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POLISH LITERATURE IN ISRAEL A RECONNAISSANCE

Polish literature has accompanied the rise and development of the state of Israel since its very beginnings. However, today, after nearly seventy years since its establishing in 1948 and after nearly fifty years since the last *Aliyah* of Polish Jews in March 1968, this chapter has been slowly closing. Polish literary life in Israel has been fading away – there are no more newspapers, weeklies, quarterlies, or other cultural or literary magazines in the Polish language; there are no more Polish publishing houses, bookstores or libraries; only few actually read in Polish; and there are only a few authors writing in Polish – with the youngest of them (Viola Wein or Eli Barbur) being about seventy years old.¹ Thus, it seems the right moment to attempt to offer a first historical and literary recapitulation of this seventy-year long chapter of the history of the Polish culture; the chapter unlimited to either home or emigration literature.

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¹ See: K. FAMULSKA-CIESIELSKA and S.J. ŻUREK, *Literatura polska w Izraelu. Leksykon* ('Polish Literature in Israel. A Lexicon'), Kraków–Budapest 2012; later in the text referred to as LPI.

I. BEFORE 1948

For many years before 1948 the first Polish-Jewish writers had been arriving in the land of Israel. Many of them sympathised with Zionism and were under the influence of the propaganda of many Zionist organisations in Poland (for example *Ha-shomer Ha-tzair*), which persuaded Jewish communities – first of all, young people – to emigrate from Poland to Palestine.

Even before the Second World War, in the land of Israel arrived Polish-Jewish artists who were the most ideological Zionists. They included, for example, Joseph Lichtenbaum (arrived in 1920) – the legendary translator into Hebrew of the Polish poetry by Słowacki, Mickiewicz (including *Pan Tadeusz*) and Tuwim, as well as the prose by Sienkiewicz. Lichtenbaum later became important also for the Israeli culture as a Hebrew poet crucial for the development of this language and literature.² This wave of immigrants included likewise Maryla Wolman-Sierackowa (Miriam Shir) (arrived in 1924), a journalist and translator, the author of Polish Jewish and Polish–Hebrew dictionaries. After her settlement in Palestine, she started working as a correspondent for Polish-Jewish newspapers, e.g. *Nasz Przegląd* ('Our Review') published in Warsaw and *Chwila* ('A Moment') – in Lviv. After the war she worked in the Hebrew newspaper *Davar*, collaborating at the same time with Polish language newspapers published in Israel, for example *Nowiny-Kurier* ('The News Courier'). Other writers included Cwi Arad (arrived in 1931) – a translator of contemporary Polish prose; Shimshon Meltzer (arrived in 1934) – a translator of Polish, Jewish and German poetry and prose into Hebrew; Mordechai Khalamish – a Hebrew literary critic and a translator from English, German, Polish and Yiddish into Hebrew, who was a member of Mapam,³ and later worked for many years in the *Al Hamishmar* newspaper connected with it. Other important authors were Joseph Kornblum – a prose writer, who debuted late, only in the end of the seventies, in *The Nowiny-Kurier* (both he and Khalamish arrived in 1935); Benjamin Tenenbaum-Tene (arrived in 1937) – a translator and a poet; and finally the journalist and writer Mieczysław (Menachem) Shtitzer (arrived in 1939). The immigrants from Poland worked first of all on translations into Hebrew from many different European languages; some of them became active both in Polish and in Hebrew literary life.

² "In the years 1931–1932 he was an editorial assistant of the magazine *Moznajim*. Later he worked in the daily *Haarec* and in the Twerski publishing house. He published his Hebrew poems in literary magazines, for instance in *Hacefira*, *Haolam*, *Hatkufa* and *Haam*" (LPI, 102).

³ Mapam (an acronym of words *Miflegat HaPoalim HaMeukhedet*, lit. *United Workers Party*) was a left-wing political party in Israel established in 1948 and dissolved in 1997. Many Polish-Jewish artists in Israel were connected with this formation.

Yet, they constituted rather individual and isolated cases, and thus it would be difficult to talk about the emigration of a substantial literary Polish Jewish *Aliyah* to Palestine.

This situation changed after the outbreak of the Second World War. Not long after the failure of the September Campaign a few Polish authors of Jewish roots appeared in the British-mandated territory of Palestine. They were mostly well-to-do and often had played an important role in the Polish social and political life before WWII. In the autumn of 1939 a few distinguished figures arrived in Palestine, including Pauline Appenszlak – a journalist and a feminist activist; Meir Perisco – an ex-service physician of the September campaign and later a poet; Eugenia Nadlerowa – a novelist, poet, translator and journalist; and Zeev Sheps – a translator who became famous for his translations of works by many twentieth-century Hebrew poets into the Polish language and who published in London *An Anthology of Hebrew Poetry* (1974). Other authors were, among others, the journalist Natan Gurdus; the journalist and literary critic Paul Glickson who had arrived in Eretz together with his parents in August 1940; Shulamit Harewen (formerly Ryfin) – a writer and a translator, the first woman who became a member of the Israel Academy of Hebrew Language; and the pre-war *Chwila* journalist from Lviv Henryk Rosmarin (1940), who represented the Polish Government in Exile in the rank of the General Consul in Tel-Aviv in the years 1941–1945.⁴ Probably the most interesting arrival to Palestine was Apolinary Hartglas – a pre-war journalist and Zionist activist, and a member of the parliament for three terms. Initially (in October 1939) he was a member of the Warsaw *Judenrat*; later he managed to escape and reach Palestine, where in 1940 he started working for the Jewish Agency (Sochnut). For the latter, as Famulska-Ciesielska and Żurek describe, “he prepared reports of the testimonies of the refugees from Poland (those who survived the Shoah and the Jewish soldiers who deserted from the Polish Army in the Near East); [at] that time he [also] prepared the booklet *Poznaj ten kraj... (do żołnierza polskiego)* [‘Get to Know this Land... (to a Polish soldier)’], published by the Polish Jew Commission at the Jewish Agency in Palestine (Jerusalem 1944).” (LPI, 67)

A new chapter of the Jewish and Polish history was opened by the Polish writers of Jewish roots who arrived in *Eretz* together with the Army of General Władysław Anders. One of them was David Lazer, who had already reached

⁴ In the years 1952-1955 Rosmarin worked in Tel-Aviv as an editor of the Polish-language newspaper *Nowiny Dnia* (‘Daily News’), which changed its title for *Nowiny Poranne* (‘Morning News’) in 1953 (cf. LPI, 138).

Palestine in 1941, even before the Polish Army. This pre-war Polish journalist (the editor of *Nowy Dziennik* [‘The New Daily’]), a Zionist activist and a Polish literary scholar escaped from Cracow to Tel-Aviv through Vilnius, Moscow, Teheran and Bagdad. In Palestine he became a Polish civil servant and run the Polish Telegraphic Agency, which belonged to the Polish Ministry of Information of the Polish Government in London. He published columns in *W drodze* (‘On the Way’) – a bi-weekly published by the Polish Army, and later in Israel he became the editor-in-chief of literary columns of *The Maarive*. Leo Lipski, undoubtedly the most distinguished Polish-Israeli writer, arrived in 1945. He reached Palestine through Soviet concentration camps, the Polish Army and the University in Beirut. In 1942 arrived Łucja Pinczewska-Gliksman, a future writer, who had been a prisoner of Soviet work camps in Kopeisk behind the Ural.⁵ Another distinguished Polish-Jewish critic who arrived in *Eretz Israel* in 1942 together with the Second Trunk of the Polish Army was Henry Ritterman-Abir.

During the stay of the Polish Army in Palestine (1942-1944) the circle of writer-soldiers gathered around the bi-weekly *On the Way* (1943-1946),⁶ where, as Famulska-Ciesielska and Żurek observe, “many publishing initiatives were raised, both in literature and literary studies, and in popular science [and where] the works both by such Polish literary classics as Ignacy Krasicki, and by common, popular authors as Melchior Wańkowicz, Bronisław Życki or Jan Szuldrzyński were published” (LPI, 6-7). Moreover, at that time the newspaper *Gazeta Polska* (‘The Polish Daily’) (1941–1947) started to appear in Jerusalem. One of its editors was Fryderyk Schoenfeld, who before the Second World War had been a journalist of *Chwila* in Lviv. As one can see, in the Near East, a large part of the active Polish journalists were Jews; they were also – apart from Polish soldiers staying in Palestine – the readers of Polish periodicals.⁷

⁵ Till the end of the war she worked as a cultural education reporter for the Representative Powers of the Polish Government and also in other government institutions, for instance for the Centre of Information for the East and the Representative Powers of the Ministry of Work and Social Welfare. During her stay in General Anders’s Army in Jerusalem she edited and published two poetry volumes of Jan Kasprowicz (1944) and Kornel Ujejski (1946).

⁶ This was a literary and research magazine edited consecutively by Władysław Broniewski, Victor Weintraub and Zdzisław Broncel.

⁷ During this time in Palestine there appeared many newsletters published by General Anders’s Army, for example: *Ku Wolnej Polsce* (‘For Free Poland’) (1941–1942); *Biuletyn Informacyjny Polskich Uchodźców Wojennych na Bliskim Wschodzie* (‘Newsletter of Polish War Refugees in Near East’) (Jerusalem 1941, published by the Social Committee of Polish Refugees (Komitet Społeczny dla Spraw Uchodźców Polskich w Palestynie); *Głos Polski* (‘The Polish Voice’) (Tel-Aviv 1942–1943); *Dziennik Żołnierza APW* (‘The Polish Army Soldiers’ Daily’) (Jerusalem 1943–1944, pu-

It is worth noticing that in the August of 1943 among the seventy seven thousands of Polish soldiers in Anders's Army, there were about three and a half thousand Jews. Out of this group, about three thousand were under the influence of Zionist propaganda and subsequently deserted from the Army.⁸ During the independence war (1948-1949) they reinforced the *Hagana* forces.

After the end of the war the survivors of the Shoah managed to get to Palestine – mostly illegally.⁹ Most of them passed through the ghettos, hiding places and the Shoah centres: Majdanek, Płaszów, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Bergen-Belsen or Ravensbrück, and finally – on the way to Palestine – through displaced persons camps scattered all over Europe. They came to Israel thanks to different Zionist organisations. Later on, many of these newcomers took part in the independence war.¹⁰

blished by the Propaganda and Education Section of the Polish Army in the East (Oddział Propagandy i Oświaty Armii Polskiej na Wschodzie); *Biuletyn Wolnej Polski* ('Free Poland Bulletin') (1944–1945; a newsletter of the Polish Patriots' Association in the Middle East (Związek Patriotów Polskich na Środkowym Wschodzie), at first – a weekly, and then a bi-weekly, edited by Stanisław Brodzki); *Mysł Polska na Wschodzie* ('The Polish Thought in the East') (an inside-newsletter of the National Faction, Jerusalem 1943–1946); *Ochotniczka* ('A Female Volunteer') (1943–1944 Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, a monthly edited by the Backup Women Service (Pomocniczej Służby Kobiet), later published in Egypt, and finally in Italy); *Więści Polskie* ('Polish News') (Jerusalem 1945–1946; an inside-newsletter for members of the organisations associated in the United Committee of Polish Citizens' Society in Palestine (Komitet Porozumiewawczy Stowarzyszenia Obywateli Polskich w Palestynie). See LPI, 128). Cf. J. CHEŁAP-NOWAKOWA, *Polskie „imperium literackie” w Iraku i Palestynie w czasie II wojny światowej*, „Arcana” 2003, No 6, p. 128-153; W. SEELISCH, *Losy emigrantów w Palestynie / Izraelu*, „Studia Podlaskie” 2001, vol. 11, p. 3-22.

⁸ See: H. SARNER, *General Anders and The Soldiers of the Second Polish Corps*, Cathedral City, California 1997; T. GAŚOWSKI, *Pod sztandarami orła białego. Kwestia żydowska w Polskich Siłach Zbrojnych w czasie II wojny światowej*, Kraków 2002.

⁹ In 1945 – Lucyna (Lilka) Miller-Kwiat, Mina Tomkiewicz-Kryształ, Israel Zyngman; in 1946 – Miriam Akavia (Matylda Weinfeld), Halina Aszkenazy-Engelhard, Ida Henefeld-Ron, Helena Szereszewska, Uri Orlew (Jerzy Henryk Orłowski); in 1947 – Irit Amiel (Irena Librowicz), Halina Birenbaum. Arrivals in Palestine before the independence war: Arie Brauner, Teodor Hatalgi (Scheinberg), Icchak Komem, Szlomo Lindenbaum.

¹⁰ Shulamit Harewen was a paramedic in the *Hagana* organisation. Ida Henefeld-Ron, Arie Brauner, Miriam Akavia and Szlomo Lindenbaum (division *Ecel*) took part in the face to face fight with the enemy as members of combat organisations.

II. AFTER 1948

In 1948 – as scholars claim – one-third of the inhabitants of the fledgling state of Israel came from Poland.¹¹ In the fifties and sixties, more than a hundred and sixty-three thousand Polish Jews arrived in Israel.¹² The dynamics of next *Aliyahs* was largely regulated by the changing policy towards Jews of the communist authorities in Poland and in consequence – by either self-imposed or forced immigrations.

1. ALIYAH 1948-1953

By the end of the forties, the time of the relative autonomy in cultural and political life of the communist Poland was being slowly finished. In December 1948 The Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza – PZPR) was established, connecting all pro-communist and leftist organisations, headed by the Polish Workers' Party (Polska Partia Robotnicza – PPR) and the Polish Socialist Party (Polska Partia Socjalistyczna – PPS). And soon after, in January 1949 in Szczecin, the Fourth Congress of Polish Writers took place thus inaugurating a several years' dictatorship of socialist realism in the officially distributed literature.¹³

The uncertain political situation on the one hand, and the building of the iron curtain on the other, provoked various types – legal, semi-legal and illegal – of departures of Jews from Poland. The group of the most famous future writers who arrived in Israel included, among others, Harry Berlin, Rachel Auerbach, Joseph Bau, Nathan Gross, Uri Huppert and Zeev (Wilhelm) Fleischer.¹⁴ At that time the authorities of Israel, however, did not particularly promote Polish-language activities and thus provided disappointing prospects for the *olim* interested in the

¹¹ See: A. STANKOWSKI, *Nowe spojrzenie na statystyki dotyczące emigracji Żydów z Polski po 1944 roku*, [in:] G. BERENDT, A. GRABSKI, A. STANKOWSKI, *Studia z historii Żydów w Polsce po 1945 r.*, Warszawa 2000, p. 104 (quoted in LPI, 6).

¹² See: E. KOSSEWSKA, *O Polsce po „izraelsku”, o Izraelu po polsku*, [in:] E. KOSSEWSKA (ed.), *Brzemie Pamięci. Współczesne stosunki polsko-izraelskie*, Warszawa 2009, p. 113.

¹³ See: P. KNAP (ed.), *Wokół zjazdu szczecińskiego 1949 r.*, Szczecin 2011.

¹⁴ During this time many Polish-Jewish artists arrived in Israel, including in 1948: Lea Shinar, Shlomo Leser, Sonia Mendel Joffe, Maria Hochberg-Mariańska, Ilana Maschler; in 1949: Shlomo Wolkowicz, Harry Berlin, Marcel Goldman, Jehuda Lejb Knobler; at the turn of 1949/1950: Edward Rostal; in 1950: Rachel Auerbach, Joseph Bau, Janina Brandwajn-Ziemianin, Jaakow Beeser, Natan Gross, Uri Huppert, Orna Jagur, Felicia Karay, Jael Shalitt, Mira Slowes, David Weinfeld, Zeev (Wilhelm) Fleischer; in 1951: Ruth Eldar, Jonatan Barkai, and in 1952: Richard Low.

building of a Polish-language literary environment. This attitude resulted from the social policy of the state of Israel, which, as Famulska-Ciesielska and Żurek note, “crusaded for Hebrewfication, conceived as inside integration [and thus] there were no favourable circumstances of development of literatures in foreign languages, also in Polish” (LPI, 7).

During that time the residual Polish literary life in Israel concentrated around Polish magazines such as *Przegląd* (‘A Review’), which appeared continuously from 1949 to 1982 (edited by Henry Ritterman-Abir),¹⁵ yet which was rather information-focused and only occasionally printed columns with literary works.¹⁶ In the years 1950–1953 the new weeklies appeared – *Kronika Tygodniowa* (‘A Weekly Chronicle’), *Kronika Izraelska* – ‘An Israel Chronicle’, or *Kronika* – ‘The Chronicle’) edited by Aleksander Charima and Maria Mariańska. These periodicals published more literary texts and journalistic writings. Towards the ending of its existence, *Kronika* appeared alternatively with *Przekrój* (‘A Cross-Section’) (*Kronika*: Sundays and Tuesdays; *Przekrój*: Thursdays).¹⁷

2. ALIYAH 1957-1959

The largest group of Polish writers and intellectuals of Jewish roots came from Poland to Israel between 1957 and 1959. This wave of emigration was called the Gomułka *Aliyah*. Among it the most famous emigrants were Ruth Baum, Henry Dankowicz, Ignacy Iserles, Ida Fink, Renata Jabłońska and Alexander Klugman.¹⁸

¹⁵ He edited also the newspaper *Nowa Gazeta* (‘The New Daily’) for a short time (1955).

¹⁶ For a short time, in 1949, *Głos Ludu* (‘Peoples’ Voice’) was edited by the communist party Maki. In 1950, there started to appear a socio-political weekly *Opinia* (‘The Opinion’), which was a continuation of sorts of a newspaper published under the same title in the inter-war period. In Israel, it was published by the Union of Polish Jews *Ichud*, which was a part of the Liberal Party (Partia Postępowa). In 1952 *Opinia* was substituted by *The Israel News* (‘Nowiny Izraelskie’). In 1950 *Chwila* was resumed as a weekly – a continuation of a newspaper under the same title, appearing in Lviv before WWII. The editor-in-chief was Maurice Hescheles, connected with the organisation of the so-called General Zionists.

¹⁷ For a short time *Głos Izraelski* (‘The Israeli Voice’) and *Życie Izraelskie* (‘The Israeli Life’) (1956) were edited by Mieczysław Shtitzer and Bolesław Zylberberg. See: E. KOSSEWSKA, „*Ona jeszcze mówi po polsku, ale śmieje się po hebrajsku*”. *Partyjna prasa polskojęzyczna a integracja kulturowa polskich Żydów w Izraelu (1948-1970)*, Warszawa 2015.

¹⁸ In 1957 many Polish writers arrived in Israel, among them: Ruth Baum, Irena Broner, Joram Bronowski, Victor Cygielman, Alexander Czernski, Henry Dankowicz, Ilona Dworak-Cousin, Jana Gurwic, Justyna Goldgraber, Jerzy Zygmunt Herman, Ignacy Iserles, Jerzy Mering, Edmund Neustein, Henry Palmon, Sever Plocker, Mieczysław Rolnicki, Boris Eppel, Eleasar Feuerman, Ida Fink, Roman

Once in Israel, the representatives of this *Aliyah* initiated the publishing of many socio-political and cultural periodicals. Thus, initially the literary life centred upon them. These newspapers and weeklies were most frequently connected with such political parties as Mapaj or The General Zionists, which wanted to win their future supporters among the refugees. Out of many titles coming out in this period, the most significant ones were *Walka* ('The Fight'), *Rimon*, *Fakty* ('Facts') (which was later substituted by *Kurier Powszechny* ['The Common Courier'] published in turns with *Kurier Niezależny* ['The Independent Courier']), *Iskry* ('Sparks'), *Echo Tygodnia* ('A Weekly Echo'), and *Przekrój Izraelski* ('The Israel Cross-Section'). The last one (only fourteen issues published) expanded the cultural column and included works by one of the most famous Polish-Jewish journalists, Henry Dan-kowicz, who published his critical sketches on literary works there and wrote short epic forms for this magazine.

Among periodicals appearing during this time in Israel two stood out – *Po Prostu w Izraelu* ['Simply in Israel'] (1956) and *Od Nowa* ['Again'] (1956-1965). The former, which appeared irregularly, was a continuation of *Po Prostu* – the legendary periodical of young intelligentsia closed down by the Polish People's Republic. It published works by Anita Wolfstein, Gabriel Szumski, Jerzy Herman, Marek Hłasko and Stanisław Lem. The latter introduced an extensive column devoted to culture, which published many important Polish texts. *Od Nowa* published for the first time short stories by Ida Fink, Jerzy Herman, Leopold Shmaus, Wiktor Traczor and Joseph Bau. It also printed texts by many new authors, for instance by Seweryn Płockier, Renata Gast or Krystyna Szczerba. This periodical was additionally interested in works by writers from outside of Israel, along with world literature in Polish translations prepared in Israel. Finally, in *Od Nowa* one could also find critical and academic texts, as well as theatre and film reviews. It is vital to stress Ryszard Loew's commitment to the edition of this column. He did extensive research on and documentation of Polish works published in Israel and of Hebrew works appearing in Poland (see: LPI, 120-121).

However, at that time a special role was played by two dailies appearing since the beginning of the fifties – *Kurier* ('The Courier') and *Nowiny* ('The News'), the latter published since the end of 1958 to 2009 as *Nowiny-Kurier* ('The News-

Frister, Renata Jabłońska, Albin Kac, Ran Kislev, Aleksander Klugman, Jakub Kost, Jan Kot, Noach Lasman, Felicia Mańska, Anat Zagórska-Springmann, Anat Zajdman, Rysia Sobol-Masłowska, Anita Wolfstein, Leopold Smaus, Józef Ziemian; and a year later, in 1958, Lipa Fischer, Helena Fischer, Herbert Friedman, Maria Lewińska, Edward Neuman (Nejman) and Aviva Shavit-Władkowska. In later years came to Israel in exile Balicka, Fabian Schlang, Tadeusz Lipiński, Jakub Perelman (1959), Szoszana Raczyńska (1960) and Erwin Schenkelbach (1963).

Courier'). In this newspaper, cultural matters in general, and literature in particular played an important role. Friday issues tended to include the variously titled column "Nauka – Kultura – Sztuka" ('Science – Culture – Art'), "Kultura i Sztuka" ('Culture and Art'), "Literatura – Muzyka – Sztuka" ('Literature – Music – Art'), in which one could find theatre, cinema, music and literary reviews. The latter constitute now an important – and often the only one – source of information on literary works published in Polish in Israel. Since the mid-eighties this periodical has printed more and more often fragments of prose texts, parts of novels, short stories and lyrical works by the authors writing in Polish in Israel, for example by Bau, Birenbaum, Pinczewska-Gliksman, Gross, Herman, Mering, Rozenfeld, Shalitt, Słucki or Wygodzki. At the same time, the poetry by contemporary Polish authors who did not live in Israel and came both from Poland and abroad was published there. The column also included works by such contemporary Hebrew-language poets as Nathan Alterman, Ilana Awiel, Michal Hefer, Lea Goldberg or Dan Pagis translated by translators of Polish-Jewish roots – Amiel, Akavia, Raczyńska, Słucki or Sheps. They also translated Yiddish poetry into Polish, among others poems by Rywka Basman, Nahum Bomze, Josef Papiernikow and Jakub Zonszajn. The themes of all these works were first of all connected with the Shoah and the memories from Poland; rarely did they treat about the contemporary life in Israel. For many years a regular literary-critical column „Na szerokim marginesie” ('On a Wide Margin') was edited by Dankowicz.

From the fifties on, libraries, bookstores, used-book sellers and little publishing houses played a very important role in the promotion of Polish literary life in Israel. Some of the most important were established after 1948. The first rental place was the used-book seller *Hasefer*, established at Allenby Street 35 by Jan Fok (Michał Diamant) and operating until 1989. At the turn of the forties and fifties there appeared two other rental places – *Gloria* (soon closed down) and *Ewa Szyper* (lasting till the seventies). The most famous of these institutions, however, was *Księgarnia Polska* ('The Polish Bookstore') run by Edmund and Ada Neustein (Allenby Street 94), which used to function as a very important centre of Polish literary life (it closed down after the death of its owners in the beginning of 2000). 'The Polish Bookstore' organised meetings with Polish writers, as well as with those from Israel and from Poland and exile. Polish books were also published there.¹⁹

¹⁹ Cf. "Neustein took part in various publishing projects in Israel and Poland. He printed, among others, *My, Żydzi polscy* by Julian Tuwim ('We, Polish Jews') (1988), reprinted *Żyd ministrem króla Zygmunta* ('A Jewish Minister of King Sigismund') by Józef Wolff (1988), *Żydzi lwowscy na*

Concluding, it is worth noticing that precisely at that time the foundations of Polish literary circles in Israel were formed and that these circles created a favourable environment for the literary life which came to full bloom in the mid-eighties.

3. ALIYAH 1968-1970

The first commonly-known Polish writer who arrived in Israel as a result of a growing anti-Semitic atmosphere in the Polish People's Republic was Stanisław Wygodzki. Together with his wife and children he left Poland in the end of 1967, and came to *Eretz Israel* in January 1968. The *Aliyah* to which he belonged was perhaps not too numerous, but looked upon from the cultural point of view – very important. The ending of the sixties saw the arrival in Israel of the Polish intelligentsia of Jewish roots, and these were the people who had contributed greatly to the Polish culture before 1968. Later, they found recognition in the cultural life in Israel – both in the Polish and in the Hebrew language. In the years 1968-1970 arrived in Israel: Anna Ćwiakowska, Alina Grabowska, Arnold Ślucky (1968), Filip Istner, Kalman Segal (1969) and Noe Wertheiser (Michał Tonecki, 1970). This group included both the figures strongly connected with the communist regime, e.g. the armed forces officer Władysław Bąk or the journalist Krystyna Bernard-Shtatler (the sister of Joseph Światło), and common citizens, for instance Aniela Jasińska, a Pole who accompanied her Jewish husband during the anti-Semitic persecutions and together with him emigrated from Poland.²⁰

Interestingly, the arrivals included also a group of very young people who were born at the ending of the forties and the beginning of the fifties, who usually came from the families of communists and who debuted as writers or journalists only in Israel. They included, for instance, Viola Wein, Anna Garncarska-Kadary, Eli Barbur, Zoja Perelmuter (*de domo Sztatler*) or Henryk Szafir.

At first the new *olim* published in the long-existing Polish-language periodicals. The writers from this *Aliyah*, together with those from the Gomułka *aliyah*,

przełomie XVI i XVII wieku ('Lviv Jews at the Turn of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries') by Majer Bałaban (1989) and *Palestyna po raz trzeci* ('Palestine – three times') by Ksawery Pruszyński (1992). He was also a co-editor of the 'New Polish-Hebrew and Hebrew-Polish Dictionary' by Alexander Klugman and 'A Self-Study Book of Hebrew Language' by Shoshana Ronen and Michał Sobelman" (LPI, 116).

²⁰After 1970, there arrived in Israel also Gustawa Stendig-Lindberg (1976).

were booming twenty years later, when in 1986 the Polish Section of The Israel Federation of Writers' Unions was established, and which was soon renamed as The Association of Authors Writing in Polish. In 1988, its members started to print the literary almanac *Kontury. Wybór prozy i poezji autorów piszących po polsku w Izraelu* ('The Contours: An Anthology of Prose and Poetry by the Authors Writing in Polish in Israel').²¹ This periodical has quickly become an active tribune for expressing Polish literary voices in Israel and for two decades has influenced the literary activity of writers and poets coming from this background. The literary group *Akcenty* ('The Accents') emerged from this circle in 1990 and established a new literary periodical under the same title, together with a publishing series (see: LPI, 16-17). In the sixteen volumes of *Kontury* (1988–1989; 1992–2003, 2005–2006) the successive editors-in-chief presented first of all a comprehensive panorama of the literary environment of authors writing in Polish in Israel. As far as prose is concerned, most of the texts were strongly anchored in the Polish past of their authors, and primarily expressed their experience of the Shoah (many of them prepared their texts especially for this almanac).²² Thus, *Kontury* serves now as an authoritative source of historical knowledge about the Holocaust time, the fate of the Polish Jews in the post-war Poland and their subsequent life in Israel. In contrast, in poetry, apart from historical trauma, Polish-Jewish poets tended to express their reflections connected with their stay in the new homeland which they treated as a so far unknown existential experience. Therefore, works presented there may be read as testimonies of successive emigration waves of Polish Jews from Poland to Israel. *Kontury* had also professionally edited columns of general and literary-historical essays.

The founding-members of the poetic group and almanac *Akcenty* were Eli Barbur, Renata Jabłońska, Aniela Jasińska, Anna Kadary, Anna Librowska, Edward Nejman and Ida Henefeld-Ron. Apart from their works, one could also find texts by representatives of the older and younger generation of Polish Jews, including Filip Istner, Ida Fink or Erwin Schenkelbach. As a publishing house,

²¹ The editing team changed a few times. It consisted of Renata Jabłońska, Aniela Jasińska i Anna Kadary (no. 1–2), Natan Gross and Jael Shalitt (no. 3), Krystyna Bernard-Shtatler, Łucja Pinczewska-Gliksman and Ryszard Löw (no. 4). From the fifth issue of the almanac, it was edited by Löw himself. Each volume contained over 150 pages (the number of issues – 300 copies)" (LPI, 90).

²² See: A. KASPEREK, *Tematyka Zagłady na łamach rocznika „Kontury”*, [in:] A. KARCEWSKA, S.J. ŻUREK (ed.), *Prasa Żydów polskich. Od przeszłości do teraźniejszości*, Lublin 2016, p. 161-172.

Akcenty edited a prose volume *Znaki innej gry* ('The Signs of Another Game') by Anna Kadary and ten poetry books by Renata Jabłońska.

In the eighties and nineties only a small group of Polish writers of Jewish roots arrived in Israel. Apart from Alexander Rozenfeld (1982), fleeing from Poland as a result of the persecutions of the Solidarity opposition,²³ it included Artur Bajorek (1988), Elżbieta Sidi (1991) and the last editor-in-chief of *Nowiny-Kurier* – Sabina Andraczyk (1995). Only one remaining translator of Polish literature and a Hebrew poet with Polish-Jewish roots, who was born in Israel, is – Rafi Weichert.

*

The Polish literary life in Israel seems to be a slowly closing chapter of the history of literature. The last writers living in *Eretz Israel* publish their works not in Israel but in Poland, and their voices sound there as an interesting but far echo from the exotic world, which has nothing in common with contemporary Poland.

POLISH LITERATURE IN ISRAEL

A RECONNAISSANCE

Summary

The article *Polish literature in Israel. A reconnaissance* is based on archival materials collected during the preliminary research for the book *Polish literature in Israel. A lexicon* (Karolina Famułska-Ciesielska, Sławomir Jacek Żurek, Kraków-Budapeszt 2012) and is an attempt at a synthetic presentation of the history of this literature. The view of it takes into consideration the works of Polish-Jewish writers coming to Palestine before the outbreak of World War II (1939 – emigration of Polish Zionists), during it (1939-1945 – refugees and soldiers who came there with General Władysław Anders's army), and also after the end of it (1945-1948 – Jews who survived the Holocaust). The article discusses the literary and cultural work of Polish Jews in Israel who came there in three waves (1948-1953, 1957-1959, and 1968-1970) with the emphasis on the role of Polish language periodicals whose editorial staff for several dozen years animated Polish cultural and literary life in that country (*Kronika Tygodniowa*, *Kronika Izraelska*, *Kronika*, *Przekrój*, *Kurier Powszechny*, *Iskry*, *Echo Tygodnia*, *Przekrój Izraelski*, *Po Prostu w Izraelu*, *Od Nowa*, and especially *Nowiny-Kurier*), and also on libraries, bookshops and second-hand bookshops ("Hasefer", "Gloria", "Księgarnia Polska" – run by Edmund and Ada Neusteins) as institutions that were significant for promoting Polish literature and culture.

Among all the authors who published their works in Polish (there were more than a hundred of them) first of all the names of the most distinguished ones are taken into consideration: Irit

²³ Rozenfeld had lived in Israel until 1987, when he came back to Poland. See: A. JARMUSIEWICZ, *Rozenfeld w trybach historii* ('Rozenfeld in the Cogs of History'), Warszawa 2010.

Amiel, Eli Barbur, Ruth Baum, Anna Ćwiakowska, Henryk Dankowicz, Ida Fink, Anna Garncarska-Kadary, Ignacy Iserleas, Filip Istner, Renata Jabłońska, Aleksander Klugman, Kalman Segal, Arnold Słucki, Viola Wein, Stanisław Wygodzki.

Key words: Polish literature; Polish-Jewish literature; literary criticism; writers; periodicals; libraries; publishing houses; bookstores; used-book sellers; literary and cultural life; Israel; Aliyah

Summary translated by Tadeusz Karłowicz

POLSKA LITERATURA W IZRAELU

REKONESANS

Streszczenie

Artykuł *Polska literatura w Izraelu. Rekonesans* opiera się na materiałach archiwalnych zebranych podczas kwerend do książki *Literatura polska w Izraelu. Leksykon* (Karolina Famulska-Cieślińska, Sławomir Jacek Żurek, Kraków–Budapeszt 2012) i jest próbą syntetycznego przedstawienia dziejów tej literatury. W ogłędzie został uwzględniony dorobek pisarzy polsko-żydowskich przybywających do Palestyny przed wybuchem drugiej wojny światowej (1939 – emigracja polskich syjonistów), podczas jej trwania (1939–1945 – uchodźcy i żołnierze przybyli wraz z armią generała Władysława Andersa), a także po jej zakończeniu (1945–1948 – Żydzi ocalali z Zagłady). Została omówiona działalność literacka i kulturalna polskich Żydów w Izraelu przybywających tam w trzech falach (1948–1953, 1957–1959 oraz 1968–1970) z podkreśleniem roli polskojęzycznych czasopism, których redakcje przez kilka dziesięcioleci animowały polskie życie kulturalne i literackie w tym kraju („Kronika Tygodniowa”, „Kronika Izraelska”, „Kronika”, „Przekrój”, „Kurier Powszechny”, „Iskry”, „Echo Tygodnia”, „Przekrój Izraelski”, „Po Prostu w Izraelu”, „Od Nowa”, a szczególnie „Nowiny–Kurier”), a także bibliotek, księgarni oraz antykwaratów („Hasefer”, „Gloria” „Księgarnia Polska” – Edmunda i Ady Neusteinów) jako instytucji bardzo ważnych dla promowania literatury i kultury polskiej.

Spośród wszystkich publikujących po polsku (było ich ponad stu) uwzględniono przede wszystkim nazwiska tych najbardziej zasłużonych, takich jak: Irit Amiel, Eli Barbur, Ruth Baum, Anna Ćwiakowska, Henryk Dankowicz, Ida Fink, Anna Garncarska-Kadary, Ignacy Iserleas, Filip Istner, Renata Jabłońska, Aleksander Klugman, Kalman Segal, Arnold Słucki, Viola Wein, Stanisław Wygodzki.

Słowa kluczowe: literatura polska; literatura polsko-żydowska; krytyka literacka; pisarze; czasopisma; wydawnictwa; biblioteki; księgarnie; antykwaraty; życie literackie i kulturalne; Izrael; alija