

Żydowskie czasopisma  
dla dzieci w Polsce  
międzywojennej  
— w trzech językach

**Jewish Children's  
periodicals in Poland  
between the two  
world wars — in  
three languages**

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**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:**

żydowskie czasopisma dla dzieci; żydowskie czasopisma dla młodzieży; czasopisma w języku polskim; czasopisma w języku hebrajskim, czasopisma w języku jidysz; dwudziestolecie międzywojenne

**KEY WORDS:**

History of the press in Poland 1918–1939 — Jewish press in Poland in Polish, Yiddish and Hebrew in the interwar period — Jewish children's magazines and Jewish magazines for teens in Poland in the interwar period

**ABSTRAKT**

Żydowskie czasopisma dla dzieci i młodzieży w Polsce między wojnami ukazywały się nakładem licznych wydawców: partii politycznych, ruchów i organizacji młodzieżowych, instytucji opieki społecznej, sieci placówek oświatowych a także pojedynczych szkół. Publikowano je w trzech językach: polskim, jidysz i hebrajskim. Żydowska społeczność w Polsce tego czasu była bardzo zróżnicowana pod wieloma względami — politycznie, społecznie oraz stopniem zaangażowania w praktyki religijne. Każdy periodyk odzwierciedlał orientację i wartości swojego wydawcy.

Artykuł dokonuje przeglądu żydowskich czasopisma dla dzieci i młodzieży w każdym z trzech języków i zwraca uwagę na różne orientacje i wartości na ich łamach. Jest owocem wieloletnich badań periodyków rozproszonych dziś w Izraelu, Polsce i Stanach Zjednoczonych.

**ABSTRACT**

Jewish periodicals for children and youth were published in Poland between the two world wars by a variety of bodies: political parties, youth movements, social welfare institutions, educational networks and individual schools. These periodicals were written in three languages: Polish, Yiddish and Hebrew. The Jewish community in Poland during that period was highly heterogeneous in many ways — politically, socially and in the degree of religious observance. Each periodical reflects the orientation and values of the body publishing it.

This article reviews the Jewish periodicals for young people in each of the three languages, and notes these various orientations and values. The article is the fruit of many years of research in which these periodicals were located in Israel, in Poland and in the United States.

## Summary

Jewish periodicals for children and youth were published in Poland between the two world wars by a variety of bodies: political parties, youth movements, social welfare institutions, educational networks and individual schools. These periodicals were written in three languages: Polish, Yiddish and Hebrew.

The Jewish community in Poland during that period was highly heterogeneous in many ways — politically, socially and in the degree of religious observance. Each periodical reflects the orientation and values of the body publishing it.

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“The periodical is like a bouquet made up of different flowers. There is no doubt that the bouquet is more beautiful when we can choose its flowers from a wider selection”.

Janusz Korczak, *O gazetce szkolnej*, Warszawa 1921

## Introduction

### a. Children's periodicals

Special periodicals for children first began to be published in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but the 19<sup>th</sup> century is the main period in the history of various aspects of this medium. The number of publications rose during this period, and together with the rise in number, there was also a change in contents and trends that took into account the age of the readers. At first the children's periodicals served to educate. Over time this trend changed, and the papers began to cater to the young readers' needs<sup>1</sup>. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there is evidence of a new attitude of society towards children's periodicals. Not only authors and educators were involved. Other factors in society, such as literary critics, dealt with this kind of press and tried to influence it. The editors underwent another process of change: from preaching morals, reprimanding and guiding, they became a kind of reader's friend, providing subject matter that interested and amused the children<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> This phenomenon is also typical in children's literature in general. Until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, children were treated as ‘small adults’. With the invention of printing, learning to read and write was considered a stage in a child's developing maturity. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, people began treating childhood as a special stage in life, and began taking into account the cognitive, psychological and emotional needs of the child. Children's literature changed accordingly. Initially, literary texts provided children with models of “proper behavior”. When the concept of childhood changed, children's literature changed, placing the child in the center. The adult authors tried to view the world through the child's eyes, and legitimize the children's feelings and actions.

<sup>2</sup> For more about the start and growth of children's periodicals around the world, see: Adina Bar-El, *Under the Little Green Trees: Yiddish and Hebrew Children's Periodicals in Poland 1918–1939*, The Hebrew University in Jerusalem, 2006, pp. 11–20.

Since children's periodicals reflect the society in which they are created, they contained echoes of historical and political events as well as reports on social products (in the realms of literature, theater, press, etc.) and also values, particularly those that the periodical's editors — as representatives of the body publishing the periodical — wished to impart to their young readership. Hence, these periodicals may serve as historical documents, teaching us about Jewish society regarding various topics, namely: attitudes towards children at that time and within that society; the education system and its influence; original and translated children's literature and its authors; the impact of the events of the period on the community and on the individual, the manifest and hidden content and messages passed on to the younger generation.

However, this kind of press had two constraints when it comes to presenting the whole picture. One stems from the age of the readers. Since it was necessary to take into consideration the intellectual and emotional development of the young readers, it is very likely that not everything appeared in print, and that the wording was also adapted to suit them. The second limitation is that in Poland, this was a minority press. As hinted at in various places in the papers themselves as well as from outside sources, not everything was detailed in the periodicals because of government censorship.

### **b. Jews in Poland, a trilingual community**

The Jewish population in Poland before the Second World War numbered three million, 10% of the total population.

At the Versailles Peace Conference held in the aftermath of the First World War, the Petite Entente for the Minorities, the Polish Government undertook to authorize the minorities in Poland to establish and run their own educational institutions, granting them the right to use their own language and give free expression to their religion.

The Jewish population was a very heterogeneous community, containing various groups, differing in their political, social and religious tendencies. It included both religious and secular Jews, socialists and their opponents, and Zionists — believing in immigration to the Land of Israel — as well as non-Zionists.

Each party wished to educate the younger generation according to its own values and cultural and political tendencies. Accordingly, the Polish Jews established several educational networks: ultra-Orthodox, traditional religious, Zionist, socialist-Zionist, socialist non-Zionist and other schools.

The Jews used three languages: In addition to Polish, they used both Yiddish and Hebrew. Thus, the Jewish population in Poland was to some extent trilingual and lived in a 'tri-cultural' milieu.

The use of the different languages — Yiddish, Hebrew or Polish — reflected different attitudes: the Zionists wished to impart Hebrew, to prepare the young for emigration to the Land of Israel; the Jewish Bund Party preferred Yiddish, the language largely used by the Jewish population in Eastern Europe and in America.

Most Jewish children went to Polish schools since the state covered the fees, and consequently they read children's books and periodicals in Polish. However, those who studied in schools run by the Jewish communities were immersed in Hebrew or Yiddish, and the need arose to provide them with the relevant children's literature and periodicals, which were very limited at that time.

The publishers faced various problems: censorship by the authorities, as every non-Polish publication had to be given approval; scarce financial resources due to lack of government support; and a relatively small and poor reading public, leading to very small profits — if any.

Children's periodicals in Yiddish and Hebrew compensated for the dearth of children's literature in these languages. They included a wealth of literary texts of various genres: stories, poems, fables, singing games, travel accounts and many more. These periodicals gradually became the mainspring of the development of children's literature in the minority languages.

### **c. Periodicals and ideological manifestos among Polish Jewry**

Between the two world wars in Poland, Jewish periodicals for children were published by different bodies: parties, youth movements, social assistance institutions, national education networks, individual schools, pupil clubs etc. In addition, supplements for children were added to adult papers. Most of these publications contained literary and informative texts written by adults. Some of them were written by youngsters themselves. In addition, there were also pedagogical periodicals for teachers and others intended for parents. In some of these there were sections devoted to essays and letters written by pupils. The Jewish periodicals for young people, like those for adults, were published in three languages, Polish, Yiddish and Hebrew. Most of them were mono-lingual while a few were bilingual.

We can find two models of Jewish children's periodicals in Poland. The first model: a political body creates an educational network in its preferred language of instruction for study content that it deems appropriate, (in addition to the study of Polish by order of the regime). The educational network publishes periodicals for youngsters of various ages. Naturally, the paper is written in the language of instruction used within that network. The other model: a political body directly publishes periodicals for children and youth that are incorporated in one of its organizations.

In the latter model, the language is not always that which the political body encourages the use of. Sometimes there is a compromise with reality in order to reach a broader readership. Most of the bodies publishing one of these two models were aware of the special needs of the readers and they published periodicals intended for different age groups: youth (12 and above), elementary school children (7 to 11) and sometimes even for a younger audience.

## Chapter 1 — Yiddish periodicals for children and youth

### a. Why Yiddish?

Yiddish is a Jewish language written in the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. It began in Western Europe in the 9<sup>th</sup> century as a dialect of German. When the Jews emigrated to Eastern Europe in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Yiddish was influenced by the Slavic languages. Yiddish also contains Hebrew words. In a census conducted in Russia in 1897, most Jews — including those living in Poland, large parts of which belonged to Russia at that time — declared that their spoken language was Yiddish. Other languages chosen by the Jews in Czarist Russia were Russian and Polish, which were considered the languages of the educated<sup>3</sup>.

Yiddish was spoken throughout Eastern Europe<sup>4</sup> and also overseas, in places where European Jews had migrated, such as America, Canada and Argentina. Those who supported Yiddish claimed that it was a tool to express the Jewish cultural experience, as it was the language of its cultural assets<sup>5</sup> and that it preserved the integrity of the Jewish people by preventing any cultural split.

Yiddish allowed for the expression of the very diverse nature of the society of Polish Jewry. Periodicals in Yiddish for children and youth were published in Poland by bodies and institutions that differed and even opposed one another in their political manifestos and their social and ideological perceptions.

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<sup>3</sup> See: Avraham Noverstern, *Literature and Life: The growing of the new Yiddish literature*, Tel Aviv 2000 (Hebrew).

<sup>4</sup> Even in Galicia, while it was part of Austro-Hungary.

<sup>5</sup> There were three classical authors who wrote in it: Ya'akov Abramovitsh, whose pen-name was Mendele Moykher Sforim [Mendele the book seller] (1835–1917); Sholem Rabinovitsh, whose pen-name was Sholem Aleikhem (1859–1916); and Yitzhok Leybush Perets (1915–1982).

## b. The periodicals of “Agudat Israel” organisation

The worldwide organization of “Agudat Israel” was founded in 1912 in Katowice. The orthodox people preferred to live according to the rules of the Torah, with absolutely no deviations. Their language of daily conversation was Yiddish, while Hebrew remained the language of prayer, according to the Holy Scriptures in the ancient language.

In the religious society, in earlier periods, a boy from the age of thirteen on was considered an adult; but in the period between the two world wars — as in the secular society — they began to notice particular problems and tendencies among the youth, and began to organize special frameworks for them in order to impart their values. Thus, orthodox youth organizations came into being, the periodical “**Orthodoxishe Yugnt-Bleter**” [Issues for the Young Orthodox]<sup>6</sup> was published. It started as a monthly in 1929 and became a bi-weekly in 1935.

Agudat Israel established a special educational system and published more periodicals for the young religious as a natural outcome of the desire to provide them with literary and other texts to cater to their needs. One of the key innovations was the provision of Jewish education for girls. Up until the World War I, only boys received Jewish religious education, while the girls were at home with their mothers or studying at state schools. The “Beys Yaakov” educational network for girls began functioning with the establishment of the first institution for girls in Kraków in 1923<sup>7</sup>. One of the means of enrichment, which could also link between community, school and family, was the “**Beys Yaakov**” periodical. It first appeared at the end of 1923 as a periodical for women and their daughters, and then became a family magazine dealing largely with educational matters. It also had a section for young children entitled “**Kinder-Gortn**” [kindergarten]<sup>8</sup> as well as a children’s section in Polish entitled “**Echo Szkolne**” [School Echo]<sup>9</sup>. Its editor was Eli’ezer Gershon Fridenzon

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<sup>6</sup> The names of the periodicals are given in this article in the original (transcribed into English) together with a translation. The names of the sub-titles and sections are given in the English translation.

<sup>7</sup> This school, which in time became a teachers’ seminary for girls, was established by Sarah She-nirer [1883–1935], a seamstress by profession. She was born into a rabbinical family in Kraków and recognized the need to provide education to ultra-orthodox girls.

<sup>8</sup> “Kinder-Gortn” was later published as a separate periodical for children in 1926. Between 1929 and 1935 its distribution was 5000 copies. It is worth mentioning that within “Kinder-Gortn” there was a section for the very young entitled “Frisinke Blimelekh” [Fresh small flowers]. In other words, they catered to a wide age range.

<sup>9</sup> The Polish section appeared until 1929.

In addition, starting in 1923, a pedagogical journal was published by the name of “**Horev**”<sup>10</sup>, also edited by Fridenzon, the director of the Horev Center. It was: “Pedagogical pages for matters of religious education”. The periodical became a platform to publicize the best of the orthodox literary powers. Moreover, using profits from the paper, which was widely distributed, it was possible to publish reading booklets at a Kraków publishing house, also called “Beys Yaakov”.

### c. “Bund” organization periodicals for children and youth The Bund and its attitude towards Yiddish

The founding conference of the Bund was held in Vilna in 1897. It was a non-Zionist Jewish socialist movement which believed in Jewish participation in the struggle of workers all around the world for a more just socialist society. According to the Bund worldview, Jews should fight not only for themselves, but together with workers everywhere for a new, better and more just world. Thus the condition of the Jewish worker would anyway improve in the future.

The secular Bund undertook that task of bringing Yiddish culture and literature to the masses, as Yiddish was the common language among Jewish workers. This contributed to the flourishing of Yiddish culture in Poland between the two world wars, by means of periodicals, literature, theater, and the support of educational institutions.

The Bundist daily, “**Folkstsaytung**” [The People’s Paper] first appeared in 1926. Over the years, the paper changed its name several times, and was also known as: “**Unser Folkstsaytung**” [Our People’s Paper] and “**Naye Folkstsaytung**” [The New People’s Paper].

The Bund had two organizations for youngsters: “**Tzukunft**” [Future] for youth and *SKIP*, [an acronym for the Yiddish words meaning Union of Socialist Children] for children. These organizations published periodicals for their young membership. For the youth, there was “**Yugnt-Vekker**” [Youth’s Awakener], which bore the subtitle: “A magazine devoted to issues of the working youth”. This began as a monthly in 1922 and from 1927 it came out every two weeks until September 1939. All in all, it published 408 editions. This paper also suffered from the heavy hand of censorship — it appeared with white patches and its editors were arrested. Its distribution was usually 6000 copies, and for special issues, even tens of

<sup>10</sup> Horev was the name of the Agudat Israel educational network for boys, which functioned alongside the Beys Yaakov network for girls.



thousands<sup>11</sup>. At the end of 1938, “**Tzukunft**” began to publish the bi-monthly “**Naye Kultur**” [New Culture]. Its subtitle was: “Periodical on the problems of socialist advocacy and education”. Only five issues ever saw the light of day.

For children there was the “**Kleyne Folkstsaytung**” [The Little People’s Paper]. It first appeared in 1926, the year that SKIP, the Bundist children’s organization, was also founded, and it stopped with the outbreak of World War II. It was a supplement to the daily “**Naye Folkstsaytung. Kleyne Folkstsaytung**” was added to the Friday issue of the adults’ paper in the format of two detachable sheets. When these were folded, it created an 8-page booklet. The supplement was also sometimes sold separately. It gave reports on what was happening in the various SKIP clubs, announcements and information from the national center, articles and items on political and socialist topics, and even the literary texts — stories and poems — were mainly in the spirit of the Bundist ideology. A common theme in this paper was poverty. There were stories of miserable children from poor families, whose parents had no work. The link between the editorial board and its readers was continuous. Many children sent letters and writings to the editors. The editor asked his young readers’ opinions on many different topics. The children also found a sympathetic ear for their complaints about teachers, their quarrels with their friends and so forth.

#### d. “**Di Kindervelt**” — the periodicals of the “**Poaley Zion Left**” party

In 1920, the socialist Poaley Zion party [Workers of Zion] split into left and right. Poaley Zion Left also supported the use of Yiddish for everyday purposes, and together with the Bund activists, it founded and ran the Yiddish “**TSISHO**” educational network (discussed later on). However, unlike the Bund, it was a Zionist party. In other words, its members believed that the place of the Jews was in Zion, in the Land of Israel. “**Di Kindervelt**” [The Children’s World] was published in Warsaw by the Poaley Zion Left party between 1927 and 1933, with a total of 28 issues. According to its contents, it was intended for children between the ages of about 12 to 15. It contained literature, articles and reports about various personalities — mainly socialist and Zionist ideologists. However, the paper also wrote about authors and poets such as Sholem Aleikhem. It had stories and reports about the Land of Israel or works sent from there, all with pictures. There was a section

<sup>11</sup> Examples: May 1<sup>st</sup> issue — 1935 — 25,000 copies, distributed to some 200 towns and villages; the Bund’s 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue — 35,000 copies, (Y.S. Herts, *Di Geshikhte fun a Yugnt* [The history of a youth], New York 1946, 7, pp. 434–437). (Yiddish).

entitled “From the children’s world”, including news items and reviews, mainly about what was happening in the various branches of the youth movement and in the Borocho<sup>12</sup> schools. Other sections were “Talks about science”, “Children’s works”, “Our mailbox”, with answers from the editorial board, and also “Entertainment Corner”, with riddles and games. There were relatively few literary texts in this periodical. The trend of the periodical was mainly ideological. It wrote about Lenin, about May 1<sup>st</sup> celebrations and so forth.

### e. The periodicals of “Poaley Zion Right” party

Poaley Zion Right was initially a partner in the TSISHO Yiddish educational network. However, in 1928, their members separated from TSISHO and established the “Shul un Kultur Farband” [Association of Schools and Culture] (“Shul-Kult” for short), also a secular organization. The bone of contention between the two networks was mainly the issue of language. While in TSISHO it was the extreme Yiddishists who set the tone, the members of Poaley Zion Right saw Hebrew as the second national language of the Jewish people, the language in which the intellectual treasures of the Jewish people had been written, and hence it had to be integrated into the present through the education of young Jews. Similarly, they supported Zionism. However, the secular nature of the school remained. The Shul-Kult schools were few in number in relation to other Jewish schools<sup>13</sup>. The “Frayhayt” [Freedom] youth organization of Poaley Zion Right, published in Warsaw the “**Frayhayt**” [Freedom] monthly from 1926 to 1939. Its name was changed twice: in October 1927 it was changed to “**Yugnt-Frayhayt**” [Youth Freedom] and in December 1930 it came out as “**Unzer Frayhayt**” [Our Freedom]. At first, there was a subtitle “The central paper of the socialist association of the Cherut working Jewish youth in Poland”, and in 1934 this was changed to “Illustrated periodical for youth at school and in trade”. The illustrated periodical contained the works of familiar writers and articles on a variety of topics: economics, art, medicine, Jewish life, the kibbutzim in the Land of Israel and more.

At the same time, the Frayhayt movement also published in Warsaw a periodical for children called “**Kinderland**” [Children’s Land], which appeared between 1931 and 1943, somewhat irregularly, but more or less on a quarterly basis. Its subtitle was “Pages for workers and school children”. Its topics were taken from children’s

<sup>12</sup> Dov Ber Borocho (1881–1917), one of the heads of the Poaley Zion party.

<sup>13</sup> In 1930 they had 40 institutions, and in the 1934/6 they had only 16. (H.S. Kazdan, *The History of the Jewish Education System in Independent Poland*, Mexico 1947, p. 539) (Yiddish).

experience, such as events from the summer camp), news from around the world, literary texts, and a section about the Land of Israel, with articles and works of authors living there. There is an obvious connection between the editorial board and the young readership, and they were asked to write to the paper. It was meant for members of the young age group “Friling” [spring]. Later on a need was felt for a periodical for the middling age group of 11 to 14, members of the “Yugnt” [Youth] group. Starting in January 1936 “**Oyfgang**” [Sunrise] was published. Its subtitle was: “An illustrated magazine for grown children and youth”. It was published in Warsaw in 1936 and 1937. It had the same contents as the movement’s other papers: a combination of the Land of Israel and socialist topics. The July 1937 issue was all in Polish. For financial reasons, it seems, it was not possible to sustain both papers, and so “**Kinderland**” ceased to appear.

In the National Library in Warsaw I found only one issue published by the Shul-Kult school under the title of “**Strallen**” [Sunrays]. Issue no. 1 of this paper, which is actually a duplicated booklet, is bound in blue cardboard, written by hand and not printed. It was published in Vilna in January 1929. It says: “Published by the first Jewish Children’s Club of ‘Shul-Kult’ in Vilna.” It contained literature, and a section with jokes and riddles. The texts were accompanied by illustrations. It is quite probable that booklets like this one — local school or club periodicals — were common in Poland.

#### **f. Periodicals published by welfare organizations**

In 1923 “Centos” was founded. It was an institution that supervised all the companies that helped orphans and abandoned children, in collaboration with the JOINT<sup>14</sup>. This company published two pedagogical periodicals, one in Yiddish, entitled “**Dos Kind**” [the Child] and the other in Polish entitled “**Przegląd Społeczny**” [Social Review]. The pedagogical journal in Yiddish, “**Dos Kind**”, first appeared in 1924 and in 1933 merged with another one — “**Unzer Kind**” [Our Child]. The pedagogical orientation of “**Dos Kind**” was to deal with problems of education that arose in the boarding school, at school and at home. The editorial board called upon everyone who was close to the children in the Centos institutions — the educator, the doctor, the mother, the public worker, the teacher and the pupils themselves — to use it as a platform for shedding light on different perspectives

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<sup>14</sup> Joint — American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee — A worldwide American Jewish welfare organization.

of the problems of educating the younger generation. It was apolitical in terms of party allegiance and was distributed both within and outside Poland. It printed articles on education as well as information to the educators. For example: a column by Janusz Korczak describing different types of children. “**Dos Kind**” also reached young readers as it had a supplement with pieces written by children from various institutions: schools, boarding schools and yeshivas. For the most part, the children related to topics that affected them personally, mainly the fact of being orphaned, but they also wrote about nature and about the Land of Israel. Among the Yiddish texts there were occasional texts in Hebrew.

Centos cooperated with TOZ<sup>15</sup> — a company founded in 1921 to maintain health among the Jewish population in Poland. It helped schools of all streams by holding clinics, offering nutrition and running summer camps. These two companies published three papers in Yiddish about health — two for adults — “**Folksgezunt**” [The People’s Health] and “**Di Sotsyale Meditzin**” [Social Medicine] — and one for children called “**Zay Gezunt**” [Be Healthy].

“**Zay Gezunt**” was published in Vilna in 1938 and 1939. Its subtitle was: “The children’s periodical for hygiene and physical education” It seems the paper was a bi-monthly. I only found three issues in the National Library in Warsaw, all from 1938. Each issue had 20 pages. The issues were attractive and pleasant to look at, rich in visual elements. Among the texts were photographs and illustrations, more than in any of the other periodicals for children and youth under discussion here. The periodical had columns and included songs and musical notation, plenty about hygiene, health, and more<sup>16</sup>.

### **g. Periodicals of the TSISHO educational network**

In 1921, the TSISHO educational network was established. Its language of instruction was Yiddish. The name is an acronym for the Yiddish words: Central organization of schools in Yiddish. Its founders and teachers belonged to the socialist parties, mostly from the Bund, and Poaley Zion Left. These were secular schools intended to provide a socialist education with no religious influences. Its heads

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<sup>15</sup> TOZ — Towarzystwo Ochrony Zdrowia Ludności Żydowskiej [Association for the preservation of health of the Jewish population].

<sup>16</sup> Examples of content from issue 5/7 — June–July 1938: a song about a trip in the summer fields together with the music; articles: Why do we need fresh air? At the summer camp (Describing a typical day, by J. Korczak); a story about a little girl who loved the sun. In the section on ‘Sports and Games’, there are written instructions on how to learn to swim in seven stages, with accompanying illustrations.

supported international solidarity of the working classes. They wanted to create a new Jewish identity based on a secular Yiddish culture, and to create a Jewish proletariat culture. Most schools in the TSISHO network were in the border areas of eastern Poland. Most of the pupils' parents were among the very poor.

The TSISHO curriculum offered a range of academic subjects: Yiddish language and literature, Polish language and literature, history, natural sciences, social sciences; and also other subjects that develop children's skills and talents: music, drama and handicrafts. In the natural sciences they integrated observations and experiments. The terminology in all subjects was in Yiddish.

Three main periodicals were published by the TSISHO network:

“**Grinike Beymelekh**” [Little Green Trees] 1914–1915 — editor: Falk Halperin; 1919–1922 — editors: Shloyme Bastomski and later Falk Halperin; 1926–1939 — editor: Shloyme Bastomski (total 307 issues).

“**Der Khaver**” [The Friend] 1920–1922 — editor: Yaakov Pat; 1929–1939 — editor Shloyme Bastomski (total 112 issues).

“**Kinderfraynt**” [The Children's Friend] 1936–1939 — editor: Moyshe Taykhman (total 56 issues).

The main permanent periodical in Yiddish — “**Grinike Beymelekh**” — is a unique phenomenon since it was first published by a private publisher at the height of World War I in Vilna. It had a few breaks due to external political and some financial reasons. However, it appeared regularly for a very long time under the auspices of the educational network edited by the teacher and editor Shloyme Bastomski, until the outbreak of World War II.

This periodical exemplifies the fact that political events influence the frequency of the publications. The periodical was first published at a time when Vilna was under Russian rule, just a few months before the outbreak of World War I. The publisher was a private individual named Klatskin<sup>17</sup>. After the July 1914 issue, there was a break of four months due to the outbreak of the war. In December 1914, the periodical reappeared and continued to be published until the spring of 1915. At that time it was stopped because of the prohibition on publishing in Hebrew or Yiddish imposed by the Russian military regime. The edict was handed down by the supreme commander of the Russian army during the world war, Nikolai Nikolaievitch.

Likewise, during the period of the German occupation, during the years of starvation and deprivation in Vilna, “**Grinike Beymelekh**” was not published. However, during that same period, the infrastructure was laid down for a network of Yiddish-speaking schools: The children of refugees who came from the border areas arrived in Vilna, where children's homes were set up for them. In September

<sup>17</sup> Boris Arkady Klatskin (1937–1875), son of a forest dealer and estate owner. He was active in the Bund in Vilna. He invested his own money in publishing books and periodicals in Yiddish. In 1925 he transferred his publishing house to Warsaw.

1915, these children's homes turned into schools where the language of instruction was Yiddish<sup>18</sup>. The development of secular schools functioning in Yiddish was one of the key factors for the start of the flourishing children's literature and periodicals in Yiddish in Eastern Europe, since there was a need to prepare reading and studying materials for the children and to train a new generation of Yiddish readers<sup>19</sup>.

From December 1918 on, Vilna was under Lithuanian–Soviet rule. Under this regime in April 1919, there was an attempt to start publishing “**Grinke Beymelekh**” again. The issue was marked No. 1 and was larger in size than Klatskin's paper. The publisher: The People's Commissariat for Education on Lithuania and White Russia. This Commissariat of Lithuania's temporary revolutionary government wanted to take control of the city's institutions of education and culture.

That same month the paper appeared, April 1919, the Poles conquered Vilna. Of course, “**Grinke Beymelekh**” did not continue to be published by this publishing house because of the changes in regime and the events. It was renewed in 1922 as a bi-weekly, while Vilna was under Polish rule until the outbreak of World War II.

Below is a comparative review of the features and contents of the three papers, “**Grinke Beymelekh**”, “**Der Khaver**” (both from Vilna) and “**Kinderfraynt**” (Warsaw)<sup>20</sup>.

All three Yiddish periodicals published contained various types of texts: literary works, informative articles, popular science and short items which contained current events and general knowledge. The majority of the texts are literary works — original and in translation — of different genres, for different age groups: lyrical poems, lullabies, realistic stories, folk stories, jokes, fables, plays, novels for the young in installments, travel stories, chapters from biographies, and rhyming riddles. For the young age group (approximately 4–6), “**Grinke Beymelekh**” contained finger-game songs, game and dance songs, nonsense poems and the narrative-poem genre. In “**Kinderfraynt**” as well, literary works were printed for the preschool age, (in its supplement “**Grezele far Kleynvarg**”<sup>21</sup>), but not with so many genres. As “**Der Khaver**” was intended for an older audience (from 11–12 and up), it contained stories, different kinds of poems, folk tales, chapters from biographies and travel stories.

<sup>18</sup> The first children's home in Vilna opened in October 1914 and the second in May 1915 (H.S. Kazdan, *The History of the Jewish Education System...*, pp. 21–24).

<sup>19</sup> See expansion on this topic regarding the three-way link between the development of Yiddish schools and that of children's literature and children's periodicals in my book: A. Bar-EI, *Under the Little Green Trees...* (see note 2).

<sup>20</sup> The review is based on comprehensive research, conducted via content analysis of these three papers. All their issues were examined in their entirety, with no sampling. See my book: A. Bar-EI, *Under the Little Green Trees...*

<sup>21</sup> Meaning: Fresh little green leaves for toddlers.



Figure 1

“Grininke Beymelekh”

In terms of influences of the world literature, one notes both characteristics and developmental directions in the periodicals in their respective periods: at the beginning of the 1920's there is a clear influence of Russian children's literature in “**Grininke Beymelekh**” and “**Der Khaver**” — both by Russian authors and Jewish authors living in Russia, principally: K. Chukovsky, S. Marshak and L. Kvitko (mainly for younger children), as well as the literary writings of Gorky, Chekhov and Dostoyevski (for older children and youth). However, from the mid 1920's until 1939 there is a noteworthy influence on the periodicals by Yiddish writers living in America — mostly former East Europeans. In addition, in the writings for preschool age children, continued in that period an influence and widespread participation by Chukovsky, Marshak and Kvitko, in both character and structure. This concerns mainly the genre of the narrative poem, which is common in children's literature, and was even transferred to the Land of Israel, where it was translated to Hebrew. One notes in the children's literature for the preschool age of “**Grininke Beymelekh**” Chukovsky's “rules” for good children's poetry<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> In Kiev in 1933, Russian author and researcher Korney Chukovsky wrote a book entitled *From two to five years* (Russian), which appeared in many issues and was translated to many lan-



Figure 2

“Der Khaver” with the teacher and editor Shloyme Bastomski

The editors of the children’s periodicals also published reading booklets: Shloyme Bastomski, the editor of “**Grinke Beymelekh**” and “**Der Khaver**” did so in Vilna, in a private publication: *Naye Yiddishe Folksshul*<sup>23</sup>; in Warsaw Moyshe Taykman (editor of “**Kinderfraynt**”) with the publication of “**Kinderfraynt**”, a publishing house which a group of teachers founded with him at the forefront. These booklets contained both original Yiddish works as well as translations.

Very many authors published in the later periodicals of “**Grinke Beymelekh**” and “**Der Khaver**”. In the former — until 1922 — the most prominent are: the editor himself Bastomski, Avraham Reyzen, Rivke Galin, Eliezer Shteynberg, Eliezer Shindler. In the latter — since 1926 — the prominent authors included: Helene Khatskels, Y.H. Radoshitski, Y.A. Rontsh, Avraham Reyzen, Eliezer Shteynberg, Levi Yosef Hillel and Perets Hirshbeyn.

guages. One of the chapters in the book contains 13 rules for a good children’s poem, among which are: imagery, rhythm, plenty of action, changing images, words that are pleasing to the ear, rhyme etc.

<sup>23</sup> Meaning: The new Jewish elementary school.





Figure 3  
 Fun section in “Grininke Beymelekh”

Many other authors contributed, some of whom were already known as children’s writers: Litman and Shmuel Tsesler from Argentina, Nakhum Y. and Mani Leyb from America. There were others whose children’s writings were not as well known, for instance the poet and translator of the Bible, Yehoash, who then lived in America. There were others who were already famous who revealed a new side to their writing, for instance Eliezer Shteynberg, known a writer of fables, who in “Grininke Beymelekh” published poetry and drama for young children.

Concerning the classical Yiddish writers — Mendele Moykher Sforim, Sholem Aleichem, and I. L. Perets — it appears that their works were extensively taught in the secular Yiddish schools. They are mentioned many times in the periodicals — in terms of important dates, exhibitions presented in the schools (local and central), and are also mentioned in the letters and writings of the children who describe their topics of study and the literary events dedicated to them. Thus, the periodicals emphasize their contribution to Yiddish literature.

Many nature poems were published in the periodicals. In the poems on the seasons of the year, the most prominent was winter and everything related to it,

especially snow and sledding. There are also many poems about spring and autumn, however there are no poems about summer — probably because the summer months were those of the school vacation during which the periodicals were not published.

In “**Grinke Beymelekh**” a change occurs in the stories’ themes and in the description of everyday life in the stories. In its first period (1914–1915), we see the children’s everyday life described as studying in Kheyder<sup>24</sup> with the Rabbi, translations of Grimm’s fairy tales, stories by Andersen and Oscar Wilde, as well as Jewish folk stories with supernatural motifs. In its second period (1919–1922), the Kheyder stories continue, however one notes the addition of stories describing summer camps and school life, while in its third period (1926–1939), the stories mainly revolve around the pupils and school. Apparently the reason for the change is due to the development of the secular Yiddish schools of the period and that the majority of the readers studied in school rather than in the Kheyder.

A radical change is noted in the description of family life and surroundings in “**Grinke Beymelekh**”. In the first period, Jewish family day to day life and holiday periods are detailed against the background of a peaceful atmosphere in a rural setting: a riverside which offers a playful backdrop for the children in summer and winter, and a forest — which is sometimes a source of fear — which borders the village. In contrast, during the third period, the writings intended for the young focused on the “I” and on the child’s immediate surroundings: the family, the home, the yard and the animals within. The atmosphere in these works was full of cheer and happiness. The older children, however, were presented within the literary works describing poor and unhappy families in which all of their members are hungry for bread, and the children have no clothing and shoes for the winter. This is appropriate for the socialist tendencies in these periodicals in which an abundance of literary writings (as well as informative and scientific texts) deal with these and the following themes: exploitation of the workers, difficult lives and hard work on the part of the workers, the gap between the rich and poor, poverty in the family as a result of the father’s unemployment, the need for mutual aid, especially for the poor.

In “**Der Khaver**” one also notes a change in the description of everyday life and its surroundings. In its first period (1920–1922), in spite of the prominence of socialist ideology, the surroundings described in most works were still connected to nature and the simple daily life in the village and shtetl<sup>25</sup>. There is even a call to live in nature. In contrast, the background of the works in the second period (1929–1939) is different: it is an urban surrounding with an emphasis on industry and labor in the city. The city is negatively depicted as opposed to the village. Noise, factory

<sup>24</sup> The *Kheyder* was a place of study for young children, where they learned to read and write Hebrew in order to be able to read the prayers and the Pentateuch. There was usually a group of children who studied in one room — in the home of the rabbi teaching them, or in a room adjacent to the synagogue.

<sup>25</sup> Small Jewish town.



Figure 4

“Kinderfraynt” with the yiddish author Sholem Aleichm

chimney smoke, and poor peoples’ homes, which do not protect them from the harsh winter’s cold and do not allow the sun’s rays to enter — are all depicted.

This tendency towards socialist values and messages was incorporated in all the above-mentioned Yiddish periodicals at the start of the 1920’s, and intensified with the passing of time. It also permeated all genres: the songs and anthems of tomorrow’s world and the youth’s role in it, realistic stories with detailed descriptions of the workers’ jobs, details of the poor home and the difficult living conditions of the family, especially the children. In the dramas, the children work hard and are exploited by their employers, or they struggle for a more just world. In “**Der Khaver**”, intended for an older reader, the anthem is prominent, in which the youth is called to organize, change the situation and build a new world.

In the later periods of “**Grinke Beymelekh**” and “**Der Khaver**”, travel literature was widely printed. Various writers presented personal travel impressions of voyages to distant countries, mainly to the Far East. There are travel impressions of China, Japan and India, as well as other cities in different countries like Johannesburg and Moscow. The writers — among them Perets Hirshbeyn, Noa Mish-

kovski and Helene Khatskeles — described the places, and the way of life, as well as encounters with the Jews there. The editorial board also recommended its readers read the travel literature. Furthermore, Helene Khatskeles translated the famous impressions of the Swedish traveler Sven Hadin.

All three periodicals, “**Grinke Beymelekh**”, “**Der Khaver**” and “**Kinderfraynt**” printed very little about the relationships within the family. There were a few stories about aunts and uncles and cousins who came to visit, however, a description of the day-to-day life and feelings towards family members are missing from the periodicals throughout all the different periods. One finds no representation of the relationships between parents and children or brothers and sisters, nor close relationships, attractions and love between boys and girls.

All the periodicals contained folk literature — both Jewish and general — from translations and adaptations of the Brothers Grimm and Andersen stories, to stories which stem from Latvia, Ukraine, Germany, Spain, Belgium, China, Japan, African countries, Arab states, and others. Within the various folktales there are also etiological folktales which use the genre to explain a certain phenomenon.

In the Jewish stories, one finds a series of humoristic stories about famous “badkhans”<sup>26</sup> as well as those about the sages of Khelm<sup>27</sup> and compilations of jokes about people of certain characteristics — for example misers. The motif of Elijah the Prophet is prominent in the Jewish stories. In the research, it becomes clear that the component of humor in the children’s periodicals expands with the passing of time.

However, in contrast to the growing prominence of humor, the topic of Jewish holidays and tradition diminishes over that same period.

All the periodicals, beginning with the first issue of “**Grinke Beymelekh**” in 1914, contained a leisure section with riddles and jokes. The readers were requested to send in their solutions, and encouraged to do so by the promise of prizes for those who answered correctly. In most periodicals, the solutions and the names of those who answered correctly were printed in the subsequent issues.

Most of the children’s periodicals printed letters and compositions written by young readers. The children’s letters are a source from which to learn about the school in that period, about the secular Yiddish schools in Poland, as well as elsewhere in the Jewish world. The pupils wrote about their school studies, cultural events and different festivities. Letters from Canada described the Jewish Yiddish schools as opposed to the public schools. The Polish and other countries’ schools

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<sup>26</sup> The *badkhanim* [jokers] were a kind of ‘stand-up comedians’ who appeared at Jewish family ceremonies such as weddings or at community events. They usually made jokes, at the expense of individuals or society. Particularly well known among the Jews were Hershele from Ostropol, Motke Chabad and Sheike Feifer from Vilna and others.

<sup>27</sup> In Jewish folk literature there are many funny stories and jokes about the Jews living in the town of Khelm in Poland, who were considered stupid. Actually there were other places that earned this ‘accolade’, such as the village of Aukh in north-eastern Caucasia.

clearly praised the Jewish school. They mentioned the friendly relations between the pupils and teachers, the school library, "cleaning week", the afternoon clubs and their activities. The foreign readers (Brazil and Argentina) described their countries. There were obviously many letters expressing a sympathetic attitude towards "**Grininke Beymelekh**" and "**Der Khaver**", letters which expressed their eagerness to read the next issue. One can also learn from the readers' letters that they really internalized the socialist principles they were being taught. Very many of the compositions dealt with poverty stricken families, their hungry, unclothed and barefoot children. At times, they were written as a first person narrative, and it is difficult to ascertain if the pupil was writing the words from personal experience or because he was influenced by his class studies. There were also compositions from other countries containing socialist declarations on the part of the pupils — especially those from the Arbeter-Ring (Workmen's Circle) schools in America — encouraging their friends in Poland that a new world would arise in which both democracy and brotherhood would exist.

Additionally, young readers give personal details describing hobbies and activities during leisure time, such as bathing in the river or listening to the radio. Here, too, one may possibly see the direction or the selection on the part of the editor, as the majority of the letters printed concerning personal details related to the hobby of reading books. One can also learn about the way of life during the period in different places, for example about life in the Jewish agricultural colonies described in the letters coming from Argentina. Sometimes children's letters revealed things the editor could not allow himself to report, i.e. they served as a means of bypassing the censors. Shloyme Bastomski turned the section entitled "Our Club" into a correspondence section between children from different countries. With the passing of time, this section expanded and there were issues in which it covered several entire pages. What is missing from all the periodicals is the personal-emotional element in the youngsters' letters.

There was little information about Poland — its history and current events — in the three Yiddish periodicals. For the most part, they dealt with studies — for example: atmospheric and polar experiments. There were short items written in small print about Polish politics, the economy, education and culture. Sometimes a Polish historical event was noted, especially the anniversary of Poland's liberation in November. The reporting of these events was objective.

Like the Jewish press for adults, the children's periodicals were published under the watchful eye of the censors who would sometimes order the erasure of paragraphs, which resulted in white empty spaces in the periodical. Sometimes the entire printed issue was censored. In addition to these dangers to the children's periodicals, there existed yet another: the closure of the schools. Among the decisions accepted in the educational reforms in 1932, there was one which stipulated that a school of a minority could be shut down if members of its staff were suspected

of moral dishonesty or patriotic disloyalty. It appears that this was the reason why the children's periodicals were very careful in the description of Jewish-Polish reality as it was, especially the attacks of Poles on Jews, which were manifested in restrictions and economic boycotts, as well as physical injury. As stated, one can learn indirectly about the status of the schools. The attacks on the Jews were written up in small items, with restraint and sometimes only hinted at. The prohibition of kosher slaughter, the "ghetto benches" and the attacks by the "endek" on Jewish pupils in the universities were all explicitly noted. In contrast, the negative attitude towards Hitler and Germany is prominent; the attacks on the Jews, "Kristalnacht", and the expelled Jews in Zbąszyń — are also prominently noted, relative to what was covered concerning Poland.

Those in the "TSISHO" network, on the other hand, attempted to prove the fact that Jews have been living in and contributing to Poland for many years. This was mainly expressed in an exhibition on the topic "Yidn in Poyln" (Jews in Poland), which was due to be shown in 1939. However, it was cancelled due to the deterioration of the situation.

The attitude towards America in "**Der Khaver**" is ambiguous: on the one hand, it is portrayed in an extremely positive light as a country with a rich culture, technological development and excellent services for its citizens, especially in the fields of literature and education. On the other hand, there is criticism of capitalism as the plight of the workers, enrichment of the employer, criticism of the political system that enables this situation and the discrimination contained within it towards its citizens of different color. The texts printed present both sides.

The Land of Israel is mentioned only on a few occasions in "**Der Khaver**", sometimes referred to as the Land of Israel and on other occasions as Palestine. Most of the time it is mentioned in short items, printed in small letters in the announcements section, which notice "riots in Palestine".

In conclusion, the examples of Yiddish children's periodicals mentioned reflect part of the variety of ideological and social trends among the Jews of Poland. There were probably other papers, particularly those of schools and children's youth clubs that did not survive. All the papers, despite their different emphases and approaches, enriched the children with knowledge, literature and suggestions for leisure time activities. In all the papers, we can see attention to and concern for the children's cognitive and physical needs.

## Chapter II — Hebrew periodicals

### a. Why Hebrew?

Hebrew, the ancient language of the scriptures and religious texts, ceased to be a spoken language during the centuries in which Jews lived in other countries. For them it remained only the language of prayer. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Jewish Enlightenment movement emerged, on the one hand supporting the enrichment of the education of the Jews and openness towards other cultures, and on the other, encouraging nationalist aspirations. In the desire to learn about the nation's past and to revive its ancient language, they began to use Hebrew in a secular context. This was given momentum by the "Hibat Zion" [Love of Zion] movement, which arose in Russia at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the aim of having Jews emigrate to the Land of Israel and make Hebrew the spoken language of the Jewish settlement there. At the same time, they began to instill Hebrew as a spoken language in various centers in Eastern Europe, mainly within the Zionist movement.

The development of children's literature in Hebrew, and subsequently Hebrew periodicals, is linked to the process of turning Hebrew into a spoken language. Hence, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century there is a certain degree of evidence in Eastern Europe of the flourishing of children's literature and periodicals in Hebrew.

The number of periodicals in Hebrew published in Poland is smaller than for the other two languages. The first Hebrew periodicals appeared in Eastern Europe, mainly in the Soviet states. The lifespan of a paper was determined by its readership, and so the existence of the papers was connected to the number of Hebrew speakers and readers. The existence or absence of community or state institutions dealing with education and culture also affected the length of time during which the paper appeared. All these factors determined the "map" of Hebrew periodicals for children and youth.

In Poland there were very few such papers in Hebrew, and those that did exist belonged mainly to the "Tarbut" educational network.

### b. The Hebrew papers in Eastern Europe

The first Hebrew weekly in Eastern Europe appeared in 1899 in Lyck, on the Russo-Prussian border. It was called "**Gan Hasha'ashuim**" [The Playground] (58

issues). “**Olam Katan**” [Little World] first appeared in Warsaw in 1901 (160 issues) and stopped in 1905. About two months later, that same year, the weekly “**Hahaim Vehateva**” [Life and Nature] came out in Vilna. The innovation of this publication was that it had three separate sections for different age groups of young readers. It appeared for eighteen months. In 1908 in Lugansk, a weekly was founded, entitled “**Haprakhim**” [The Flowers], and it was published for six years, with many difficulties. The paper closed with the outbreak of World War I.

A unique phenomenon was the children’s daily paper, “**Hekhaver**” [The Friend], which appeared in Vilna in January 1908. It contained news from the Land of Israel, informative columns, short stories poems and skits. After four and a half months it stopped appearing as a daily and then reappeared in Riga as a weekly. In this format it lasted less than a year. Three years later, in 1913, the weekly “**Hanoar**” [The Youth] began in Vilna, but it only published six issues.

In Warsaw in 1911, 4 issues of the weekly “**Hayarden**” [The Jordan] appeared. That same year, there was also a children’s paper for the Chabad Hassids, called “**Ha’ach**” [The Brother]. It was founded in Lubawicze in White Russia. It was published for a period of three years, until the middle of 1914. Also in 1911, another weekly appeared in Warsaw — “**Hashachar**” [The Dawn] and its supplement for young subscribers “**Ben Shachar**” [Son of Dawn]. These papers stopped appearing after just seven months. In Moscow, in 1917, the paper “**Shtilim**” [Young Plants] appeared for about a year and a half, and also reflected the events of the war in Europe.

The first supplement for children, which was attached to an adult’s daily paper, was the monthly “**HaTzifra Leveladim**” [The Siren for Children], which came out in Warsaw in 1914. Due to the outbreak of World War I later that year, only six issues were ever published.

In the period between the two world wars, the following periodicals were published in Poland: in 1920 in Lwow, a bi-weekly entitled “**Karmeinu**” [Our Vineyard] (4 issues); also in Lodz in 1920 there was a bi-weekly entitled “**Tzafirim**” [Zephyrs] (17 issues), which contained literary texts. Each issue was divided into two — half printed without vowel markings for the youth, and half in larger letters with vowel markings for beginner readers. In 1921, a monthly began appearing in Krakow entitled “**Hakore Hakatan**” [The Little Reader] (12 issues). In 1922–1923 in Warsaw there was “**Shvilim**” [Paths] (20 issues). In 1923, also in Warsaw there was a literary paper called “**Hakokhav**” [The Star] followed by the monthly “**Ben Kokhav**”, for the younger children. These papers appeared for five years, although with certain breaks and irregularities and some changes. In 1928–1929 in Warsaw another children’s weekly appeared entitled “**Iton Katan**” [Little Periodical], half of which was letters from children and the other half pieces of literature. In 1932 appeared “**Bishvil Hayeladim**” [For children], printed with vowel markings, as a literary supplement to the Warsaw paper “**Baderekh**” [On the Way]. “**Bishvil**



**Hayeladim**” appeared for over three years, until 1934. A year later, a weekly paper appeared in Warsaw called **“Aviron”** [Airplane], but ceased in 1936, the year the paper **“Olami”** [My World] began to appear. From that time on until the outbreak of World War II, there were three periodicals published by the “Tarbut” Hebrew educational network: **“Olami”** [My World], **“Olami Hakatan”** [My Little World] and **“Olami Haktantan”** [My Tiny World].

In Europe, outside Poland, there were other papers printed in Hebrew. For example, in 1927 in Kishinev (Bessarabia) there was the monthly **“Eshkolot”** [Clusters]. In 1931 in Greece there was **“Olamenu”** [Our World] a vowel-marked supplement for children. Also in 1931 in Bucharest there was **“Amudim Leyeladim”** [Pages for Children], the supplement to the monthly **“Amudim”** [Pages]. This paper dealt with tradition and folklore. At the same time in Kovno in Lithuania there was **“Olam Hayeled”** [The Child’s World], a supplement to the Yiddish daily paper **“Di Yiddishe Shtimme”** [The Jewish Voice]. Two years later, from 1937 to 1938 in Vilna **“Yalduteynu”** [Our Childhood] was published as a vowel-marked supplement of the orthodox Yiddish weekly **“Dos Vort”** [The Word] (2 issues).

In conclusion, most of the Hebrew papers appeared for short periods, but from the above list, it turns out that there were always Hebrew papers in various places in Eastern Europe and elsewhere. There was always the burning hope of renewing Hebrew as the daily spoken language.

### c. The Hebrew educational network “Tarbut”

The “Tarbut” educational network was founded in 1922 in Poland, a network in which the language of instruction was Hebrew. Its institutions covered a wide age range: preschools, elementary schools, high schools, teacher colleges, pedagogical courses and evening classes for youth and adults. The education was secular in nature. The curriculum included both general studies — humanities and sciences — and Hebrew studies including Hebrew literature and Jewish history. History, geography and Polish literature were taught in Polish. The schools had a Zionist-nationalist orientation, in other words, they wanted to prepare the pupils to move to the Land of Israel and live there as farmers. The studies about Poland in Polish were added to the curriculum for two reasons. One was internal-political: the Zionists (who aspired to move to the Land of Israel), adopted the principle of “here and there”. This meant that as long as the Jews live “here” in Poland, they must be loyal citizens, and integrate into its social and cultural life. To do this, the children and youth must be fluent in Polish, know its history and respect its laws. At the same time, they must prepare the younger generation for life “there” in the Land

of Israel, and so they must know Hebrew and Jewish history. A second reason was external; the Polish regime determined that all the minorities in the country must learn Polish.

#### d. The “Tarbut” periodicals

Below are the research findings about the “Tarbut” periodicals that appeared at different times<sup>28</sup>.

The following Hebrew periodicals were examined:

“**Shibolim**” 1922–1923 — editor: A. L. Yaakobovitch and later Aaron Zeytlin (total 21 issues).

“**Olami**” 1936–1939 — editors: Shmuel Rozenhek and Elkhanan Indelman (total 69 issues).

“**Olami Hakatan**” 1936–1939 — editors: Shmuel Rozenhek and Elkhanan Indelman (total 59 issues).

“**Olami Haktantan**” 1939 — editors: Shmuel Rozenhek and Elkhanan Indelman (total 8 issues).

Tarbut’s children’s periodicals express the explicit preference of this educational network for the Hebrew language, both as the language of instruction and as an everyday language, even though it was foreign to its surroundings. A small percentage of pupils studied in the Tarbut system, and Hebrew was not widespread among the Jewish community in Poland due to the existence of two alternatives: Yiddish, the mother tongue of the masses and Polish. Because their periodicals incorporated a Zionist tendency, they related to both Poland and the Land of Israel at the same time.

The monthly publication “**Shibolim**” existed for a short period of a little more than a year, due to its severe financial problems, for which the board “blamed” the lack of readers and subscribers. One must remember that in this period, 1922–1923, there was also a crisis in the adult Jewish periodical press in Poland. “**Olami**” and “**Olami Hakatan**”, which were bi-monthly publications, were published for approximately four years. In 1939, “**Olami Haktantan**”, a publication for the very young, began to appear. All the three periodicals ceased to appear due to the outbreak of the World War II.

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<sup>28</sup> The research was conducted by content analysis of all issues published with no sampling. See my book: Adina Bar-Eli, *When I grow up I will move to the Land of Israel: The “Tarbut” network in Poland and its children’s periodicals*, in the series “Generation to Generation”, 21, Tel Aviv University, 2003.



Figure 5

"Shibolim"

"**Shibolim**" can be defined primarily as a literary periodical, while "**Olami**" mostly dealt with current events, and "**Olami Hakatan**" printed many texts written by its young readers, in which the "Tarbut" teachers' influence is apparent both stylistically and contextually.

The periodical "**Shibolim**", which appeared in 1922–1923, combined literary works (approximately 70%) with general knowledge — personal enrichment for the reader. The periodical reflected little of the reality of its period, and did not focus on the current events taking place either in the Land of Israel or in Poland. In contrast, "**Olami**" and "**Olami Hakatan**", which appeared from 1936 until the outbreak of the Second World War, shifted their focus to the present, to the description of the "Yishuv" (Jewish settlement) in the Land of Israel, which was developing and struggling both for its existence and recognition; and to the description of current world events. In addition, it must be noted that despite the large percentage of current events, the periodical greatly contributed to its readers on the topic of literature. It published poems and songs, as well as whole books in installments, and combined selections of classical Hebrew literature with new works of writers living in the



Figure 6

“Olami Haktantan”

Land of Israel and Poland. All of this apparently encouraged the reading in Hebrew. Writing was also encouraged by the announcement of essay competitions on the writing of stories in installments. “**Olami Hakatan**” offered, as stated, a wide forum for the letters of its young readers.

Based on a survey of the periodicals’ features, one notes that “**Shibolim**” (1922–1923) maintained a secular non-Zionist character, despite the fact that it was published in Hebrew, which reflected the aim and the desire to spread the language among the children and youth.

In contrast to “**Shibolim**”, the topic of the Land of Israel plays a central role in “**Olami**” and “**Olami Hakatan**” (1936–1939). The topic flows throughout the texts, both explicitly and more subtly, and is primarily expressed in the activity for the ‘Keren Kayemet’ (The Jewish National Fund), and the provision of information about the events taking place in the Land of Israel, and this was parallel with the prominence of these topics within the educational system. The principle of practical labor and the fostering of physical strength<sup>29</sup> are expressed in all the

<sup>29</sup> This is an educational approach that emerged at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when educators began to relate to the child’s body and emotions, and not just cognition. Accordingly, they began cultivating children’s attitudes to art and esthetics, encouraging sports and hiking and teaching not only through memorization but also through practical workshops and laboratories.

periodicals. In “**Olami**” and “**Olami Hakatan**”, it served the ideas of “hakhshara” (“preparation”) for “aliya” (the emigration “up” to Israel), as well as life in The Land of Israel.

A new topic appears in “**Olami**” and “**Olami Hakatan**”, the description of daily life in the school (the new Hebrew school), as well as of nature trips and summer camps.

The struggle for the “here and now”, for the rights of the Jews in Poland was expressed — not defiantly, but quietly, in a positive manner: the contribution of the Jews in the Poles’ struggles for independence was emphasized, as was the Jews’ joining in and contribution to the social and cultural life in Poland (for example: in the field of sports or excelling in studies). The periodicals even noted the emigration of the Jews to the Land of Israel as contributing to the trade relations between Poland and the Land of Israel. They presented the Jews in general and the educational institutions of “Tarbut” in particular, as taking an active role in Polish state events: praise and blessings for the president on the occasion of his birthday, celebrating “Constitution Day”, and participating in “Savings Day”. There was an expression of disappointment that the Polish people did not value the level of the Jews’ contribution enough, however, as stated, there is virtually no hint of the waves of persecutions which were occurring in Poland, nor did the periodicals tell their young readers about pogroms. The muted tone is especially noticeable when set against the background of the screaming headlines and the emphasis on the Jews’ persecution in other countries, especially in Germany, but also in Romania and elsewhere. Up until the last issue of “**Olami**”, the periodical stressed the connection between the Jews and the Polish State, while Germany was defined as an enemy of the state and the world — situated on the other side of the “barricade”.

One notes the periodicals’ desire to balance between their “Polish” and their Jewish characteristics. The dual loyalty was expressed in terms of the terminology used by the periodicals: The Land of Israel was referred to as “artseyanu” (“our country”), and Poland as “medinateynu” (“our state”).

“**Olami**” and “**Olami Hakatan**” specifically detailed the history of Poland’s struggle for independence, while expressing admiration for Marshal Józef Piłsudski. This emphasized the Jew’s contribution to Poland, with the apparent intention of proving loyalty to its rulers. The government forced all minority schools to teach the Polish language, Polish history, geography and literature. This could be the reason for the information published about Poland in the Tarbut periodicals, however there is another reason: the desire to present the world in which they live to the young readers, to supply them with information about the state in which they live. One of the sections in the periodical *Olami* was actually entitled “Da Et Polin” (“Know about Poland”).



Figure 7

“Olami” with Józef Piłsudski

This section had mainly statistical information on education, transportation, postal services, army, police etc. When the section first appeared its purpose was described as follows:

We come to you, dear readers, with a new slogan: Know the country you live in, learn about and know Poland! [...] And so from now on the issues of “**Olami**” will bring you informative numbers and interesting items about what is around you in this country you live in. However, dear readers, we would like you not just to read. To investigate, think and learn are things you must do, and anyway you will come to thinking about the reality in other countries and in our homeland — Eretz Israel (“Olami”, 5 March 1937).

It also seems that the texts about the Polish struggles were used as an educational tool for Jewish children, as they served as an example of a nation’s persevering struggle for freedom.

One makes note of this as well in the Tarbut’s periodicals’ sympathetic attitude towards Piłsudski: he is presented as a most tolerant of the Polish leaders, as a man who did not support anti-Semitism, and as an example of a freedom fighter carrying on a struggle for justice and for national liberation.

In “**Olami Hakatan**”, Piłsudski is described as “a great hero. He loved his country with all his heart and soul and redeemed it from foreigners” (“**Olami Hakatan**”, 2 April 1936). And in “**Olami**” under a picture of his statue it read:

On May 12, the memorial day for Marshal Josef Piłsudski, the thoughts of all the country's citizens will be focused on the Marshall's wonderful personality, the redeemer and reviver of Poland. [...] The day of commemoration of his death will be a source of strengthening of the people and strengthen the aspiration to peace and brotherhood (“**Olami**”, 4 May 1939).

Two types of “bravery” are presented in the periodicals: the first is that of the Jewish heroes who participated in all of Poland's struggles, who took part in the fighting on the side of the Poles for the Polish state, and the second: that of Jewish heroes who live in The Land of Israel — each and every one of them is a combination of a farmer and a guard, whose bravery is expressed both in the redemption of the soil, and in its protection from rioters and the Arab inciters. This bravery, the second type, allowed the periodical to relate, as well, to the actual people in Poland who were in the process of making Aliya: they would sometimes leave both home and family, they were prepared for any type of difficult work, even humiliating work, as long as they could prepare their body and mind for life in the Land of Israel.

The “**Tarbut**” Hebrew periodicals contributed first and foremost to the spreading of the Hebrew language and to the enriching of the readers' vocabulary. Additionally, the periodicals informed the readers about the nature of the modern world. All the periodicals printed works of literature in different genres and on different themes, and as such also contributed to the encouragement of reading. Information was offered on the development of humanity, science, inventions and discoveries — and all this in the simple language, that is to say “popular science”. “**Olami**” and “**Olami Hakatan**” presented information about contemporary world events in both the Jewish and non-Jewish world, and essentially brought the Diaspora children closer to the reality in the Land of Israel. The children's letters printed in the periodicals expressed a desire to emigrate to Israel and become agricultural workers. It is feasible to assume that these periodicals contributed to the motivation of the youths who studied in the “**Tarbut**” system to emigrate. It may be noted that the children's periodicals were used (and can be used today as well) as a source of information and statistical data for the topics of settlement and policy, culture and society both in Poland and in the Land of Israel.

We may say that the changes in the periodicals — from the early “**Shibolim**” to “**Olami**” and “**Olami Hakatan**” related to the aim of personal fostering (mainly through literature and popular sciences) of the young reader to a national-Zionist ideal; from the need to enrich the soul of the reader, to the need to instill in him national pride and the desire to emigrate to the Land of Israel. The periodicals of the secular Zionist variations, especially those in the years 1936–1939, were banners of the Zionist movement, presenting the Jews as a nation — a nation with a shared

national past in the Land of Israel and a nation with shared interests for the future, a nation which produced people who contributed to humanity and culture in different places.

### **Chapter III — Jewish children's/youth periodicals in Polish**

#### **a. Why Polish?**

Alongside Jewish press in Yiddish and Hebrew, there was also Jewish press in Polish. This definition includes Polish periodicals published by Jews for a Jewish audience.

The number of Jewish periodicals that came out in Polish and their distribution was consistently on the rise. As in other countries, the Jews in Poland were undergoing a process of modernization and they adopted the language and cultural habits of their country. The Polish Jewish press was not supplementary to that in the other languages (Yiddish and Hebrew), but rather had its own regular readership. The Polish publications provided the Jews who spoke Polish with Jewish content, including the works of Jewish writers. Moreover, they also served as an outward means of expression for the Jews towards Polish public and governmental opinion<sup>30</sup>.

This press flourished because it had a large readership. Many Jews read Polish and most Jewish children attended Polish schools, both at the elementary and high school level. Out of some 500,000 Jewish children in elementary schools, over 300,000 attended Polish state schools. Not only did pupils and graduates of these state schools speak and read Polish, but also pupils and graduates of Jewish institutions where the language of instruction was Yiddish and/or Hebrew. Hence it is clear that there was a need to also publish children's papers in Polish, for the same reason as for the adults: there was a large Polish readership among the Jews. Polish researcher Andrzej Paczkowski notes that the younger generation were fluent in Polish, and adds that the press in Polish was cheaper to buy and more easily accessible<sup>31</sup>.

Publishers, organizations and various institutions were aware of the need to publish in Polish in order to reach a wider audience. This consideration is mentioned

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<sup>30</sup> H. Shmeruk, *The tri-lingual Jewish press in Warsaw*, "Hasifrut", 30–31, Tel Aviv, April 1981, pp. 193–200 (Heb.); A. Paczkowski, *Jewish press in Poland between the two world wars*, "Keshet", 3, Tel Aviv, May 1988, pp. 49–56 (Heb.)

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem, p. 50.



in various places quite explicitly: the Bund youth movement, the Zukunft [Future], published periodicals in Yiddish, as mentioned above, but in January 1938 they began publishing a monthly in Polish, *Wolna Młodzież* [Free Youth] which appeared until June 1939. The necessity of a paper in Polish was explained in the first issue: because of the formal Polish education policy, many Jewish children studied in Polish schools, and thus many Jewish children did not know how to read or write Yiddish. A free translation of what it said would be: “We must not turn a blind eye to the fact that we can bring the socialist message to a large part of the youth growing among us only through the Polish language”<sup>32</sup>.

A justification for the use of a periodical in Polish is given by the editorial board of the bi-lingual Polish-Hebrew paper “*Świt–Hashachar*” published in Stanisławów:

The life surrounding the pupil here, its tumult and verbal rhythm are Polish. The key experiences of the generation we are educating, both culturally (reading, formal development, artistic impressions) and socially (youth unions, community organizations and military training at school) are Hebrew neither in form nor in tongue<sup>33</sup>.

## b. National and regional periodicals — an overview

Among the periodicals for children and youth in Polish, we can find publications by various bodies: private publishing houses, educational, social and political institutions and organizations<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> Y.S. Herts, *Di Geshikhte fun a Yugnt...*

<sup>33</sup> “*Świt–Hashachar*”, Year 2, Issue 2, Stanisławów, 1933, pp. 39–40.

<sup>34</sup> In order to complete the picture of the tri-lingual setup in papers for children and youth in Poland, this section will be devoted to a description of several Jewish periodicals published in Polish by various bodies. To find them I used two bibliographical lists. The first is that of I. Szajn, *Bibliografia żydowskiej prasy młodzieżowej wydawanej w Polsce w latach 1918–1939 w języku polskim*, „Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego w Polsce”, 2 (94), 1975, pp. 103–113. The second is that of P. Glickson, *A List of daily and periodical Jewish periodicals published in Polish between 1823 and 1982*, Jerusalem 1983. I also used printouts from the university catalogue in Warsaw, through which I located and studied Jewish periodicals on site. It should be mentioned that in this library I also found papers that did not appear on the lists of Szajn or Glickson, or I found later additions than these lists suggested. The detail of the inventory at the National Library in Warsaw as opposed to the above bibliography lists can be found in my book (A. Bar-El, *Under the Little Green Trees...*). Sometimes periodicals from different places have the same name, such as “*Głos Młodzieży*”, as mentioned below. Hence, it is important to note the location and year of publication.

In Krakow there was a quarterly entitled “**Okienko Na Świat: Pismo Dzieci i Młodzieży**” [Window to the World: periodical for children and youth]. It appeared from 1937 to 1939. Its editors were Maria Hochberg-Mariańska, Fromer Stillerowa and Marta Hirsprung<sup>35</sup>. Another children’s paper that came out in Kraków was “**Nowy Dziennik**” [New Journal], a supplement for children to the daily “**Nowy Dziennik**” [New Journal], also edited by Maria Hochberg-Mariańska. In Lwów the monthly “**Nasza Jutrzenka**” [Our Dawn] appeared from 1921 to 1939. The cover page illustration already indicates the dual orientation of the paper: on one side there are the Hanukkah candelabrum, the tablets of the Ten Commandments and palm trees and on the other, the Polish eagles and a crown. Polish researcher Barbara Letocha defines the paper as assimilationist. She quotes one of the letters to the editor in which a 7<sup>th</sup> grade pupil from Kraków writes (freely translated from the Polish):

You, dear Uncle<sup>36</sup>, sense the soul of the child best, and so you know and understand that Jewish youth still have a Polish spirit in them... You understood what needs to be done to arouse within the Jewish child love and respect for the motherland. You, in your virtuous internality, are reviving the Polish spirit. And it is very successful, because many children are under your influence [...]<sup>37</sup>.

The paper presented its young readers with the poetry, literature and history of Poland, as well as the customs, culture and history of the Jewish people. According to Łętocha, the paper instilled in the younger generation a love of both their Polish motherland and of the Jewish people.

In Lwów, the Jewish daily in Polish “**Chwila**” [Moment] was published from 1919 to 1939. It was a Zionist periodical and covered political, social and cultural topics. It had information about Poland, but also about the Land of Israel<sup>38</sup>. Writing about both places was apparently in accordance with the “here” and “there” approach of the Polish Zionists<sup>39</sup>. For part of the time, this daily had a children’s supplement — “**Chwilka**” [Little Moment] but it is not certain during which years exactly it

<sup>35</sup> This information was given to me orally by researcher Eugenia Prokop of the Uniwersytet Jagielloński in Kraków. Her book contains biographical details of one of the editors, Maria Hochberg-Mariańska, who moved to Israel and whose Hebrew name is Miryam Peleg. E. Prokop-Janiec, *Międzywojenna literatura polsko-żydowska jako zjawisko kulturowe i artystyczne*, Kraków 1992, p. 307.

<sup>36</sup> “Uncle” was the nickname for the reporter, Elazar Byk, who handled the correspondence with the children (B. Łętocha, *Prasa żydowska we Lwowie 1918–1939*, “Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego”, nr 3/96 (179), lipiec–wrzesień 1996, pp. 17–32).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>38</sup> B. Łętocha, A. Cała, Z. Głowicka (oprac.), *Dokumenty życia społecznego Żydów polskich (1918–1939) w zbiorach Biblioteki Narodowej*, Warszawa 1999, pp.132–133.

<sup>39</sup> Meaning: as long as we Jews are “here” in Poland, we must be loyal to this country. At the same time we must aspire to get “there”, to Land of Israel.

appeared. There is no written evidence of it, but it is known that between 1925 and 1927 the supplement was edited by Runa Reitmanova<sup>40</sup>. The “**Chwilka**” supplement had stories, poems, information about life in the Land of Israel, articles about history and nature, riddles and crosswords. Mainly it had the works of artists, authors and poets, but also of children.

In 1929, an individual editor and publisher, Yerakhmiel Wayngarten, published “**Gazeta Młodych**” [The Youngsters' Periodical]. There were in total 25 issues. It was an illustrated weekly printed on newsprint paper with no binding. This was probably due to the influence of “**Mały Przegląd**”<sup>41</sup> — Korczak's paper — which was also printed on newsprint paper like that of the adults. Why did Weingarten choose to publish a paper in Polish parallel to that of his teacher and friend Janusz Korczak? That year, 1929, Korczak handed the editing of the paper over to his deputy, Igor Newerly, and possibly Weingarten “permitted himself” to publish a new paper in Polish, without it being considered as competing with “**Mały Przegląd**”. Or perhaps he intended his paper for the adolescents, while Korczak's paper was meant for the younger children. Each issue of “**Gazeta Młodych**” had eight pages. Most of the texts dealt with general topics such as journeys, prehistoric man, cinema, sport, animals; only a few texts were devoted to Jewish topics.

### c. Jewish school periodicals

Below are examples of periodicals of schools and school clubs that I found in the National Library in Warsaw. It is highly likely that there were many more such papers that were lost with the destruction of the Jewish community in Poland during World War II.

“**Głos Młodzieży**” [The Voice of the Young] of the high school in Równe was first published in 1933. It covered issues of the life at the school and of the pupils, with reports by pupils from different classes; and it also had general and Jewish topics. The Jewish high school in Kielce published fourteen issues of a bi-weekly entitled “**Nasz Świat / Olameynu**” [Our World] during the two year period of 1921–1922. It had a chronicles section, literature, general and Jewish topics. Another periodical from the same school was published in 1924 by the fourth department under the title

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<sup>40</sup> E. Prokop-Janiec, *Międzywojenna literatura polsko-żydowska...*, p. 313. Rona Reitman was born in Lwów in 1890. In addition to her writing and editorial work, she devoted her life to helping children: she organized children's care centers, orphanages and shelters (B. Łętocha, *Prasa żydowska we Lwowie...*, p. 134). For more biographical details see E. Prokop-Janiec, *Międzywojenna literatura polsko-żydowska...*, pp. 313–314.

<sup>41</sup> Details about “**Mały Przegląd**” and its editor Korczak appear further on.

“**Nadzieja / Hatykwa**” [The Hope]. It contained texts on a variety of topics, poems, jokes and crosswords.

A one-off booklet (Jednodniówka) called “**Nasza Myśl**” [Our Thought] was published in May 1929 by the Epstejn Humanities High School in Vilna. It had eight newspaper pages with no hard binding. Most of it consisted of texts written by the pupils.

“**Promień**” [Ray of Light] was the paper of the Włodzimierz High School, that was first published in 1936. The whole paper was written by the pupils. It dealt with school life, trips and general topics.

Between 1929 and 1933, the High School for Boys in Lwów published a paper called “**Sprawozdawca**” [The Reporter] to which both pupils and teachers contributed. It also contained photographs of school life. “**Wiadomości Szkolne**” [School News] was a bi-monthly, apparently of a chain of elementary schools<sup>42</sup>. The pupils wrote in it. It looked like a periodical and was meant for younger children compared to the papers mentioned above. The print was clear and attractive. It had letters, poems, games and crosswords.

A paper of the Pupil’s Council in Brodnica was called “**Z Ławy Szkolnej**” [From the School Desk]. It first appeared in 1933 in a relatively large format, but in later issues the format was reduced in size. Pupils wrote in it about topics connected to the school and to the youth. It had no illustrations or games.

“**Zew**” [The Voice of the Ancients] was the periodical of the Oświata High School in Warsaw, which appeared between 1931 and 1935.

The Youth Club in Lwów published a bi-lingual Polish-Hebrew periodical that started in 1930. On the right hand side there was a cover page in Hebrew under the heading “**Kol Hanoar**” [The Voice of the Youth] and on the left cover page in Polish it said “**Głos Młodzieży**”. It contained topics relating to life in the Land of Israel and in the Diaspora as well as general topics. The second issue was in a smaller format than the first and was written only in Polish.

Another Polish-Hebrew bi-lingual paper was “**Głos Ucznia**” [The Voice of the Pupil] from 1929. It was published by the High School in Kalisz and had texts written only by the pupils. The first issue was duplicated, the later issues were printed.

#### d. Youth movement periodicals

The national monthly “**Hatsofe**” [The Observer] was published by the Zionist Youth movement between 1934 and 1936 and was distributed in Lwów, Warsaw, Kraków and Łódź. In the middle of the issue was a detachable supplement for young

<sup>42</sup> There is no mention of where it was published, only where it was printed.

children. Issues defined as one-time publications entitled “**Hanoar**” [The Youth] and “**Hanoar Haivri**” [Hebrew Youth] were published in Krakow in different years. Their contents were Jewish and Zionist and included materials connected to the Jewish literary heritage. A Zionist-revisionist periodical entitled “**Masada**” came out in Kraków, apparently between 1927 and 1932. The “Hashomer Hatsair” [Young Guard] movement published the monthly “**Młody Czyn**” [The Young Deed] in 1938 and 1939. This paper often inserted Hebrew words here and there as well as whole texts in Hebrew. It also had illustrations and photographs and featured writers from the Land of Israel. “**Yahadut**” [Judaism] was a religious monthly published in Lodz in 1937 in which adults wrote for children.

Examples of catering to the needs of the young Polish-speaking Jews were the periodicals of the Gordonia movement. Established in 1925, this pioneering youth movement published several papers in all three languages. For young readers it produced three periodicals in Polish and one in Hebrew (“**Hatsair**”), but none of the four lasted very long. In 1931 in Brody there appeared a single issue entitled “**Młody Gordonista**” [The Young Gordonist] and in January 1934 the Gordonia Center in Warsaw began publishing a bi-weekly for the youth called “**W Drodze**” [On the Way] in the format of a large 4-page daily paper rather than a bound booklet. After four years, in November 1935, this became a monthly and the format also changed to a green bound 24-page booklet. It appeared until March 1936. From 1935 a supplement for younger children was included under the name “**Młody Gordonista**”. At least four issues for the younger readers were published. This supplement had eight pages. It seems that some of the writers were from the Land of Israel. It was suitable for young readers, pupils in the early years of elementary school.

#### e. “**Mały Przegląd**” — Janusz Korczak’s children’s periodical

Most of the Jewish periodicals in Polish described above were local and appeared for short periods, apart from “**Chwilka**” — the supplement to the Jewish daily in Lwów — which was widely distributed. And now it turns out that in Warsaw, too, there was a supplement to the Jewish daily in Polish. This was “**Mały Przegląd**”, initiated and edited by educator, author and medical doctor, Janusz Korczak. This periodical was special because it was written mainly by children, and Korczak also had children help him with the editing. From this periodical we can learn about Korczak’s unique approach to educating children.

Henryk Goldszmit, whose pen name was Janusz Korczak, was born in 1878 in Warsaw into a Jewish family. He was orphaned at a young age and had to become the

breadwinner of the family. He studied medicine and served as a doctor in the Polish army. Then, for almost thirty years, starting in 1912, he jointly ran children's homes in Warsaw, one for Jewish children, which he ran with Stefania Wilczyńska [Stefa], and the other for Polish children, which he managed with Maria Falska. He was an educator and pedagogue, extremely devoted to children, especially the poor, the homeless and the orphans. His educational methodology, which he practiced in the orphanages he managed, was based on children's self-governance. This taught the children to live through sharing and responsibility, with self-respect and according to just principles. Janusz Korczak accompanied the children from the orphanages and their teachers to Treblinka, where he perished in 1942.

The children's paper played a vital role in his educational theory. In his opinion children needed their own paper which they would prepare themselves. In one of his articles, Korczak wrote about the school paper, expressing his opinion that it is important for the children themselves to be partners in their newspaper, so that they raise topics of interest to them. It is they who must determine what is important to them<sup>43</sup>. And indeed, in his children's homes there was a weekly paper in which Korczak wrote the main editorial piece (sometimes another educator), and the rest was written by the children. Everyone read the paper together.

However, Korczak was not satisfied with local intramural papers and he managed to found a periodical entitled "**Mały Przegląd**" [Little Review]. In the periodical review that appeared in the paper of the Hebrew-Polish school in Łódź "**Nasze Życie — Hayeynu**" [Our Life] the following was written about "**Mały Przegląd**": "The reporters are children and because of this it is a children's paper in the fullest sense of the word"<sup>44</sup>.

Indeed, what was unique (compared to other national periodicals) was that most of the writers were children apart from a few articles written mainly by Korczak himself.

"**Mały Przegląd**" was a weekly supplement to a Jewish daily in Polish "**Nasz Przegląd**" [Our Review]. This daily had a broad readership, especially among the Jewish intelligentsia. The paper supported Zionism. This trend of a children's periodical written by children is expressed in the change in the subtitle of "**Mały Przegląd**", which at first was "Pismo dla dzieci i młodzieży" [periodical for children and youth] but later, at the end of March 1929 it was changed to "Pismo dzieci i młodzieży" [Youth and children's periodical]. Korczak founded "**Mały Przegląd**" in 1926, and headed the editorial board for about three years, and then handed the editing work over to his pupil Igor Abramov-Newerly, who carried on the work for another ten years, until the outbreak of the war. In the early issues, Korczak wrote

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<sup>43</sup> M. Fuks, „*Mały Przegląd*” *Janusza Korczaka*, „Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego w Polsce”, 1(105) 1978, pp. 3–28.

<sup>44</sup> „*Nasze Życie*”, first issue, 1929, p. 6.

a lot in the paper, but later wrote less, leaving more room for the children's writings. The first issue appeared on Saturday October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1926, and after that every Friday for thirteen years.

Who was the target audience for this periodical? Korczak intended to reach Jewish children studying in the Polish schools who could read neither Yiddish nor Hebrew (according to the testimony of his friend and disciple Weingarten)<sup>45</sup>. And indeed, it was read by Jewish children, since "**Nasz Przegląd**" was a Jewish daily. However, it seems non-Jewish Polish children also read "**Mały Przegląd**"<sup>46</sup>. In the years when Korczak edited the paper, he addressed the children rather than the adolescents. The board received very many letters from children and fewer from adolescents. This was also true for the letters published in the paper, a topic which aroused criticism. However, Korczak consciously focused on the younger audience in order to give them a platform. This was because the young children were not courageous enough, nor did they have same opportunities to express themselves and make their points that the adolescents did. Moreover, it is possible that Korczak was afraid of censorship with regard to the adolescents, who might be beginning to formulate ideas and social and political approaches and would not be afraid to express them. On the other hand, Korczak was not afraid of censorship. In one of his short articles he relates to the limitations on writing via the "press law", humorously declaring that he would write "**Mały Przegląd**" with courage since any punishment would be borne by the editor of "**Nasz Przegląd**". It was only in the fourth year of its publication, under the editing of Newerly, that the adolescents were given more room to express themselves in the paper. It might be that the reason was not only the change in editor, but also the fact that the reporters had grown up and were beginning to articulate the ideas they had formulated more clearly. Korczak was given complete autonomy by the editorial board of the "**Nasz Przegląd**" daily for his "**Mały Przegląd**". At any rate, in the 1930s, white spaces began to appear on the pages, because of the work of the censor.

In anticipation of the paper's appearance, just a few days before the first issue, Korczak published a prospectus, seemingly addressed to children, his future readers, but in fact he was addressing the adults and also the publisher of "**Nasz Przegląd**" itself<sup>47</sup>. In this document, Korczak declares that the children's paper will be neither political nor party affiliated, and that its purpose is to encourage youngsters to write about or relate (over the phone), their needs, bad things done to them, their troubles and their concerns. Korczak also added imagination and humor into this document by describing the editorial office as a spacious two-story building with a waiting

<sup>45</sup> Y. Weingarten, *Janusz Korczak the martyred Jew: his life and times*, Tel Aviv 1979, p. 251 (Heb).

<sup>46</sup> M. F u k s, „*Mały Przegląd*” *Janusza Korczaka*..., p. 7, note 12.

<sup>47</sup> The prospectus was printed in issue no. 271 of "**Nasz Przegląd**", on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1926. A photograph of this document can be found in M. F u k s, "*Mały Przegląd*” *Janusza Korczaka*..., pp. 24–26.

room, a meeting room and separate rooms for the section editors, when in fact it was all cramped into two small rooms in the “**Nasz Przegląd**” building at 7, Nowolipki Street. Editorial work on “**Maly Przegląd**” was as follows: the material reached the board by mail. The number of letters from the children kept growing. In the first year there were 5,000 letters, and in the second, 6,500. Korczak promised his readers that no letter was thrown away (and in fact it was only in the editing rooms of the adult papers that there was a waste paper bin...). All the letters were read, sorted, numbered and filed by topic and place of origin. Korczak would come to the office on Thursdays. As the paper was being prepared, Newerly coordinated the work. The other workers were all youngsters. The first secretary of the editorial board was a young girl, Madzia Markuze, and two senior journalists were her brother Edwin Markuze and Yerahmiel Weingarten who was known as Javan.

As mentioned, Korczak edited the paper for about three years, and in the middle of 1930, handed the editing work over to Newerly. The reasons for his resignation are not clear. It seems he did not always earn people’s appreciation and esteem. There were occasional claims and criticism against him. For example, people claimed that he encouraged graphomania. Another claim was that he disappointed his young readers even so far as to harm them psychologically, since they would write and send their work to the paper, then for six months eagerly await to see their words in print. Meanwhile they kept on buying the paper. As mentioned, Korczak did not refrain from publishing things written against him or against the paper, and we cannot know if this affected him. It may be that he resigned because of the workload caused by his pedagogical work and the writing together.

“**Maly Przegląd**”, the children’s supplement, was made of the same kind of paper and laid out in the same way as the adult daily. This was different from other periodicals for children and youth, most of which appeared in a smaller format, on better paper, with illustrations and pictures. It turns out that Korczak did this on purpose. In response to those who demanded better paper and printing as well as pictures, he recommended that those who have difficulty reading should ask their mother or brother to read to them. Pictures could be found in “**Nasz Przegląd**” and about the paper he replied jokingly: “We are afraid that if there is better paper they will tell us to print poems and tales. Such weeklies already exist, and we want this to be a real paper.” Here, apparently, the idea was to give the young readers the feeling that their paper was like that of the adults, and thus should be taken seriously.

There was no set model for the contents of the issues of “**Maly Przegląd**”. Usually, as mentioned, most of the material was written by the children with a few articles by Korczak himself. However, there are also issues with stories and poems of other writers, including famous ones<sup>48</sup>. In general, not every issue edited by

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<sup>48</sup> For example: In the issue that appeared on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1929, among others, there is a story by Shalom Asch and a poem by Byalik. It may be that this issue, which appeared during the vacation, was not



Korczak cited his name as the editor. It might be that he did not sign his name when he had to compromise and the contents of the issue were not to his liking. The young readers wrote about themselves, raised complaints, and requests for advice and help, recounted their problems with parents and teachers, and even made suggestions of topics for the paper. An example of a public problem that was printed and then resolved: the paper reported a dangerous barbed wire fence located in a playground in Krasiński Park in Warsaw. The editorial board sent a reporter to describe the situation, warned of the problem, and the fence that was dangerous for children was removed. There were issues devoted to special topics, and writing contests were also announced. From time to time, the editorial board suggested topics. There was very little correspondence with children from the Land of Israel, mainly with children from kibbutz Eein Harod, which hosted Korczak and Stefa on their visits. Korczak put a call for Israeli children to write to “**Maly Przegląd**”, and was very disappointed to receive only two letters.

Unlike other periodicals for children and youth, Korczak's periodical was not affiliated with any particular educational trend. He also did not approach teachers to contribute to the paper. He explained this as follows: teachers have their own periodicals in which to publish their thoughts; but children and adolescents need a separate platform on which to express their feelings and thoughts freely.

In his articles in “**Maly Przegląd**”, as in his other writings, Korczak harshly criticizes the school institutions, but is careful about respecting the teachers. He does not criticize them personally or show contempt for them, nor does he interfere with their work, even when there is a complaint from a pupil and it is clear that the teacher hurt the child. On one occasion he even gave a teacher an opportunity to express his own distress in the paper and let him speak about the disdain for him on the part of the pupils, even though he was doing his best for them.

#### f. Bi-lingual (Polish-Hebrew) periodicals

The bi-lingual school network, founded by “Agudat Khavarot” [Friendship Society], headed by Dr. Braude and Dr. Tartakower<sup>49</sup> supported the integration of the pupil into life in Poland alongside a Zionist orientation and preparation for the Land of Israel. Hence, its institutions used two languages of instruction: Polish

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edited by Korczak, since his name does not appear as the editor. (M. F u k s, “*Maly Przegląd*” *Janusza Korczaka*..., p. 12, note 18).

<sup>49</sup> For more on the “Agudat Havarot” schools and other Jewish educational networks, see my book: A. B a r - E l, *When I grow up I will move to the Land of Israel: The “Tarbut” network in Poland and its children's periodicals*, in the series “Generation to Generation”, 21, Tel Aviv University, 2003.

and Hebrew. Unlike the “Tarbut” schools, which included the study of Polish and Polish subjects because of government edicts, in the bi-lingual schools the use of Polish as a language of instruction was the result of a rational consideration and worldview that a Jewish youth needs the language in daily life, both in order to live and work in the Polish state and integrate into the surrounding society, and also to enrich themselves with knowledge and literature, and express himself well. Even the publications of this network, which included periodicals for the pupils and for the parents and yearbooks, were printed in both languages. Most of the texts were in Polish with a small part of the material in Hebrew.

Below is a review of several publications: school periodicals from Łódź, Stanisławów, and Lwów; a periodical for parents published by the parents’ committee of the School for Girls in Łódź.

“**Nasze Życie/Hayeynu**” appeared between 1928 and 1932 at irregular intervals, approximately once every two months. Its editor was P. Friedman and the publisher was S. Rieger. The publishing body was the Pupil Council of the second school for boys of the company of high schools in Łódź. On the right end of the issue was the Hebrew section, with a cover page featuring the name ‘Hayeynu’. On the left was the cover page in Polish with the title ‘Nasze Życie’. The sub-title was “Pismo Młodzieży” [Youth periodical]. In the first issue dated December 1928, there was a mixture of texts in both languages. From the second issue, however, the two languages were separate. The right side was all in Hebrew, while the left side was all in Polish. Teachers, pupils and school graduates all wrote for this periodical. There were not many illustrations in these issues. There were articles on the state of the youth, about the community and about what was happening in the Land of Israel. There was also a mention and review of other youth periodicals of various Zionist and pioneering movements. In both the Hebrew and the Polish sections there were special supplements for younger readers. The title of the supplement in Hebrew was: “Addition of ‘Hayeynu’ for the young ones” and the title of the Polish supplement was: “Dodatek ‘Nasze Życie’ dla najmłodszych”. At some point they began to include vowel markings in the Hebrew. The supplement for the children was printed in the inner pages and was detachable. Here, too, there was a mixture of works by adults (authors) and children

The stated purposes of the periodical:

It is designed to serve as a mirror of the life of our school and schools that are close to us in spirit — through articles, questionnaires and reports; to build a bridge between ourselves and the lives and ambitions of the young people in Poland and abroad, especially a strong bond with Hebrew youth in all countries wherever they may be; to create a strong bond with the Land of Israel and the life of the young people there; to create a basis for the exchange of ideas among pupils, teachers and graduates; to provide news and reviews about the new educational movement and thereby aspire to enhance and improve the school; to describe and clarify the various forms of self-governance at scho-

ol; to stimulate discussion about our self-governance, about its obstacles and disadvantages, to help it develop and flourish, to seek new solutions; to provide news about the life of the Hebrew youth not at the school; to provide information and research in science, art and sports.; to support and develop our own young literary talent. We will also pay great attention to youth periodicals and literature. Particularly we will mention books relating to questions of the youth movements and of the improvement. ... The Editors<sup>50</sup>.

As mentioned above, the bi-lingual schools also published yearbooks. In the National Library in Warsaw, I found two yearbooks published the First High School for Boys in Łódź<sup>51</sup>.

“**Ogniwa/Huliot**” [Links] was published from 1928 to 1939 by the parents’ committee of the High School for Girls in Lodz, and was intended for the parents. Its aim was symbolized by its title, and also in the illustration on each cover — Hebrew and Polish. It showed a closed circle of a chain made of links inside which were the three words ‘School’, ‘Child’, ‘Home’. The editor was the school principal, Michael Brandshtetter. The periodical had articles on education and about the teaching of various subjects. It also contained literary texts (many poems about ‘Mother’) and memoirs. There were also a few photographs from school life.

“**Świt/Hashahar**” had the subtitle “Youth periodical”. The high school in Stanisławów published a bi-lingual periodical from 1932 to 1935. Here too, there was a Hebrew cover page on the right and a Polish one on the left. They both featured a drawing of a seven-branch candelabrum above which was the title. The chief editor was Professor Berger. Pupils were part of the editorial board. Most of the periodical was written by the pupils, who wrote about school life, about general topics (spring, night), and topics pertaining to Hebrew and Judaism. There were also proverbs and sayings from the Talmud and other Jewish sources and by well-known Jewish figures, and slogans about the importance of land and the activity of the Jewish National Fund. In the school’s jubilee issue, the national idea and the importance of training the youth to go to the Land of Israel was particularly stressed.

Published by the High School for Boys in Lwów, “**Sprawozdawca**” [Report] was different. Even though the school belonged to “Agudat Khavarot” it was not bi-lingual and was written only in Polish. Pupils and teachers wrote in it and it appeared for many years — 1929–1938/9. Its contents seem appropriate for adolescents and related to school life and general topics.

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<sup>50</sup> „Nasze Życie”, Issue 1, Lodz, 1929, p. 48.

<sup>51</sup> For information about the school, its ideology, pedagogical approaches, curricula and clubs, see: H.S. Kazdan, *The History of the Jewish Education System...*, pp. 527–532). One volume (1929–1930) of the yearbook contained 94 pages in Hebrew, and over 350 pages in Polish. The articles dealt with psychology and pedagogy and reports on the school, including about the students’ self-governance, and also the list of students and teachers. In the second book (1930–1931), the topics were similar, but the Hebrew section is smaller and contains only one article.

## Epilogue

In spite of the ideological differences, there are many points of similarity and similar phenomena in the publications for children and youth; for example: separate periodicals for youth, children and preschool age (nursery, kindergarten). It appears that each one of the publishing institutions was aware of the needs of its readers, and published appropriate periodicals for the wide range of ages. Another point, the periodicals for children and those of preschool age frequently began as a section within another publication, and later separated from it — becoming an independent periodical.

Ch. Shmeruk<sup>52</sup> depicts the social “poly-system” within the Polish Jewish community as encompassing three systems: Hebrew, Yiddish and Polish. Four spheres acted within each of the systems; education, literature, theater, and the periodical press. Shmeruk compared each of the four spheres within their respective cultural system, and in relation to the other cultural systems, and his conclusions were as follows: the Hebrew system was in decline in all of the spheres; the Yiddish system was flourishing within the literature, theater and periodical press spheres, while the educational sphere within the Polish system was strong among the Jews — which directly influenced the reading of literature and the periodical press in the Polish language.

In accordance with the above concept, my research positioned the children’s periodical press as a part of the poly-system, and examined it in relation to the relevant spheres. One of the conclusions of my research is that this too was the picture of children’s periodicals: many periodicals in Yiddish and Polish, fewer in Hebrew. However, it is difficult to make a list and count all the periodicals in all three languages for statistical data because of the destruction of Polish Jewry and its institutions, which caused many of the publications (especially those published by individual schools and clubs) to be lost, and we may never know about them.

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<sup>52</sup> C. Shmeruk, *Hebrew-Yiddish-Polish: A Trilingual Jewish Culture*, [in:] Y. Gutman, E. Mendelsohn, J. Reinharz, C. Shmeruk (eds.), *The Jews of Poland Between Two World Wars*, Hanover–London 1989, pp. 285–311.