

# THE LITTLE REVIEW

CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH PAPER

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY MORNING

CORRESPONDENCE AND MATERIALS SHOULD BE SENT TO THE LITTLE REVIEW NEWSROOM

WARSAW, NO. 7 NOWOLIPKI STREET

## APRIL INKBLOTS AND TONSILLITIS

I lie in bed, angry and frustrated. I have tonsillitis. So, spring, then? Because I'm always sick in the spring.

I furiously look out onto the street, where couples in love parade and vendors praise their products, where the sun is shining beautifully, where my friends ride their bicycles, where I am not allowed to go.

Well, tough. Despite the beautiful weather, I must lie in bed, take my temperature and be bored out of my mind. I waited for spring for so long, and then suddenly, tonsillitis. I comfort myself with the thought that I will be better soon. My faithful bicycle waits for me, the iron steed ready for my commands, as well as tennis and many

other pleasant sports.

The reign of spring has begun. The flowers in the yard garden are sprouting. The world is being covered in greenery. The sun shines warmer and warmer. The air is cleaner, of course not counting the dust from the pillows, comforters, and carpets being beaten. It doesn't count; what's important is that it's spring.

Above us on the second floor, a lady stubbornly plinks out a melody on the piano in her spring joy, while my head hurts more and more. But that's all trivial; what's important is that it's spring.

My ping-pong game is resting. Its

owner is sick. Anyway, sick or healthy, I wouldn't play anyway. The spring brings trips to Młociny and Bielany. That's why I need to get rid of this stupid tonsillitis as soon as possible. I need to be optimistic. Tonsillitis, which doesn't let me leave the bed, that's nothing. The spring will outlast it.

The birds chirp cheerfully. The flowers uncertainly open their petals; everything renews and passes – illness, too. The world is reborn.

Every year, spring comes, wreathed in fragrant flowers, with a bunch of multicolored pansies and violets, carrying other flowers in her basket. She scatters them across fields and meadows. I must greet her. I'm getting up.

Stasiek P.

PS. I apologize for the inkblot on the first page, but when I was putting the letter into the envelope, it wasn't there. My hands were shaking. It's spring, sir – these are spring inkblots. ■

## IT'S SPRING AFTER ALL

Not everything we think about and feel can be repeated and described, because not everything is fit for repeating. There are beautiful and lofty thoughts, there are dirty and low thoughts, there is a fight between the bad and the good thoughts, and such thoughts that no one understands because they are the product of individual imaginations and minds.

Sometimes the mind tries to figure out such things as what language do the deaf and dumb think in? And this idea takes up our attention for a long time, absorbs us, and doesn't let go. It's not a smart idea, but it demands thinking about. There are many such thoughts. They scatter the mind and don't let us think about more serious things.

As far as I am concerned, I can never focus my interests on one thing. Lately, I have been thinking that I will not get a promotion, that I am taking a kayak trip to Gdynia in the summer, that the students did a really awful thing with Dean Handelsman, and now I'm thinking that it's spring, that I would really like to go and do some cartwheels on the grass, that I didn't learn the poem for Latin class today – and how am I supposed to choose what interests me the most?

Fundamentally, it is the fault of spring, which completely muddles the mind. I do not know whether it's the same for everyone, but it affects me significantly.

Spring! I love it for being spring, for bringing beauty, for being young and beautiful itself...

I can smell its fragrance even when there is still snow in the yard and it gets tracked into the front hall.

Even then, they laugh at me when I say it "smells like spring."

Later, the snows melt, the sun starts to shine warmly, and the Saxon Garden

turns to mud... The earth smells like spring then.

You feel then like your soul has been changed, like something is melting, something crowing, and it's so strange, so happy, and so pleasant.

You'd want to sit with Wierzyński's springtime poems on the balcony and not hear the servants tenderizing the meat for steaks, or the son of the watchman playing soldiers, but sink into the poetry and the spring, look at the open swath of sky and dream about nothing and everything...

And then, suddenly, the chestnut trees in the parks will turn green, nannies with pink babies in strollers will come out, the alleys and open cafés will fill with people, and the flowers will come out... A multicolored crowd of dirty and shabby children will take to the streets to make mud pies in the gutter and roll around in the dust on the street! They will leave their rooms, stuffy in the summer and cold in the winter, where they were crowded into for eight months...

I went to the cemetery. Spring was there, too. Shameless in its joy, it illuminates the immortelles on the stone graves; it is even more beautiful there than on the streets.

I went out to the street, where a funeral procession was going by. I only thought: the lady in black must be very hot.

Despite everything, it is spring after all!

It is! And no one can deny its reign. It is... And it influences our thoughts, it demands that we think about it and leaves a mark on our actions.

That is why I love the spring – because it forces you to think chaotically and because it lets me understand the whole world in one moment's thoughts.

Aneri

## WHAT A LADY YOU ARE!

Someone quite rightly observed that spring smells like skipping class. And really, how we you sit in school and listen to boring teachers when outside, the sun gives us encouraging, knowing winks.

We agreed to go to the woods with some boys the next day. In the morning, we met the three joyfully smiling boys and we set out in a great mood, with our bags under our arms. The boys whistled, showing off, and one of them sang at the top of his lungs: "Cutting class is a schoolboy's thing, cutting class is a student's life..."

After half an hour's walk, we arrived in the woods. We made ourselves comfortable on the grass and took out our breakfasts, which our naïve mummies had packed for us. After the sumptuous breakfast, we started to play.

The hours passed quickly and unfortunately, we had to go back home. We walked happily, the girls talking, the boys loudly singing "The professor's asking if I know how to count," etc.

The next day in school, we were

horrified to notice that the principal was eyeing us suspiciously. Our hearts clenched in painful precognition.

Indeed, right after the first class, she strode into the classroom majestically. Judging by her expression and her gaze, enough to curdle the blood, we could sense by oncoming storm.

The principal cleared her throat and began.

"Who was absent yesterday?"

Our legs went weak, and a cold sweat broke out on our foreheads. We stood.

The principal looked us up and down with an authoritative look.

"You were seen yesterday," she began, enunciating every word carefully, "during school hours, in the company of boys."

She put special emphasis on the last word. We were frozen with fear, and the principal finished with a flourish.

"You will take your bags and go home, and don't come back in the morning without your mothers."

Raising one eyebrow triumphantly, she left the classroom.

We packed our things and left humbly. Our comrades in misery stood waiting for us at the school gate, but looking quite pleased, as if they were celebrating their birthdays.

They came closer. "You got kicked out of school? Us, too. It's pretty cool, actually, because we were supposed to have a Latin test."

We looked at each other and burst out laughing. It was beautiful outside. One of the boys lifted his head and started singing in a heroic tenor.

"Spring, oh spring, what a lady you are!"

We woke up. The images disappeared. We were sitting in a horribly boring math class. Golden rays of sunlight shine into the classroom. Some girls napped comfortably, others gazed out the window with longing, others still read the paper. The teacher rocked automatically in her chair. At the blackboard, one girl yawned, solving algebra problems.

Outside, spring ruled omnipotently.

Stella and Ziuta from Kielce

## A WARM, GOLDEN BEAM

The day steals a of an hour of darkness from the night every day. The sun rips the clouds to shreds. The stove has bravely staved off all attacks from the cold and now stands in the sun, no longer needed, meritorious, like a hero wreathed in glory.

It's the most beautiful time of the year. We have to enjoy it – welcome each new day with joy. But people don't know how to enjoy what they have, and truly spoil their lives.

"Will spring solve all our school and outside-of-school grievances?"

"Is the spring an escape from the bailiff and the auction?"

"Will the spring give me a job?"

"Will the Earth stop spinning, like a dog after its own tail?"

No, most certainly not. The Earth will continue to spin, despite prophecies about the coming end of the world.

Even in the spring, things can happen to spoil the mood. Sure. The threat of war won't disappear in the spring, the sun won't shrink the number of the unemployed, the smell of flowers won't stun the teacher and they'll still give an F to those who are supposed to get it. Will spring bring nations close? Will

the Germans understand the horrible foolishness of their Nordic theory? Will everyone be granted the right to live and to learn?

Certainly not. But in the spring, I want to believe it all. The heart beats stronger, more surely, and the eyes are brighter. We have more strength to fight for our desired goal. Our chests fill with clear air and desires.

Why does this happen? Oh, just a small thing: the sun falls on the floor in a warm, golden beam.

Somewhere down below, the city hums and hustles and bustles.

Spring is here.

OLEK R.

## SOON

The spring is coming, lightly, sprightly.

I cross the street several times, first to one side, then to the other because I see a light spot here, and there...

My soul has grown sunny, and filled with song. I want to run and shout with joy, that spring is outside.

Think about it:

- soon, everything will be green;
- soon, we will be able to walk with a backpack down a path in the field, and after taking off our shoes and stockings, cross the stream;
- soon, we will be able to lie in the shade of the trees and read a book;
- soon, we will wake at dawn, sneak out the window to the garden, we will watch the sunrise, listen to the morning song of birds, and embrace the

dew-covered trees.

"You haven't been in such a good mood in a long time," my mother says with a smile.

I throw my arms around her neck, kiss her wrinkled forehead and her eyes, once so beautiful, but faded today.

"It's springtime, mom! Spring!" And then I run downstairs.

Where am I going and why? I run straight ahead, without a purpose or need, I run through the noise and crowd of the honest city street, shamelessly happy. I wave my arms and greet people with a smile, as if they were my good friends.

"That girl's gone crazy!"

It's not me, darlings, it's the spring!

PSD

# THE EDITOR HAS DISAPPEARED

We, veterans and anniversary celebrants of the Little Review are now like rare comments. We appear, we shine, and then we disappear. People stop taking an interest in us, because we start to repeat ourselves.

And if from time to time, they print our article, no one knows how much we had to listen to the editor, lecturing us with disgusting morals and disgraceful allusions, about "if you will, this horse, instead of being a shining example for the younger ones, is stumbling around more and more," and that Dziunia, Abramek, and other wunderkind are better writers than we are. From us, you see, they demand deep thought, a sophisticated style, and lively content – because we are veterans.

With every such article, we play the funeral march, thinking that it's our last appearance on the pages of the Little Review. We are being replaced by new forces. And we, the old ones (we don't have gray hair yet, but we do have to shave every three months), we have to make room and look for other markets.

In Warsaw, and even in Poland, there is no other tribune for children and youth like the Little Review. There are some weekly supplements, true, but in reality, they're just caricatures of papers for youth.

We went to one such paper. We had read earlier that the editor saw visitors

on Saturdays between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

We walked full of good thoughts, hope, and plans for the coming future. Fiszal imagined the editor as a figure that was, according to his dictionary, archaic (a word that neither Fiszal nor I understand to this day). Leon, on the other hand, thought that the editor of a similar paper should have English-style sideburns, a fancy neckerchief knot, and a cigarette case, full of original "Egyptians."

Hanging on the main door was a metal sign: "Entrance to the newsroom from the back, through the kitchen, watchman has the key."

When we entered the kitchen in a kind of guard house, we were hit by a smell that resembled a gas attack drill on Warsaw. Leading from the kitchen to the newsroom proper was a dark, windowless corridor that resembled mouse holes in medieval castles. After a few minutes of knocking, we heard the squealing of a key and a sonorous voice called "entrer" (the word was pronounced the way it's written).

"Do we have the pleasure of speaking to the youth editor?"

"You do not have the pleasure."

"But sir, if it isn't one o'clock yet, why is the editor not here?" Fiszal asked shyly.

"Because he isn't here, and that's that."

"When will he be here?"

"On Tuesday," the phlegmatic, gravely sonorous baritone grumbled.

We barely got out of the mouse hole and took big breaths of fresh air.

On Tuesday, we went back again to the newsroom-cum-guardhouse. You never knew, they might let us in.

This time, we were welcomed by a pleasant young man who began talking with us.

"With whom do I have the pleasure of speaking?"

"Leon G-R-G and Fiszal K."

"Very nice to meet you," he answered in a hoarse voice.

"And with whom are we speaking?" We pressed, intrigued.

He mumbled his name carelessly, as is the habit of famous people. We were guessing it was him!

"We finally caught you. So much running back and forth and wasting time, while time is money, as the proverb says."

"Who do you think I am, gentlemen?" The young man asked.

"What do you mean, who? You're the youth editor!"

"Not at all, I'm only the janitor here," the presumed editor answered with sadness and grief in his voice.

Leon's glasses slid down a few centimeters, while Fiszal's right eyebrow rose and his jaw grated, like after a hot potato.

"Well, is the editor around at all?" We asked, stammering.

"The editor has left the city."

Leon swore, "may the earth rest lightly on him and may my grandfather take him with him."

A week went by. We stood at the door again, listening. The room was filled with the rhythmic clacking of a Remington typewriter. We knocked. An anemic typist with long fingers and hooked fingernails tipped with black opened the door.

"I'm the editor's personal secretary," she announced without being asked, in a thin, squeaky voice that resembled the voice of the Baba Yaga from Janusz Korczak's play "Children of the Playground."

"Very nice to meet you," we answered, straining for a smile, which in Leon's case looked like a Frankenstein mask, and in Fiszal's, looked like that of cow-eyed wonder. "But we would like to see the editor himself."

The secretary's expression dropped and she came down a peg.

"And what business brings you here, gentlemen?" She asked with a note of sadness in her voice.

"It's a personal matter, miss, and you should not be concerned with it," said Leon. "The editor of every paper sometimes sees such individuals as us, and on matters that a decent girl should not know about."

The secretary scoffed, looked us over from head to top, and taking a few steps back, tried to get rid of us.

"The editor does not take care of

personal matters in the newsroom."

"In that case, it is a formal matter that only the editor can see to."

"If you would be so kind to head to the other room."

We kindly headed to the room with a sign that said "Editor-in-chief – do not enter without knocking." We knocked and at the answer "indeed," we reverently opened the door.

Sitting at the enormous desk and drinking tea was the young man we knew very well.

"What is the meaning of this?" Fiszal asked threateningly. "Is there any sense?"

"There is no essence," the youth answered glumly. "That is why I'm drinking it straight with sugar."

"This isn't about the tea, but the editor. Where is the editor?"

"He isn't seeing visitors today."

"Speak like a normal human, man, or..." Leon glanced eloquently at the marble blotter. "I'll ask again: where is the editor?"

"The editor has disappeared. You gentlemen understand: spring..."

\* \* \*

We went back to our own newsroom. In case our own editor disappears, too, we remind you that we see visitors in the Little Review hall on Sundays, between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. We also note that Leon is a specialist in off the rails things and unemployment. Fiszal, on the other hand, can handle matters of nails in shoes and spackling women's faces.

FISZAL AND LEON

RITA

## KRAŚNIAK

I immediately warn you, residents of other cities, that I will not talk about the monuments of Warsaw because they are more or less familiar to you. But is metropolitan life noteworthy only in restaurant districts?

I will tell you about the Krasinski Garden, commonly known as Kraśniak; about this garden that doesn't seem to stand out, but which has so much real life in it.

Lovely Kraśniak! It is true that you are not one of the things that we Varsovians are proud of. But I like you despite your ordinary outward appearance. Among your ornaments are the banal pond with white swans, and the flower bed located right next to the Krasinski Palace. For children, the biggest attraction is the hill and the so-called children's garden, where there is an ice rink in the winter.

Why am I writing about Kraśniak? First of all, because we, the Warsaw correspondents, unlike the inhabitants of the province, do not talk much about our city. I would like to share the collection of observations and impressions from the year where I visited Kraśniak every day.

The first pedestrians I looked at more closely, and among whom I counted myself, were school youth. Kraśniak connects the districts where there are the most Jewish middle schools. Nalewki-Świętojerska and Nalewki-Krasinski Square (there are no other exits). Students know each other as "passers-by." Everyone knows more or less which school everyone else goes to. Every morning, I passed familiar faces.

In the morning, the student does not make a pleasant impression. Many

look angry and tired. You can see by a person's nose if the poor thing did their homework for the day. In general, the individual's reluctance to the institution of the school can be more or less deduced.

For months, two boys passed my every day. They went up to the vending machine and looked at themselves in the mirror for a pretty long time. It made me angry. Girls are one thing, but I can't stand boys who preen in front of a mirror.

I wasn't surprised that at the exit, I heard loud name-calling behind me. I'd gotten used to it. An older brother was calling the younger one names for constantly making him late. This happened every day, and always at the exit gate.

This reminded me that it really was late, so I walked faster. In my hurry, I bumped into two girls, maybe ten years old, dressed the same and looking very similar. Twins, I think. They probably love each other very much.

I'm at Kraśniak, waiting for Bronka. We always meet here. Several nannies walk by with babies in strollers. The most current subject of conversation are "their honorable employers."

"My missus, she's a very smart and intelligent woman," says one, much older than the others.

"Why is that?"

"She dresses nicely, she has a fur, and above all, money. And money only comes to a smart, capable person," she says with conviction.

The gossip and talking about their employers start. One, very young, claims that the young master wanted to marry her, but she didn't want to. The others look at her doubtfully.

The conversation is interrupted from time to time by the crying of a child, demanding his rights.

Whenever I think of Kraśniak, I always think first and foremost about the children who came here

to play. I often watched their dames. The only calm children were those accompanied by grown-ups. They usually sit on the benches near the flower bed. They play musical chairs or ball games. Occasionally, they look at the swans on the pond. Most of the children are small, unkempt boys from the Jewish working class, and pale cheder students. It is true that the Saxon Garden is much nicer, but the children there are wealthier, so the poorer ones prefer to leave and not feel the difference between them. Kraśniak also has an advantage, in their opinion, that they can speak Yiddish and do whatever they like.

The favorite place to play is the hill. It has a great charm for children, if only because other gardens don't have it. You run up the hill, even very low, and then you run down. I myself once loved it, too. Kraśniak was the first playground I was allowed to go to by myself. You can also find children in the small garden. They run wild and often fight. The strangest ones are the cheder students. Any small thing can make them happy. They sit all day in stuffy rooms. They play for a short time. Then, just one more look at the garden, and they're running off to the cheder.

It was late fall. This was the time I first got to know Kraśniak better. I came with Bronka. Coming back from school, we said goodbye at the entrance from the Nalewki Street side. Usually, we ended up chatting in the garden for an hour or so. Kraśniak was growing empty. It was getting cold. The wind stripped more and more trees bare every day. People trampled over the yellowed leaves and nobody cared that they were alive, like us.

My friends wanted it to be winter. Yes, an ice rink and holidays. School youth, going through the park in the mornings, kept a lookout for the preparations for the ice rink. After all, the Maccabi Society organized

## THE LITTLE REVIEW FROM FEBRUARY 2ND

"The best title! 33 lowercase letters and two capital! Altogether, 18 zloty and 50 groszy!"

"You see, he wasn't fooling."

"You earned it."

"I earned it," I repeat proudly.

\* \* \*

"First of all, not 'Oasis' but 'Tabarih.' Not Mirjam Tobjasz but Sara Rajgrodzka."

"Ha, ha, ha! 'The swollen crowd carried her out!' She soars through the heavens! I saw with my own eyes how careful she was when walking, she counted every step! What a fake."

"Gothelf was the most important one, she didn't mention him."

"What did you get it for, anyway?"

"For the most appropriate title for my article."

"That's worth it."

"Yeah, right. Throwing so much money away for them!"

their own rink in Kraśniak every year. Work moved forward, and the students counted the days on their fingers. They grew impatient. Finally, the opening ceremony came. The girls talked about the first time on the ice. In class, the girls who could boast of figure skating became popular.

After the hustle and bustle of Nalewki Street, Kraśniak made a nice impression. In my opinion, it was never as pretty as in the winter. Everything was white. Music and laughter of young people rang throughout the garden. Children were riding sleds in places less frequented, making a sledding run. A boy and a girl walked by me, their skates clinking together. The skaters were observed

"You couldn't come up with a longer title?"

"Mine wouldn't have cost less than fifty."

\* \* \*

The post office. 18 zloty and 50 groszy. 10 groszy gets spent. On the way – a few kind words. It's supposed to be a hard punishment for him!

Yes, mommy, the golden age of fruitful impositions of silly things is gone now!

The black number in the calendar, framed by a bracket. A memorable day.

Joy does not sleep, but it remains hidden.

Thoughts to not sleep, but they remain inside. They want to call out, shout to the entire world: be glad with me! My first earnings!

My thoughts are calm.

My fist earnings did not take away my hard-earned honor. Mother has not stopped complaining, demanding obedience and mercilessly hounding me to do my math homework. Father is maliciously philosophizing in his own way.

End of the week. Silence.

HALINA (Łódź)

by a group of spectators behind the fence. With a demonstration, or a Maccabi hockey tournament, the group grew significantly. There were adults, youth, and children. In a word, all those who were temporarily or permanently deprived of this sport and entertainment. Everyone watched the young people skating, and made comments. This one barely keeps his balance on the ice. That one is doing a really nice pistol squat. Some fat man stubbornly maintains that he would be able to dance on skates if he went on the ice. There are jokes and jeers. Two boys argue over who has an easier time staying on the ice, a tall or a short person. (T.B.C.)

# AT THE RESTAURANT

So I lost my job... The thing I was most afraid of has come to pass. I came back home depressed. What would I do next? I thought about my violin. Maybe they could be useful? But right now is the "dead season," because everyone is at the resorts. In the summer, if you don't have a job, you go to the beach.

So I spent whole days sitting on the "wild beach," which isn't as wild as they say. But it was worse and worse at home. How to save myself? What to do?

One Saturday, I had a visit from a friend who was in basically the same situation as me.

"Just like you, I don't have a penny to my name," he said. "If I want to smoke a cigarette, I have to argue with my mother so that she'll give me a few groszy. What do I need all that for? Let's take our violins and we'll go to a restaurant where there is no music."

At 2 p.m., we went. We came to a restaurant on Okopowa Street, where we saw guests sitting and drinking. One shouted right away.

"Oh, look, musicians! Here is 1 zloty, play a nice polka, but I want it to lift me up to the ceiling!"

We took out our violins and started playing "The Old Town Polka." And the guest was indeed lifted up. He grabbed the waitress and started dancing with her. When we finished, he turned to us.

"Well, musicians, come on, have a drink with us."

We went, drank, ate well, and they played a foxtrot. We made a few zloty.

There is a saying musicians have, "you only need to have a good start." At 11 p.m., we split our earnings – each one got 4 zloty and 75 groszy.

Since then, we started going to the restaurants more often. The best earnings were between the 1st and 15th of each month, and on Saturdays and Sundays, when the workers got paid.

There are different guests in restaurants. Some tell you to play and play, and then they'll take out 20 or 50 groszy. The bests guests are the drunk ones. They'll pay for every piece you play. I've even had one give me 20 zloty. One time, two guests took out whole handfuls of money and said, "here you go, musicians, 20 groszy, and play the funeral march."

I said, "Sir, we can't play for 20 groszy!"

So they gave us more.

One day, we came to a restaurant where our friends played. We looked for them, but they weren't there and nobody was playing. We asked the owner, and she said that they were so and so, and that she fired them. (Later, I found out that they found a better eatery.)

So we told the owner that we could play instead.

"All right, you can play, on the following conditions: I want four people to play – first and second violin, a jazzband, and a mandolin. I can give you two zloty and supper."

"Instead of a mandolin, we'll have a cello."

She agreed.

We looked for a jazzband player half the day. Nobody wanted to come for 50 groszy and a supper. Finally, we found one old player, who agreed after a lot of convincing.

In the evening, we arrived in a full line-up. My friend and I played the violin, my grandfather had the cello, and the jazzband played full steam.

Because it was a Monday, we had meager earnings. After a few days, the owner started to complain, that we couldn't have to old men playing – meaning my grandfather and the jazzband player – and that we should look for a mandolin instead of the cello.

We found a Polish boy who played the mandolin a bit. We played with him on Saturday and Sunday. Those two days, there were a lot of guests. On Saturday, we made 12 zloty each, and on Sunday, 7 each.

But our mandolinist, seeing that we needed him, said, "If we don't play with my whole band that I'm used to, I don't want to play with you."

The next day, without asking us, he brought his band – three guys. One played the banjo, the second the guitar, and the third sang and played the zither. So there were seven of us. We didn't want to play in those conditions. We told the owner, and she said, "If you don't want to, they'll play by themselves!"

The next day, we didn't show up. On Sunday, we came to visit, and there was no one playing. In the meantime, we had found a "young jazzband player" and a mandolin. We'd been playing

with them for a few weeks, making so-so money.

We had all types of guests. From one guy, we made 15 zloty. Another time, these three guests came up and told us to play "The Internationale." We told them that we weren't allowed to play it, and they started to throw bottles at us. Since the violinist stands at the front, I was hit with one of these bottles.

They came to us a few times and invited us to play in their homes (at weddings, concerts, games). When we accepted those, the restaurant owner was angry. After a few weeks, she raised our "salary," adding another zloty.

One Saturday, we had to play a Jewish wedding. We made a lot of money at the wedding. But the restaurant owner really cared about Saturdays because that is when payday is. When there is music, people will eat and drink more, and then she makes more money as well.

And so, when we came back from the wedding, there were already other musicians playing at the restaurant. We know them, they're backyard players.

But we didn't really care about the restaurant because the carnival had started. I played at various balls, evenings and weddings during the carnival. Grandfather and I have enough until summer, and in the summer, birds and musicians live on the sun and gifts of nature.

Sincerely,

Ignacy – formerly Icek

## CINEMA OR BOOK?

Many people argue over which is better: the cinema, or the book?

Those who can imagine everything probably prefer the book, and to those who can't imagine, I say: go to the cinema.

I love the cinema more than the book. I experience everything with the main character of the movie. I forget about my worries and eagerly wait to see how the picture will end: happily, or sadly.

Thanks to the movies, we can see and explore many countries, animals, and plants. I believe that we have much more use for the movies than books. And you, readers, what do you think?

Bolek from Smocza Street

## JOKES

### THE DIFFERENCE

"Listen, I keep seeing you wearing just one glove. Did you lose one?"

"No, I found this one."

### ART HYPNOSIS

"You know, child, maybe it's pretty, but I don't like your modern music."

"But auntie, that's just the vacuum cleaner!"

### A SUBJECTIVE JUDGMENT

A boy is traveling to the country to visit his grandmother, whom he hasn't seen in a year.

"I wonder if I'll recognize grandma this time. She must have grown a lot since I saw her."

## SIOMA FROM OTWOCK

# FROM UKRAINE TO POLAND BY CART

I was born in 1919 in Kharkiv, but I didn't live there long because my parents moved us to a small town in Ukraine.

Those were the times of the birth of Soviet power. Nearly every month, the town was overtaken by some army – General Denikin's, Wrangel's, or one of the many green atamans, or partisans. The Bolsheviks fled, and then, a while later, having gathered their forces, came back to chase the others away. Of course, the local population got the worst of it because all new authorities started their rule with an execution of suspect people and demanding a tribute from the whole town.

I don't remember myself, but I know it so well from the stories my parents were told me, that I sometimes think that I saw those times, events, people and the dark forest.

My parents had had enough of red, white, green and black anarchists. They decided to go to Poland.

Father knew the station chief, who "sold" him a freight wagon for a sum. It was quite a fair deal because the railroad was owned by all the authorities and citizens, and they all demanded to ride for free, while the station chief had to feed himself, two children, the driver, a blind squirrel and the former cashier.

Our wagon was attached to a military train. We rode for 36 hours, accompanied by wild singing and the soldiers' rough jokes.

When we were getting off the train at the station, someone tried to rob us, but father managed to grab the thief in time.

We couldn't move on without a cart. My parents decided to go to a miller they knew, who lived near the station. Mother took me in her arms and along with a friend, went to the miller's, while father and uncle stayed at the station with our things. First father kept watch, then uncle. Uncle, tired of keeping watch, went to a stream flowing nearby, took off his clothes and went into the water.

Along came a Soviet soldier and demanded to see his documents. Uncle didn't have any papers on him. Thinking that the miller was known in the area, he suggested that the soldier go with him to the mill.

No acquaintances helped. The soldier stubbornly demanded the documents. Our mother got up her courage and showed him our false passports. The soldier noticed that they were false and wanted to take everyone to the Cheka station to be identified there. After much pleading and haggling, he let us go, but he took all of my parents' money.

Meanwhile, father was watching our luggage at the station and didn't know anything. The miller sent a cart for father and our things. Everything was covered with hay and father and the cart driver sat on the hay and drove.

The next day, the miller gave us two carts and a guide. He led us on horseback, and after a warm goodbye, he turned back. The cart driver, a brave Russian peasant, was a smuggler. He was an honest and pleasant man. He talked about his adventures the whole way. My parents believed in his dexterity and cleverness.

At first, we rode over the steppe. The heat was terrible, but in the evening, it cooled down. The landscape was slowly changing, too. At midnight, we drove into a thick forest. Everyone rested under a tree until the morning, and at dawn, we set out again on the road.

It took three days for us to reach the end of the forest. We drove onto a road leading to a town. At the crossroads, there was a cross. At this cross, father and uncle stayed with all our things, while the driver, mother, the friend of the family and I went on to check if there was a patrol nearby. If we were caught, he could say that we were carrying hay from the miller's meadows.

But we didn't meet anyone. In the open field, just outside of town, stood a lonely, abandoned church. The cart driver ordered us to hide in the hay because the church was used as a hiding place by robbers who attacked refugees from Russia, robbed them, and killed those who resisted. Seeing a peasant with hay, they let the cart pass.

Everyone in town was asleep. We looked for accommodation, but no one wanted to let us into their home. Finally, one villager found the courage and, after crossing himself several times, opened the door of his cottage to us. His fears were justified because there were hordes of bandits roaming Russia at the time, and nobody was certain of their life or their property.

After saying his prayers, he asked what brought us to his hut in such

turbulent times and at such a late hour. He believed mother's answer, gave us food and a place to sleep.

Meanwhile, my father had reached the town. He inquired about us, but no one could tell him that they had seen us. He found us only when he accidentally entered the cottage where we slept.

We stayed with our friendly host for two days, then paid for the stay, and set out on our journey again.

There was only a small distance separating us from the border, but it was the most difficult to pass because it was guarded by patrols and military units.

We drove into a dense forest again – so dense that we could only move during the day. At night, the horses were unharnessed and we waited for dawn in a clearing. The nights in the forest were horrible. Huge trees stood around us like giants and monsters. In the gloom, we could hear murmurs, like someone sneaking around. A bat flew by, and everyone jumped to their feet. An owl hooted in the distance, and everyone thought it was a scout giving the signal that he had found us.

We couldn't start a fire or speak loudly because the forest had good acoustics and every sound was carried far by the echoes.

On the fifth day, we stood at the river. It wasn't deep but it was wide. The horses didn't want to go into the water, but they were forced to. They obeyed, but they were still afraid. In a deep place, the cart rolled and all the things sank. The horse was saved.

We moved on with one cart and two

horses. We moved forward slowly, cautiously, and despite this, the cart still tipped a few times. The men worked on fixing it, while the women sat with me, keeping a lookout for the enemy.

We were at the border. Only a few kilometers away was Poland – a country where bread was sold openly without food stamps, where there was only one authority. Our guide knew the border well. He knew where it was well guarded, and where it wasn't. First, he went ahead along to check. The dark, starless night made his task easier. On a night like that, it's difficult to spot a man who can sneak without a sound and has the eyes of a lynx.

He chose the appropriate location and came back for us. Quietly, like snakes, we moved through that piece of land called the border. My parents' dreams had come true: we were on the Polish side.

We went to Grodno. Here, we said goodbye to our faithful guide who, with a load of stockings and fabrics from Łódź on his back, went back to Russia to continue practicing his difficult and dangerous craft.

My mother fainted with fatigue at the Grodno station. We didn't rest until Warsaw, after we completed all civic formalities.

And thus, we reached the happy end of our journey, which lasted three weeks.

A few years later, my parents found out from a friend's letter that our guide had been shot by a border patrol.

Honor to his memory! ■

# SIGHTSEEING

A few days ago, our class went to the Zoological Museum.

In the first hall, we saw the skeleton of an elephant and a giraffe in all their glory, and two enormous bison from the Białowieża Forest. There are only a few of them left in the Forest, although before the war, there were 750. They stay in a fenced-in preserve under care, to make sure that they don't entirely die out.

In the same hall, there are two wild pigs on rockers, with their young. In the back are horned animals: a deer, a fawn, a moose.

Moving on. We didn't look thoroughly at the next floors. Glancing

around, I saw various fish, frogs, lizards, and other horrid creatures. I was certain catching them had not been pleasant.

The Museum is famous for the rich collection of birds (about 2,000 exhibits), that we saw in special halls.

In a nearby room are the insect collections, from the smallest to the largest. Out of rodents, I saw a gopher, a red squirrel, a marmot, a beaver, and various species of mice.

I consider this trip to be the most interesting of all, and I advise everyone to visit the Museum, especially since admission is free.

Maja

## HOW LIGHTBULBS ARE REPAIRED

The factory was small and had several departments. Regeneration, that is repair, of burned-out lightbulbs is done as follows.

A hole is drilled in a burned-out lightbulb, and the bulb is cleaned. After cleaning, the bulb moves to the next

department. The wires that provide the light are installed. Then the hole is narrowed and a thin glass tube is inserted. This tube is used to pump out air, and then the tip of the tube is melted. This is why regenerated lightbulbs have points.

Felek from Krochmalna Street

## THE PAPER MILL

At first, I stand there in shock. The enormous hall is full of vats, machines, and enormous furnaces. The roaring, whistling noise is enough to deafen you. Wherever I look, I see something huge.

The guide shouts, waves his hands, pointing to the vat, but I can't hear him, I don't understand. But my eyes are working overtime.

I see rags in the vats, soaked in water and boiling. Farther on, I see a yellow mass – soft wood after being boiled. The mass will eventually transform into cardboard.

In the next hall, I see fresh paper, evenly rolling out in white sheets from under the machine. Some of the paper

is dyed various colors. Next, it's cut into small pieces, which are sent to chocolate and candy factories.

The same factory also makes boxes and reels. In a large machine, there is something like a trough. A worker puts a box that's not glued together yet into the trough. It falls into a small dungeon-like space, is put together and glued in a few seconds, and then it falls into the trough, rides its entire length, and then exits at the other end, where a second worker immediately places it on a pile of clean, ready boxes.

We leave the factory excited. I feel like I've left a busy beehive and entered a silent emptiness.

Tusia from Będzin

## THE AIRBORNE AND ANTIGAS DEFENSE LEAGUE CAMP

"Tickets, please," calls out the ticket inspector.

I don't have 25 groszy. I wait until it gets dark and then, hop, over the fence I go, and I'm in. There is a plane in the corner. I move closer.

"Don't touch, please!"

"Don't worry, sir. I'm not going to break anything. Besides, what could I break in this old piece of junk?"

"Hey, kid, don't be smart, or I'll throw you out."

"Yeah, yeah, big man," I mutter under my breath and move on.

I go into a tent. On a long table, there are glazed cabinets. In the first one is a human face made out of wax. Underneath is a sign that reads, "this is what a human face looks like after chlorine poisoning." It's not a very pleasant sight. In the second, third, fourth... oh, horrible... real human arms and legs. To make things worse, the arms and legs are covered with disgusting wounds; in one place, the wound goes down to the bone. Brrr. Underneath a sign: "wounds resulting from mustard gas."

Next are two emergency apparatuses. In the corners, there are mannequins in anti-mustard gas masks and clothing, holding equipment used to put out the

gas-liquid. On the right side are masks of various shapes and sizes.

In the second tent, there were much more interesting things. I was really interested in the bombs and aerial missiles. I was really intrigued by the shape of one bomb, several meters long – it had a wide front and a narrow back. Next to those were models of planes, both flying and not. I wasn't very interested in the flying ones, but when I saw the others, I froze in delight. I had never seen anything so beautiful in my life.

I spent nearly half an hour looking at the models that held a sign: "please do not touch", and thinking "they're too good for the likes of you."

Finally, I left the tent. Nearby was a hut filled with teargas. That's where I headed. There was a smell coming from it, something like horseradish, or vinegar. One man went up to it, opened the doors, took a whiff, and started crying.

"Get this man his mommy! So old, and he's crying. Such an embarrassment, for pity's sake!"

"Go away or I'll kick you."

At the end, they showed a propaganda film, not half bad, but I didn't wait until the end because it was late and I was hungry.

Jerzy from Bagno Street

## HOW A LIGHTBULB IS MADE

To see it, I left the house sick, with a swollen face, wrapped up – in other words, divine.

A large hall, lots of machines, humming motors. To the right, to the left, straight ahead – machines everywhere.

The guide explained.

Before the manufacture of the lightbulb itself starts, a number of components have to be made out of glass and metal, the stem (the glass mount), a wide tube, bent in a fire into the shape of a disk – which is called a pinch, the bulb, a narrow tube, a filament, and two electrodes. A filament is a thin tungsten wire, much thinner than a human hair (diameter of 6 microns). Currently, lighting technology is oriented to developing the best possible filament, since tungsten is very difficult to draw out, and creating such a thin wire requires an enormous amount of work.

An electrode is a copper wire, tipped with nickel in gas lightbulbs, which at one point has a narrowing made of tombac (an alloy). The chemical composition of this alloy is the secret of every factory. This narrowing touches the glass and has the same thermal expansion coefficient as the glass.

With a mechanical movement, the worker sitting at the machine inserts the stem, then the pinch, electrodes and sleeve into the pincers of a machine that automatically moves forward. The pincers pass through some flames that gradually heat up the pinch until the machine finally

clamps the now elastic glass. The stem resulting from this, cooled in a special furnace, goes to the next machine, which presses a small button into the bottom of the stem.

Then another machine leads the wire to a small anvil, above which the stem is placed. Above it is a metal cross, and lower down, a bit to the side – flames. At some point, the cross comes down and presses the cut wires into the molten button. The worker bends the wires into hooks using a small machine, and the filament is attached to them by hand.

This stem with the filament, placed into a cleaned and stamped bulb, is then soldered at the top. The bulb is thus closed, and the only connection with the inside is through the tube sticking out. Through this sleeve, using increasingly better pumps, the air is sucked out and a vacuum created inside.

Now we come to the firing: at a certain voltage, certain chemicals burn in the lightbulb, which were previously sprayed on the filament. They attract the rest of the molecules found in the lightbulb and deposit them on the inner surface of the bulb. It has been calculated that 15-40 layers of molecules are found on the walls of the bulb.

And finally, the last stage in this hall – filling the bulb with gas, non-flammable of course, which means nitrogen or argon, never oxygen.

In the next hall, the substance that is applied to the bases is prepared, the bases are attached, their durability is tested, their ends are soldered to the contact and to the cap (the contact is the black circle the bottom of the

base, the cap is the light-colored metal part).

Now the lightbulb, washed and dried, can go to the packing room, and from there, out into the world. But a good factory wants to check the efficiency of its work. And so, a light-meter measures the beam of light in lumens and the power consumption in volts. A light-metered lightbulb burns at a ratio of 1:55, which means that one hour of burning at this voltage equals 55 hours of normal burning. Next to every burned-out test lightbulb is an exact label: the photometric data, the machine it was made on, when the test began, so that it can be determined exactly how long the light bulb burned and an average can be calculated. Normally, a lightbulb should burn for 1000 hours, i.e. 3.5 months without break. After death, the so-called burning out, the lightbulbs are usually dark. This is because tungsten evaporates and settles on the walls of the bulb.

The guide also showed us an aerial lightbulb. It is a large glass tube, topped with a mirrored sphere. The filament hangs on a strong tube. This kind of lightbulb gives 6500 lumens with 1000 volts!

In the basement, there is a hall of machines with several compressors (for compressing air), vacuums, and pumps, powered by municipal electricity; an explosive materials deposit, which much be kept cool; an array of batteries that produce direct current at a maximum voltage of 312 volts for photometric tests; switches for the electricity and power (lights and motors). With these switches, the whole factory can be shut down in an instant.

Wita

## R.E.O.

There is a Rural Employment Office, or R.E.O., on Grzybowska Street. I entered the waiting room with a friend. She had to take care of something in the emigration department.

I stayed in the waiting room. I looked at the posters that covered nearly every wall. The posters contained explanations of the cases when the unemployed were entitled to benefits.

Sitting on the benches that were the only furniture in the waiting room were shabbily dressed people with sad faces. I listened to their conversations. It turned out that they were emigrants. They were going to France, hoping to find work there.

In the middle of the room, two

charming children played, a boy and a girl.

I started talking to their mothers. It was the first time they had been in the capital city. They were going to France to join their husbands. They said that they would rather stay here, that they loved the countryside and their work. They didn't want to go to sunny France, to the vineyards, they preferred rye in their own fields. The faces of these village women were gray, wrinkled, their bodies hunched over, even though they were only in their twenties.

A worker sitting beside them asked me if I was going with them. I told him no, and asked if he was going to France permanently. He didn't know yet. If he could find work there, he would bring his wife to join him. It was hard to leave her, but as he said,

he wasn't the only one. He pointed to the other men sitting beside him.

The boy and girl came back to their mothers. The girl started crying.

"I want to go home, home!"

The longing for home and the countryside was in her, too. The boy stared at her, wide-eyes, and suddenly said, lisp, "I want a car. I'm going to see daddy. Daddy's gonna give me a car."

After a moment, the children were running around and laughing, having forgotten about their desires – the girl about wanting to go home, the boy about the car.

My friend had taken care of her business. We were leaving and I glanced at the people one last time. Would I ever see them again? Would they come back to their homeland?

Lili from Otwock

## THE SHOEMAKER'S WORKSHOP

We walk down Krochmalna Street, one of the poorest streets in Warsaw, to go see the workshop of shoemaker Josie Kogut.

We enter a small, half-dark room, which is used both as a workshop and the residence of a numerous family.

The workshop is set up at the window, with the gray-haired Mr. Kogut sitting on a low stool.

"What do you need repaired, young misses?"

We hand over a school bag to be sewn up. Mr. Kogut asks us to have a seat, and sits at the rattling machine himself.

Initially, we sit quietly and watch

him work. But we need to start a conversation – that is why we came here. We start with the most important subject right now – the crisis.

Indeed, Mr. Kogut gets into the conversation. He recalled the old, happy days and compared them with the present day. Until recently, he made 10 to 14 zloty daily and he only made new shoes, but now he makes 3 to 5 zloty a day. In addition to the crisis, he was also affected by the development of the machines, which are taking earnings away from small craftsmen.

We then asked about his profession. Mr. Kogut said that shoemaking is an especially handcrafted job: nearly

everything has to be made by hand, with only a few tools. The most important is the last, a wooden form of a foot; the stirrup – a leather strap with the ends sewn together, used to hold a shoe on the knee while working; a short knife for cutting leather, with a diagonal tip, an awl, and thread.

He told us how he makes slippers. He takes the appropriate last, and nails the first sole to the bottom. Then he covers the top of the last with the shoe upper, already cut out earlier, pulls it tight so it fits the last well, and then nails it down on the bottom. Then, using an awl and thread, he sews the upper to the first sole. Next comes

## AT THE INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND

I climb the clean stairs to the first floor. I walk through a long open gallery and find myself at the school for the blind.

I walk into a classroom. Near the wall is a large closet. A map of the other hemisphere hangs on the wall, but it is no ordinary map. Both Americas, all the mountains, rivers, and cities on it are convex.

Two girls and three boys sit at a long table. The strange seriousness carved into their faces makes it difficult to judge their age. I estimate it to be between 12 and 16 years. The teacher stops the lecture and provides explanations.

The blind write, read, and "see" in their own way. They see with their very sensitive and trained fingertips, which they run over books, notebooks, papers, and maps.

Except that the print and writing is different than that of sighted people. The writing is convex and does not consist of a normal alphabet, but one specially composed for the blind. It is six-dot writing, because each letter fits in a rectangle made up of 1 to 6 dots. The layout of the dots decides on the meaning of the letter.

It might seem that reading such writing using one's hands is extremely difficult, that it would be syllabication rather than reading. But it turns out that the blind read fluently, just like we do. One of the girls opens a book and starts reading. She picked a description of nature. I hear words about the blue sky, the green forest, the warm red of raspberries, and the delicate pale green of apples.

I watch the faces of the other students during the reading. They seem terribly old, sad, and unhappy to me. The even, calm voice of the reader rings out in complete silence. And suddenly, I see a bright, happy smile on the lips of one of the boys. It forces me to revise my assessment of the appearance of their faces. Looking a little differently, deeper than before, I don't see sadness and despair, but rather a focus, deep thought, and listening to the voice of their own hearts. I don't know why, but I become aware that they see colors, that for them, the forest is just as green, the sky blue, the day bright, and the night dark.

I can't resist my curiosity and after the reading is over, I ask one of the girls.

"What do you think the forest is like?"

She speaks slowly and carefully. "The forest is green and quiet, and very good. It is so beautiful there, and there is almost music playing in it..."

a layer of thick, hard leather on top of the first sole. On top of this, he sews on the second sole. Finally, he makes a hard counter for the heel, which he attaches to the sole, and a heel made of several layers of hard leather, which is nailed to the shoe. He trims the edges of the sole and the heel with his knife, smooths them with a file, and puts shoe-black on the upper and the sides.

Finishing his story, old Mr. Kogut sighed heavily.

"Yes, it wouldn't be too bad, if not for the cursed machines that have started to take even the last piece of bread from us poor shoemakers. ■

The lesson is over. The girls and boys run to the neighboring large room, which soon fills with blind children. They all act as if they could see. They chase each other, fight, horse around, just like normal boys their age who do the same during all the breaks.

I take advantage of this freedom and start a conversation.

"Do you feel happy?" I ask one of the boys.

"Yes. I only feel bad when someone pities me, and people do that often. I have good hearing, so I often hear them whispering with great pity, 'Careful, he's handicapped, he's blind.' But I really don't need pity, it even hurts me. I much prefer encouragement to keep going, a simple 'that's nothing bad,' rather than tender words of compassion."

I also found out that the blind organize sightseeing trips.

Leaving, I met a girl in the cloakroom. Her large, incredibly beautiful eyes looked at me without moving, without life.

And once again, I am filled with pity. On the street, I shake it off quickly. If they don't want it, we shouldn't pity them.

Life is difficult for everyone. Opposing winds often buffet us on the turbulent road of life. We fight against the oppositions and in this fierce fight for existence, we don't have a lot of time to look inside ourselves, where true beauty hides.

But they have that time. And even though they have less than we do in other things, they have an advantage over us – a beauty and richness of the soul.

Sara from Bonifraterska Street

## ROCK BREAKERS

The workers were working in the large square beyond the railway tracks. The place was beautiful, and the work hard. The square was surrounded by hills covered with flowers and greenery. Behind them, on one side you could see the forest, on the other, the platform.

The workers paid no attention to the beautiful view. Their eyes were on the gray boulder fragments. While they worked, they sat in a row on the ground. Their legs were wrapped with rags to protect them from being cut by the sharp rocks. Holding the boulders with their feet, they hit them with their picks, and they did it so skillfully that all the rocks they split were nearly the same size.

When they had broken up many of the rocks, they were stacked in a form. The stacks were then measured. They were paid by the meter, so they tried to have as many meters as possible. They only stopped working to eat something or wipe the sweat from their foreheads.

They went home at 9 in the evening. They looked as dirty as the gray stacks of stone – the fruit of their hard work.

Irka Gr.

**The 15th of April is the deadline for submitting works to the DRAWING CONTEST LITERARY CONTEST (Novellas, poems, humoresques, a novel or a play for the school theater) PRIZES: five prizes of 20 złoty, five of 10 złoty, and one of 100 złoty**

# AT THE SCHOOL FOR WAYWARD YOUTH

A small, gray building in the suburbs. It gives the impression of being an ordinary ruin, and it is one in fact, which is noticeable right at the entrance. A small square yard, surrounded by a wooden fence; an old, one-story building, a musty smell in the narrow stairwell.

This is a place where all the "outcasts" of children's society are sent. Here, refuge is available to those, about whom schools have issue the worst opinions: the worst, steals, lies, demoralizes others. Here, they are supposed to grow into decent people.

I enter the front hall. Above the door, there is a large, decorative inscription: "It is good that you are here." This is probably the only place where a young criminal is welcome.

Across from the door is a recreation hall, where boys are currently playing. Next to it is a dining hall, and on the other side workshops, where the older boys learn trades. Upstairs are bedrooms, classrooms, and a common room. The walls of the common room are decorated with the pupils' drawings. There are about 130 boys in the school, of whom 30 live in the dormitories. The curriculum is the same as at a public school. Outside of the program, the older boys learn trades. They come here, sent by public schools, by juvenile courts, or of their own will.

The students usually come from the oldest low social layers. These are children who took to the streets due to hunger, poverty, or poor moral conditions in the home, children who have been harmed morally and physically from their youngest years. They find themselves in the sphere of offences and crimes, from their earliest years, their eyes have been opened to all of the meanness and poverty of the life that brutally tramples then into the ground. It is no surprise then that they give in, that even the best of them start to hate everyone and everything, that they become criminals. For some, their vices are like a collective revenge, a hatred of everything: for their alcoholic father, for their mother, beaten and tormented, for hunger, for poverty, for humiliations. These children, when they come to the school, have experienced a multitude of painful experiences and suffering. They are mistrustful, withdrawn, and suspicious.

It is difficult to break through the wall of reluctance that has come into existence between the child and the outside world. They must be approached carefully, to avoid opening fresh wounds; skillfully, to awaken honesty.

The director of the school is one of the few people who can do this. She combines a large heart and a love for her work with an enlightened mind, which knows how to speak to these young outcasts.

At the school, they are not treated as criminals, but as equals, and their crimes as a sickness of the soul, for which they seek a cure along with their teachers. The results that come from this method are incredible. After a certain time spent at the school, the wall of reluctance disappears and relations between students and teachers

begin to be based on mutual trust and honesty. This does not mean that the student improves the moment they step through the door of the school. No, but they begin to work on eliminating their existing faults and habits, which with the aid of a teacher, they usually manage to do. The truth of this is proven by the fact that after finishing the school, only a small percentage of students return to their previous lives.

I browse the so-called book of honesty. The boys gave this book to the director on her name day. It contains letters to her, in which they describe their experiences. I have to say that I got choked up while reading these confessions.

"I often went stealing with him," a boy writes. "Usually at night. He stood under the window, and I kept a lookout..."

The letter is quite long, the tone of complete honesty maintained throughout. It contains a list of all sorts of thefts in which the mysterious "he" is a participant. When giving the letter to the director, the boy explained.

"That's my father, ma'am, but I wrote 'he' so that the boys, when they read it, wouldn't know that someone has a father like that."

"I am most afraid when they yell. I'd rather they beat me than yelled," another writes. "When someone insults me, I could kill them, or run away – that's how scared I get. Once, I stole father's cigarettes. Father saw, and I was terribly scared, but mother begged him and nothing happened to me. Later, to make up for the fear, I convinced the boys to break our windows."

Does such a nervous child not need medical care, rather than the court and juvenile detention?

Another writes: "I would very much like to improve. And I know that stealing is bad, but sometimes, something tempts me and I take something. I don't like to lie, either, but when I'm mad at someone, I lie. Out of spite, on purpose. When you said that I'm not that bad at all, I decided to improve. And I thought that if I'm not bad, then I can improve, but now after what happened, you probably don't trust me anymore. So I'm asking: am I really not bad? Because sometimes it seems that I'm so bad that nothing can help me, but if you say that I'm not, maybe I can still improve."

This was one of the "worst ones," whose removal was unconditionally demanded by the teachers' council.

How great is the tragedy of this boy, who wants to be different, but there is something inside him that doesn't let him? How enormous a motivation is someone's belief in him and a good opinion? I don't know whether all those who place these "criminals" in prisons and juvenile detention take all these factors into consideration.

The relationship of these boys towards their parents is strange. They shake in anger when someone says something bad. It is very painful for them that their parents often don't feel anything for them.

One time, there was an incident in the dorms. One of the boys went home for a name day celebration. After coming back, he told his friends about

the fabulous presents he received and the good time he had. The director noticed, however, that the boy was unnaturally cheerful. In the evening, when everyone was asleep, she approached him. She saw that he was choking down his tears. He told her then what he saw at home, how he had been thrown out on the street, and he said something completely different "so that the boys wouldn't know."

When I read these letters and listened to their stories, I had the impression that these boys, practically torn away from prison bars, are better than their moral peers. They have ideals, they can dream about a new, better world, strive to eliminate evil, think about the happiness of humanity, which few among the normal youth are capable of. Therefore, they are more subtle, react more lively, and think more intently.

The atmosphere in the school is very cordial, homey. It's clear the boys love their teachers and their school. This is their home, after all. Here, for the first time, they were recognized as people, for the first time, they had the conditions for normal development. They experience the brightest moments of their lives here. There is an enormous simplicity in the teachers' attitude towards the boys, no trace of superiority, and at the same time, it is characterized by warmth. The students and the teachers form one big family, which can be seen, for example, in the fact that the whole school celebrates the name day of each pupil.

All of this despite the fact that the teachers work much more than the teachers in normal schools, and in far worse conditions. Their work does not end with the bell, it lasts all day and night.

Additionally, the hygiene conditions in the school on Budowlana Street are very poor. They lack the necessary toilets, have little space, and all of this makes their work much harder. Despite this, the teachers work with devotion, joyfully, so that the joy radiates into the surroundings. The boys who ended up at the school are very lucky.

But we should not forget that this is only about 7% of the overall number of candidates. The others are either half-starving on the streets of Warsaw, or, having been caught stealing, are placed in prisons and juvenile detention. One of the school's pupils, despite the best efforts of the teachers, ended up in the reformatory in Studzieniec. He writes that he is doing well there, but his letters are censored.

At the end, I take a look at the workshops. One of the oldest pupils proudly shows off the closet he made by himself.

I leave with a feeling of deep satisfaction. I start to look at the world more brightly. There are no truly bad people, if those who are generally considered to be the worst have so many good elements in their souls. You just have to know how to awaken those elements. And for that, we need more schools like this one, more teachers like these. Perhaps then prisons and juvenile detention centers will vanish from the face of the Earth.

Marysia

# READER UPDATES

## MAZEL TOV

I went in a car to the rabbi's. The guests had already been gathered.

As soon as Salek came in, he put a veil on Regina's head. I was holding a candle, and many other people also held candles.

Regina and Salek stud with the rabbi under the chuppah. They drank wine from one glass, then they threw the glass on the floor and stomped on it with their feet.

Salek put a wedding band on Regina's finger. Everyone congratulated the bride.

"Mazel tov, congratulations!"

MIECIO from Miła Street

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## SPRING IN THE COUNTRY

All year, I lived in Śródborów, and I was happiest when spring came.

One time, a few of my friends and I went past Śródborów. We walked maybe four hours. When we were coming back, I saw a hut with a straw roof. I was very glad to see it and I told the girls this was a country hut, for sure.

Then one of the girls said that she had a few groszy with her, so we could go inside and buy some milk from the housewife, because we were very thirsty.

We all agreed and went inside. We asked for a quart of milk. The lady didn't want to sell it to us, but she gave it to us for free. She pushed a bench up to the table and set out potatoes and cabbage.

When we had eaten everything, we thanked her for the modest offering and made our way back.

JANKA from Chłodna Street

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## A HAPPIER LIFE WILL COME

I was lying in bed and was very weak. I dreamed of an orange and licked my dry lips.

In the evening, mommy came back home after working all day. I couldn't stand it anymore, and I asked for an orange. Mommy didn't have money, but she borrowed it from a neighbor and brought me two large, juicy oranges – one of them was raspberry-colored inside. I started to eat them greedily, but I was embarrassed in front of mommy, who stood in the corner and watched the mess. Another time, she would probably have told me to eat one today and leave the second for tomorrow. But this time, mommy was merciful and didn't say anything.

When the "If I was Kaytek" contest was announced, almost everyone expected too much. If I was Kaytek, I would give out oranges to sick children.

But I am happy anyway, because spring has come, and I am so happy I want to fly in the air. Then summer will come, and fruit. Mommy also buys fruit then because even the poor can afford them.

And if the soles of my shoes aren't quite good in the summer, that's all right, too, because it's warm and happy.

MIETEK from Nowolipie Street

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## THE WORST CLASS

Our class doesn't have a good student council. The president tattles on the children and hits them. The boys are the worst bullies.

We want to have a peer club, but how can we, when the girls tell on people.

I'm ashamed to write what my class is like. In our school, we say a prayer before classes, but the boys don't show up for it at all.

Everyone complains about our class. The janitor complains that we take too long to get dressed after classes, the teachers call us unbearable. In general, our class is the worst in the whole school.

FELICJA from Wołyńska Street

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## RELIGION CLASS

Before every religion class, there is a lot of noise in our classroom. Everyone tries to learn their homework and copies out the summary.

Only when the teacher comes in after the bell, the class quiets down. There is only the whisper of one girl who complains to her friend about why they teach religion, who needs to know the prophets' speeches, and why do they assign so many summaries. The other answers that all Jews should learn the history of their nation. The teacher, having overheard the whispering, throws them both out of the classroom.

Then he calls on a student and tells him to summarize the last lesson. The student doesn't know, and gets an F. Another one is called, and he knows a bit, so he gets a C and he's very happy.

Then the teacher calls on a girl, who knows her lesson and gets an A. Then he tells us the new lesson and has us summarize it from the book. The bell interrupts the lesson and the teacher leaves.

HANKA from Ogrodowa Street

## WHAT I OWE TO BOOKS

When I was very little, I liked to listen to fairytales. Mom had to tell the same thing, dozens of times. Finally, she started reading me books.

When I grew up, I started reading myself, and I asked mommy to sign me up at the library.

I like to read books because I can learn from them about the lives of people who were born before me and those who live in other countries. I find out about the lives of different animals and birds.

Sometimes when a book is sad, I feel like crying, and when it's happy, then I laugh because I feel like everything described in the book is happening to me. Reading books, I can write better and I learn new expressions.

I also like books because thanks to them, I spent my time pleasantly instead of being bored because there's nothing to do.

Of the books I have read so far, I most liked Korczak's 'Fame.' I want to be famous, too."

JURAS

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## AT THE MOVIES

The teacher said that those who wanted to go to the cinema should bring 25 groszy. We went to the Modern Cinema. It was a Palestinian picture. First, they showed President Sokolow, and then the city of Tel-Aviv. And it went like this:

Some Jews bought land from an Arab. In this land, there was a plant, called a sabra. People worked hard to clear the land of the sabras.

The Jews decided to dig a well to have their own water and not have to pay the Arabs. One of their workers was a deaf-mute. When there was a bell, everyone went to dinner, but he didn't hear the bell, so he kept working. He dug and dug until water came out. Then he started dancing for joy. In the meantime, a lot of dirt fell down from above, filling the well and burying the deaf-mute.

The workers came back and saw the filled-in well. They started to dig and got the deaf-mute man out. He was put to bed, but he was better the next day.

There was one bad Arab, who closed the well and told the Arabs to kill Jews. They killed one, and then someone said that the bad Arab had locked the well with a key.

Then the Arabs stopped beating the Jews, and the Jews told them that they would give them water for free.

CHACIUŚ from Białystok

# THE STORY OF ONE CUT

I have noticed quite often that films are prohibited at the beginning and then suddenly they are "permitted" for youth. It would seem that this might be a question of determined pleas to the cinema management, or good relations.

No, usually in cases like this, the censors cut out a piece of the film that according to them, demoralize youth. Usually, they cut out love scenes, too many kisses, etc. An example of this is "The Pagan." The censors declared that the necklines of Ramon Novarro's costumes were too low. "Ten Percent for Me" lost a scene with a model in a fashion salon because she was walking around in skimpy lingerie. Hell! That's a completely natural scene. Everyone knows that a model in a fashion salon walks around in lingerie. But of course, the extremely distasteful and unintelligent scene with the toilet was left in, to the delight of the marginal audiences.

Recently, I encountered another case where after a week of being shown, the movie was allowed for us. I'm talking about the film "Hell Below" (Europa Cinema).

I went to see the movie when it was still prohibited for us, and I was

outraged. Love full of devotion. Nothing tawdry. But still – prohibited! Generally, I liked the movie because of the good technique and acting of Walter Huston.

One scene was noteworthy and provoked a discussion. At one moment, a subordinate hits his superior in the face.

"That wasn't right," I could hear voices in the cinema during the break.

"Even if the superior hurt his subordinate very much, he should keep quiet and follow the order, and then he can complain to the appropriate authorities."

The scene does actually ruin the impression of the film.

When I found out that the movie was now allowed for us, I went to see it again, to see the difference. And what do I see? The scene was cut out, as demoralizing.

God! Do you really want to suppress every spark of criticism in us, gentlemen? I will prove to you that however many youth went to see the movie before the "permission," they all criticize this moment. And you're worried that the youth will imitate Robert Montgomery.

Efr.

# TOM SAWYER ON THE SCHOOL STAGE

This school year, work on the school stage proceeded with exceptional enthusiasm. A careful critic and lover of the youth theater (I think that there will eventually be a specialist in this area, too) could write a nice and intriguing discussion about the directions of individual school theaters, outline their history, consider the pros and cons, and finally assemble a summary of the students' theatrical work this year.

The future school theater historian will undoubtedly devote a chapter to the as yet few drama sections that have broken with following the same templates, searched for an appropriate repertoire, and through a proper analysis of the play at a meeting of the section, through a skillful portrayal of each character, thought-out down to the smallest detail, began a period of reformation.

I'm making the task of the unknown

colleague easier, and out of a chronicler's duty, draw his attention to the work of the drama club at the Teachers' Union Middle School. The female students at the school recently staged "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer." The play, directed by Mr. Centnerszwer, professor of Polish studies, was so excellent that if old man Twain were sitting in the audience, he would have certainly admitted to being the author. In places, "Tom" was better, or at least more faithful to the original, than the movie. The acting of the entire cast completely deserved the applause that shook the gym.

"The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" at the Teachers' Union Middle School once again confirms the correctness of the claim that pioneers should organize an inter-school theater in Warsaw.

Gr.

## CORRECT SOLUTIONS TO BRAIN TEASERS WERE SENT BY:

Basia Albekówna, Alina from Włocławek, Estusia and Iziek Aschenfarb, Baby, Bala and Bea, Beniek from Nowolipki Street, the Bielickie sisters, Różia Drózdziarz, Edgar, Jakób Fajn, Hanka Fejginówna, Beniek Fiszer, Abram Freidenreich, Zaza G., Tadzik Ginzburg, Elżunia Goldmanówna, Adaś Gotlieb, Iser from Dzielnia Street, Bluma Justmanówna, Jerzy Kerner, Halina

Kirszbłum, Lusja Kirszrotówna, Nusia Kuczyńska, Esterka Lengerówna, Pola Litmanowicz, Sz. Łaznowski, Dorka Majerowicz, Mosze from Nalewki Street, Basia Muszyńska, Kuba Nuskier, Ina Ostryńska, B. Rapaport, Tadeusz Rosenwein, Lola Szejngros, Tóbcia and Tadzio Szryber, Zachary Śniadowski, Józio Wolteger, Bela Zaks, Icek Zylberberg ■

## DZIECIAKOWO

The editors have received an invitation to tour "Dzieciakowo" in Józefów. This is a kind of summer camp or a boarding house for children. The opening of "Dzieciakowo" will take place on May 1st. The camp is planned for sixty children. The building is winter-suitable, built of brick, in the winter, it will host school housing.

The owners of "Dzieciakowo" founded it for philanthropic reasons – they want as many poor students from public schools as possible to be able to take advantage of the paradise for children.

A detailed report and description will be published in the next issue. ■

READERS MAY CONTACT THE LITTLE REVIEW NEWSROOM BY TELEPHONE ON TUESDAYS AND FRIDAYS BETWEEN 1 AND 2 P.M. – PHONE 11-99-17. VISITORS ARE WELCOME ON SUNDAYS BETWEEN 4 AND 5 P.M. AT 7 NOWOLIPKI STREET. FOR SUNDAY, APRIL 8TH, WE INVITE THE FOLLOWING: M. NATANBLUTÓWNA, SARA ROZENFELDÓWNA, IZIO CUKIER AND M. RABINOWICZ.