



Among the large number of letters which Josef received in New York after the War, from the hundreds of surviving *landsleit* of his hometown Warta, he also received a letter from Gołda. Without knowing why, Josef held Gołda's letter longer in his hands. He read it and reread it, falling into thought as he read, and then turning his eyes back to the letters penned in green ink. Although the letter was written in the month of December 1945, Josef still felt a sort of green, springtime, youthful something wafting from the words of the young teacher at the Warta children's home.

Josef had some instinctive sensation, as it were, that this letter was starting a new page in his life. Even though the letter was a sad one and told of suffering, the words in it had the exact opposite effect on Josef - one of joy and the promise of a new life.

To begin with, Josef was alarmed by his own thoughts, which raced through his mind immediately upon rereading the letter. Lajbisz's daughter! Lajbisz, his best friend! Could it be that she was his truly destined one, in the ripe autumn of his life? Could she - albeit younger than him in years, yet "old" in suffering and sorrowful experiences - have become his consolation in life? It was her words - open and clear, but with such warmth and closeness - that elicited these thoughts. Golda wrote:

*This is Golda writing to you. Do you still remember me? Lajbisz's daughter. I've been left all alone.*

*I write you this letter while lying in bed. I'm tired, spent. I work at the Yiddish children's home. I arranged a children's performance. I worked hard so that the performance would be a success. Now I'm without strength and must rest after that great exertion.*

*Dear Josef! I ask you to write me a personal letter - not as an activist and secretary of the 'Relief', but in your own handwriting and not on a typewriter. You, dear friend, remind me of my most beautiful and finest years. I see [in my mind] my home and my nearest and dearest! If you write to me, I shall once again feel as I once did as a child, when you were my teacher.*

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The correspondence with Josef cheered up Gołda to some extent. During the day, she was immersed in her work at the children's home, busy with the tumult of the little ones. She constantly went about among the children, [who were] mostly orphans. She was tender towards them, appeasing all their quarrels, answering the different questions that the little ones were continuously asking, and making peace between them.

In the evenings, when Gołda was resting, before her eyes loomed the sad faces of the older children who, for all their frolicking and gambolling, would in the middle of their game or lesson remain lost in gloomy thoughts, gazing at her with their sad eyes, as if mutely asking the eternal question to which no one could give them an answer, "Why? Why have they taken my mother from me? And where is my father? And where is my sister? And where is my brother?"

Lying in bed after a hard day at work, Gołda was unable to fall asleep. She tried to read something, but the words did not get into her head.

Since Josef had begun writing to her, Gołda's life became more acceptable to her. She no longer asked herself the question, "What am I alive for?" Of course, she did not cease to think of her husband and her brothers Mordche and Szymon. Silently, in her heart, she wept over their uncertain fate.

But since Josef's letters began reaching her, it was as if a young ray of sunshine had appeared in her room. It became a bit easier for her in her little corner. It was as if the loneliness had somehow disappeared. No, she was no longer alone. Somebody there across the ocean, someone close and warm-hearted, was thinking about her, writing her letters, inquiring as to her health, telling her his own experiences, and comforting her to the effect that she was still young and that her life was just beginning.

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In the meantime, Gołda received the glad news that her brother Mordche was alive! He was in Germany, in the French Zone.

This good news was brought to her by a well-known Jew from Warta, Mojsze Pułower, who had spent long years in German camps and had now returned home. Mojsze told her that her brother Mordche had begged him, and actually made him swear, that if God helped him and he made it safe and sound back home to Warta, he should, for God's sake, seek out his sister Gołda and, if he found her alive, to tell her that he was the sole survivor of the whole family. Mordche had lost Szymon along the way, when the German murderers drove them deeper into Germany, together with hundreds of other Jews. That had been just one day prior to the liberation of the HASAG camp. Ludwik had perished in a German camp - he had died of typhus.

It was difficult for Mojsze to tell Gołda of Ludwik's death, and that she was now a widow, but she had to know, sooner or later. While Mojsze recounted, Golda said nothing. Only tears rolled down from her eyes - tears of pain, but also mingled with joy, that at least Mordche, [now] her only brother, was alive. She was no longer alone. She called to mind Josef's words - as if Josef had guessed correctly and predicted that new days would begin in her lonesome life in the Warta children's home.

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Gołda began corresponding with Mordche. She soon learnt more details as to how he had been saved. Mordche also wrote to her about Ludwik's last days, when he lay tortured on his

little bed, severely ill with typhus. Mordche asked Gołda to come to Germany - to get herself out of Poland, the land where so many massacres had taken place. There, in the French Zone in Germany, it would be easier for both of them to emigrate to somewhere in the Americas - to Canada, Argentina or whatever place, maybe even New York, where they had so many friends and *landsleit* from their bygone Warta.

Gołda thought no differently. She saw how Jewish life in liberated Poland was flickering and faltering. Jews arrived from everywhere, but did not stay long. The city became a place of transit, from which people saved themselves to Germany and, from there, to the German DP camps, from which Jews had the opportunity of migrating to the free, big world.

