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Meanwhile, Josef ceased being the [household's] provider. His place was taken by his eldest brother, Szaja. Josef received a position as an office worker with Maurycy Lipski¹. After working there for a few months, he was sacked. Josef was studying, little by little, and continued to be engaged in political work. It was then that he made the acquaintance of the Zionist-Socialist Workers Party (SS) activists, Comrades Mendel Szuchter, Szaja-Jakow Miętkiewicz (Mencoff), Herszl Gotajner and others.

For him, [life at] home became too constricting and he now lived, in a furnished apartment together with his close friend Klajnman. Day in and day out, Josef would sit with comrades and discuss "the Jewish question"². Influenced by the party activist Mendel Szuchter, Josef and his friend Emanuel Klajnman joined the SS Party, because they were displeased with the SDKPiL Party's attitude towards Jewish issues.

At home, they realised that Josef would eventually end up in prison, [so] his brother Zalman, who had a position at a paint factory, undertook to support Josef, on condition that he leave the country. Josef did, in fact, very soon afterwards travel to Kraków, with the goal of attaining a secondary school *matura* [certificate].

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In Kraków, Josef lived in the Podgórze [district], on ul. Kołłątaja, where he lived among the immigrants from the Kingdom of Poland [viz. Congress Pol.], who were called "Królewiaczy"³. Josef had made a pact with himself that he would get the *matura* within the year.

In the meantime, he met many friends there, who had returned from deportations, from Siberia. He [also] met some who were just fleeing, as a result of the hard repressions that had started in Poland at the time. Those who arrived were Herszl Gotajner, who escaped from Siberia, having earlier been imprisoned for several years in the Piotrków prison; Dawid Gerichter, who had been granted a free "*visilka*" [ВЫСЫЛКА, expulsion notice] to leave the country; and Comrade Michał Alter was also in Kraków. Motl Asz, Aleksander Haftka and Dawid Borzykowski were external students⁴ in Kraków. The Yiddish author Abram Wiewiorka was also living in Kraków at the time. Josef learned much from his meetings with all these friends.

¹ [TN: According to the memorial section at the end of the "Czenstochover Yidn" (p. LVI), Maurycy Lipski was one of the largest timber traders in Częstochowa.]

² [TN: Viz. what the Jews should do – or should be done to them – as a nation, and namely whether they should establish a sovereign state, and if so – where exactly?]

³ [TN: "Królewiać", from the Pol. "królestwo", or kingdom, was an ethnic slur used in ref. to natives of Congress Poland, which is called "Congress Kingdom" in Polish.]

⁴ [TN: Student who studies independently, without participating in the classes organised at the school or university, but only passes exams there.]

At the time, the SS newspaper *Die Freiheit* [*The Freedom*] was being published in Kraków. Josef did not give up his work for the party in Kraków, even though his studies demanded that he do so. Little by little, he engaged in the work surrounding the newspaper *Die Freiheit*. Josef would [also] receive the periodical *Freiland* [Freeland] from Vienna, which he would have sent from there to Poland. During this period in Kraków, Josef also made the acquaintance of the poet Josef-Hillel Lewi and the *Poalei Zion* activist Szachna Sagan.

During this period, Josef, on more than one occasion, travelled to the city of Warta and back to Kraków, sometimes using Lewi's passport and sometimes Sagan's [to cross the Austrian border]. The support from his brother Zalman was often not sufficient for his sustenance, and Josef was more than once forced to sell his textbooks to buy bread and, afterwards, buy back the books, as soon as the monthly stipend arrived from his brother.

An outlandish piece of information regarding Comrade Baszka had a severe impact upon Josef at the time. He met once with SDKPiL activist Józef Domański from Warta, who showed him a copy of the *Czerwony Sztandar* [*Red Standard*], in which a warning was printed to the effect that Comrade Baszka, the SDKPiL activist, was in the service of the tsarist Ochraha [Secret Police]. Josef was stunned by this news. He even took to the bitter drop⁵ from despair, got drunk and lost all his schoolbooks on the way home. For a long enough time, he could not forget about it - such was his disappointment. Years later, Sholem Asch explained this painful matter - it was simply a mistake by Feliks Dzierżyński. Dzierżyński had, by mistake, wrongfully accused Baszka of treason.

Josef spent almost two years in Kraków. He did not get his *matura*, but nevertheless acquired a little knowledge.

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Once the repressions in the city of Warta had quietened down a little, Josef returned home. He found work in a pharmaceutical warehouse. Comrade Ira⁶ worked there. Josef had a certain affection for her. This was the period when the movement was dead. The youth read romantic books, and were less ardent about political issues. Love and romance were in the air. [Michał] Arcybaszew was the most read writer. Dwojra [Szacher], the daughter of the teacher Wolf Jankiel's⁷, seized Josef's heart. Josef invested a great deal of time in Dwojra, so that she should be able to climb the ladder of life and go along with the spirit of the time. He drew her into communal life, into "Lira" and, later, into the Jewish Literary Society. Dwojra had a talent for theatrical performance and Josef helped her extensively, teaching her, until Dwojra, under his influence, appeared in recitals and theatrical pieces. She was very well received.

[But] Dwojra had a propensity for talking about herself and telling exaggerated, fantastic stories. She obviously wanted to find favour with Josef with these stories. This, however, had the opposite effect on Josef, and he gradually distanced himself from her. Over the course of their friendship, she was certainly an intimate friend in his life.

⁵ [TN: Yiddish expression akin to the English "the hard stuff" – viz. strong liquor.]

⁶ [TN: Codename of Dora Warszawska.]

⁷ [TN: Viz. Wolf the son of Jankiel.]

During that same period, Josef was also friends with a friend of Dwojra's named Jecza [Pakuła]. Josef came to Jecza's house frequently. Her home was a modest one, [but] her father, Mendel *Kowal* [Blacksmith], with his great affection for his wife and children, created an atmosphere of love and friendship in his house. Mendel *Kowal* was like "Yankel the Smith", whom Dovid Pinski describes in his drama by that name. Ideas were born in this house. In this house, everyone strove for a new life. A great many friends and comrades gathered there. When Mendel *Kowal* died, following an operation in a Warsaw hospital, his death left a deep tear in Josef's soul. He felt that he had lost his second home.

