebrew]: Golombek, Gorodzinsky, Zaltzberg, Lavsky, Slowik, Pekarewicz, Rothberg.

The head of the Golombek family, Chaim, was our pride – the leader of the *Poalei Tzion* party, both prominent and well-liked in local Jewish society. Regrettably, he died before his time, and we felt the loss severely and with great pain. (His picture is above, on p. 485).

There is no Zambrow Society to be found here, but we maintain fraternal relationships, getting together quite often, on joyous occasions, or just plain to spend time together, and to share our memories of the *alte haym*. We also stay close to the *landsleit* from Lomza, and to other neighboring *landsleit,* and often carry a social function together.

In a material sense, all of the Zambrow *landsleit* in Mexico are more-or-less well-established. They take part in the general social life of the local Jewish community, are especially active in the Zionist movement, and generally occupy a respected position in the society.

Zambrow Members in the Landsleit Union of Lomza, Zambrow and Vicinity

By Boaz Chmiel (General-Secretary)
Buenos Aires, Argentina



Page 599: Boaz Chmiel

Landsleit from Zambrow occupy a very respected place in the Jewish life of Argentina. They stand out because of their active role in work for Yiddish culture, Jewish creativity, for the synagogue, education and fund-raising campaigns.

From a societal point of view, they linked their work and relief assistance with their brethren from Lomza, whose numbers in Argentina are quite significant, and a little at a time with other small towns that found themselves to be neighboring one-time Zambrow in the *alte haym*, which to our great sorrow, no longer exists.



Page 600: The Women's Committee of the Argentina Society of Lomza-Zambrow & Vicinity

And so, it was in this fashion, that the large and imposing Jewish-Argentinian fraternal institution, called the 'Union of Lomza, Zambrow & Vicinity *Landsleit*' was created.

The Union was founded one pleasant Thursday, on August 26, 1926 (15 Elul 5686), and the basis was laid down by the community-cultural, and economic conditions, of the newly arrived immigrants to the country. But it was an instance of illness of a *landsman* without means that brought the Union to life: It was necessary to bring both material help and help with morale, to the stricken brother, with utmost speed. A provisional committee was immediately formed, which did everything possible to lighten the need. However, since that time, the committee never disbanded. On the contrary, it became bigger and stronger, developed added branches, and became increasingly active day by day.



Page 601: A Group of Landsleit, with Herschel Kuropatwa standing to the right, and his wife, Sarah, standing to the left.

From that day on, every 'green' arrival from the Lomza-Zambrow vicinity knew, that here, one could receive suitable fraternal support, and a place of work would be procured for him, in a shop or at home. He has a place where he can meet with familiar faces from home, and be able to spend an evening together, Sabbath, and a Festival

Holiday, until.... until he himself acclimatizes himself as a local citizen, and is both willing and able to do the same for other newly arrived immigrants.

Because of the meaningful number of people from Zambrow, and their very active participation in the Union, the name is later changes and it is now known as the 'Lomza-Zambrow Union.' The people from Zambrow, throughout this entire period, were among the very active members in the Union, and we should carefully note here, and give recognition to the name of the Zambrow family of Herschel and Sarah Kuropatwa. Herschel came to Buenos Aires in the year 1923. His wife came a year later, Their home became a sort of welcoming house for people from Zambrow; or as it was called 'the Zambrow Embassy.' Any number of *landsleit* found a place at the table here, to restore their hearts with nourishment, find a bed to sleep in, and a roof over their head. truly a homey roof at that, until they could get up on their own two feet. The lady of the family, Sarah Kuropatwa, passed away on 24 Heshvan 5722 (2.11.1961), and an exceptionally large audience turned out to escort her to her eternal rest.

The Credit Bank of the Union was established in the year 1940, having legal powers, under the name 'Casa de Credita Flores Sod.' This is a legalized (formalized?) *Gemilut Hasadim* Bank, built on a solid financial foundation, loyal to its name, and the intent of its founding. It always comes to the landsman with constructive help, offered in a gracious manner. No landsman has yet come with any complaint against the way the Credit Bank conducts itself. The 'bank' is always correct, if only the brother in question does not violate the laws of the land, which the bank is obligated to uphold.

With the growth and broadening of the Union, and the addition of 'Zambrow' to its name, an effort was made to leave the old premises, which had by now grown crowded, and to create a new home. A house was purchased for our use, with a foyer, at 4467-69 Bartoloma Mitra. This was the first time in Argentina that *landsleit* would take the initiative to buy a house. And we had the good fortune, that by chance, on November 29, 1947 (Saturday night 16 Kislev 5708), on the very day that the State of Israel was proclaimed, it fell out that we celebrated the inauguration of our own new, Lomza-Zambrow home.

Our small homey celebration was amalgamated into the larger pan-Jewish celebration, and this will always remain etched deeply in our memory.

Since that time, our home has become a center of culture, alongside all of our other community endeavors. On Saturday and Sunday, there are speeches, lectures, literary evenings, and artistic presentations held as a matter of course. Also, other *landsmanschaften* and institutions find our auditorium open for their community events.

We have put out two volumes of '*Lomzer Stimme*' containing much material, pictures and information, a collective work of our *landsleit*. We possess a rich library named for Simon Dubnow ז"ל, with a very large collection of Yiddish books. The income from our events are exclusively dedicated to a variety of support activities, especially Israel. We have sent an ambulance to the *Magen David Adom* in Israel, which bears our name, and we also support '*Tormei Or.*'

In the year 1961, we had a very extensive celebration of the 35th Jubilee year of our Society. The hall was overflowing with *landsleit* and their families. The writer of these lines, as Secretary of the Society, made a proposal, as part of his report, and overview of the history of the Society, which now has 400 members, to other *landsmanschaften*, and also to our *landsleit* in Israel, and in the United States, that they should bring together all of the neighboring towns into a single organization, on the model of the Lomza-Zambrow Society, and in this manner, develop an intensive initiative on behalf of the *landsleit,* Israel, and all Jewish-oriented institutions. The President, Chaim-Joseph Rudnik ז"ל, greeted all of the assembled *landsleit*, portraying the *alte haym*, with its laudable Jewish qualities, with its elevated spiritual ideals, and expressed the wish and hope, that here, as well, in an alien place, that we should continue the tradition of the *alte haym*. The following also spoke: Moshe Leib Wisznia, an old-time active participant, David Dunowicz,[282] from among to one-time party activists, Zalman Hirschfeld, Joseph Rosen, Mordechai Rubinstein, Sarah Crystal.

The Ladies Committee of the Society was established in April 1947. Our lady members and sisters gather together quite frequently, and assist with the work of the Society in the rendering of aid, also sponsor evening events and managing discussions about literary, political, social, and other types of questions.

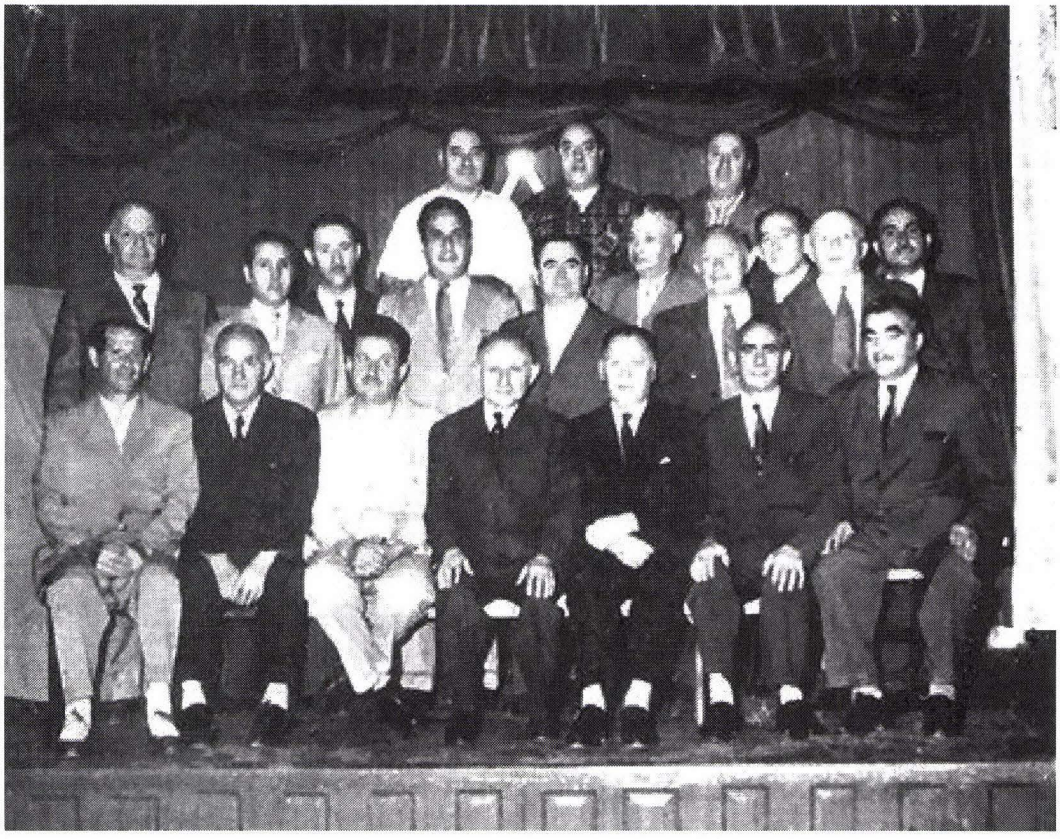
And this is how we progress from one endeavor to the next, and the Lomza-Zambrow Society & Vicinity occupies a very important place in the Jewish community life in Argentina.

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282 Shown in the text as Domowicz.

Scions of Zambrow in Argentina

(Among the Organization of the Scions of Lomza-Zambrow & Vicinity)



Page 603: *The Committee and Active Members of Lomza-Zambrow & Vicinity Landsleit, in Buenos Aires*

First Row (Right to Left): *Wisznia, Czerwonka, Dunowicz, Rudnik, Chmiel, Borenstein, Mlinarsky.*

Second Row: *Kuropatwa, Slassky, Ossowsky, Chaim Nadworna, Mendelson, Schwartzbard, Jewka, Levinsky.*

Third Row: *Markowitz, Crystal, Chmiel*

The scions of Zambrow occupy a respected place in Argentine Jewry. In the communal sense, they organized themselves with the scions of Lomza and the vicinity, and are working together for several years.

In August 1926 (5686), the Organization of the Scions of Lomza came about by happenstance: one of them fell sick, and it became necessary to provide him with help. From that time on, they slowly organized themselves, and appropriated several noble institutions to themselves. In time, the name was broadened: The Organization of the Scions of Lomza, Zambrow & Vicinity. Among the Zambrow scions, the couple of Herschel and Sarah Kuropatwa were active. Their home was transformed into a Zambrow 'embassy.' Everyone of the newcomers from the city found a home and a roof over their head with them – until they got themselves settled. Sarah passed away, with a good name, on 24 Heshvan 5722 (2.11.1961).



Page 604: A Group of Active Ladies in the organization of Lomza-Zambrow & Vicinity in Buenos Aires.



Page 605: The Three Stupnik Brothers in Argentina, Yitzhak, Moshe, Yaakov

In the year 1940, a Loan Society was established, a form of a Gemilut Hasadim, for the scions of the city, with real functions, and whose rules were approved by the government. Every one of the city sons was able to receive constructive assistance, if all he did was satisfy the conditions that were set out by the government.

In 1947, a house was bought on Bartoloma-Mitra Street 4467-69. This was the first instance of such a sort done by a *landsleit* organization. The house was transformed into a place for education, culture, public gatherings, and lectures, for use by other organizations as well.

The dedication of this premises took place by fortunate happenstance, on the same evening that the representatives of the United Nations decided to approve the establishment of the State of Israel. The joy was great, and doubled, a celebration within a celebration.

In the year 1961, the 35th anniversary of the establishment was celebrated with great fanfare. The festivities were opened by Boaz Chmiel, the Chief Secretary and Chair of the organization, and Chaim-Joseph Rudnik.

The organization nurtured a large library named for Simon Dubnow, and produced two volumes '*Lomzer Stimme*,' also organizing the ladies who were scions of the city, who come and perform all the work that makes social support possible, and in that capacity, also participates at set occasions in lectures, and discussions concerning matters that are literary and of national interest.

Chaim-Joseph Rudnik ז"ל

He was born in the *shtetl* of Gocz, near Lomza-Zambrow, in the year 1898. He came to Argentina in the year 1923. He was the nerve center for the *landsleit* Society and for many years, its Honorary President. He was active in Jewish education and cultural activities. He gave much of his time, in the organization of workers in tailoring, into professional unions, and was active in IFT and other such organizations.

However, his central activity was exhibited in working with *landsleit*. When the Lomza Society was founded, he did not rest until he had organized all of the Zambrow folks, and it was his doing and achievement that the name 'Zambrow' was officially added to the original name of the Society.

It is barely possible to reduce to writing how much energy this man gave on behalf of his brethren, how much he allowed it to cost him out of his own money, how many thousands of dollars that he collected for the brothers, who had been saved from the Nazis.

The thought of buying a house of their own was his, and the value of this to the Society cannot be over-estimated. It was he who was the first to manifest concern for Israel, carrying out collections and fund-raising for the *Magen David Adom*, such as sending them an ambulance. Upon his arrival in Israel as a delegate to the Congress of Polish Jews, he encountered a great deal of recognition on the part of Lomza and Zambrow *landsleit*, and they honored him with a festive reception. He was intensely enthusiastic about the Zambrow [Yizkor] Book, and took on personal responsibility to send over a significant sum of money to cover the costs of printing the book. As was his way, he kept his word. Regrettably, however, he was not privileged to see the book: he suddenly collapsed. His death is certainly a great loss, which plunged all of us into a deep sorrow. All of us sense his absence, and there is no equal to him. Hundreds, hundreds escorted his remains and mourned him. He was eulogized at the Society House by: Moshe-Leib Wisznia, his long-time friend and co-worker, and Sarah Crystal, the President of the Ladies Division of the Society. At the Tablada Cemetery, he was further eulogized by the learned scholar from Lomza, Joseph Rosen, former President Mordechai Rubinstein, and David Rosenfarb – in the name of the Tailors Union. Honor his memory!

The Organization of the Émigrés from Zambrow in Israel

By Zvi Zamir

Before the [First] World War, only odd individuals made *aliyah* to Israel, and a bit is told about them in this book (see pages 99-102). After the War, the Third *Aliyah* began, in 1920-21 – in which a number of Zionists made *aliyah*, to build the land and live in it. However, to our sorrow, a number of them didn't take hold, and they regressed [to the Diaspora]. Among the few that remained, and even tried their hand at the opening of a factory, was Lipa Blumrosen ז"ל, who was among the first to make *aliyah*, with the members of his family, settling in Tel-Aviv and engaging in the manufacture of floor tiles. After him, the sons of his brother Itcheh-Fyvel, and then his brother. In 1926, Aryeh (Leibczak) Golombek made *aliyah*, and [also] engaged in tile manufacture, Noah Tykoczinsky, Yekhezkiel Zamir ז"ל, Aliza Weinberg and her family, Rubinstein and Moshe Zusman ז"ל. After a time, the families of the Seczkowsky (the sons of Itcheh Mulyar), Benjamin Pszisusker and his brothers. With the Zambrow *HeHalutz* organization, the first of the *Halutzim* made *aliyah* in 1925: Mikhl Jabkowsky, Abraham Baumkuler, and Shmuel Gutman.

In 1926, the following members of *HeHalutz* made *aliyah* after their 'training:' Moshe Bursztein, Noah Zukrowicz ז"ל, Mordechai Gabriel, Daniel Koziol, Chaya Sarah Jablonka, Chana Dunowicz, and Herschel Slowik (Zvi Zamir). With their arrival, the need for an organization of city *landsleit* grew stronger. These people organized themselves a little bit at a time, and in 1928 the first party took place in the hall on LaSalle Street. The meeting of the old-timers with the new *olim* left a deep impression, and from that time forward, the group has existed ever since: The Sons of Zambrow. After this, *several other meetings took place* in Petakh-Tikva, a place where a number of our city scions took up residence, and in Tel-Aviv.



Page 606: A Group of Active Landsleit, scions of the city and vicinity, in Buenos Aires.



Page 606: Lipa Blumrosen



Page 608: A Committee of Zambrow Landsleit in Israel

From Right to Left, First Row: Malka Portugali, Ahuva Greenberg.
Second Row: Dr. Yom-Tov Levinsky, Y. Jabkowsky, Zvi Zamir, Aryeh Golombek.
Third Row: M. Bursztein – Tova Stepner-Jabkowsky, Zvi Ben-Joseph, Pinchas Kaplan, Jabkowsky, Joseph Srebrowicz

The Second World War cut off the Zambrow *olim* from their ancestral home, and like all of world Jewry, they waited in fearful trepidation, in anticipation of what was coming – until the bitter truth was learned that the entire community had been wiped out, to the last person. In January 1946, a crowded meeting took place in the store of Noah Tykoczinsky, and they decided to hold a memorial service in memory of the martyrs, in the month of Shevat, in the health center named for Nathan Strauss, to be held on the last day of Shevat, that being the *Yahrzeit* of the last Zambrow group exterminated at Auschwitz. A standing committee was selected at that time, that continued its work for several years: Zvi Ben-Joseph (Secretary), Zvi Zamir (Chair), the sisters, Malka and Ahuva Greenberg, Tova and Yaakov Jabkowsky, Yom-Tov Levinsky, M. Sabidur, Joseph Srebrowicz (Finance) and others.

At one of the meetings, it was decided to publish a Memorial Book of the Zambrow community, in keeping with the proposal of Dr. Yom-Tov Levinsky. This proposal continued on, and was brought into being with the help of our brethren overseas – in the United States, and in part, also from Argentina – and became a reality.

From that time onwards, it has been the custom to have an annual memorial meeting to recall our city that no longer exists – and to this meeting come the scions of the city from all ends of the country. The *El Moleh Rachamim* prayer is recited, and we say K*addish*, and shed a tear in the gloom. The organization of the city *landsleit* helped the refugees from Zambrow, in no small way, to get themselves settled and acclimated.

The organization maintains very tight ties with other organizations of city scions outside of *The Land*, and also with individuals. Every new arrival, every tourist, who is a *landsman*, is received graciously by us. We organize a formal welcome, mostly in the home of the sisters Greenberg-Portugali, who excel in the pleasant way they do receptions for guests. Meetings of this sort were arranged in honor of Yitzhak Gorodzinsky, and also his brother Chaim from Mexico, Zelig Warszafczyk, Mordechai Schwartzbard, Joseph Waxman, Isaac Rubinson, Joseph Scharfman, Chaim Ben-Dor, Eliezer Pav, Isaac Malinowicz, Bezalel Yellin, David Tzivan, Esther Rosing, Elkanah Shulsinger, Max Finkelstein and his sisters, Yehudit Finkelstein, Mary Golombek, Rabbi Matityahu Kagan, and his wife Dvosh'keh Golombek, Esther Smoliar (Paris) and others.



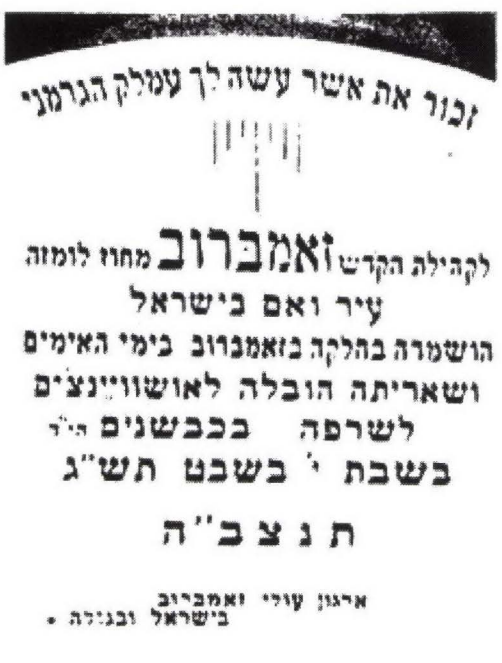
Page 609: Pessia Furmanowicz (See above pp. 453-454)

In the Holocaust Grotto on Mount Zion, we have erected a memorial stone in memory of our city, [which sits] among the other memorial stones erected there for the cities, and the 'mothers' of Jewry that were brought low. In the year 1960, the committee was refreshed anew, the following were selected: the Messrs. Zamir (Chair), Ben-Joseph (Secretary), Malka Portugali (Treasurer), Ahuva Greenberg, Yaakov Jabkowsky (Haifa), Tova Jabkowsky-Stepner (who just recently passed away), Moshe Jabkowsky, Menachem Sabidur-Khodorowsky, Moshe Bursztein, Sarah Jablonka, Naomi Wax-Blumrosen, Aryeh Golombek, Pinchas Kaplan, Joseph Srebrowicz, and Dr. Yom-Tov Levinsky. It is proper to offer a citation of praise to Mr. Zvi Ben-Joseph (Konopiata) who was the secretary, the focal point, the catalyst and living spirit in our midst, and the loyal and dedicated liaison of our scions in Israel to those outside the land – may his hand be strengthened!

[Original Location of Supporters List, Now Moved to the Front of the Book]

Yitgadal veYitkadash Shmey Rabah...

[We intone the Kaddish prayer in memory of] the souls of our sanctified Zambrow community הי"ד, who died a martyrs and heroes death, before their time, tortured, murdered, buried alive, gassed, and incinerated by the foul and depraved Nazis, and their [all too willing] accomplices. Those who we are able to recall, and inscribe their names, and those, who regrettably cannot recall and so inscribe their names – all, all will be eternally recorded for posterity in this book about our community, and may their souls hover among us, and be bound up with us, the living, who mourn their loss, and the destruction of our home city.



Page 611: **Plaque Commemorating the Community of Zambrow on Mount Zion in the Grotto of the Holocaust, Jerusalem**

Significant Dates to Remember in the City's History

Set up landmarks! Put up road signs!
Remember the highway, the road on which you traveled.
Come back, my dear people Israel, come back to your cities.

– Jeremiah 31:20

Date	Event
1828 – 5585	The Zambrow community is founded. The old cemetery is opened in that same year.
Parsha of Balak, 5655, in July 1895	The first Great Fire breaks out on Friday. Approximately 400 houses are burned down.
10 Iyyar 5669, May 1, 1909	The second Great Fire breaks out on a Saturday night. Approximately 500 houses are burned down.
22 Sivan 5701, June 21, 1941	The Nazis take over the town for the second time. Decrees against the Jews, and murdering of Jews begins.
26 Av 5701, August 19, 1941	Black Tuesday. Approximately 1,500 Jews from Zambrow are exterminated in the Szumowo vicinity.
12 Elul 5701, September 4, 1941	Close to 900 residents of the city, along with 600 residents of Rutki, are buried alive in the Kosaki Forest.
14 Tishri 5702, September 5, 1941	Confined to the Ghetto on the Eve of *Sukkot*.
Tammuz, 5702, July 1942	Approximately 2,000 residents of the city, along with residents of Lomza, and others, are confined to the barracks.
19 Tevet 5703, December 27, 1942	200 old and sick people are poisoned and euthanized with Venerol, in the barracks.
Morning of 10 Shevat 5703, January 16, 1943	The Final Journey of the last of the Zambrow *landsleit*, on Friday evening: the remains incinerated in the crematoria at Auschwitz on Saturday night.



Page 613:A Picture of the Dzenchill Family (See Item 33 in the Necrology)

Necrology - יזכור

1

In memory of my mother, ***Hinde-Dina***, of the Golombek Family, my brothers, ***Shlomo & Yaakov***, my sister ***Zlatkeh*** (Liba), who were murdered in the Holocaust.

Raphael Gershonovich, Tel-Aviv
Moshe Gershonovich, USA

2

In memory of by dear parents ***Chana & Yitzhak***, my brothers ***Yaakov & Chaim Pinchas***, my sister **Rachel,** and sister-in-law ***Miriam Bursztein***.

Moshe (Avital) Paciner, Hadera

3

In memory of our parents and brothers ***Gershon & Miriam, Yaakov, Nehemiah***, and ***Henya*** Jablonka.

Chaya-Sarah Rubinstein-Jablonka
Esther Jablonka-Yenczman
Kfar Az'r – Tel-Aviv

4

In memory of our brother ***Shmuel***, his wife, ***Nechama***, their son, ***Moshe Finkelstein***, and their sister-in-law ***Tzip'keh Rabinovich.***

Esther, Leah of the Finkelstein Family
Tel-Aviv, Kfar Atta

5

In memory of my dear mother ***Chana***, my sister, **Miriam-Rachel** and her husband ***Eliyahu Pekarewicz***, and their sons.

Yitzhak Sosnowiec & Family, Tel-Aviv

6

In memory of my father ***Moshe Kalman Pekarewicz***, my sisters and brothers, ***Rachel, Bash'keh, Chanan, Joseph, Zayd'keh*** and their families, and all family relatives.

Pessia Schreier-Pekarewicz
Petakh-Tikva

7

In memory of our dear parents, and family members, who were murdered in the Holocaust, ***Sarah-Meiram***, and ***Meiram Bursztein***, ***Baylah & Yaakov Zerakh Kagan***, and the sons: ***Abraham Zvi, Chash'keh*** (of the Srebrowicz family) their daughters ***Sarah, Rivka, Reikhl, Ethel, Pessia, Shlomit, Moshe Aharon, Leah.***

The sons, and family members
David-Aryeh, Zvi-Yaakov, Moshe Bursztein,
& their families
Tel-Aviv Kfar Sirkin

8

In memory of my dear friends ***Gedalia Rekant*** and his family (Ostrow-Mazowiecki), ***Chaim-Joseph Shafran*** and his family (Antwerp, Belgium) who were murdered by the Nazis ימ"ש.

Zvi Zamir-Slowik, Magdiel



Page 614: (Top Left): Rachel Pszepszawicz



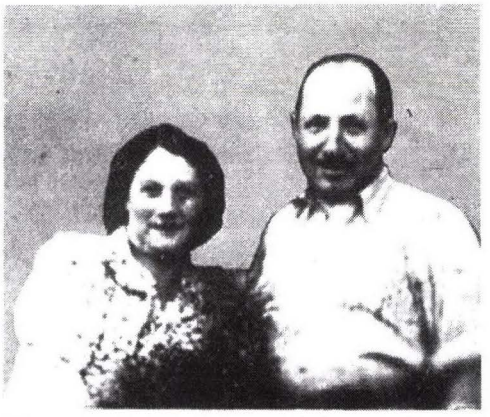
Page 614: (Top Right): The Greenberg Family (See Necrology # 32)



Page 614: (Center Left): Herschel Stupnik and his Wife



Page 614: (Bottom Left): Kossowsky Family (See Necrology #37)



Page 614: (Bottom Right): Moshe Hersh and Faygl Pszepszawicz

9

In memory of my parents ***Alta*** and ***Israel***, my sister ***Sarah***, and her daughter ***Losha***, my brother ***Berl*** who were exterminated by the Nazis ימ"ש, and my sister ***Chava***, who passed away in Israel.

Menucha Sokol-Kramer, Haifa

10

In memory of my dear parents, ***Chaim Joseph*** & ***Chaya***, my brothers ***Yitzhak, Reuben***, and ***Shlomo Rudnik***.

Ida Rudnik-Zukerman, Hulta

11

In memory of my beloved parents, ***Chana Taiba*** & ***Abraham***, my sisters, ***Chava, Sarah and Zippora***, the daughter of my sister Leah, and the sons of my brother ***Reuben-Yaakov*** and ***Chaim***, who were exterminated in the Holocaust.

Malka Warszawsky (Ratuszewicz)
Miriam Levinger (Ratuszewicz)
Ramot Rama"z beside Haifa

12

To the memory of our parents, ***Chana-Chaya*** and ***Joseph Konopiata***, our brothers ***Shmuel & Leibl.***

Zvi Ben-Joseph (Israel)
Israel and Esther Konopiata-Cohen, Sam Cohen (Cleveland, OH, USA)

13

In memory of my aunt ***Leah***, bat ***Aharon Zarembsky***, and uncle ***Moshe Gedalia***, and his wife ***Sarah-Pearl***, and the daughters ***Shifra, Gittl & Zelda.***

Zvi Ben-Joseph, Tel-Aviv
Israel Cohen-Konopiata, [Cleveland]
Esther Cohen-Konopiata, Cleveland

14

In memory of the souls of our parents, Rabbi ***Aryeh-Dov*** (ben Abraham u'Miriam Esther) ***Kawior***, and ***Guta*** (bat Mordechai v'Rachel Soliarz).

Our brothers and sisters, ***Shmuel, Baylah-Rivka, Joel & Rachel.***

Aharon Kawior, Bnei Brak

15

In memory of our dear parents ***Faygl & Joseph Benjamin*** (son of Moshe Shmuel) ***Golombek Nehemiah*** (Berg) – died in the United States (see his picture in the book) ***Chava*** – died in Israel, ***Moshe, Sara & Rachel, Israel & Yaakov*** – who were killed in the Holocaust.

Aryeh Golombek & Family
Yitzhak Golombek & Family



Page 616: (Top Left): Leah Zarembsky (See Necrology # 13),





Page 616: (Top Right):Family of Chana-Chaya & Joseph Konopiata (See Necrology #12)



Page 616: (Center Left): Shimon Rubin (See Necrology #30)



Page 616: (Center Right): The Family of Aryeh Zamir (See Necrology # 18)



Page 616: (Bottom): The Zamir-Rubinstein Family (See Necrology #17)

16

In memory of our beloved uncles and their families, ***Meir & Rivka Bronack, Isaac Golombek, his Wife & Children***, who were killed by the Nazis.

Zvi Zamir
Joseph Zamir

17

In memory of our dear uncles and their families ***Yehuda & Nech'a***, and ***Moshe Rubinstein, Chaya*** and members of their family, ***Eliyahu, Sarah Yarmolkowsky, Dina & Leah, Joseph, Sarah Slowik,*** and the children – who were killed in the Holocaust.

Joseph Zamir & Family, Tel-Aviv
Zvi Zamir & Family, Magdiel
Tova Katz & Family, Haifa

18

To the memory of our dear parents, ***R' Yitzhak Aryeh*** ben R' David ***Slowik***, and ***Sarah-Dina*** bat R' Moshe-Shmuel ***Golombek***, our brothers and sisters, ***Noah, Ada, Chava, Masheh, Yenta, Moshe*** – who died a martyr's death in Zambrow and in Auschwitz.

Zvi Zamir & Family, Magdiel
Joseph Zamir & Family, Tel-Aviv

19

In memory of our dear parents ***Dov & Sarah***, our brother ***Yehuda,*** and our sister ***Pessia***, who were exterminated in the Holocaust.

Rivka, Mira and Rachel Furmanowicz

20

In memory of my dear parents ***Nahum & Rachel*** and my brother ***Joseph***, who were killed in the Holocaust.

Israel Lichtenstein, Holon

21

In memory of our dear mother ***Henya Rachel***, our sister ***Shayna Khanit***, our uncle and aunt ***Yitzhak & Liba***, cousins ***Yaakov & Breineh Rothstein.***

Zvi & Moshe Khanit, Ramat Gan

22

In memory of my dear parents ***Sarah & Shmuel-Leib***, my brothers and sisters, ***Yitzhak-Eliyahu, Leah, Chaya Chash'keh*** & ***Moshe***.

Gershon Rosenblum, Holon

23

In memory of my daughter and our sister, ***Fruma Lieb'cheh Grade-Klepfish*** murdered by the Nazis in Lithuania.

The *Rebbetzin* Sarah Klepfish
The brothers: Meshuli, Heshl, Pales David, Shmeryl

24

In memory of my dear parents ***Ephraim & Rivka Friedman***, brothers and sisters ***Et'keh, Gittl Faygl, Shimon, Mottl & Gershon.***

Moshe Friedman, Holon



Page 618: (Top Left): The Stupnik Family;



Page 618: (Top Right): The Family of Reiz'keh Kaplan-Goldberg (See Necrology #28)



Page 618: (Center Left): The Gershonovich Family (See Necrology #1)



Page 618: (Center Right): Chaim Ze'ev Krolewiecky (See Necrology #39);



Page 618: (Bottom): The Family of Joseph Golombek (See Necrology # 15)

25

In memory of my father and mother, ***Joseph Chaim & Dvora Nagurka***, my brothers and sisters, ***Sholom, Esther, Shifra & Tzila.***

Abraham Nagurka, Kibbutz Ein-Dor

26

In memory of our sister and brother-in-law ***Liba & Abraham Zukerman,*** who were killed in the Holocaust.

Yaakov Jabkowsky & Family, Haifa
Moshe Jabkowsky & Family, Petakh-Tikva
Sarah-Rachel Melamed-Jabkowsky & Family
Tova Stepner

27

In memory of our parents ***Aryeh & Alt'keh Rosing***, my sisters ***Chay'cheh, Blum'cheh, Brein'cheh.***

Fruma Mandelbrot, Jerusalem
Esther & Joseph, United States

28

In memory of friend ***Reiz'keh Kaplan-Goldberg***, her husband ***David,*** and their children, who were exterminated in the Holocaust.

Nachman Scharfman, Buenos-Aires, Argentina

29

In memory of my dear parents ***Baruch-Zvi & Liba,*** my sisters ***Reizl, Esther & Rachel'eh.***

Eliezer Koszcewa, Haifa

30

In memory of my husband and our father ***Shimon Rubin*** who was murdered in Zambrow.

Rachel Greenberg-Rubin
Daughter Leah
Son Sholom

31

In memory of our parents ***Jocheved & Gershon Farbowicz***, grandfather ***R' Yaakov Zukrowicz***, who died after being tortured in a Nazi camp, and his wife ***Sarah Rachel***, our brothers, ***Moshe & Meir***, his sister-in-law ***Nash'keh***, and her daughter ***Sarah Rachel***, our uncle ***Menachem***, our aunt ***Dina***, and their son ***Yitzhak***, who were exterminated in the Holocaust.

Joseph, Nahum & Yehuda Srebrowicz-Kaspi & Their Families
Tel-Aviv, Ganigar, Ein-Dor
See their pictures on pp. 487-489.

32

In memory of our dear parents ***Alt'keh & Avigdor Greenberg***, our brothers ***Sholom & David***.

Rachel, Malka, Ahuva, Rivka, & Families in Israel

33

In memory of my parents ***Yitzhak Leib & Sarah Esther***, my sister ***Malka*** and my brother ***Jekuthiel***, who were exterminated in the Holocaust.

Leah Dzenchill-Eisenberg, Shfayim



Page 620: (Top Center): The Family of Aryeh Rosing (See Necrology #27)



Page 620:(Bottom Left): Fruma Lieb'cheh (See Necrology #23)



Page 620:(Bottom Right): Koszczawa Family (See Necrology #29).

34

Dedicated to the eternal memory of our dear parents ***Yehoshua & Rivka Rothberg***

Moshe Rothberg (Buenos-Aires)
Yitzhak & Nechama Rothberg (Mexico City)

35

To the memory of our dear uncles, aunts, and cousins, who were exterminated during the Holocaust in Zambrow and in the Bialystok ghetto:

David & Sarah Rothberg, with their sons: ***Alter*** & his wife ***Rivka***, and their children ***(Izzie, Yekhezkiel & Hadassah), Chaim, Tzip'keh & Rivka'leh.***
Yehoshua & Rivka Rothberg
Yitzhak & Frieda Rothberg and their children: ***Sarah, Abraham, Taiba-Zissl, Moshe.***
Berl & Nechama Rothberg and their children: ***Chaim Reuben, Nachman-Yaakov, Faygl, & Sarah-Leah.***

Zissl & Isaac Malinowicz, USA
Zippora Binkin & Family, Yitzhak & Nechama Rothberg (Mexico), Moshe Rothberg, Yom-Tov, Zvi & Nachman Levinsky, Henya Matzman & Their Families.

36

In memory of our parents and our uncles ***Yitzhak-Velvel, Getzel, Eliyahu & Berl Golombek,*** and their families.

The Descendants of the Golombek Family, in Israel

37

To the eternal memory of our beloved martyrs and innocents: our parents ***Israel & Esther***, our sister ***Yenta***, and our brothers ***Yitzhak, Moshe & Zalman.***

Chaya Ben-Zvi, Moshe Kossowsky

38

To the memory of our dear fellow city residents, ***Abraham Zukrowicz*** and the members of his family, ***Yaakov-Hersh Zukrowicz*** & his wife ***Chaya*** of the ***Shafran*** family, their sister, ***Pessia Zukrowicz*** and her family, who were exterminated by the Nazis in Antwerp (Belgium).

39

A memorial marker to my brother ***R' Chaim Zev*** ben R; Yitzhak Menachem ***Krolewiecky***, born in Jabłonki 13 Sivan 5666 (June 6, 1906), his wife ***Pessia Kahanowicz***, his daughters ***Freida, Henya & Duba***, and his son ***Eliyahu David***, who were exterminated in the Bialystok ghetto in 1942. ת.נ.צ.ב.ה

Joseph Krolewiecky & Family (Buenos-Aires)

40

Our dear parents:
Abraham & Henya Schwartzbard, brother ***Yaakov & wife*** children, ***Berl Lejzor & Eli***, sisters: ***Gutka, Shifra, Chana'cheh***, along with their husbands and children.

Chaim Mordechai Schwartzbard
Zelka Schwartzbard



Page 622: (Top Left): Faygl & Sarah Leah Rothberg (See Necrology #33)



Page 622: (Top Right): Nechama Rothberg & Her Son (See Necrology #35)



Page 622: (Bottom Left): The Family of Lejzor Levinsky (See Necrology # 44);



Page 622: (Bottom Right) Rivka Rothberg & Her Children (See Necrology # 35 on page 338)



Page 623: (Top Left): Jocheved Srebrowicz & Her Son, Meir (See Necrology # 31)



Page 623: (Top Right): Abraham Jabkowsky & Liba Zukerman (See Necrology # 26)

Page 623: (Center, Left): Zippora Srebrowicz





Page 623: (Bottom Left): Family of Moshe & Nash'keh Srebrowicz (See Necrology # 31)



Page 623: (Bottom Right): Moshe Garbass & His Family.

41

My dear grandfather & grandmother:
Shlomo & Mattl Pekarewicz

Gedalia Levin

42

Father & Mother ***Zelik & Chana Kuropatwa***, brother ***Nissl*** with his wife ***Basha-Reiz'eh*** and children, mother-in-law ***Chana Leah Kopczinsky***

Herschel Kuropatwa,
Basha Fuchs, Rivka Kuropatwa, Faygl Sosnowsky, Gittl Sosnowsky & Husband,
Zeitl Lifschitz

43

Our unforgettable mother & sisters: ***Dvora Zlateh Wisznia, Leah, Gittl*** with husbands and children.

Moshe Wisznia & Family

44

Our dear parents:
David Shlomo & Chava Leah Levinsky, brother ***Lejzor*** with wife & children, sisters: ***Etkeh*** with husband & children, ***Rivka*** with husband & children, ***Esther*** with husband & children.

Herschel Levinsky & Family

45

Our dear parents:
Velvel Baruch & Sarah Monkasz, brothers ***Naphtali, David Isaac***, sisters: ***Baylah*** & her children, ***Chava Itka*** & her children.

Yaakov Monkasz & Family

46

Our dear parents:
Sender, Shayna-Feiga Edem,
Sisters: ***Mindl, Rachel, Hendl, Esther*** & their families. Brothers: ***Abraham Yaakov, Moshe Aharon, Eli-Leib, Chaim Lejzor*** & families, all our relatives, and others who were exterminated.

Dan, Sarah, Yaakov, Bluma Edem

47

Our beloved martyrs:
Father ***Chaim Meir Wisznia***, sisters: ***Masha, Sarah'keh*** and their families, brother-in-law ***Itcheh*** and his wife ***Chana Niewiadomsky***

Moshe Leib & Dob'keh Wisznia,
Herschel Ber & wife Miriam Esther & Family,
Mirl Wisznia, Khatzkel Wisznia & Family.

48

Our dear parents ***Sender & Shayna Feiga Edem***. sisters: ***Mindl, Rachel, Hendl, Esther*** & their families, brothers: ***Abraham Yaakov, Moshe Aharon, Eli-Leib, Chaim Lejzor*** and their families.

Hersh Mikhl, Sarah, Esther, Yaakov & Abraham Sender Edem

49

To the Sanctified memory – of our martyrs from the Warsaw Ghetto: Mother: ***Sarah Rosenblum***, brother ***David Rosenblum***, sisters: ***Leah, Aydl, Bluma*** & their families.

Hadassah, Boaz, Frieda & Masha Chmiel



Page 625: (Top Left): The Ratowicz Family (See Necrology # 11)



Page 625: (Top Right): The Finkelstein Family (See Necrology # 4)



Page 625: (Bottom): The Pacziner Family (See Necrology # 2)

50

We mourn our martyrs:
Parents: ***Shmuel & Dvora Rothberg***,
Brothers: ***Yitzhak, Bendet*** & their families, ***Shlomo Rothberg, Meir*** & his family.
Sisters: ***Tzipa*** and her husband, mother-in-law ***Breineh Applebaum***, brother-in-law ***Moshe Applebaum*** & family, Sisters-in-law: ***Luba Greenberg, Bayl'keh Applebaum*** & families.

Zelik Rothberg, Rasa & Maria, Elka Rothberg

51

To the eternal memory of our family:
Yitzhak Rubinstock, ***Leib Zdaleker, Nahum Mendelewicz, Mendl Goldstein***, uncles, aunts, with their families, from Zambrow and Lomza.

Rivka Czikelewicz da Geluda

52

To memorialize our ***Houseman*** family from Zambrow

Noss'keh & Matt'keh Houseman

53

Those unforgettable to me: Wife ***Reiz'eh Tzivan*** & child, ***Abraham Shlomo'leh***.

David Tzivan

54

Our dear parents and Family.
Parents: ***Chaim Reuven & Basha Tzivan***, sisters, ***Dvora'keh, Chava-Hinde***, with their husbands and children, ***Sarah'keh*** and her children.

Pesh'keh with her husband & children (N. America) David & Meir Yitzhak Tzivan

55

Our dear parents ***Chaim & Sarah Rachel Bursztein***, brother ***Abraham'cheh*** with his wife and children, sister ***Basha*** with her husband and children, brother-in-law ***Herschel Dzewko***.

Moshe, Chan'cheh Dzewko & children

56

Our dear mother ***Chaya Friedman***, brother ***Yitzhak Friedman*** & family, Uncle ***Ephraim Friedman*** & family.

Faygl Friedman

57

Dear mother and sister ***Dvorah Zlata Wisznia***, ***Leah Gittl*** with husband and children.

Moshe Wisznia & Family

58

I will always remember you: My father ***Yaakov-Yeshaya HaKohen***, uncle ***Asher Joseph Cohen*** & family, uncle and sitting Rabbi, ***Rabbi Dov Menachem Regensberg*** & family.

Eliyahu Mordechai Cohen

59

To the eternal memory of my wife ***Dvorah'keh Pekarewicz***, my daughter ***Chaya Pekarewicz***

Shlomo Pekarewicz

60

Our beloved mother
Rachel Leah Golombek-Zaltzman

Yaakov & Aryeh Zaltzman

61

Our dear brother ***Chaim***, wife ***Toba Kuropatwa*** and three children, sister ***Gittl Kuropatwa*** & children

Shmuel Kuropatwa & Family

62

We will carry the memory forever:
Mother ***Malka Brom***, brother ***Yitzhak*** & wife ***Ban'cheh Brom*** & child, of the ***Granica*** Family: brother ***Yaakov Herschel*** & children, sister ***Chaya-Faygl*** with her husband ***Israel Yitzhak Jonkac*** & children, ***Masha-Leah*** & husband ***Fyvel Zukrowicz*** & children, ***Golda Rivka*** with her husband ***Getzel, Rachel*** & children,

Mikhl Granica & Family

**

In memory of ***Chaya (Chay'cheh) Tykoczinsky*** of the ***Golombek Family***, my good, and modest sister, who died in the prime of life 12 Elul 5720 (4 September 1960).



Page 624: (Left column, center): Chaya (Chay'cheh) Tykoczinsky of the Golombek Family

You were [sic: like] an only daughter to us, beloved and precious. In the thirties, you left your father's home, broke your connections with the Diaspora, and made *aliyah* to *The Land*, with the love of your life, at a time when the Hebrew language flowed fluently from your mouth. I, the sole survivor of our family, was privileged to see you yet again, for a short time on the Land of our Birth.

With your passing, a pillar of radiance was extinguished from our widely-branched family.

Yitzhak Golombek

Tova Stepner-Jabkowsky ל"ז

She was the daughter of Shlomkeh the yeast merchant, who, from childhood onwards, was educated in Torah and taught to work. From her early youth, she was active in the Land of Israel Labor Movement. She made *aliyah* in 1926 and from that time on, she was active in organizing the scions of the town, dealing with newly-arrived *olim*, to the point that she got the nickname: mother of those scions of Zambrow. She proved herself in all manner of hard work, on the roads, and in factories, and found a place for herself in later years in the dairy firm of 'Tenuvah.' She was vibrant and respected even at her place of work. Her premature passing cast sorrow on everyone.

Photos From the English Appendix



Page 68A: The Entire Family of Shmelke Sarniewicz



Page 60A: The Kozshol Family



Page 66A: Scions of Zambrow in California (Photo by Isaac Malinowicz, Summer 1963)



Page 53A: The Zambrow League for Israeli Labor Workers



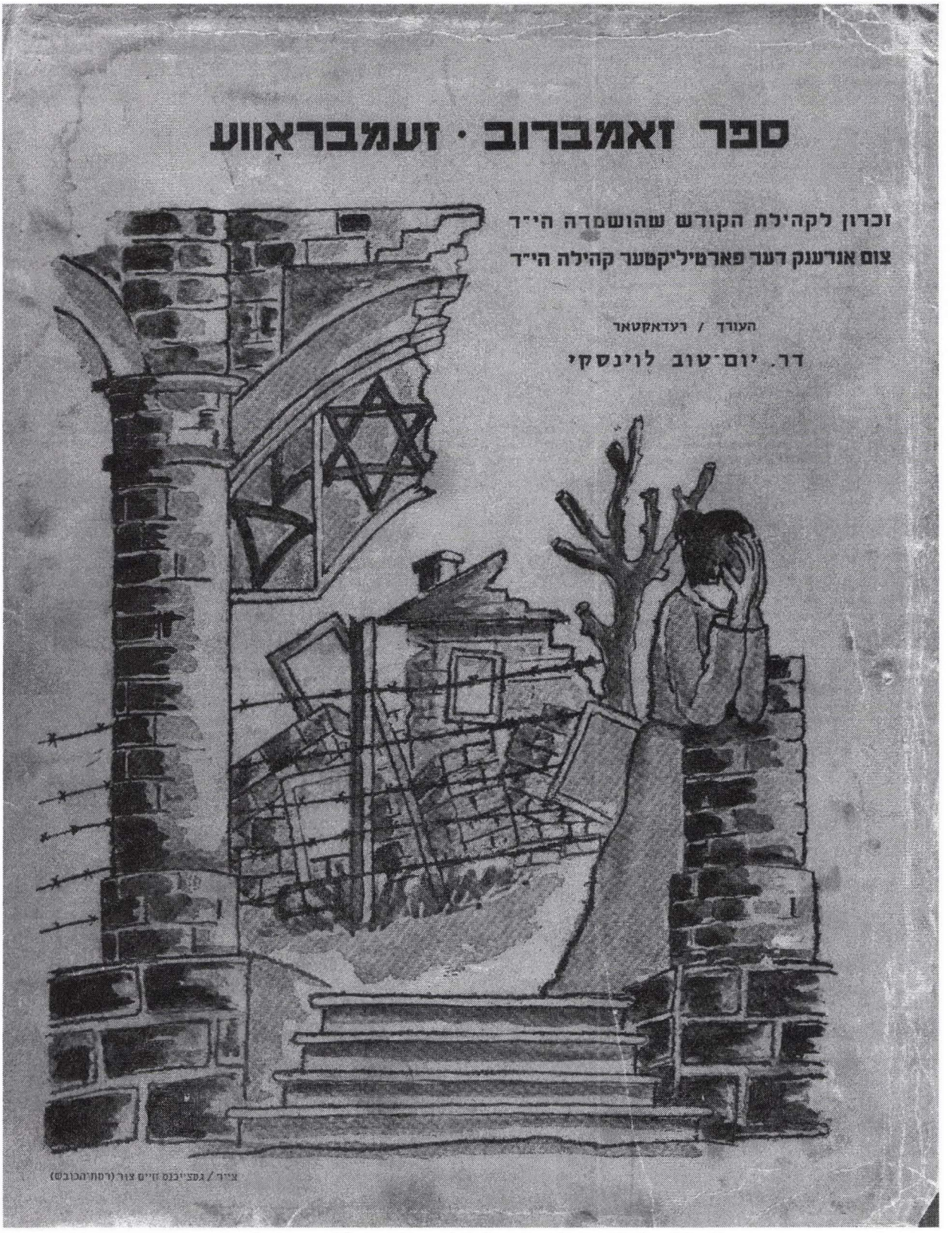
Page 35A: A Pioneer Group (Halutzim)



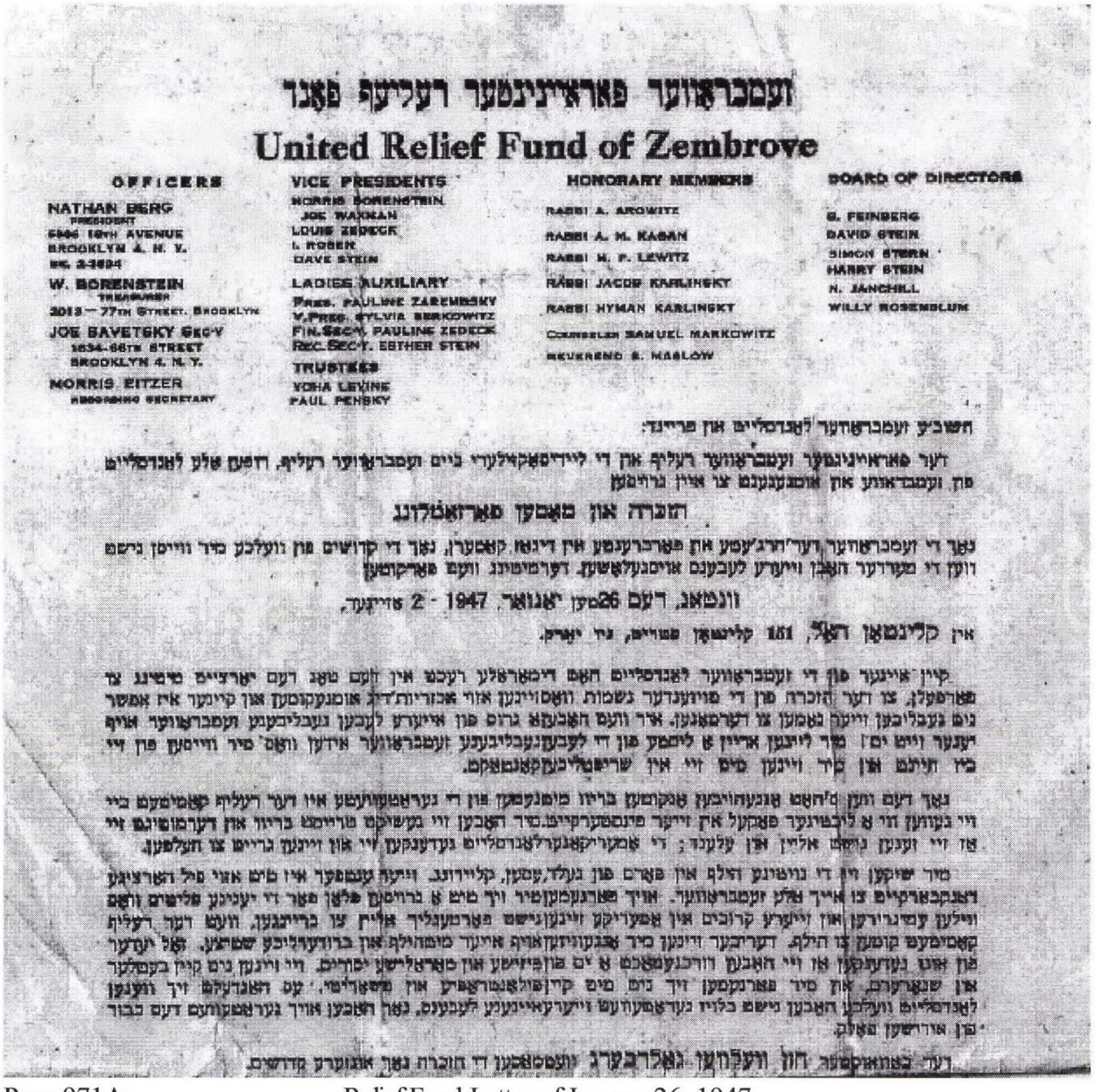
Page 969: *Yitzhak Levinsky (of the Koszarers) & Wife.*
A Scion of Zambrow who settled in the U.S. A. (Passed away 1962)

Supplementary Picture Album

In the process of preparing this translated volume, a search was made of the archives containing the raw material from which the original *Sefer Zambrow* was prepared. A small trove of photographs was uncovered that were not included in the original publication. They are presented here in the interest of preserving as complete a record for posterity as possible.



Page 970: Book Cover Illustration of *Sefer Zambrow Yizkor* Book



זעמבראווער פאראיינטער רעליף פאנד

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WILLY ROSENBLUM

חשובע זעמברוווער לאנדסלייט און פריינד:

דער פאראיינטער זעמברוווער רעליף און די לויטמאקילערז ביים זעמברוווער רעליף, זענען שלע לאנדסלייט פון זעמברוווע אין אומגעגנט צו אירן גרוסען

הצרה און מאסען פארזאמלונג

נאך די זעמברוווער דער'הרג'עטע אין פארבראכענעם אין דיזען קאסערן, נאך די קדושים פון וועלכע מיר ווייסן נישט ווען די מערדער האבן זייערע לעבענס אומגעלאשטע. דעמיטינג וועט פארקומען

זונטאג, דעם 26סטן יאנואר 1947 - 2 זייגער,

אין קלינטאן האל, 151 קלינטאן סטריט, ני יארק.

קיין אויסגער פון די זעמברוווער לאנדסלייט האט ניכטאראלע רעכט אין דעם טאג דעם יארציים מיטינג צו פארפעלן, צו דער זכירה פון די מיוערדער נשמות וואס זייגען אזוי אכזריותדיג אומגעקומען און קיינער איז אפטר גיט געבליבען זייער נאמען צו דערמאנען. איר וועט האבען גרוס פון אייערע לעבען געבליבענע זעמברוווער אויף יענער וויט ים. מיר ליבען אייך א ליכטיג פון די לעבענדיגבליבענע זעמברוווער אידן וואס מיר ווייסן פון זיי בין תיתם און מיר ווילען סיי זיי אין שריפטליכען קאנטאקט.

נאך דעם וועלן מ'חאט אונטערווילען ברויז סימפאטיע פון די נעראשטעלטע איז דער רעליף קאמיטע ביי זיי בעזונען דזו א ליכטינער פאקעל אין זייער פינסטערקייט. מיר האבען זיי בעשיקט מוריטע ברויו און דערמוטיגט זיי זאל זיי ווענען גוטען אליין אן עלנד; די אמעריקאנער לאנדסלייט געדענקען זיי און ווילען גרייט צו העלפען.

מיר שיקען זיך די נויטיגע הילף אין פארם פון געלד, קלייד. ווילה עסטער איז טיט אזוי פיל האנדארבייט צו אייך שלע זעמברוווער. אויך פארגעסטמיר וך טיט א ברוסטן פלעק מער די יעניגע מישטיס וואס ווילען קאמפירירן און ווילען קרובים אין אמעריקע זיינען נישט פארטעליך אויף עז בריינגען, וועט דער רעליף קאמיטע קוטען צו הילף. דערבייך ווילען כיר אפגעזונדען אויך מיטוולף און ברודערליכע שמיצן. שלע יעדער פון אונז נעדענקען אז ווי האבען ווירכנעמאכט א ים פון פיינשע און פארשלישע יסורים. ווי ווילען נים קיין בעסערער אין שנארקום, און מיר פארנעמען זיך נים מים קיין פולאנטראפיע און משוגעטס, עס האנדעלט זיך ווענען לאנדסלייט ווועלכע האבען נישט בלויז נעראמעדעט ווילען לעבענס, נאר האבען אויך נעראמעדעט דעם כבוד פון אידישען נאמען.

דער באמאקראט חון ווילהעלם גאלדבערג ווענשען די חזכרת נאך אונזערע קדושים.

Page 971A: Relief Fund Letter of January 26, 1947

איטליכער פון זיי שרייבט אונז זיין מוזיערונג לעבעדיגצושיכטע, וי אזוי זיי זענען נצול געווארען פון די שרעקות, דאס איז איין קיינס פון צרות פול טעג נימים, ווי אזוי וייזענען בערעטעוועט פון מויל; זייער מרשגרישע לשנה איצט גרייכט ביז מארצוויילונג... שוין באלדאנדערהאלבען יאהר נאך אזוי געדענקען באפרייאונג, שמאכען זיי נאך אויף די בלומיג קבר.

קומט און העלפט אז באריכט פון רעליף קאמיטעט. מיר האבען צו זיי א חוב. מיר דארפען שלע זאגען: מיר וועלען אונזער חוב מקיים זיין.

מיט לאנדסמאנשאפט גרום,

די רעליף קאמיטע

נייעש בוירג, פרעזידענט — יוסף סאווטצקי, סעקרעטאר

ג. ב. — א וויכטונער דאקומענט איז אנגעקומען פון א לאנדסמאן. קם וועט געלעזען ווערען בים טיטינג.

A CALL TO ALL ZEMBROVER LANDSLEIT:

The United Zembrover Relief and itsLadies' Auxiliary invite you to a **MEMORIAL MEETING for the fallen Zem-brover Jews, SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 1947,** at 2:00 P. M., at **Clinton Hall,** 151 ClintonStreet, New York.

It is your duty as friends of the peoplewho were born in your hometown Zembrove to honor the memory of the fallenheroes and martyrs who gave their lives that we Jews in America might live.

We are taking great pains to provide aninteresting program. The famous Cantor will make the invocation.

We are glad to let you know that sur-vivors of Zembrov are now located in all parts of the world, Poland, Russia, France,Germany, Austria, Italy, Palestine and Shanghai. We are in touch with all ourZembrover in all these countries and are continually sending them food, clothing,money and immigration assistance, wherever it is possible. This help is provided inthe name of all Zembrover that now live in the United States.

We want you to come and hear for your-self their letters of thanks from your own people of Zembrov. Come and hear thegreetings from your families and friends.

Sincerely yours,

JOE SAVETSKY, Secretary

PLEASE NOTE!

All contributions are to be sent to
UNITED ZEMBROVER RELIEF
c/o JOE SAVITSKY, Secretary
1634—66th Street, Brooklyn 4, N. Y.
or W. BERNSTEIN
2013—77th St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Information about contributions or reliefwork for residents of the . tained from MORRIS EITZER, 2504 Bronx Park East, Bronx 67, N. Y.

Page 971B: Relief Fund Letter of January 26, 1947

Rabbi Simcha Maslow

By Aaron D. Maslow



Page 972 (Left): Rabbi Simcha Maslow



Page 972 (Right): Sarah Maslow

Born in 1891 in Czyew, Poland, Simcha Maslow attended the famous Lomza Yeshiva. He married Sarah Zaks in 1914, and they resided in her hometown of Zambrow, Poland. At that time, Poland was part of Czarist Russia. Besides obtaining *smicha*, Simcha Maslow engaged in various entrepreneurial pursuits -- buying cigarettes and sundries and selling them to the soldiers of the warring countries during World War I, becoming a salesman for the American sewing machine company Singer.

In 1924, Rabbi Simcha Maslow left his family and immigrated to the United States. The plan was to bring over his family after he had acquired citizenship. While in America, he earned a living principally as a *Shokhet* and *mohel*. A string of Jewish farms existed in Colchester, Connecticut, and he served as their *Shokhet*. With her husband in America, my grandmother Sarah Reizl Maslow supported herself as a businesswoman in Zambrow. Employing other woman who worked under her, she ran a seamstress shop, turning out dresses and other women's clothes.

After acquiring citizenship in 1930, Rabbi Simcha Maslow returned to his family in Zambrow. He was reluctant to go back to America but his mother wrote from America asking that he return with his family. He made the fateful decision to return to America and spent two more years there (1932-1934) without his family. In late 1934, Rabbi Maslow made his last trip back to Poland to prepare his family for their emigration from there to the United States. My father, Morris Maslow; my two

aunts, Esther and Helen; and my grandparents arrived in New York on Jan. 31, 1935. (My grandparents had a daughter Frumit, who died as a teenager in Zambrow, and was buried there.) The family moved from the Bronx (where my grandfather and father were active in Young Israel of Tremont) to Brooklyn in the early 1940's. In Brooklyn they continued their activism in the Young Israel movement and *davened* at Young Israel of Avenue U. Rabbi Simcha Maslow never served as a pulpit rabbi. Instead he served in other capacities. For many years he taught in yeshivas. Many boys preparing for their *bar mitzvah* were taught their *Torah* and *Haftara* portions by my grandfather without his charging. As ardent Orthodox Zionists in pre-Israeli statehood years, my grandfather and father were both very active in the *HaPoel HaMizrachi* movement. They ran as candidates for the World Zionist Congress on the religious Zionist slate (although they were too low on the list to win). *Landsmanshaften* were an integral aspect of American Jewish life back then. Immigrants from the same town formed mutual aid and burial organizations, meeting frequently and providing assistance to one another. Rabbi Simcha Maslow was active in the United Zembrover Society, lending money and giving advice to fellow Zembrovers. In fact, giving advice was a forte of his. Several family members remarked to me how people would always seek out his advice on all sorts of secular and religious problems.

In the days before kashrut supervision became a nationwide business, Rabbi Simcha Maslow served as an individual *mashgiach* at catered affairs in the New York City area. He insisted on keeping the keys and opening up the place himself; it was he who turned on the ovens and stoves for the cooking.

My grandfather had some modest real estate investments and he repeatedly made worthy charitable donations.

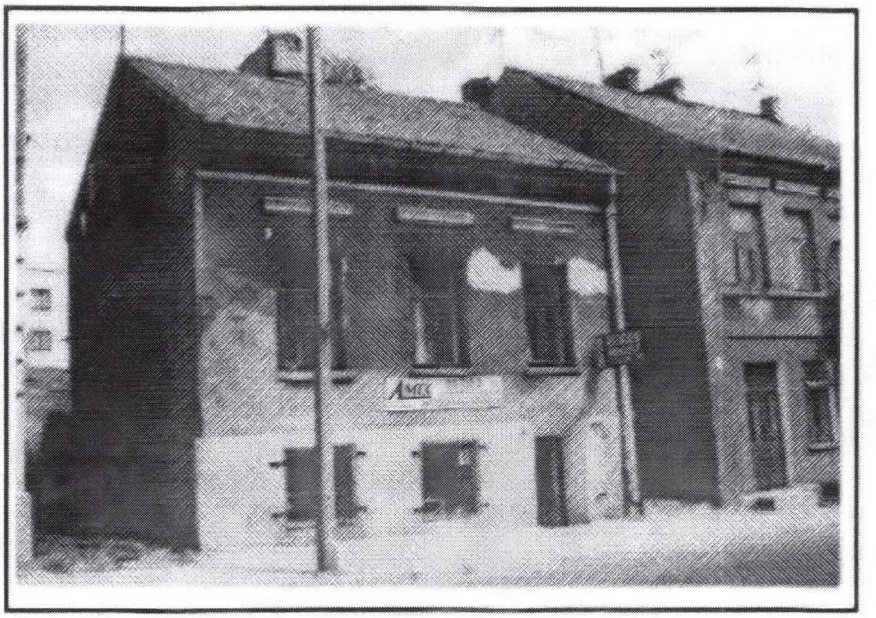
Rabbi Simcha Maslow was a modest man. He could have used his *smicha* to have the title "Rabbi" printed with his name in the telephone book yet he chose the more modest "Rev."

In the 1950's, Rabbi Simcha Maslow and my father were instrumental in forming Young Israel of Ocean Parkway and hiring Rabbi Herbert Bomzer as its first rabbi. My grandfather taught the *Chevra Mishnayos* class there, waking up early every morning and trudging to the *Shul* to teach the class, even if only one man would show up. He did this until the day he suffered his fatal heart attack in 1964.

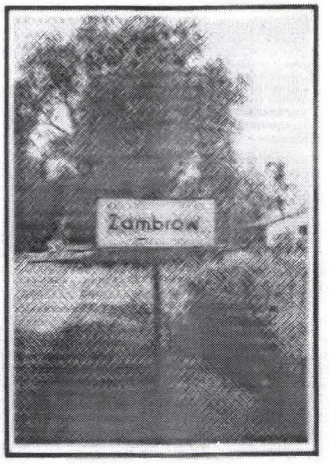
Orthodox Judaism bloomed in America in the last two decades of the 20th century, when those born after World War II entered adulthood. However, during the mid-20th century, at a time when Orthodoxy was struggling to survive, there were certain unheralded individuals who labored to keep Torah Judaism alive. My grandfather Rabbi Simcha Maslow זצ"ל was one of them.



Hebrew Caption reads: **"Committee of Youth and Freedom" Zambrow,** August 12, 1926. Judith Jakula Zedek seated at far left and Hyman Zedek seated second from right in white tunic.



Judith Yakula Zedek's home in Zambrow (1992)
All Photos by Dr. Sheldon Zedeck

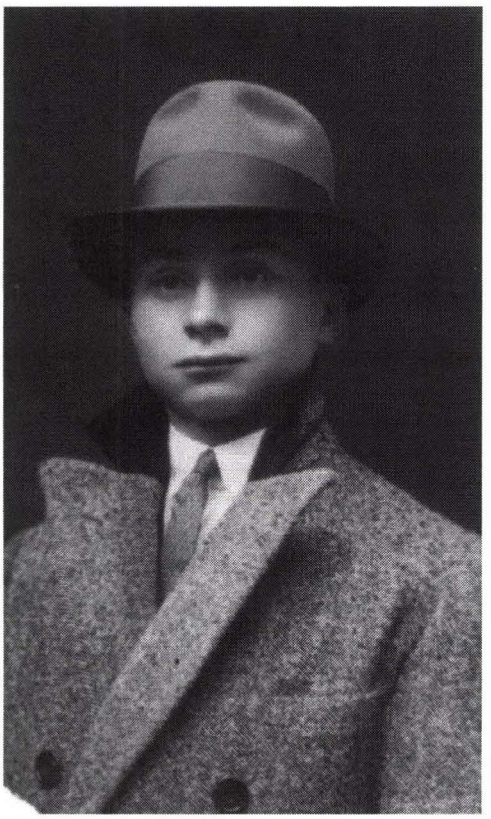




Nos. 12 and 14 Koscinsiki St. (1992) - Archway leads to homes of Renee Brozoza and Hyman Zedek



Page 974 (Top, Left): Florence Greenfeld Goldbrum and Milton Greenfeld in Zambrow. They left Zambrow in the 1930's. Milton was killed while serving in the U.S. Army during WW II.



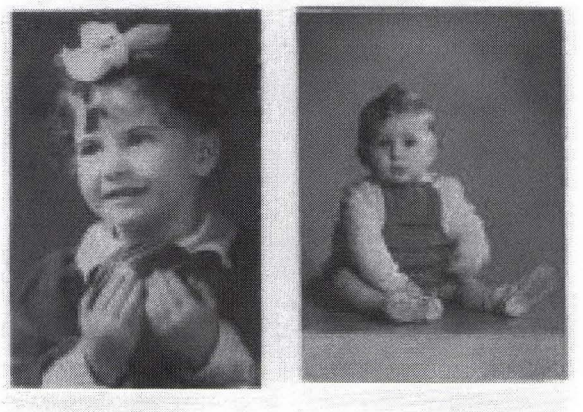
Page 974 (Top, Right): Jack (Angel) Green, né Greenfeld, in Zambrow, 1926.



Page 974 (Bottom, Left): Fraidky Jainchill Greenfeld, in Zambrow, 1922.



Page 974 (Bottom, Right): Benjamin Greenfeld



Page 975 (Top, Left): Children of Yudl and Golda Koziol:

Anna Bella Koziol (now Billie Robbins) and Yitzhak Isaac Koziol



Page 975 (Top, Right): Julius (Yudl) Koziol and Chaya Rivka Koziol. Left Zambrow in 1936-1937.

הֲלוֹא זֶה אוּד מֻצָּל מֵאֵשׁ׃

This a burning brand plucked from the fire, is it not?"

– Zechariah 3:2



Page 975 (Bottom): Descendants of Julius and Goldie Koziol & Their Families in 2015



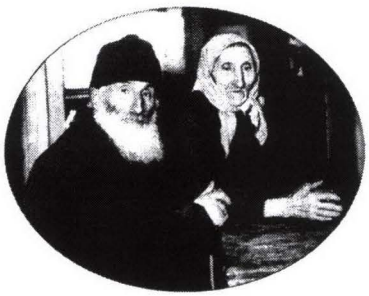
Page 976 (Top, Left): Renée Zonenshine, née Brozoza, left Zambrow in 1938, and Chanan Kessler, grandson of Joseph Waxman, né Wierzbowicz, at her home in Southern California, in 2015.



Page 976 (Top, Right): Joseph Waxman né Wierbowicz, front row, third from left, left Zambrow in 1920, shown working in Palestine in 1922.



Page 976 (Bottom): **The Wierzbowicz Family**
L to R: Hinde, Puah (Paiche), her son David, and Shayndl Wierzbowicz
Picture Sent to America sometime between 1939-1941.
The family reportedly all perished in Treblinka in January 1942.



Page 977 (Top, Left): Michael Lifschitz and His Wife, Zambrow, 1927.



Page 977 (Top, Right): The Merchant Isaac Stupnik, Zambrow, 1927.



Page 977 (Middle): The Sexton (*Shammes*) Mordechai Aharon Meiner and His Wife, Zambrow, 1927.



Page 977 (Bottom, Left): Wife of the *Shammes* beside the Oven, Zambrow, 1927.



Page 977 (Bottom, Right): Moshe Lejzor Sobiel, Zambrow, 1927.



Page 978: Rose and Jack Cooperman with Children (L to R): Naphtali (Nat), Moshe (Melvin), and Leah'cheh (Lucy)



Page 978: (Top, Right) Leah'cheh, Moshe and Naphtali Cooperman in Zambrow, 1928



Page 978: (Bottom, Left): The Family of One of Jack Cooper's Sisters



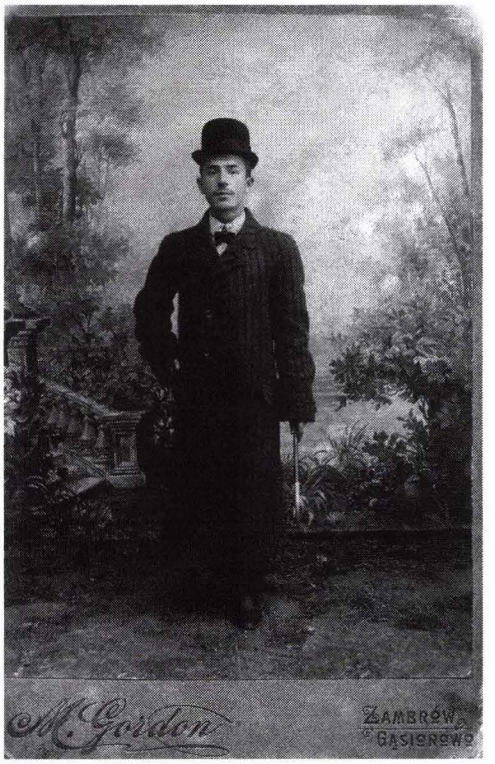
Page 978: (LtoR): Rywka Kowalewska, Renée Zonenshine, née Rywka Brzoza, Zambrow, 1938



Page 979: Benet, Esther Rokhl, Eli, Pesha and Tzirl Piekarewicz, standing. Seated are their grandmother, and 'Srul'keh Piekarewicz



Page 979: The Furmanowicz Sisters



Page 979: Mr. Bednowicz, taken at the Zambrow Photo Studio of M. Gordon



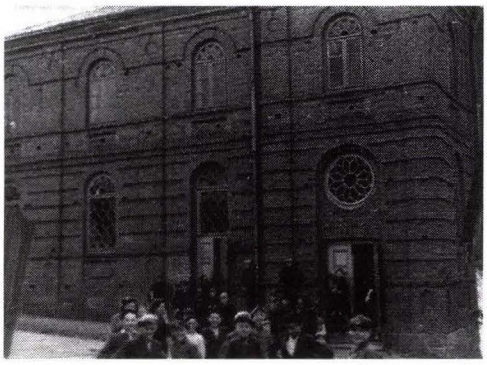
Page 979: (L to R): Menucha, Masha and Avram Choroszcz and an unknown woman



Page 980: 'Srul'keh Lichtensztejn



Page 980: BETAR Youth in Zambrow



Page 980: Zambrow Townsfolk in front of the Synagogue



Page 980: **The Zambrow Jewish Public School, 1926-1927**
Next to the last row is Mr. Glazwand who taught Jewish History. In the middle row are Principal Hamburg, Nuta Gordon, who taught Polish language, and Cymrung, who taught World History. At the end of the same row as the teachers is Yachat Prawda.

These I shall remember... אֵלֶּה אֶזְכְּרָה...

In the fullness of time, many pictures have come to light, in the possession of *landsleit*, which – sadly – carry no identification, and there is no living memory to consult in order that identity may be established. We provide this place for those images, as a minimal form of memorialization for these likely victims of the Holocaust, who remain unnamed.



Page 990: A Group Photo Taken at the Send-Off of the *Maggid* of Zambrow, 1923

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