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A couple of days after Sure'le's journey to Paris, a telegram arrived from Terca [saying] that Sure'le was ill. The telegram consisted of a few words, which promised nothing good. Terca did not write how serious Sure'le's illness was and what disease she had.

Rywka did not wait one minute. She completed the consulate paperwork, packed her things and went to the train station. With a pounding heart, filled with fear and forlornness, she boarded the railway carriage. Now, she forgot all her grievances against Josef. With eyes running with tears, she stood with her head bowed. Josef tried to soothe her, although his heart told him that some great tragedy was moving over their only child. He asked Rywka to telephone him immediately once she arrived in Paris and saw the child.

Josef spoke with Rywka on the telephone every single day. Sure'le's life was in great peril. [Then] the tragedy occurred. It happened on 24th October 1936. After five days of sending telegrams and dozens of telephone conversations, Josef heard Rywka's teary voice from distant Paris, weeping over the phone:

"Oh, Josef! Sure'le has been taken from us! Sure'le is no more. Come to the funeral, at least. Be by me, Josef, in this great misfortune that has befallen the both of us".

Josef's experiences, on that early morning, crushed him. Weeping and powerless, accompanied by Miriam, he boarded the train that was to bring him to Paris. Miriam looked at him - with love, not words - beseeching him to be strong:

"Be strong, Josef, I beg you. Remember yourself. This is what dark Fate wishes."

The death of her only daughter hit Rywka very hard, and the tragedy was no lesser an experience for Josef. They walked back from the Paris Jewish cemetery like two orphans, who had left there, in the child's small grave, that which was dearest and most beloved in their lives. Life was now empty and meaningless for both of them.

Rywka no longer had any reason to remain in Paris. Although most of her family was there in Paris, she preferred to be with Josef. In profound grief, Rywka and Josef travelled back to Warsaw. Upon parting company, Terca said to Josef, "The only consolation, Josef, would be for Rywka to have a child".

Rywka bowed her head ashamedly. A light smile filled, with grief and supplication, hovered over her lips. Josef sensed in Rywka's silence, in her dreamy, mournful appearance, the deep desire of her warm body clinging to him, as it once had done, before they were married. But Josef was cold to Rywka's tenderness. In his heart, he felt differently. After the death of his child, of that beautiful flower which was so cruelly torn from him, Josef firmly decided never

to bring a child into this world again! Josef now found the only consolation in his life was in his work for the party.

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In place of Comrade Binem Warszawski¹ - the secretary of the Typographical Union, who had travelled to Australia - Josef was nominated by the National Council of Professional Unions to occupy Comrade Binem's position. Josef took over this post in 1935 and held it until the outbreak of the Second World War. In his work as secretary, Josef displayed many capabilities. In one of the elections to the Warsaw City Council, Josef was chosen as the [Bund's] leading candidate, on the same Labour list as the famous workers' leader, the late Henryk Erlich.

As secretary of the Typographical Union, Josef led several successful strikes in some of the Warsaw printing presses, as well as in the presses of an array of newspapers - Yiddish and non-Yiddish.

The strike at the Yiddish newspaper *Der Moment* even took on a political character. Josef was arrested twice. The first time was in a strike at the Polish-Yiddish Warsaw newspaper *5-ta Rano* [5:00 AM], which, in a disgusting, provocative manner, let the Typographical Union's entire delegation be detained. The publisher and editor of this paper was the renowned Zionist leader [Stanisław] Świśtock². In [his] favour, however, it must be mentioned that Świśtock, himself, under the pressure and at the request of the Typographical Union, made efforts to have the arrestees released.

The second time Josef was arrested was in a police raid on the premises of the Typographical Union, when the late Szlojme Mendelson was in the middle of one of his interesting lectures. Dozens of Jewish workers were also beaten by the police, for the sole sin of sitting and listening to Szlojme Mendelson's interesting talk. On this occasion, they also arrested Josef's wife Rywka and his sister Cirla, who was just then visiting Warsaw.

Following the interrogation, which took several days, all the detainees were released. The police only held Josef longer than everyone. They suspected Josef of having a hand in the assassination that had been perpetrated on the provocateur Markus Herszlikowicz. They obviously knew that Josef had not lived in peace with this leftist "comrade" when they were both living in the city of Warta.

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The air in Warsaw was filled with the portent of war and the dreadful anxieties that a war could now bring upon everyone, and upon Jews in particular. From Berlin, people constantly heard on the radio what Hitler was preparing to do with all the Jews, wherever his bloodied feet would only gain access.

¹ [TN: Binem Warszawski died on 2nd March 1956 in Melbourne, Australia, at the age of 62.]

² [TN: Although Świśtock was most certainly a journalist who wrote for "5-ta Rano", we have found no mention in historical sources of his also having been its publisher and editor.]

It was just in those days that the visa, given to Rywka by the consul, was about to expire. Rywka thought that, should the war break out between Germany and Poland, Heaven forbid that maybe it would be better if she was already in France. If war was unavoidable, she should first of all save herself and, immediately upon arriving in Paris, summon Josef there as well. She thought that perhaps, in France, the wound in her heart would heal. The proximity of her child's tomb in the Paris cemetery might bring Josef closer to her, like before, in the first days after their marriage.

Josef felt the atmosphere of war in the air. He saw the steps of the sanguinary German destroyer which was approaching and which could lay waste not only to Poland, but to the entire world. Josef walked about in the Warsaw streets. He saw smiling mothers pushing their children about in their strollers. He took in the fresh air of the beautiful Polish autumn and the mild rays of the sun, which was shining so peacefully upon the young and old. He saw life following its usual course. It was difficult to believe that this beautiful city, which was now bubbling with so much life, could very soon be reduced to dust in the deluge of fire and smoke of the German aeroplanes, whose piercing, fiery gazes he could already sense from afar.

Josef agreed that Rywka should travel away. It was better this way, [but] he did not promise her anything. In silence, without words, mourning for their child and in fear of the imminent evil, Josef murmured, "Perhaps, Rywka, it is better this way - and whatever Fate wishes, thus it shall be".

Rywka attempted saying something to him. She wished to ask him to remember that, if she had the possibility to immediately bring him over to Paris, that he should leave everything here and come. But the words remained stuck in her throat. She looked out from the railway carriage window in sorrow and saw Josef standing bent over, eyes cast down, as sad as she, immersed in thoughts.

And then the train [started] moving. Josef's figure became smaller and smaller, until he vanished completely from her eyes.

