

# THE POLISH JEWRY

Book series of the Central Union of Polish Jews  
in Argentina

Editor: **Mark Turkow**

## Published until now<sup>1</sup>:

- 1.) Mark Turkow: *Malka Owsiany Recounts...* (sold out)
- 2.) H.D. Nomberg: *I.L. Perec* (sold out)
- 3.) V. Grosman – I. Viernik: *Treblinka* (sold out)
- 4.) Peretz Granatstein: *Sokolów – My Destroyed Shtetl* (sold out)
- 5.) Israel Tabaksblat: *Churbn Łódź* (sold out)
- 6.) Zerubavel: *Barg Churbn* [Mt. Ruins] (Poland Chapters) (sold out)
- 7.) Elchonon Zeitlin: *In a Literarisher Shtub* [In a Literary Home] (sold out)
- 8.) Dr H. Shoskies: *Poilyn – 1946* [Poland in 1946] (sold out)
- 9.) Z. Segalowicz: *Tłomackie 13* (sold out)
- 10.) M. Nudelman: *Gelechter Durch Trern* [Laughter Through Tears] (sold out)
- 11.) [Prof] Dr Maier Balaban: *Di Idn-Sztot Lublin* [The Jewish City Lublin] (sold out)
- 12.) Israel Efros: *Heimlose Idn* [Jews Without a Home] (sold out)
- 13.) Dr Jacob Shatzki: *In Shotn fun Owar* [In the Shade of the Past] (sold out)
- 14.) David Flinker: *A Hois oif Grzybow* [A House in Grzybów] (sold out)
- 15.) Dr Hilel Seidman: *Togbuch fun Warszewer Ghetto* [Diary of the Warsaw Ghetto]
- 16.) [Compiled by Noe Gruess:] *Martyrdom of the Children (A Collection of Documents)*
- 17.) Chaim Grade: *Pleitim* [Refugees (songs and poems written in the USSR in 1941-1945)]
- 18.) Sz. Kaczerginski: *Partisaner Gueien!...* [Partisans on the March!...] (Wilno Ghetto)
- 19.) Fryda Zerubavel: *Na Venad* [Wanderer] (a refugee's notes)
- 20.) Mordchai Schtrigler: *Majdanek*
- 21.) Jacob Lestschinsky: *Oifn Rand fun Opgrunt* [On the Edge of the Abyss<sup>2</sup>]
- 22.) Z. Segalowicz: *Gebreute Trit* [Burning Steps (memoirs of a refugee)]
- 23.) Abraham Teitelbaum: *Warszewer Haif* [Courtyards of Warsaw]
- 24.) Tania Fuks: *A Wanderung Iber Okupirte Gebitn* [Wandering Across Occupied Territories]
- 25.) S.L. Shnaiderman: *Tzwishn Shrek un Hofenung* [Between Anguish and Hope]
- 26.) Leo Finkielstein: *Meguilath Poilin* [The Scroll of Poland]
- 27.) Jonas Turkow: *Azoi iz es Gewen...* [This is How it Was...] (*The destruction of Warsaw*)
- 28.) S. Isban<sup>3</sup>: *"Umlegale" Idn Shpaltn Iamen* ["Illegal" Jews Cross Seas]
- 29.) Jacob Pat: *Henech* [about a boy who fled the Warsaw Ghetto]
- 30.) Dr J. Kermisz: *Der Ojfsztand in Warszewer Geto* [The Uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto]

<sup>1</sup> [TN: Wherever we have had access to the original book, we have rendered the names of the authors exactly as they appear in them in Latin characters, regardless of their correct Polish spelling; we have rendered the titles themselves also as they appear in the original (adding Polish diacritics) in Latin characters, with the translation to English in brackets. Titles that appear in Spanish in the original have been directly translated to English. The texts within parentheses appear as such in the original Yiddish.]

<sup>2</sup> [TN: This book is about the Jewish life in Poland between the years 1927-1933.]

<sup>3</sup> [TN: Originally *Szmul Izbicki*.]

- 31.) Symcha Poliakiewicz: *A Tog in Treblinka* [A Day in Treblinka]
- 32.) Mordchai Strigler: *In di Fabrikn fun Toit* [In the Factories of Death]
- 33.) Abraham Nachtumi: *In Shotn fun Doires* [In the Shadow of Generations]
- 34.) Iechiel Lerer: *Main Haim* [My Home]
- 35.) Josef Wolf: *Lainendik Peretzn...* [Reading Peretz] (J.L. Peretz)
- 36.) Cypora Kacnelson-Nachumov: *lcchok Kacnelson*
- 37.) J. Hirschhaut: *Finctere Necht in Pawiak* [Dark Nights in Pawiak]
- 38.) Nahum Socolow: *Perzenlechkaitn* [Personalities]
- 39.) Rachel H. Korn: *Heim un Heimlozikait* [Home and Homelessness (poems)]
- 40.) A. Almi: *Momentn fun a Lebn* [Episodes of a Life (memoirs)]
- 41.) Menashe Unger: *Pszysche un Kock* [Przysucha & Kock (Chassidic courts)]
- 42.) M. Bursztyn: *Iber de Churves fun Ploine* [Across the Ruins of Ploine<sup>4</sup>]
- 43.) M. Kipnis: *Hundert Folks-Lider* [A Hundred Folksongs]
- 44.) Z. Segalowicz: *Maine Zibn Yor in Tel-Aviv* [My Seven Years in Tel-Aviv]
- 45.) Dr Chaim Shoskies: *A Welt Vos iz Farbai* [A World That is Gone]
- 46.) Szlojme Waga: *Churbn Czenstochow*

### In printing, to appear soon:

I.I. Trunk: *Di Idisze Proze in Poiln* [The Jewish Literature in Poland]  
 Sholem Ash: *Petersburg; Warsaw; Moscow*  
 R. Shoshano Kahan: *In Faier un Flamen* [In Fire and Flames]  
 S. Isban: *The Karp Family* (novel)  
 Dr A. Mukdoni: *Maine Bagegenishn* [My Encounters]  
 Dr Filip Friedman: *Oshwiencim* [Oświęcim (Auschwitz)]  
 David Flinker: *In Shturem* [In the Storm] (novel)  
*Bełchatów* (a collective work<sup>5</sup>)

### In preparation for printing<sup>6</sup>:

Abraham Zak: *Yorn in Wander* [Years in Wandering] (songs and poems)  
 Jonas Turkow: *In Kamf farn Lebn* [Fighting for Life]  
 Pinchas Bizberg: *Shabes Iomtoivdike Idn* [Sabbath and Holiday Jews<sup>7</sup>]  
 Rywka Kwiatkowska: *Fun Laguer in Laguer* [From Camp to Camp]  
 Josef Okrutny: *In Klem* [In the Vice]  
 Kadie Mołodowska: *A Mol iz Gewen* [Once Upon a Time]  
 Oizer Warshawski: *Shmuglers* [Smugglers (Under the Occupation)]  
 Abraham Lev: *A Lid Noch Aich* [A Poem After You]  
 Ber J. Rozen: *Tłomackie 13*  
 Dr Emanuel Ringelblum: *To the History of the Jews in Poland*  
 Dr Izaak Schipper: *Chapters of History*  
 Herszele<sup>8</sup>: *Shabes ojfen Trakt* [Sabbath on the Highway]  
 Jehoszua Perle: *Judn fun a Ganc Jor* [Everyday Jews]

<sup>4</sup> [TN: This book is a novel about Jewish life in Poland, and the shtetl "Ploine" is fictional, representing a typical Jewish locality in Poland.]

<sup>5</sup> [TN: This large Yizkor Book was eventually published in 1951.]

<sup>6</sup> [TN: We have not been able to ascertain whether this publisher eventually published all the following proposed works; in some cases, we have rendered the spellings as they appear in editions by other publishers.]

<sup>7</sup> [TN: Subtitle in Yiddish and sole title in Spanish: "The Songs of a Generation".]

<sup>8</sup> [TN: Pseudonym of Hersz Danielewicz.]

Press reviews on the book series

## THE POLISH JEWRY



[This is what] **Mojsze Grosman** writes, among other things, about Jonas Turkow's book *This is How it Was... (The Destruction of Warsaw)* in [the newspaper] *Kiyum [Survival]*, Paris, June 1948:

*Jonas Turkow was an active participant in the communal life of the Warsaw Ghetto. He was thoroughly acquainted with all the kehilla activists, writers, actors, plastic artists, scientists and medical people. He was also involved in the underground work, in procuring weapons, and was actually active in many operations. He know what and how to relate, viz. simply noting that which is the most important and necessary. He recounts everything openly, both for good and for bad. If important people broke down and sold their consciences – Jewish society is entitled to know this.*

*The names of over eleven hundred individuals are mentioned in this book. It may serve as a handbook, as a directory, of all the happenings in the Warsaw Ghetto life until the April Uprising. He did not write all this from memory, but according to the diary which he kept. Before going across to the Aryan side, he buried this diary along with other documents in a small garden at ul. Mylna. Following the Liberation, he dug it back up.*

*When reading such chronicles, we are usually captivated by the central events – yet we must also devote our attention to the secondary and more distantly ranking happenings and matters.*

*In the ghetto, there were a large number of converts to Christianity and also such Jews who had once lived and created in the Polish environs and language, and had little in common with Jews. The Jewish fate, however, did not skip them over: the scientist and talented writer Bruno Winawer; the popular novelist Leo Belmont (his real name was Blumental); the co-editor of "Robotnik" [The Worker], M. Borski (I think his real name was Szapiro<sup>9</sup>), who was known for his frequently anti-Semitic articles; the actor of the "Teatr Polski", Michał Znicz; the revue writer Andrzej Włast<sup>10</sup>; the poetess Henryka Łazowert; the famous priest Tadeusz Puder, and hundreds of other well-known and famed intellectuals and artists.*

*Because of them, the Yiddishists in the ghetto truly had to fight against the strong assimilation stream of Polonism which for a time pervaded the ghetto streets, primarily in the institutions.*

*All the memoirists write about the attitude of the Poles towards the ghetto with the most furious embitterment. The Bundists Bernard Goldsztajn and Władka also speak of the phenomenon with agony and anger. The proletarian poet Kalman Lis managed to save himself from the German murderers during the*

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<sup>9</sup> [TN: Jan Maurycy Borski's original surname was Essigman.]

<sup>10</sup> [TN: Born Gustaw Baumritter.]

pogrom in the Otwock children's sanatorium. He was saved from the Germans, and the Poles killed him. Turkow writes about this (p.351):

*"Kalman Lis, who with a couple of children from his institution managed to escape from the German hands and hide in the village of Teklin, not far from Otwock, was killed by a peasant who dealt him [a blow] over the head with a spade. He lay two days in a moribund state. During this akcja, some three thousand Jews fled to the woods and to other little towns and villages, from whence they were later 'given away' and 'liquidated' just like the rest of the Jews of Otwock."*

*Reading this reminds one of Nachman Blitz's description of how the Ukrainians killed the writer Alter Kacyzne with spades and sticks.*

*During the pogrom that the Poles perpetrated in Warsaw on the eve of Peisach 1940, Turkow writes: "The main heroes of the excesses were the young sons of the Warsaw concierges."*

*Now let us leaf through the shameful pages of the chapter of disgrace: Jewish treason. Here we must cast our eyes down to the ground. Jewish traitors, informers, policemen, blackmailers and "Gestapowces"! This is our national "rak" (cancer). The Yiddish-Hebrew writer Juda [Lajb] Warszawiak was the press leader of the infamous "Thirteen"<sup>11</sup> in the ghetto, which was a bit of a Gestapo agency. Juda Warszawiak! I knew him. I should like to say to already in the good, normal times one could foresee that such a person was capable of anything. There are criminals who commit no crime only due to the fact that they do not have the suitable opportunity, the fitting conditions. But all this is still a meagre consolation, when you read the written facts*

*regarding Jewish treason and depravity. The sun may then shine brightly – darkness falls before the eyes. The [classical Jewish] "mesiras-nefesh" [selfless sacrifice] has received a fleck of "mesirah" [denunciation]. The sanctity has been blemished.*

*The former Hebrew teacher Abram Gancwajch, who had been ordained as rabbi and had been a contributor to the provincial Yiddish press in Poland, was for many years a secret collaborator of the Gestapo. In the ghetto, he was the one who was the manager of the "Thirteen". He was also a dual character, secretly saving Jewish cultural activists, such as [Jakub] Gens, the head of the Wilno Judenrat, and [Chaim-Mordechaj] Rumkowski, the strange leader of the Łódź Judenrat. The German rewarded them in a fitting manner – he shot them all, to the last man<sup>12</sup>.*

*Lines such as these should also be read attentively:*

*"The working people, who had no money to buy themselves off, as well as the poor ones, were the first to be caught (during the akcje)."*

*"Among a group of elderly folk captured in an old age home who were led away to the Umschlagplatz<sup>13</sup> was also a brother of Sholem Asch."*

*A tragic dilemma is inferred from these few lines: "First and foremost, we endeavour **to save the children of the meritorious parents** (my italics), although the plan is to save anyone and anything – as much as we only can."*

*This is a difficult question: may one take into consideration the merit of the parents upon rescuing children? Does this mean that birth*

<sup>11</sup> [TN: Jewish Nazi collaborationist organisation in the Warsaw Ghetto, whose main office was located at ul. Leszno 13, thus its informal name "Thirteen".]

<sup>12</sup> [TN: According to historical sources, Chaim-Mordechaj Rumkowski was killed in Auschwitz by Jewish inmates in revenge for his actions.]

<sup>13</sup> [TN: The place where people were concentrated and sorted pending deportation.]

*decides? Is race replaced by elite?*<sup>14</sup>

*Thus grows and expands a ball of dilemmas, which are in our minds and seek an answer.*

**N.B. Linder** writes about Sz. Isban's book *"Illegal" Jews Cross Seas (Der Tog, New York, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1948)*:

*When [the time] comes to write the history of the so-called "illegal" Jewish wandering to the Land of Israel, which began immediately following the Second World War and still continues to this day, the historians shall not be able to complain of any lack of material. They shall find more than enough information protocolled, photographed and recorded in several languages, in writing, images and audio.*

*One with a trained eye and a keen ear may yet uncover for us enough details of this bloody drama, and with that enrich even further the treasuries of information, which will constitute inestimable material for the future historian. One such individual is the renowned belletrist Sz. Isban, who, in the capacity of reporter, accompanied "illegal" Jewish wanderers on a journey to the Land of Israel on a ship.*

*It is easy to say "journey". In truth, this was one long chain of anxieties and torments, with mortal perils into the bargain. It was a voyage of pure miracles from beginning to end. This only becomes truly clear to you once you have finished reading his feverish and lively account of this same journey which has now been published in a book titled "Illegal Jews Cross Seas".*

*You read this book and marvel at the boldness and courage of this young Jewish writer, who,*

*Let us not run away from these bloodied ghetto pages; let us read these gravestone books – they tell and teach us a very great deal.*

*in order to personally witness and experience all the pains and plagues of the hapless wanderers, left his comfortable home and family here – and set upon such a perilous voyage across distant seas in a ship with "illegal Jews", as he calls them.*

*This is one of the numbered Yiddish books which once you begin reading it, you cannot let it out of your hands until you finish it. This is because – besides the story itself, which enthral you to such an extent that you oftentimes literally spring up from your chair – it was written by an excellent storyteller. Isban knows the art of telling a great deal in few words, and he is able even with a few brief lines that he tosses out to portray a personality so alive that you almost feel the person's breath.*

*Whether he describes one of the passengers, one of the ship's officers, or the captain himself – you see the person before you as if he was standing alive in front of your eyes. Here are just a couple of examples, taken from Chapter 9, namely: "portrait of an illegal sailor", [of which] Isban says:*

*"Here is Adrian-Abraham Phillips, twenty-eight years of age, a hairy, dark-skinned lad. In his greasy 'overalls', with the red bandana tied with a slip knot on his head, he resembles an opium smuggler in Marseilles. He was born in New York and knows no Yiddish. He is a*

<sup>14</sup> [TN: The writer's question, it would seem, is whether in such cases the inhuman Nazi racial doctrines may not have merely

been exchanged for an equally inhuman policy of elitist supremacy.]

*mechanical engineer by trade; he worked at Philco Radio and television. His grandmother was very religious; his grandfather – a reverend.”*

*Another portrait:*

*“The ship’s fireman, Josef Gilden. He moves with heavy steps. A native of Baltimore. His parents come from Russia. He was a high-school lad. Tall, rather bulgy, overgrown like a man of the woods of olden times. His movements are sluggish, heavy. He served for a couple of years in the army. Later went to hachshara<sup>15</sup>. Until then had no knowledge of Jewish life. He joined the crew (of the “illegal” ship) with the practical aim of settling in the Land of Israel and living in a kibbutz.”*

*Here you have but two examples of an entire gallery of characters, described swiftly and livelily, as only the hands of a master may do it. The primary worth of Isban’s book, however, with which we are dealing here, lies not in the form, not in how the book is written, but in the content – in what the author has to tell in it. And it is in this particular that the book “Illegal Jews Cross Seas” is in itself an entire treasury of interesting, breath-taking information regarding the “illegal” Jewish wandering, which shall remain an eternal smudge of shame on the world’s current “civilisation”.*

*In this book the writer provides us with a full and clear image of all the troubles and mishaps, of all the anxieties, torments and fears experienced by these unfortunate, uprooted Jewish wanderers, which the bitter destiny has turned into hunted and plauged*

*“illegal” wanderers. Yet you perceive here, and you also feel, their steadfast decisiveness not to give in; also their deep drive for life and – to spite the evil, malicious world – to live as free people in their own, liberated homeland.*

*And it is not only this that you see and feel reading this book. You also meet people here – Jews and a number of non-Jews, children of the various nationalities – who are capable of heroic deeds and risk their own lives to aid the “illegal” wanderers to fight their way to the coasts of the Land of Israel and realise their dream to live as free people in the land of their ancestors.*

*You also have here a record of the wicked acts, the deceptive actions of the British authorities and their “sea heroes” who hunt down the ships with “illegal” wanderers – with the weakened, impoverished men, women and children – just as these hapless refugees were who knows what kind of criminals. You sense in this the perfidy and mockery of the Englishman, priding himself on his feeling for sport, who turned this chase after “illegal” ships into a sort of hunt after wild beasts.*

*You will find all this sharply and clearly described in Sz. Isban’s book “Illegal Jews Cross Seas”. This book was published by the Central Union of Polish Jews in Argentina. This book is beautifully printed and finely bound, and is labelled number 28 in the book series of said union. Every Yiddish reader should procure this book. He will both learn something from it and also possess a work which is worthwhile to keep as a memory of this current era of frenzy.*

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<sup>15</sup> [TN: Heb., “training”; name given to Zionist training programmes for youth wishing to emigrate to the Land of Israel and settle there, primarily as farmers.]

דאָס בוך האָט זיך געענדיקט דרוקן  
דעם 20סטן אפריל 1949 אין דער  
דרוקעריי „היימאן“ — פּאַסטעור 333  
טעלעפּאָן 7752-47 — בוענאָס אַירעס

[The printing of this book was completed on the day  
20<sup>th</sup> of April 1949 at the HEUMAN Graphic Workshops  
Pasteur 333 – Telephone 47-7752 – Buenos Aires]

Este libro terminóse de imprimir  
el día 20 de Abril de 1949 en  
los Talleres Gráficos H E U M A N  
Pasteur 333 - T. E. 47-7752 - Bs. As.