

# THE LITTLE REVIEW

CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH PAPER

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**WŁADYSŁAW BERG**

## NEW ARABESQUES ON AN OLD CANDLESTICK

Two silver lions stick their heads out from among the dense and tangles arabesques. Snake-like tongues of fire spit out of their wide-open mouths. One, two... Nine. The last day. The dreidel spins around, just to fall on the ground clumsily, with a tin letter shining in the light.

"I won!" Rysiek exclaimed.

So many words have been written about Chanukkah and about those who strenuously polish their copper, bronze and silver candlesticks just to make them shine with their full glory on that one evening of the year. About Josiek, who is occupied with playing with his dreidel. About Ruchla, street fruit peddler who always makes latkes for her kids on Chanukkah. Good and delicious latkes.

It also seems that many words were written about Leon, back in the day known as little Leib, returning from a party with his friends to his room on the fifth or seventh floor – but on Nowy Świat Street, ladies and gentlemen! Should we write about that for the tenth or the hundredth time? No. It is better to listen to the silence of December snow, falling down on the streets, to look at the flames of the Chanukkah menorah, red like old Jankiel's fox hat and tattered beard...

\* \* \*

Reb Jankiel sits behind a table. His fox hat and thin white beard that was once red as fire can be seen above a yellowed piece of paper, which is as old as he is. He reckons that the book belonged to his father.

Ah, father!

Reb Jankiel tries to remember his face, his loving and good face. Only two such faces exist in the world, the one of one's mother and father. The most precious of all.

He cannot recall the images from the past. The lines are blurred and distorted, like a face covered with wrinkles – like his mother's, or like his own, now that he's almost eighty years old. Or like Moniek's in ten or so years...

Moniek... Why is he so distant and strange? He would never even recite the Kaddish for his father. But on the other hand, Moniek is a good man; after all, he provides for Jankiel from his modest salary as a locksmith's apprentice. What would Jankiel do without him? Ehh, such is the fate of an old man, difficult and hard.

Reb Jankiel tries to think about Moniek and the way he will recall him in years' time. A fox hat, thinning beard and wrinkles. A web of wrinkles, tangled into elaborate arabesques, like

those on the candlestick. Perhaps he will remember the Chanukkah menorah? Reb Jankiel still remembers how it used to dominate the table. The tablecloth used to be white like a field covered with December snow he saw later on, during the horrible night of the pogrom.

His father was a publican in the Mogilev Governorate. It was fifty, maybe sixty years ago. Rumors were spreading about a pogrom in the area. Black hundredists were roaming around, murdering, beating and robbing Jews. Or so they said...

The inn was already closed. Father, who was wearing a black skullcap, lit the oil in the lamps of the menorah. Young Jankiel, his mother and two sisters – Sara and Rachel, fifteen and eighteen years old – were sitting around the table when the last lamp was being lit. Suddenly, footsteps and some voices could be heard outside.

"Hey, open right now, you kike!"

Reb Jankiel's hands – dried out and wrinkled like an old piece of paper – are shaking. Once again, he is living the terrible night, the night of the pogrom.

\* \* \*

The dreidel spins round and round. Once again it falls to its side, showing a shiny, curly letter.

"I won!" Rysiek exclaims in joy.

\* \* \*

Heniek returns home from his university classes. He's in a hurry because it's the first day of Chanukkah and he still has to buy some candles. Two beautiful new dreidels are resting in his pocket – for Szlamek and Surcia. The garden is covered by white snow, resting on the branches of all the trees and bushes and creaking under the soles of his boots as he runs through. The dreidels rattle in his pocket.

"Why are the streets so dark? It's almost unpleasant to walk after dark. It's just two more blocks, five minutes at the drugstore and I will be back home. Szlamek and Surcia are probably waiting already..."

Szlamek is a fifth-grader in elementary school, where he's the best student. "Of course. He's my brother, after all!" Surcia has yet to go to school next autumn. She was supposed to start going to school this year, but they had no place for her. Next year, however, she will start right from the second grade, he will prepare her for that.

The thoughts are strangely calming... Szlamek, Surcia...

Suddenly, he heard a word, which hurt like an insult. "Hey, Jew!"

For a brief second, he saw all of them. Maybe ten or so boys in student caps, with massive wooden bats in their hands. A punch with brass knuckles knocked him out and he fell to the ground. Their boots broke his ribs and the sharp steel razors skillfully installed on the ends of the bats quickly disfigured soft flesh and a face deemed to be too Jewish.

The tin dreidels fell out of his pocket. Someone's heavy boot pushed them deep into snow.

"He's had enough! Let's go!"

The December snow was falling. Someone was passing by and noticed the lifeless body. The horrifying scream cut the silence of the night like a razor blade.

\* \* \*

"Where is the fervor of Moses, who in a single day destroyed 23,000 idolaters today?" Screams Konrad von Marburg, a monk, preacher and inquisitor to this day.

The fervor had to once again be seen and felt, hundreds of stakes had to be lit and mastery in the art of tortures had to be reached.

"Where is the fervor of Moses...?"

\* \* \*

If I was to write about Chanukkah today, I would not write – as in the past – about Hannah, the mother of seven sons, slain by the ruthless Antiochus.

Instead, I would write about another mother of two sons, an electrical engineer and a graduate of the School of Economics – both with their degrees, looking towards life with hope, but unable to find a job. One had to work for a pittance, fixing broken doorbells for the neighbors and another one polished the cobblestones on the streets of Warsaw, running from place to place looking for work. Both could not find any – but not because there was no work.

Very often, they were "almost hired," but when they had to hand in their resumes, it turned out that they have "impure birth certificates." Because their mother was named Fajga, and Icek was their father. The manager would tell them on the spot "I'm so sorry, but we already hired someone for this position." And the pointless search would start once again. All of that simply because they had no Aryan grandmother...

\* \* \*

The pages of the Book of Maccabees slowly turn with quiet rustling. Outside, there is darkness, snow and wind... ■

## CHANUKKAH-GELT FOR THE CHILDREN FROM THE ORPHANS' HOME

Soon, the windows of our homes will shine bright into the dark of the night and we will feel warm and cozy among our loved ones.

Some among us, however, will look towards the darkness of the street at night, and it will seem to be even darker than ever to those passing our windows, to all the children without families.

And their happiness will disappear like the blown-out flame of a candle. "I do not deserve it, I didn't earn it on my own." It was purely an accident that we did not lose our parents, that we are better off than someone else.

On this holiday, when we receive tokens of love and memory, we want to say to our less fortunate peers that even though we don't know them, we care about them and send them gifts, like we do to our loved ones.

Among the orphanages which are the dearest to us is the Orphans' Home on Krochmalna Street. There, the Little Review was brought to life in Dr. Korczak's office, the very first assemblies and press conferences were held there, it gave us our first correspondents, and every Saturday, new ones learned writing there.

The Orphans' Home gave us a lot of interesting material, starting from the reports written by the first literary collective – Harry and Maks, through a multitude of letters and short stories, to the journal titled "About a pine tree in a Jewish cemetery," published in this

year's Yom Kippur issue.

All of them belonged to the Useful Entertainment Club mentioned in the diary. The Club works for the benefit of the entire Home, offering physical and mental activities for all the children throughout the school year and the summer holidays, organizing games, tournaments and contests, theatrical plays, trips and excursions, buying toys, books, musical instruments and athletic equipment.

When we heard the news that the Useful Entertainment Club is in the worst trouble in the 17 years of its existence... Suffice it to say, they did not even have 5 zloty to purchase costumes for the actors participating in the Chanukkah play, so we thought that we – the readers of the Little Review – could repay some of the debt of gratitude to the Orphans' Home by helping its most active organization, which provides entertainment and cultural activities to all the children living there.

Therefore:

We offer our contribution – 50 zloty in total – to the Useful Entertainment Club, and we call upon all Little Review correspondent associations to start collecting funds for the Club as well. We are also calling upon all the readers to support our campaign and send donations for the general Chanukkah fund (The Little Review, Warsaw, No. 7 Nowolipki St., labelled "Chanukkah-Gelt for the children from the Orphans' Home").

The Group of Seven

## A MEMORY

Chanukkah came as it does like in every year, bringing many happy memories with it.

I remember those happy and careless Chanukkah evenings, when father lit the candles and everyone in the family gave gifts to each other, when we played with the traditional dreidel or the timeless Old Maid and at the end we would all go to the cinema. The bright Chanukkah menorah, which was placed in the middle of the table symbolized a safe haven. I could listen to the stories of a Chanukkah miracle all day long. I was proud and happy.

Of course, there were some worse days, but when Chanukkah came, the happiness hiding deep in our hearts always erupted and livened up the house – and it was beautiful.

I always loved Chanukkah very much because my parents and other family members gave me gifts, but I did not believe in the miracle. I simply couldn't believe that the oil for one day could be enough for eight days. Sadly, soon I would be punished for my lack of faith.

Several years ago, Chanukkah came – as always – in December. The first three evenings weren't too joyful, but the fourth one was simply awful. A snowstorm started and without a single noise, white snow covered the ground. The wind kept blowing outside.

On that dark and terrible night, mom fell ill. We tiptoed around her, not caring about Chanukkah at all – our thoughts were only with her.

On the morning of the fourth day a doctor came and performed surgery. We were waiting in another room, motionless, whispering prayers for her survival in the dead silence of the house, not knowing about anything that was going on.

In the evening, father called us as always and lit the candles. He was sad, but he pretended to be happy for us. Suddenly, when he was lighting up the menorah, I thought "if all the candles burn for the same amount of time, mom will recover." And so, I started watching the candles slowly burn down.

Everyone left the table, but I stayed there. With shining eyes, I kept watching the colorful candles, praying to God for a miracle and thinking that I would believe in the miracle that happened hundreds of years ago, in the far-away lands of our ancestors...

The candles were burning down evenly, and not one of them burned faster than the others. I held my breath and kept looking at them. In an hour, all of them burned down and the flames disappeared at the same time.

I knew mom would recover and that I just witnessed a double miracle: I regained my mother and my faith.

D.G.

# AN ATTACK ON HUMOR

A report from Sosnowiec:

"Recently, an unknown group of bombers, purportedly from under the banner of the Little Review, carried out a vicious attack on humor. The investigation is underway."

## INTRODUCTION

If you simply cannot deal with it and want to voice your disapproval, please be soft about it (we are still a bunch of young lads and we can still improve).

Our only excuse is the fact that this chronicle was not written over the course of a single day, but during several meetings, sometimes in awful moods as well (like after reading the article titled "The Theatre of Fleas.")

Therefore, we would like to ask you to forgive us and read the article with faith in a better tomorrow. Man cannot live by bread alone.

Attention! Here we go!

## 1ST MEETING

For a week or so, every single sparrow on the rooftops of Sosnowiec kept chirping about the meeting of fledgling writers, future pillars of the Little Review, at Ludwik's freshly renovated residence. And indeed, it took place. On October 5th at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, the organizer, scared to no end, rushed to the door like a gazelle and let the two future academics inside.

The three writers sat at the table among dead silence. Amidst the difficult efforts to muster up that first smile, they heard a silent scratching from the front door. They waited for long seconds, until they saw three girls, whose height justified the first word in our paper's title.

Soon, the unending streams of words coming from the mouths of our girls also swept the languid geniuses. After long deliberations regarding the future foundations of the great Sosnowiec circle, we came up with the following needs and requirements:

Socialists – need to be vocal about their opinions;

Revisionists – to maintain order;

Clericalists – to win over the favor of the heavens and censorship;

Zionists – to propose other motions;

Local beauties – for the interviews.

The meeting was finished, and we went home in solemn mood.

## 2ND MEETING

The second day came, and fish were swimming silently in the aquarium kept by the responsible correspondent. Suddenly, the calmness of their existence was disturbed by a sharp noise.

"For heaven's sake! One more meeting and the door will be busted," Ludwik muttered under his nose. The chairs shrank down in anticipation of strong emotions, and the meeting was joined by the literary team of Icek and Chaim. Soon after, the representatives of the intellectual elite from Sosnowiec burst into the room, as they say.

And the meeting was kicked off. Then, it was concluded. Between these two events, the following happened:

The interim correspondent kept running his mouth, presenting the proposed program of operations. The general Hanoar-revisionist-non-partisan-socialist silence was broken by some boring interruptions of the editorial committee, that is, the veterans who participated in the first meeting.

The elections for the secretary of the circle were conducted according to five-point electoral law and ended in an unequivocal victory of Halinka, a well-known and respected social activist.

The member dues were set at 5 groszy, which led to the immediate increase of the indicators observed by the Institute of Price and Market Trend Research, leading them to believe that the crisis would be over soon.

Icek started going off about his well-thought out theory about the attitude towards individuals and the other way around, and he would have probably continued discussing the inner workings of the world for ages, if he had not been interrupted by the ironic looks of Renia, the leader of the rebels. The fire in her eyes must have

been noticed by Zdzisiek, whose thick glasses usually made for an impervious shield, as he was clearly awoken from his daydreaming about the source of all existence. He looked with contempt at the other participants and – alluding to the majority of them – started speaking about the origin of men. His allusions had quite an effect on them, since the descendants of baboons started fighting with the descendants of large-headed capuchins (*Cebus fatuellus*). Upon seeing what was going to happen, the president decided to adjourn the meeting.

The fish in the fish tank could be heard sighing in relief.

## 3RD MEETING

Icek decided to deliberate about the Italian-Abyssinian front in front of the surprised audience. The room slowly started turning into a battlefield, with a strong stench of gases filling the air. When Icek finally finished his speech, Zdzisiek discreetly opened a window and with relief, he breathed in fresh air, which, sadly, was still filled with fascist fumes. Part of this was not due to the attack of the Italian army but rather due to Artek's sudden admission of support for revisionism, which was met with the complete silence. Because of that, Artek stood up and just said "Bagalili."

In response, the secretary asked for his dismissal. Her motion was carried unanimously with much happiness from every attendee.

The audience was taken aback by the appearance of an outstanding character, the top student of one of the middle schools in the region, who after coming to the meeting smiled with dignified irony and took the seat near the door, which belonged to him due to his position and seniority.

His protector – Tusia – afraid that he might discredit himself, encouraged him with a seducing yet castigating look to take the position of a secretary, combined with an honorary position of a treasurer. With immediate effect, the portfolio of shares for the topic mine was also given to him. The new official kept silent with a grace that amazed the entire auditorium.

However, let us move on to the content of the historic meeting. It was with deep

regret that Chaim read an All Saints' Day speech about Hala, our former secretary, who sadly is no longer with us. We will no longer speak of her here, as one should not talk badly about the dead.

When his mournful speech was getting to the end, Irka, an ethereal blonde girl knocked at the door and using the lock pick of a good motion opened the discussion about the purpose of the meeting, the agenda and our goals.

## EDUCATIONAL EPILOGUE

The first meetings described above were the period of the difficulties and obstacles faced by us while creating the structures of our Sosnowiec correspondent club, and here we would like to end our description of our struggles.

Taking into account the educational purpose of this write-up, we would also like to draw attention of the initiators and organizers of literary circles to the various personae and types that they will have to face:

## TYPES DANGEROUS

### FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

All persons with murderous intent, dangerous to the peace and the room, the furniture and good mood are to be exterminated on sight, without mercy. First and foremost, you have to get rid of all the murderers of domestic and foreign poets – reciters, then fanatics willing to blow up the globe, as long as there is some place for their ideas. Finally, return the local Cleopatra to the street.

## MILD TYPES

They don't believe in standing up to the evil, they don't really believe in standing up to anything. Moreover, they do not have any beliefs set in stone. They are perfect material for the members of a club or citizens of a country, as they always pay their dues on time.

## PHILOSOPHICAL TYPES

The notion of philosopher means someone who loves learning, but in our circles, it also means someone who bores everyone to death with their headache-inducing tirades. They might do this with their lecture on physics titled "The Bottomless Pit of the Absolute and Its Impact on the Synthesis of Heavy Water

in Puddles," as well as using an untitled paper on sociology – but this time, the entire assembly will keep thinking about it. Some of them will title it "Marx in Paradise," others will claim that its title should be "Unemployment Seen Through Rose-Colored Glasses." Eventually, insulted that no one understood the complex yet subtle symbolism, they will propose calling it "Under a Green Lampshade." They can spend hours deliberating about why the page of the Little Review is divided into 5 columns instead of 6, or why the North Star is an extension of the Earth's axis of rotation instead of the Southern Cross.

## ACTIVE TYPES

To act does not mean only doing a lot and running one's mouth as little as possible. Sometimes it might be quite the opposite. It is good when they only keep running their mouth and do nothing. They'll keep yapping and then they will go home. Until the next meeting, they will sit still in their burrows, feeling safe because they know that no one will come to get any articles from them. It is much worse when they do not respect any breaks and keep trying to make their slogans a reality. For example, Tusia constantly requests slavery in Eritrea to be abolished and she wants our group to be a matriarchy. Naftali is much worse in that regard, as he asks for the creation of 30 committees for 15 members, so that everyone may do some social work.

The worst type attending the meetings of a literary group are the writers. They come – pale, absent-minded – they sit somewhere in the corner and wait for an opportunity to present their writing. They would only read and talk about literature all day long. They aren't fit for fun or sports, nor will they ever conform to any agenda.

Throw away all of those pesky types and you will have a proper club or association – with agendas and a book of reports. Everyone will pay their due of 5 groszy and everybody will always arrive on time. You will buy green fabric, a bell and a carafe, and then you will have your peace and silence. Only the fish in the tank will die looking at you.

The Sosnowiec Group

## LUSIA from Człuchowa

# FOOTSTEPS

Now he had enough time. He could sit, stretched comfortably on a chair next to the constantly leaking faucet, close his eyes and think about anything he wanted to think about. No one could forbid him from doing so. Tenants walked around in the kitchen, Miss Bergman kept coming with her bucket to get some water, but she did not mind Hubert sitting there.

Hubert! His father used to have some lordly fantasies. "A leaseholder from a Galician village, who made a pretty penny on military transports, bought a manor, became more sophisticated, lost his wealth and then made the comfortable decision to die, leaving a widowed wife with a child with aristocratic name," Hubert's embittered thoughts kept revolving around him.

He remembered his father's short and furry coats, as well as his tall horse-riding shoes, he remembered the smell of the great dining room (the smell of liquors and cigars), noisy meetings, the smell of perfumes, the beautiful lady and his mother's tears...

At least his childhood was care-free... Until a certain point, at least

He shuddered – and once again, he was just five years old and was sitting on the steps of the veranda. Next to him was a suitcase, decorated with numerous colorful stickers. Somewhere behind him, he heard two voices: one belonged to a man, who kept screaming at the top of his lungs, and the other, softer one... That one belonged to his mother. The smell of the garden was intense, since the grass was still wet from the rain. Ajax was lying just below his feet on the same stairs, his fur glistening from all the water on it.

His mother stood behind him,

"Darling, you can't just sit here on the stairs," she said and kissed him. Andrzej took the chest, threw it over his left shoulder and went to the gate among the wet peonies. Mother put him back on the step and went after Andrzej, looking back at him when she was at the gate.

He sat on the step and looked after her – until she disappeared. After that, he sat there for a long time, looking at the traces on the muddy path – shallow footprints, slowly filling up with water, leading to the gate. He ran

along the traces, splashing the water around. Suddenly, he stopped, grabbed a blood-red peony flower and tore it to pieces. After that, Miss Melanja came to fetch him.

"But mother returned from staying with her parents when the other lady left... She should not have come back. And father – after they moved to the city – decided to go to the Alps. He just had to have an aristocratic death," Hubert thought with bitter satisfaction.

But his mother stayed with him – oh, how she had changed! Of course she did, working as a tailor is not really beneficial to anyone, especially to someone who was not used to working at all.

Miss Bergman came again, this time with a kettle, and she sprayed water all over Hubert. Fearfully, she apologized and quickly disappeared. He just grunted in return, he was already focused on yet another vision.

He was in 6th grade, she was in 7th. Her name was Pola, but she called herself Lili and told him to call her that, too. And so he did. She had thick black hair and she styled it differently on each day. Her eyes were dark and she had a swarthy complexion, even though he was and very slender. And how she danced... Her body could bend in the

most unimaginable ways... In the winter, she wore a black fur... Hubert once knew what it was called.

She liked him very much, especially his name. She would walk with him and keep saying "Hubert... Hubert..." She also often said that he must have had a Swede in his family because he looked like a "Nordic hero," so she called him a "fair-haired Viking."

"Yes, I used to be pretty back then," Hubert thinks and imagines his scarred face and cleanly shaven hair, comparing it to Hubert from the days of old. "A boy should not think about his beauty," he remembered what Basia said once...

Yes, but Basia was ugly herself and anyway, she was far too smart for a girl.

It happened in the city. She said goodbye, as she always did. Hubert stood behind the curtain in the window and observed. There were clearly visible foot prints in the snow, from afar they seemed to be almost blue.

Then he remembered that once in a time he stood like that, boundlessly sad, looking at the traces of happiness that left – and will never come back. Mother returned, but at that point Hubert was different, and so was she.

The door opened silently and Henio walked into the kitchen. He stopped next to Hubert, put his little hand on Hubert's knee and asked him:

"Could you explain Latin to me? Please! I'm going to have an exam tomorrow!" And Hubert started explaining him the secrets of cum causal clauses and why the conjunctive was used in a sentence about Caesar.

They finished and Heniek left.

Latin... Sure, that was one of his fortes in middle school. How did it end? One could never know. He used to be so calm and confident. After all, he could fail one subject during the final exam. But he failed history. He. Failed history. That's almost comical!

Just a day before, his uncle promised to hire him for an apprenticeship, saying, "Well, if you pass the exam, I'll make you my apprentice." But first he had to pass the exam, which he didn't do. Because he failed history.

He still remembers that June. The white walls of his middle school were blindingly bright and the air moved due to excessive heat. He stood with others at the end of a yellow rectangle – the pitch. Miss Madejska came towards them along the edge of sand. She told him about his defeat. After that, she went back through the pitch – tiny, black and hunched. Everyone kept looking at her, at her too-high heels getting stuck in the sand like giant black worms. Finally, they heard the front door squeaking and she disappeared in the darkness.

# THE LAW AND THE CHILDREN

A “juvenile detention center” will replace prison for youth. A perpetrator aged 13-17 who was aware of the gravity of their act at the moment of committing a crime will be now sentenced for a detention center.

Unlike adult criminals, who are usually sentenced for a year, six months or several years in prison, youth courts sentence young criminals to a detention center without specifying the duration of the sentence. It is actually unnecessary, since the penal code states that one stays in a detention center until 21 years of age, or as Janek’s mother wanted it to be, until one is eligible to be drafted for the military.

The courts have rather significant discretion regarding minors. The judge may order the use of so-called educational measures and leave the young criminal under the supervision of their parents or legal guardians. The judge may also suspend the sentence for some amount of time, for example two years. During that time, educational measures are applied. If during that time, the behavior of the minor was on point and the sentence was not activated, it is considered non-existent.

Therefore, the court may give a young criminal many chances to improve their behavior and expunge – at least formally – the traces of their criminal act. It has to be admitted that the courts usually use the discretion. However, even the best will of the judge does nothing when the conditions and circumstances push poor children in the cities towards crime.

The judge summons Józek. An old, hunched worker with a sad look on his face stands before the court.

“He doesn’t live with me,” he tells her.

“So, where is he then?”

“I don’t know. Probably hanging around somewhere. I haven’t seen him

since April, when he stole my coat, my jacket, watch and some money.”

“Why does he keep running away? Is this caused by poor conditions at home?” She already knew Józek from several court cases she had presided over.

His father was silent, instead he only shrugged. The environment inquiry in the documents left little doubts, 9 people from two families living in a single room in the basement. No mother, the father is unemployed. Three younger siblings. That is a clear answer to the question.

Running away is pretty common. They keep running away from stuffy small rooms they are forced to live in, from fights between people living in poverty, from the fists and belts of their constantly angry and gloomy parents, from hunger they have to try and cheat with a bowl of dry potatoes. They know that “it’s bad everywhere, but it’s the worst at home.” Leaving them under the “responsible supervision” of their parents or guardians does not change the situation of a young criminal. Most probably they are still going to run away and live as they used to live.

We need to be honest with ourselves. Most of them don’t have any real supervision or care at all. Sometimes facts brought forth in youth court prove that they don’t even have formal caregivers, required by law.

Franek, 15 years old, wrongfully accused of stealing a bike came to the court with his 20-year-old sister, working as a clerk.

“We don’t have parents” she explained. “I’m the guardian. I’m 20 years old.”

“It is hard to call an underage girl a guardian,” the judge replied. “Who lives with you?”

“No one, we live alone.”

“What does Franek do?”

“He finished elementary school,

currently he is on an apprenticeship in the same office where I am working.”

“When did your parents die?”

“Mom died six years ago, dad followed her two years later.”

“Did they leave you anything?”

“Just furniture.”

A sixteen-year-old girl and eleven-year-old boy were left alone in the world. The sister took care of her brother, provided for him from her measly salary and after he graduated from elementary school, she found him a job. According to the law, however, neither she nor her brother have any legal guardian, because a guardian needs to be an adult. If their parents left any property, it is quite certain that there would be a guardian because someone needs to take care of the estate, it could not simply go to waste. Unlike people, who can and do because rarely anyone cares.

Defendants who are over 17 years old are tried by courts for adults instead of youth courts, and they are punished according to the penal code, which means they might pay a fine, they might be arrested, imprisoned or even executed.

There are many illiterate people in youth courts. Usually the young criminals attended schools, but they stopped going at some point because “they were needed at home” or “their parents were moving” or they simply stopped learning because there was no money for books or even for shoes, just like in the case of a boy who came to the court with bare feet. He was already in the 2nd grade and he could read, but he forgot everything – even letters.

Those who ended up in orphanages are the luckiest ones. As long as life has not yet demoralized them to the very core, one may have hope that they will return to the society instead of their former life of crime.

N.E.

Blinded, Hubert kept looking at her footprints left in the sand. They led from him to the door, behind which his fate has already been decided. His eyes started getting watery – from the sun, obviously – and he kept looking at the thin line of dark yellow holes in the light-yellow surface. “A traveler,” he thought pointlessly, “who was left for death by his friends looks at the footprints of the last one who left with the remaining water.” And now he was there, sentenced to a lonely death of thirst.

He hunched over a tap, ran some cold water and pressed his lips to the icy spout. He drank some and sighed. That’s what it looked like.

Eventually, he was satisfied. What else can one expect from life? We are brought into this world against our will, we die when we do, not when we want it either. Not everyone can tailor and measure the short piece of time they have to be happy with their lives. “I cannot do that,” Hubert thought with despair and smiled bitterly.

People are lonely. They can only delude themselves that benevolent powers will listen to their prayers and that friendly people will give them a hand...

“I’m a madman,” he suddenly said out loud and started laughing. “I haven’t lost anything yet. I’m still young and I can be whomever I want. Maybe I can’t

change the external circumstances, but I can be what I want to be!”

He spat into the sink, which gave him a sense of moral satisfaction, stood up, took off his jacket, grabbed a small basket, poured some water into a bowl and started peeling potatoes, singing something under his nose.

“Why did I always see happiness when it was already gone, never when it first appeared? Now I’m going to finally see happiness... And notice it before it leaves footprints in the sand. I’m not the only one who has no job, no money and no girlfriend. There are also many lonely girls out there. I’m still young, strong and thirsty for victory... Damn!”

Red and young blood started flowing from his finger across the blade and the drops started falling into the peels. Hubert smiled with content. The blood stopped dripping, but there was still a mark on the blade – a trace of a young man’s blood, which announced the happiness he finally decided to strive for.

When he thought about it in the past, he saw the unknown and most beautiful landscapes, afternoon sun, palms, azure sea, sometimes even boundless snowy plains basking in the lights of the auroras, tall mountains or a path leading to nowhere among the forests and fields of wheat... But ultimately, he did not find happiness among the

vast open spaces. He found it in a tiny kitchen, among the most mundane things. Not on a mountain trail, but in a confined space between the stove and the kitchen sink, between the cupboard and a coal box. Not in a cheering crowd, but in solitude, interrupted by people who needed him.

“After all, there is no happiness outside ourselves, somewhere in the world. It’s all inside us. Not somewhere in the future but now, not in a picturesque, postcard-like world, but here and now in everyday life, in common situations. We carry the most beautiful worlds in our souls,” Hubert thought, firing up the stove to cook the potatoes.

Fire consumed the wood like it always did, even in the darkness of pre-historic caves and it burned exactly the same as it does in every place around the world. It was started by one of the inhabitants of this planet, floating in vast and undiscovered space among worlds unknown...

The sacred mystery of the fire connected him with all the people in the world – the living and the dead, whose bones were turned into dust centuries ago and mixed with soil, which is the same everywhere.

He sat by the fire, connected with the universe, and looked at the pot, lovingly embraced by the blood-red fire. ■

## A STORY OF A NIBBLED ERASER

Some days ago, when I was going through my things, looking for something I needed, I found a small box with a small and slightly nibbled eraser, a small magnifying glass and a round pencil sharpener. I held the treasures in my hand and looked at them from every side. Suddenly, I felt strange regret and my cheeks were burning. I remembered everything as if it happened yesterday.

I was only six years old. After our father died, we moved to a small, narrow street and had a small, narrow room. My older siblings went to school, mother worked to provide for us all, while me and my younger sister weren’t attending school or working.

I remember a small drugstore. I would often go there to buy soap and naphtha and when mother did laundry, she would send me for chlorine and starch. On the way, I would keep saying to myself “fifty grams of chlorine and 2 groszy change, fifty grams of chlorine...” all the way to the store. After arriving at the store, when I was about to say what I came for, I kept forgetting. Maybe it was because of those beautiful angels which smiled at me, or maybe it was due to the silver and gold stars, shining beautifully... I don’t know. But I always came back home crying or I returned with bleach instead of chlorine.

One day, when I went there to buy naphtha, I saw two large white erasers, very nice ones. I looked at them once, then looked again. “What if I just took them?” I thought to myself. “No, how could you? You can’t! It’s not yours!” But I needed an eraser. When I drew, I made an eraser out of bread and used that. And here... I could have a real one! “Don’t you dare! Don’t do it!”

“Sir, could you hurry up, please?” I asked the clerk.

But of course, more and more people came into the store, and he was serving them first. It was obvious, adults were in hurry, while I could wait. I kept looking at the erasers. Oh, the tall man almost stepped on one of them. Finally, I picked one up. “It’s enough, don’t take another one!” But he could step on the other one, and it would be a pity. I picked them both and looked at them. “I could return them to the clerk” I thought. I could tell him I found them on the floor and he would give them to me because they are almost worthless for him. I quietly asked:

“Sir...?”

“What, what! You already have your naphtha, come on, get out little girl, there’s a lot of people here, you see. Go on!”

And so, I left with the erasers.

I felt that I wasn’t fair, but after all... I ran home and immediately got to work. I kept drawing with my pencil and erasing it immediately with both erasers.

“Niusia!” I called my sister. “Do you want one?”

And we kept playing in silence all day long.

In the evening, when my mother asked me about the erasers, I told her that I found them on the street.

“But there’s a drugstore nearby, I might go there and ask him if they are not his,” she proposed. I held my little treasures close to my heart so that she wouldn’t take them.

“But it was far away from the store, I’m sure someone just lost them!”

She did not insist. Soon after, I forgot how I got them, I even forgot about them at all. I just tossed them into

a drawer. But that’s not the end. That was just the beginning.

I had a friend, her name was Edzia and we shared the same backyard. I would often go and play with her. She had a nice magnifying glass. When you looked through it, everything became big, huge and enormous, even the smallest of things, which were almost invisible to the naked eye, became visible when looked at through that glass.

“Oh, if only I had such a glass” I thought. “I could look at my room from one end to the other and it would for once be enormous!”

Apart from that, Edzia had a pencil sharpener, not a typical one, but a round one. A beautiful, round pencil sharpener. When Edzia let me sharpen my pencils, colorful wooden shavings would fall out of it, almost like lace.

I liked this pencil sharpener very much and I kept asking Edzia to show me those things. She gave them to me then, and I kept dreaming about getting my hands on such treasures one day, looking at them from every side.

One day, when everyone was busy at Edzia’s home and Edzia was cleaning, I looked under the wardrobe and saw the two beauties I wanted next to each other.

“Oh God!” I thought. “Such beautiful things just lying there, left under the wardrobe? It would be much better for them if they were with me.”

Soon after, without any second thoughts I just grabbed them and put them in my pocket. I went back home, but this time I didn’t show my new treasures to anyone. As soon as I entered the house, I heard my mom talking.

“Did you hear it already? Łaja’s daughter stole bread from the bakery again. Of course, it’s her mother’s fault, she should’ve taught her better after the first time...” Suddenly, the pencil sharpener and the glass felt heavy in my pocket.

That was not the end of it. It’s true, the box that I found holds only those three small treasures, but I remember many other things that I stole.

It all ended with cherries. Normal, typical cherries, some of them rotten. They were all in a basket, and the basket was at a “fruit store.” The boys from our street kept watching the basket. Not that they did not like it, quite to the contrary!

“If only we could grab it...” they kept discussing that idea with each other. One day, Mietek said, “Listen, we’ll be waiting here, just go and grab some. Nothing’s gonna come out of it!”

I did as I was told. Moniek took all the cherries from me and ran away to share with his friends and I was left with nothing... However, after an hour the store owner came to my mother and told her everything.

There was a row. I cried. Mom paid for the cherries. But the worst that came out of this was the words of my mother: “So the erasers and everything else... My child, you need to understand...” Her voice was shaking as he was talking to me. The dusk came and she was still talking. How painful it all was to her!

And that was the end of it.

Now, when I remember my petty thefts I think about the others. Fajga from my backyard steals to this day. Josek does exactly the same. I don’t know, maybe I would do exactly the same. But I have a mother. A wise one, good and understanding. They have no one in the world.

Rysia G.

## A LETTER FROM EIN HAROD TO THE CHILDREN FROM THE ORPHANS' HOME

My Dears!

When someone goes to Palestine, some dumb people think that "he's going to ride his bike in a hat all day long like Izaak, swim in the sea two or three times a day and eat oranges and grapes instead of pea soup and potatoes." I don't know what the whole of Palestine looks like because I live in a village of Ein Harod, but we also have a bell that wakes us up in the morning, just like there. In the winter, it is also dark in the morning and many people – like there – find it difficult to get up for work. We also have bells at school, bells calling us for meals and to work, as well as bells ending the work for adults. And the everyday schedule looks like the one in our hard-working village. The adults have some free time in the evenings during the week and one free day, children have it no better than you do.

They have even fewer holidays than you do, so they make up various celebrations and special days, according to our calendar. Only here, on Labor Day or Kitchen Day we hang a special board and get some sweets, and here... Just read about the celebrations we had here this week.

The first celebration was to commemorate the birth of a lamb.

The school and kindergarten have a small barn, and the first sheep they raised gave birth to this lamb. The mother's name is Chumka because she has some brown patches and "brown" in Hebrew is "chum." The little lamb also has some brown patches. Our Chumka doesn't really know that she's named like that because she doesn't like to wash her hands and they are often brown, as if they were slightly tanned.

The celebration brought together 140 children from the school and the kindergarten. They sang every single song about sheep and shepherds. One boy from 5th grade recalled his

memories from Chumka's childhood, when he himself was still young and had just started 1st grade. He was speaking very quickly, but everyone understood. Another boy told us everything about the day he learnt about the birth of the lamb in the morning, who saw it first, what it eats and so on. An older boy from the 7th grade played a sad song on his harmonica, as if he was a shepherd grazing his flock.

As you can see, only boys took part in the celebrations. Maybe it was because it had to be organized quickly, without rehearsals, preparations and without... sulking.

After that, they brought a cup... Not an enormous and amazing one, like the Gordon Bennett Cup, but a smaller one. A little cup of sorts. The prize was awarded to the school in Ein Harod not for athletic exploits, but for honest, patient work in the school garden. I saw the first such award given to children by the National Agriculture Association, which visited school gardens in the whole country. The teacher, who handed the cup gave a short speech, which can be summed up as "work hard and do your best, not just for the award."

On another day, we celebrated Zerubawel. If someone read the Little Review nine years ago, they probably still remember those little poems translated from a children's paper from Ein Harod. The poems were the first pieces written by Zerubawel when he was 10 or 12. Now, his first book of poetry has finally been released and one evening, we sat together reading, singing and reciting his poems, discussing his poetry, even criticizing it a bit, but it was all in good faith, as if he was one of us. This celebration went on until 1 o'clock at night, and three hours later, the poet had to wake up for his kitchen duty to serve us breakfast in a working sweatshirt.

We grownups eat in a large hall for 500 people, and if we squeeze together, we could possibly accommodate even more guests. Schoolchildren, kindergarteners and younger children eat in separate mess halls.

The days are still hot, but the difference between day and night might be as high as 20 degrees and it might get really cold. The flies keep pestering us and one quickly realizes that the old saying does not lie, they may be nothing, but they do create loathsomeness. All the time, we see flocks of birds arriving from your country for winter – to "warmer countries," as you learnt at school.

We had several rains already and there will certainly be more of them. After rain, the streets are so muddy that small children are forbidden to leave their homes, but it is unlike the mud in Warsaw, Goclaw or any other village in Europe.

The village is large, if you try to go from school to the sawmill or the poultry house, from your home to the factory, the barn or the library, you keep getting stuck in the mud like in quicksand. The mud gets stuck to your shoes, layer after layer, you carry more and more until it's difficult to walk. Then, when you finally get home, there's so much mud that you can't even get inside. And you should not even try wearing anything other than heavy boots.

Thus, it's not worth cleaning your boots before the sun appears again. In the rainy season, this is quite a rare occurrence, so you rarely see people clean their boots, like Baja, Chaim and many people of the second category like to do. Too bad that we don't have Edek and his camera, so he could photograph the cleaning process. It is a long and tiresome work. You have to get some shoe polish and a cloth. First you clean the soles and heels with a knife, then you clean them with a wet cloth and a brush. It's a long and arduous process,

so the older and more experienced people give advice to the less experienced ones and boast about their efficient methods. Many people wear boots made of rubber.

The mud is different, but the soil is different as well. I still remember large stones on fallow land six years ago. Now we have an orchard there, with fruit-bearing grapefruit trees.

But before we got any fruit, we had to care for the trees for six years, water them and feed them. Just look at how much we actually had to water them: for the first three months, you have to water them three times a day. Not a single row or a pot, but entire orchards, thousands of orange trees watered three times a day so that they don't wither. Then, for another three months you have to water every tree once a day, then six months of watering them once a week, then it's just once every three weeks, but you have to spend a lot of water on each tree. Currently, we can eat all the "waste" fruit – basically, fruit

with any damage because we cannot ship any blemished or damaged fruit to Europe or anywhere in the world.

At the end of my letter, I would like to thank you for clothes for the doll. It turned out that it's too difficult for the kindergarteners to dress it up, but the children in 2nd and 3rd grades had so much fun, that only after a while they begrudgingly gave it up to our first-graders. They love Mindla's pajamas, all kinds of aprons, caps, dresses and garters the most. Even boys from 2nd and 3rd grade are eager to dress it up and ask you – what clothes are you wearing? The duvet has to remain in storage until they make a bed at the sawmill. They are happy with everything they got and keep looking through it all the time. They only don't really like Binem's hat because it's for "g'veret" (a lady).

Instead of wasting your strength for clapping, better use it for writing to me, if you'd like!

Stefa W.

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Readers who want to collaborate with the Little Review may contact a local reporter from their cities.

## A CHANUKKAH PARTY AT "MACCABI"

On Sunday, December 22nd, a Chanukkah party with small gifts and surprises for children will be held at "Maccabi" (2a Nalewki St.) Admission to the event is free, cloak room is paid.

## A NOVEL BY DYCIA FROM ZAMOŚĆ

# THE BICYCLE

I'm finally submitting my novel. I wrote it from June until today. I wanted to drop it twice, because I couldn't bring myself to finish it. I took a break from writing instead and then it all went swimmingly.

The worst part of writing is actually copying the finished work. My hands hurt and no one wants to help me. Everyone has something else to do.

I wrote "The Bicycle" in order to try my hand at writing a proper novel. I wanted to finish off Kazio twice, but I would have to put Cesio and Romek in a juvenile detention center and that topic would be more than I could handle. Moreover I have no idea what a juvenile detention center looks like from the inside. I heard it's bad, but that's not enough knowledge to actually write about it.

The novel mostly covers some details from my brother's life (he would kill me if he'd known I wrote a novel about him), as well as many made-up stories and even some moments from my own life.

Currently I want to take a short break and then get back to work. Please, be honest with me – is the novel any good?

It would make me sad to know that all the effort was in vain, but I'd rather hear the truth.

If you find any mistakes or errors, please forgive me – I have been horrible at writing recently.

### CHAPTER 1 – SUMMER

Three children – two sisters and their younger brother – were sitting at the table in a small flat on the suburbs of an insignificant city somewhere. They were playing Sixty-Six, a card game they learned just a day before, and had been playing since early in the morning. Their breakfast was still on the table, untouched, and they simply kept staring at their cards.

Through the window, they could see bright red poppy flowers and proud sunflowers, but on that day, they could not care less about all of that. They just sat there, counting their cards, like caricatures of adults.

The room was silent. Suddenly, Kazik spotted Ewa cheating and smacked her in the face.

"You pig! I don't want to play with you anymore!"

"No, you're a pig! Come on, Fela, let's play some stones."

The boy left, offended. He regretted calling his sisters a pig, but her cheating offended him even more. "She's so bad," he thought. "I know, I'm going to go and swim in the river." After a moment, he already had his swimming trunks on and he was running through the neighboring backyard and a meadow to the river. The beach was packed with people – elderly, adults and children.

Some workers egged him on.

"Hey, idiot! Don't go swimming, you will drown!" He decided to ignore them and jumped in for five minutes.

"It's great thing, that river... If only I could swim. Today the boys from the town are going to come and find out that I can't..." After a moment, he came up with another idea. He noticed his cousin and another friend swimming nearby, so he decided to bet who is going to hold his breath for longer underwater.

The idea was accepted and the three boys dove in the water in a second. After a second, Kazik raised his head above water and laughs silently, looking at the two fools. As soon as he noticed his cousin's head moving, he dove again. The boys were amazed, seeing him underwater after they resurfaced. "He's so good," they thought, giving up their three uniform buttons and a piece of wire, which would become a fishing rod.

### CHAPTER 2 – FISHING

For a whole week, Kazik was spending time with the son of Chana the gardener, making a fishing rod. First, they went to the forest and brought a bundle of sticks with them. After preparing and washing them, they finally chose one thin one to use.

After that, they started stealing corks and bottles. Despite their best intentions, they couldn't find any that would work and they had to buy a special large one. After working for a week, the fishing rod was finally ready to go. The sisters started to gather worms and catch flies, and finally Kazik went fishing like a hero.

He left home at 6 in the morning and returned at 10 in the evening, but in a far worse shape.

Hairs torn from the top of his head, scratched face, swollen nose... But he had two totally real fish sticking out from his pocket, as big as his pinky finger.

He told everyone that the fishing went swimmingly, but on the way home, a pack of local village boys jumped him and stole his enormous carp, despite his protests.

"But that's nothing, I had my revenge and two of them returned home with a black eye!"

"How could it be?" Ewa asked. "Two boys with just one eye?"

"Oh, you're so stupid... Don't talk if you don't understand what's it all about." And he didn't want to talk anymore.

### CHAPTER 3 – JIGSAW

"Mommy, if only I had a jigsaw, I would be nice and I would never be mean to anyone." After some pestering, mom finally agreed and one day her son returned from the town with a jigsaw and some blades. He went to get some plywood right away. He spent one zloty, claiming that he was going to get it back and make a profit as soon as he manages to cut some picture frames.

He started spending days on drawing fanciful patterns and then cutting them out. The sisters looked at his efforts with awestruck interest, but soon after they got bored with looking at him doing nothing, so they left him alone and went to the garden to watch beans grow.

Nothing tastes like young, fresh fava beans, eaten uncooked with potatoes so that mommy doesn't notice, otherwise she would get angry at them and beat them for that.

After several days, Kazik had many frames of various sizes, and they were truly beautiful. Out of sheer happiness he allowed his sisters to clean them up with sandpaper, which they did with diligence.

During the summer holidays, the house slowly filled up with picture frames, some of which are still hanging in the kitchen and the hall – the rest disappeared in mysterious circumstances. (TBC)

# DOMESTIC NEWS

## POLITICAL UPSET

The cabinet of Prime Minister Felek tendered its resignation. During a general assembly, Felek announced that he had spent several years working for the benefit of the class and now he wants to take a break.

The next day, Romek, the minister of education, asked the new Prime Minister Adek for a permission to organize a class meeting regarding the activities in the recreation room.

"No one's asking you for that! I'll call a meeting when I feel like it," said the new prime minister.

He quickly started ruling with an iron fist. The class was unhappy, but no one dared to speak up against the new tyrant lest our Mussolini cull all dissent by force. He ruled on his own, without asking any of the appointed ministers for approval. He conducted activities in the recreation room without the consent of the minister of education, published a paper without approval from the commissaries, he cleaned the classroom on his own and collected waste without the help of the ministry of interior.

Eventually, the cabinet rebelled and accused the new prime minister of being in a breach of section 13 of the constitution, which says that the leader controls the work of the committees, but does not act on their own.

After a rather violent meeting, the prime minister was forced to make a vow that he was not going to diminish the rights of the cabinet and that he would remain faithful to democracy. The political upset was thus brought to an end.

Arje from Białystok

## WET

The wind started bending the trees. Then, lightning struck somewhere and the rain started drumming on the roof. The tunnel was quickly transformed into a river which was impossible to cross. The residents of Otwock closed their windows and looked outside as if they were in a besieged fortress.

After that storm, only the pine trees did not change along with the rest of the world. Acacia leaves littered the puddles and withered twigs pointed towards the sky like bayonets. Soon, the first snow of this year started falling. For an hour, it painted the roofs and streets white, and then we once again saw rain crying from the sky, along with children, who missed the snow already. And then we had a storm of exams. Bad grades were raining down... A week of crying and natural disasters.

In order to cheer everybody up, "Piccolo" organized a "Funny Otwock" gala at the casino and invited a theatre group from Ukraine. The hall was heated up only by the warmth of the Ukrainian melodies played on stage. Everyone was amazed and thrilled by their words and songs straight from their hearts. Only one man was unhappy. On that day, he read a column with the report from the court case of the assassins of the late Minister Pieracki. Right after that, he saw the poster advertising the Ukrainian show at the casino. "What a disgrace!" he exclaimed and rushed there. During the show, he stood up and started telling everyone to leave the casino. Some people actually stood up, others kept sitting down, visibly unhappy with the situation. Only after

a moment the casino owner explained the angry patriot that there are many Ukrainians in the world and that the whole nation cannot be held responsible for the crime committed by a single organization.

There was one bright evening and it got dark again. Everybody knew the confectionery ran by Mr. Łopata, the one with a brightly lit window on Warszawska Street, on the opposite from the train station. A car came and took it away. The light was turned off, the lively discussions and arguments about marzipan mushrooms went silent. The end. Łopata is no more.

The silence is painful. But what is that? Sirens somewhere in the city. "Fire!" "Where?" "In the city center, a petrol explosion." The Jewish merchants lost thousands. And people are crying again.

How can one write a chronicle when everyone's crying?

The rain is falling. It's a downpour. Someone sighed, and someone else scribbled with his pen.

Szlamek from Otwock

## FIRE

I was doing my homework, but then suddenly I was interrupted by loud sirens. I ran out to the street, where all people were rushing in one direction. Suddenly, I noticed a red glow against the dark sky. Some windows opened and some worried, pale faces appeared here and there, asking "Fire? What's burning?"

Around me, I hear the bells and whistles of fire brigade cars, with firefighters – looking like Roman gladiators with their steel helmets – standing among their equipment. I decided to run along with the crowd. Suddenly, I saw the horrible picture of destruction. A wooden building had gone up in flames and looked like a giant torch. Impressive tongues of fire and billows of dark smoke shot up to the sky. The streams of water released by the firefighters resembled colorful rockets, falling onto the smoldering house with a hissing noise. A part of the house fell down, glowing red pieces of wood rained from the sky. A cordon of the police blocked access to the scene of accident. The firefighters kept trying to extinguish the fire.

The night passed among the screams of horror and the new morning dawned. Among the smoldering ruins there were no more onlookers, only the crying owners, who were now left without a roof over their heads and who lost everything they had. The last pieces were still burning down and the air was filled by the horrible stench of burned wood. The family home was turned into ashes and ruins.

Ida from Pińsk

## THE RADOM CHRONICLE

Sadly, my dear readers, what goes around comes around – upon returning from a showing of "Pan Tadeusz," where we went on a school outing, I was forced to add 50 groszy spent on a ticket to a piece of paper with "I.W.D." on it – it stands for "I was duped."

I won't even discuss the terrible organization and the behavior of the boys who, upon learning that the gallery and the ground floor cost exactly the same, did everything in their power to completely take over the ground

floor, and I will just talk about the play in question.

I cannot fathom how Zosia could be cross-eyed and how could they make Telimena a redhead with a costume so strange it was almost comical. The same applies to Tadeusz, who wore yellow pants with everything else green, thanks to which he looked like an embodiment of scrambled eggs with green onions. The judge? I could barely tell him apart from the table and other furniture because his costume was made of the same fabric as the upholstery.

Apart from that, I have never seen such uninspired acting in my life before. In general, it all seemed like a parody aimed at making us hate "Pan Tadeusz" with a passion.

From the life of the organizations: Masada already organizes a number of events. Recently we had two of them: a literary contest and a party. The best competitor guessed 8 out of 11 books. It's also worth noting that the only book guessed by every participant was "A Child of the Salon" by Janusz Korczak. The winner received a prize – a book from the Masada library.

Apart from that, I can tell you about the meeting of the patronage. During the meeting, one of the ladies presented a lecture, in which she bravely fought imaginary assimilation, which in my mind made her like Don Quixote fighting against windmills. Additionally, out of nowhere R., the president of Masada, started to explain what Masada was about (as if anyone didn't know this already) and started getting into history so deeply, that he could probably put Dubnow, Bałaban or Grecco. He realized what he was doing only when the president of the Zionist organization came for one of the activists to deal with the issue of a Radom kibbutz.

## Sports:

Schoolchildren around the city are earning their National Sport Badges. Our school is currently completing jumping tests.

Apart from that, shooting trophies were displayed in all classrooms – a marble cup and a black clock. During the speech of the principal, who could not stop praising the winning team of six pupils, an essential question was asked from the back of the room: "Does this clock even work?"

It was really important question, given the romantic enthusiasm of everyone gathered in the classroom. Additionally, we decided not to let the five shooters from the 8th grade graduate until we find new ones; however, the teachers think otherwise.

Biba from Radom

## A NICE

### AND BREAKTHROUGH DAY

Our association had an important and solemn moment yesterday, and it is going to be a breakthrough in our lives.

As our third most beautiful clock in Poland struck four, our room started filling up with correspondents. They arrived in droves and as a result we quickly ran out of space at the table. The secretary cleaned his glasses and looked amazed at the crowd of people that gathered.

The director of the Jewish Middle School, Mr. Fruchter, also came to the meeting, and he was welcomed with open arms by the members of the association.

Order of the day:

- Reading the report from the last meeting.

- The issue of a local column dedicated to Zamość.

- The chronicle.

- Current articles.

Dorka from Zamość

## A BIG WORD: ARTIST – AND SUCH TRICKS!

I am very angry and my head hurts. I was expecting a happy day, but instead it is filled with sadness and bitterness.

On Saturday, I was happy to go to the Kameralny Theatre to see "Robinson Crusoe" with my class. It is not one of the more serious plays out there, but I felt happy about seeing my favorite heroes once again.

The day finally came. It was Sunday, December 8. We came to the theatre. I won't go into details of what happened in the beginning and how we were seated. We paid 75 groszy and we were supposed to get the boxes, but only some of the girls could sit there, the others had to stand in the back. After our director protested, the remaining girls were put in a corner somewhere, from where they could barely get a glimpse of the stage.

I decided to endure, hoping that at least the play would be great. But the play was really bad. Neither the performance nor the stage design made any impression on me. Then, we finally got to the "nice" surprise.

At some point, when Robinson and his friends were waiting for the ship, a fat lady got on the stage, characterized as a Jew, and started screaming:

"Icuś! Icuś! Where's my husband? I'm afraid!"

Suddenly, there was a man with a suitcase, looking like a Jew, among the audience. He ran to the stage and asked:

"Dear children, did you see my wife anywhere?"

He hugged his wife, then he came closer to the sailor and said with a Jewish accent:

- A lecture on the need of promoting Jewish culture by the members of the association (a response to the article by N. Budwicz published in the Little Review of November 22 this year)

- Projects:

a) Organization of social life of the association.

b) The issue of parties, recreation room and celebrations.

It is impossible to write a report concerning the entirety of the meeting and every discussion that took place. I will only say that we are not discouraged by the failure of our first regional column. Everyone adopted the "Heads up!" resolution with enthusiasm and we are going to create a new, better column that will be printed for sure.

Thanks to the good will of Director Bronisław Fruchter, our association will be able to take advantage of the recreation room, radio, papers and the library of the Jewish Middle School. On behalf of the association, I expressed our gratitude to the director. Apart from that, he promised to offer us a hall to organize theatrical plays (with all correspondents participating as actors). Does anybody wonder why we decided to celebrate such a solemn moment? Our new colleague, Artur, started singing and Dycia recited some poems, which was met with rounds of applause. At the end of the meeting, we played some table tennis.

We would like to know what is going on with other associations and circles. What's up with the BPA (Białystok Press Agency)? How about VPA (Vilnius), CPA (Częstochowa), ŁPA (Łódź), RPA (Radom) and others? I propose that everyone sends an activity report from time to time.

Dorka from Zamość

"Cap'n, this is me wifey, her name's Sara and me name's Icuś, dun' be mad at me, Cap'n!"

Then, they started doing all sorts of strange things on stage, and obviously, they mentioned that they had to buy some herring, onions and lemonade.

I was surprised. I didn't know what was going on. I read many versions of Robinson Crusoe, more and less abridged editions and I don't remember any Jews taking part in his adventures. I realized that this scene was added on purpose. I felt hot and kept asking myself why would they bring us here. To insult us? To laugh at us?

I was surprised that many of my friends laughed at it. Didn't they realize that they weren't laughing at the actors, but at themselves?

Now that I have written it all, I feel somehow better. But this is not the only reason why I wrote that letter. I also wanted it to serve as a warning to everyone, so that they don't have to go through what I had to see.

Mirjam

## BRAIN TEASERS

### FIRST ENTERTAINMENT TOURNAMENT OF THE LITTLE REVIEW

Solution to Tournament Task no. 18. Stefek's story is inconsistent in the following aspects:

The post office is closed on Sundays, so Janek could not take out money from his savings account.

The #17 tram doesn't run through Miodowa or Nowy Świat Streets.

The "film matinées" end at 2 in the afternoon at the earliest, thus it isn't a good time for breakfast.

### TOURNAMENT TASK NO. 19.

Submitted by: Emerzon

5 points for submitting a solution.

Three men are on board of a bus as staff – driver, conductor and assistant driver. Their names are Józef, Salomon and Rubin. We don't know which name belongs to whom.

There are also three passengers, also Józef, Salomon and Rubin. Mr. Rubin lives in Jerusalem, the man bearing the same name as the conductor lives in Haifa. Józef earns 5,244 pounds and 23 piastres per year. The passenger living the closest to the conductor earns three times as more as the conductor. The conductor lives halfway between Jerusalem and Haifa, Salomon is better at billiards than the assistant driver.

What is the name of the driver?

CONTINUED ON P. 6

# READER UPDATES

## CHANUKKAH OF THE YOUNGEST

### I.

Almost every single Jewish child loves Chanukkah. The atmosphere at home is joyful, daddy lights up candles, we play with dreidel, Old Maid and other games.

Chanukkah is very nice in our home. Daddy lights the candles and tells the story of Hannah and her eight sons that were killed.

Mommy makes latkes and my sister is very happy because her birthday falls on Chanukkah. We invite some guests and play together.

Symcia from Gęsia Street

### II.

Everyone should be jolly on Chanukkah. When the long-awaited week finally comes, we are happy and joyful. Looking at the lit candles, we remember the history of Jews from generations ago.

At school, we usually organize a special evening. When the audience gathers, a play with dancing and music starts. Then, after the play, we have some treats for every guest and we return home happy.

Lola from Twarda Street

### III.

Last year, daddy bought a Chanukkah menorah, I lit the candles and dad sung a song with his beautiful voice. Then we played dreidel with my daddy, mommy and my friend.

Last year we were living in Białystok, now we live in Orla in Podlachia. It is going to be joyful as well because our entire family lives here.

My sister, Salcia, also wants to light candles this year, so we are going to take turns.

Ajzyk from Orla

### IV.

The Chanukkah menorah was standing beside the frozen window. I kept looking at the candles and the window and each time I looked I saw different images.

I saw a temple covered with moss, surrounded by various idols, with Antiochus soldier standing in the middle.

I looked at the second candle and the image on the window disappeared. I saw Hannah with her last son, dressed in mourning clothes. Beside her was Antiochus, fuming with anger.

The third candle showed a happier image – Judah Maccabee taking revenge for the crimes against his nation.

The fourth one was horrible. I saw the ruthless Antiochus beating an old man and forcing him to eat pork.

The fifth one showed the death of Maccabee and his son promising to continue his father's work.

The sixth candle made me happy because I saw Judah expelling the army of Antiochus.

With the seventh one, I clearly saw the word "Chanukkah," and with the eighth one – a beautiful candlestick. I started singing my own Chanukkah song.

Stasio from Nowolipki Street

## CANDLES AND SOAP

Soon, colorful candles will be lit in all windows. Many of you are probably interested in how they are made. We

decided to tour a candle factory to tell you.

The factory, or rather a small manufacture is located in the basement. The owner – a young and modest man – welcomed us and demonstrated every single thing, after first explaining it.

First, stearin is melted in a large, heated boiler. The resulting liquid is then poured into a machine with holes shaped like candles. The wick goes through the middle of the forms. When the stearin sets, the machine automatically lifts the candles up, thus cleaning the holes and pulling the wick.

Some additional stearin is then poured into the holes. When it sets again, the wick connecting two candles is cut with a special knife. All the candles where the wick did not go through are melted again. In the case of Chanukkah candles, a special dye is added. The finished candles are packed into special boxes and transported across Warsaw.

Taking advantage of the fact that the candle manufacture shares backyard with a soap factory, we decided to tour it as well.

In an enormous room, the first thing that we noticed was a large boiler that makes steam. The steam is then moved via pipes to large vats where resin, tallow, coconut and soda are melted. The mixture is left for 24 hours, after which it is poured into special trays with water. After an hour, the soap is cut by machine and then another one stamps the factory logo on the pieces.

Romek and Mietek

## A RAFFLE

I was going through the Saxon Garden. Next to the entrance, there are various peddlers selling their balloons, mirrors and combs. Many onlookers gathered around the man advertising the newest "Robot" shoe polish.

However, the largest crowd gathered for the raffle. The table, where the tickets were sold, various prizes such as chocolate, clocks, jugs and so on were displayed. A single ticket costs 20 groszy. Anybody who finds a small piece of paper in their ticket gets a prize on the spot and all the tickets will also participate in the final draw.

The seller encourages people. A worker's hand takes out money from a torn pocket. Something is so enticing, so attractive about the whole lottery thing. A moment of waiting. Some tension, as the shaking hands open a ticket...

"Nothing." The voice whispers, but the man is actually wrong. There is a piece of paper at the bottom. The worker's face brightens with joy. The seller hands him a carafe and the worker laughs, asking the seller to add some vodka. The worker leaves and makes room for everybody else.

On the other side, some man started screaming that the lottery is a scam because he already bought three tickets and didn't win anything. He started arguing with the seller who told him to leave, otherwise he would call the police. The angry man threw his tickets on the ground. I picked them up and told him they were valid, but apparently, he didn't have much faith in them.

I put them in my pocket. Perhaps I could win a bicycle? The lottery seems to be very popular, so I decided to leave.

In just a few days, I collected five tickets. I know I'm not going to win anything, but maybe... If I win anything, I'll let you know.

Rysio from Ogrodowa Street

## HARSH PUNISHMENT

When I was walking to school in the morning, I was very happy, but during my art class – which I actually like very much – everything turned worse.

The teacher gave us back the drawings she collected during our last class. I saw that she wrote "BAD" over my drawing with large letters.

I got very angry and tore the drawing in front of her eyes. She told me to leave the class and not come back for a week.

I know I shouldn't have done that, but tell me, dear readers, should I face such a severe punishment for that?

Fela from Sierpc

## THE DANCER HAS A VOICE

Since early childhood I loved to dance. When I was four, mom wanted to sign me up for the stage dance school ran by Tacjana Wysocka, but dad said that I was still too young to dance. He told me that I will be able to join when I'm five.

On my fifth birthday, dad made me a surprise and told me that the next day I would go and participate in an entry exam for Tacjana Wysocka's school. The very next day I went to the exam. They told me to present my own dance routine, so I danced a krakowiak and that was the end of my exam. When I returned to the office, they told me that I was accepted for the children's troupe.

Last year I performed on the stage of the Maly Theatre in the play "Janka." Now I'm taking the intermediate course and I perform from time to time.

Apart from that, I attend school as well. When I was six and a half years old, I started attending 1st grade of a private elementary school. After six months, the teacher said that I'm too well-developed for 1st grade and wanted to move me to the 2nd grade, but mom was adamant and did not allow her to do so, because she thought I was still too young. I stayed in 1st grade until the end of the year.

Now I'm eight and in 3rd grade already. Learning is quite easy for me. For some time, I've been interested in animals. My biggest dream was to have a dog at home. I kept pestering mom about that, but she said it was impossible because a dog would make our home dirty. Now my dream finally came true, but soon I'm going to have to say goodbye to my friend.

I keep telling myself that when I grow up and I will be living on my own, I'll buy myself a dog and I will be a member of the Animal Care Society.

Aniutka from Sosnowa Street

THE LITTLE REVIEW NEWSROOM CAN BE REACHED BY PHONE ON TUESDAYS AND FRIDAYS BETWEEN 1 P.M. AND 2 P.M., PHONE 11-99-17.

THE LITTLE REVIEW NEWSROOM WELCOMES VISITORS EVERY SUNDAY BETWEEN 4 P.M. AND 5 P.M. – NO. 7 NOWOLIPKI STREET.

## BRAIN TEASERS

CONTINUED FROM P. 5

### TOURNAMENT TASK NO. 20.

Submitted by: Baby

2 points for submitting a solution.

Write five six-letter words with a common element – "PA" – into the grid above.

### TOURNAMENT TASK NO. 21

Submitted by: Olek G.

1 point for submitting a solution.

### SOLUTIONS TO THE TOURNAMENT TASK NO. 13

WERE SUBMITTED BY:

Mieczysław Akerajzen (5 p.), Jakób Fajersztejn (5 p.), Jakób Kamień (5 p.), Rafał Rubinstein (5 p.), Bolesław Rząsiński (5 p.), Janka Winkler (5 p.).

### SOLUTIONS TO THE TOURNAMENT TASK NO. 14

WERE SUBMITTED BY:

Jan Ryszard Czarnocki, Dawid Greber, Leon Lewinstein, Eljasz Pietrowiecki, Abram Waksman, Ludwik Winawer.

### SOLUTIONS TO THE TOURNAMENT TASKS NO. 14

AND 15 WERE SUBMITTED BY:

Mieczysław Akerajzer, Dawid Brandszteter, Jakób Fajersztejn, Izio Fryszman, Michał Gelblum, Olek Gold, Mosze Goldfarb, Kryśia Hopengarten, Aleksander Hopfengarten, Helena Janowska, Sara Libermanówna, Izrael Lichtensztejn, Dorka Majerowiczówna, Mietek Oppenheim, Halina Repsztejnówna, Stasio Rozenfeld, Rafał Rubinsztejn, Mirka Rząsińska, Marysia Serebriana, Irka Szafir, Sonia Wermusówna, Ryszard Zapolski, Saba Żelazo.

### CORRECT SOLUTIONS TO TOURNAMENT TASK NO. 15

WERE SUBMITTED BY:

Aniela Ajzenberg, Henryk Ajzenberg, Hanka Fejginówna, Eda Frenklówna, Teodor Geszychter, Szoel Szpilman, Mirka Wajnberg.

NOTICE: There was a printing mistake in task no. 14. The first number in the first row was wrong. Due to that mistake, all the submitted solutions with first word being wrong were also accepted.

### BELOW ARE THE BEST SOLUTIONS TO TOURNAMENT TASK NO. 4: ALONE AT HOME BY BLUMA JUSTMAN.

Autumn. Dusk. I'm sitting at the window. The streets are empty. It's raining. Rain drops fall from the gutter, drum at the window and play strange, rhythmical melodies. The characteristic, mild sound of the ticking clock fills the room. In the darkness, I can still distinguish the

contours of houses and trees. I turn on the light because I think that one does not have to sit in the darkness and watch how "the stove opens its toothless mouth and the legs of the desk become one with the table." The lampshade of the night lamp got crooked, directing some light over the desk and leaving the remainder of the room shrouded in mysterious shade. I'm thinking about whether one can call a tangled mess of images, thoughts and desires a dream. So many new thoughts are crowding in my head. I start longing for a strong idea that I could look upon, that would give me a purpose, an ultimate goal in life. I keep thinking. I'm afraid that you won't understand me and that I'll be lost in the avalanche of new impressions and emotions, that I will create a wild chaos of syllables, words and sentences that will play the silent and painful notes only for me...

Civil wars, party wars, fights on the streets, local wars, world wars... It's bad.

And so, I keep thinking for a long time.

The maid comes in. I get undressed and go straight to bed. I close my eyes and try to fall asleep before the light goes out because then I will be forced to go one more night without sleep.

## BRAIN TEASERS CREATORS' CONTEST:

The editors of the Brain Teasers column announce a contest for creators. The participants should submit tasks based on their own ideas only. The authors of the most ingenious tasks will receive prizes.

The editors are setting three prizes. The tasks will be published in the Brain Teasers column of the paper. Apart from that, the authors who receive prizes and distinctions will be invited to join the Brain Teasers Club that will be formed at the Little Review. The contest will run until January 9, 1936 and the tasks may be submitted to that date at the latest. Each author may submit any number of works. Each task should be submitted with a correct solution on a separate piece of paper (each task with a solution on a separate piece of paper). Please write "Brain Teasers Creators' Contest" at the top of each piece. Do not forget to include your full name, age and exact address on every piece. If you decide to use a pseudonym, please also include your name and surname. Do not add any letters, inquiries or solutions to the tournament tasks to the contest submissions. All illegible submissions (written in pencil, on tissue paper, etc.) will not be considered for the prizes. ■

During the winter break, we will hold the annual

## CHESS COMPETITION FOR THE LITTLE REVIEW CHAMPIONSHIP

Registrations will be accepted from today, until Sunday, December 22nd (to be submitted to the newsroom, No. 7 Nowolipki Street in Warsaw). The tournament is open to all Little Review readers under the age of 13. Registrations should contain your full name, age, grade and your address.