

SUMMARY

It must clearly be stated at the very beginning, that the present issue of «Pamiętnik Teatralny» is neither a monograph nor even an outline of a monograph on the history of Yiddish theatre in Poland until 1939. This is due to the fact that it lacks articles treating many important theatres and people, such as VYKT, Vilna Troupe, Ester Rokhl (Rachel) Kamińska, Avrom Morevsky (Abraham Morewski), Ida Kamińska, Zygmunt Turkow, Jonas (Jonasz) Turkow, Andrzej Marek (Marek Arensztejn), Yankev Rotboym (Jakub Rotbaum) and others. It had not been the aim of the Editors to provide an outline of a monograph (this is not at all a task for a periodical), but had such an intention arisen — it would have outgrown our capabilities. The present issue does not go beyond 1939, since that year constitutes a clear dividing line, not only in the history of Yiddish theatre.

What is then this quadruple issue of the quarterly, having no precedent in its forty year history nor in the entire Polish (and not only Polish) theatre literature? In order to explain this, one must briefly describe the long story of its birth.

In 1964 Jerzy Timoszewicz, the editor of the issue of «Pamiętnik Teatralny» devoted to Andrzej Pronaszko, succeeded in obtaining from Yankev Rotboym and Mikhl (Michał) Weichert recollections concerning the collaboration of this scenographer with Yiddish theatres. These publications made public materials, which existed in private archives, which — we believed — had perished during the war. It was at that time that the idea arose to prepare a single issue of «Pamiętnik Teatralny» devoted to Yiddish theatre, mainly in the inter-war period. In November 1964 in the Historical Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences, at a meeting between enthusiasts of the history of Warsaw with the directors of the Jewish State Theatre in Warsaw (Meir [Marian] Melman and Ida Kamińska, among others, spoke at this meeting), Zbigniew Raszewski, the Editor-in-chief, announced that work was to be undertaken to prepare such a publication. His statement was noted by «Nasz Głos», in the supplement to «Folks Sztyme» (vol. 21, December 12th 1964).

For the Editorial Board and Polish authors the greatest difficulty was — and still is — the language problem. Ignorance of Yiddish as well as helplessness in the face of the Hebrew alphabet had made it impossible to search for sources even in the sense of finding articles in the press in order to pass them on to a translator. It was necessary to find a co-editor who would know Yiddish as well as the history of Yiddish theatre. It turned out that Meir Melman, who at that time wrote a valuable paper on the Yiddish theatre in the inter-war period (later published in volume I of the book *Warszawa II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa 1968) was ready to take on this role. The first conversation with Melman about this was undertaken by Andrzej Wyśiński, the secretary of the Editorial Board, in April 1967. The Six-Day War, the events of March 1968, the antisemitic cam-

paign and Melman's emigration put an end to chances of preparing such an issue. In any event, even if it had managed to come about, it would not have been passed by the censors.

The matter came to life again in 1975 during a conversation between Wysiński and Melman, who had come to Warsaw together with Ida Kamińska to participate in the ceremony commemorating the 50th anniversary of the death of Ester Rokhl Kamińska. Melman had hoped to come to Warsaw for a longer stay. Unfortunately, he died in New York in 1978.

In the meantime, Professor Raszewski, who had for a long time been interested in the history of Yiddish theatre in Poland, especially in its beginnings in the 19th century, during his seminars at the State Theatre School (at the Department of Theater Studies) gave the students topics concerning Yiddish theatre for seminar talks as well as for M.A. degree dissertations, which were to be based on materials available in the Polish language (e.g. in the Polish-language Jewish press). A number of such M.A. dissertations had been written under the supervision of Zbigniew Raszewski. Their authors were Małgorzata Magier, Faustyna Toeplitz, Elżbieta Wrotnowska. In the latter part of the eighties the idea of a single „Jewish” issue of «Pamiętnik Teatralny» making use of this work appeared once more. The project came under the editorial supervision of Marek Waszkiel.

The situation was changed by establishing contact with Professors Chone Shmeruk (Szmeruk) from Jerusalem and Michael C. Steinlauf from the U.S.A., who were staying in Poland. Thanks to them we are publishing also articles and dissertations sent in from Jerusalem, New York, Philadelphia and Binghamton. We are also publishing papers by Professor Shmeruk's students from the Jagiellonian University (Miroslawa Bułat) and from Warsaw University (Tomasz Kuberczyk). Furthermore, it turned out that Polish historians working on the history of theatre in various cities can support us with articles about Yiddish theatre in these cities (Warsaw, Cracow, Lublin, Łódź). It was a matter of chance that we received a popular account providing information about Yiddish theatre in Lvov; what is however missing is an at least similar publication concerning Vilna.

As a result, instead of a single issue, a volume resulted which takes more than 500 printed pages and 150 illustrations, which is only in part a realization of the conception from many years ago. This was possible to a large extent due to lucky coincidences, the good will and assistance from authors abroad, the interest and effort of local authors, and lastly, due to the persistence of the Editorial Board.

According to an expression of the late Professor Raszewski, who put a lot of heart and effort into this project, working on it literally until the last days of his life, this issue is to be a pilot, a tug-boat bringing this new subject into Polish theatrical literature.

Issue 1-4/1992 closes a long period in the history of «Pamiętnik Teatralny», edited since 1956 by Bohdan Korzeniewski (1905-1992) and Zbigniew

Raszewski (1925–1992). If by collecting materials, showing the richness of phenomena, unveiling uncharted regions, pointing to problems and posing questions it will spur the reader on to further research, then it will fulfill the tasks, which both the Editors had always set for «Pamiętnik Teatralny».

The history of theatre in Poland, in the old as well as the new Republic, is not solely the history of Polish theatre, but also of the theatre of those nations, which lived here and still live here. The history of Yiddish theatre unrolled itself in many countries, on different continents. Also in Poland. We wish to draw attention to the mutual relationships between Yiddish and Polish theatre, to the collaboration between the creators, the intermingling of works and ideas. We hope that this issue of «Pamiętnik Teatralny» will serve not only the enthusiasts, researchers and creators of Yiddish theatre, but also all those who take interest in the history of theatre in Poland, in its richness and diversity.

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The issue of «Pamiętnik Teatralny» devoted to the history of Yiddish theatre in Poland is first of all an assesment of the state of our knowledge and a presentation of the sources which survived in various languages. Thus, this issue brings together major studies presenting material hitherto not investigated and on their basis it verifies and supplements thesis formulated at earlier times. In the article *Teatr żydowski w Polsce. Stan badań (Yiddish Theatre in Poland. The State of Research)* Michael C. Steinlauf sketches the general framework of the subject, placing the problem of Yiddish theatre in Poland in a trilingual cultural context – Yiddish, Hebrew and Polish. The definition of Yiddish theatre encompasses stage productions, both amateur and professional, staged within the geographic boundaries of Poland by Jews for Yiddish audiences. Yiddish theatre was however an international phenomenon created by travelling troupes, so that it also brought to these regions theatrical traditions stemming from other countries. Steinlauf puts in order and systematizes the sources relevant to the study of this subject. Most of these sources had been written in Yiddish, a large part was destroyed during the war. The pre-war treatises concerning the history of Yiddish theatre were based on them. Among these, one might distinguish the studies of Zylbercweig (Zalmen Zilbercwaig) and a six volume dictionary of Yiddish theatre compiled by him. The author of the article mentions two outlines of history of Yiddish theatre – an anachronic one by Bernard Gorin, which contains however rich anecdotal material, and a modern one by Nahma Sandrow (1977). Apart from this, papers pertaining to the various time periods were written, based on source materials. A lot had been written by scholars associated with YIVO, especially worth mentioning here is Yankev Shatsky (Jakub Szacki). Press published in Poland in the Yiddish and Hebrew languages still awaits a professional treatment – this includes daily newspapers as well as periodicals devoted entirely to matters of theatre.

Steinlauf proposes his own periodization of the history of Yiddish theatre in Poland. The period of folk theatre, which came before professional theatre, and later existed in parallel, is filled by plays based on biblical themes performed usually during the Purim holiday. After a study of materials from Eastern Europe one would need to verify the thesis of Chone Shmeruk, that these plays could not have been much older than the surviving texts from the end of the 17th century or the beginning of the 18th century. Earlier, scenes and parodies based on social and religious subjects were known. The years between the thirties and the eighties of the nineteenth century are the early period of professional theatre, where the Goldfaden era (end of the seventies, early eighties) may be distinguished — in this context worth mentioning are the papers by Soviet authors, written in the inter-war period. Since the middle eighties until 1905 Yiddish theatre was banned. In the YIVO archive in New York there are many documents which have not been studied, as well as published memoirs of Yiddish artists who appeared on stage during this period. The ban came at a time, when Goldfaden had already left a Yiddish audience accustomed to theatre, and these people began also to come to Polish theatres. First attempts to create performances for this audience appear at this time (through the activities of Mark Arnshteyn [Marek Arensztejn]). The years 1905–1920 were a time when many new Yiddish groups appeared and the division into artistic and popular theatre ensued. Professional theatre criticism and a new type of dramaturgy were initiated by Peretz, this process coming to a culmination with the première of *The Dybbuk*. These matters are the subject of the basic work of Chone Shmeruk about Peretz's attitude to the new theatre. The interwar period was a time of growth and development of Yiddish theatre as well as of other activities centered around the theatre, a time of greater mutual contact between Yiddish and Polish theatres. This period has not been treated by scholars, despite the existence of rich archives in YIVO (a part of the collection of the old YIVO has recently been discovered in Vilna), the Polish language Yiddish press, as well as the possibility of getting reminiscences from the artists of the day who are still alive. The history of theatre deserves attention as a convenient field to study Polish–Jewish contacts, while for Jews — theatre in Yiddish may be important as a key to contemporary Jewish identity.

The article *Przedstawienia purimowe (The Purim Plays)* by Tomasz Kuberczyk is the first Polish language exposition of the oldest Yiddish theatrical tradition, along with its religious and social contexts. The author gives a description of the Purim festivities and mentions the traditional dislike expressed by religious circles toward theatre as a pagan phenomenon. He depicts the process by means of which elements of theatre develop from the ritual festivity, as well their literary origin and possible influences from non–Yiddish theatre. He then describes the staging of the plays themselves, relying on examples from literature and on surviving texts of Purim plays (the majority of these coming from the collection of Noah Prylucki), which he cites extensively. Kuberczyk discusses the composition of such plays — the places left for improvisation, typical plots and characters, the mechanisms by means of which comical situations arise. By

giving examples of possible influences of non-Yiddish folk theatre, he points to a subject which now awaits treatment. The text is illustrated by a translation of one of the Purim plays — *Solomon's Wisdom (Mądrość Salomona)*.

The work of Abraham Goldfaden, taking into account in detail the origins of his activities in Rumania (making use of the Rumanian press of the day) and in Russia is the subject of an article by Michael Taub *Abraham Goldfaden i teatr żydowski (Abraham Goldfaden and Yiddish Theatre)*. It is in those early days that Goldfaden's dramatic and theatrical style had been forming and the majority of his classical plays, reflecting the life and problems of Jews living in this part of Europe, the encounter between tradition and modern society, had been written. The author of the article also cites various opinions of historians concerning Goldfaden's role in the history of Yiddish theatre. As an example of Goldfaden's writing a summary of his *The Witch (Czarodziejka)* is given as well as a translation of the couplets from this operetta.

Performances of Goldfaden's troupe and those of his followers, performing mainly plays written by him, in Polish regions within the Russian partition, and the ambiguous situation of semilegal Yiddish theatre performances after the official ban on Yiddish language plays, are the subject of a number of articles devoted to various aspects of this problem. A general outline is contained in the by now historic and not entirely accurate text by Zalmen Zylbercweig entitled *Goldfaden na polskiej scenie (Goldfaden on the Polish Stage)*. The author writes about Goldfaden's stay in Warsaw in the years 1885–1887, about the great success of *Shulamis*, which was as a result of this translated into Polish and performed in cooperation with choristers from Goldfaden's theatre in one of Warsaw's „garden theatres” to salvage its financial situation (the author confuses however the date of the performance, which took place in 1887 not in 1888, as well as the name of the entrepreneur — Szymborski rather than Smotrycki). He also discusses two other Polish productions of plays by this author — *The Witch* in 1889 and *Bar Kokhba* in 1934 in Łódź. Elżbieta Wrotnowska in the article *Dwie glosy do arykułu Zalmena Zilbercwaiga (Two Glosses to Zalmen Zylbercweig's Article)* supplements the information given by him on the basis of materials from the censor's archives (she cites large fragments of records pertaining to Goldfaden's texts and presents a detailed discussion of their contents) and on the basis of Polish press of the day, which not only makes note of the performances in the years 1886 and 1887, but also mentions the presence of Goldfaden's plays in the repertoire of Yiddish theatres on Polish lands before the year 1886.

Goldfaden's troupe in Warsaw, despite the ban, had been giving performances for one and a half years at the theatre Eldorado, whose name was changed at the time to Teatr Buff, together with a Russian operetta, which was the first Russian language theatre to perform on a regular basis in this city, which was resisting russification. Maria Prussak in the article *Goldfaden i rosyjski Teatr Buff (Goldfaden and the Russian Theatre Buff)*, on the basis of archives of the administrative powers of the Kingdom of Poland (records of the Warsaw Censorship Committee and documents from the chancellery of the Governor General of

Warsaw) as well on the basis of the official Russian press, determines the repertoire of both companies and analyses the mechanisms of tolerance, and the strategy of the Russian administration, which used the popularity of Yiddish theatre to introduce Russian theatre into the city. An even more complicated situation (from the point of view of nationalities) accompanied the first performances of Yiddish troupes in Łódź, where the dominant group among the population were the Germans. Anna Kuligowska, in a broad dissertation entitled *Pierwsze przedstawienia żydowskie w Łodzi (First Yiddish Performances in Łódź)*, discusses Yiddish performances in Łódź beginning with the earliest performance mentioned by the press, that of the Broder Singers, in March 1868. She lists all the performances by Yiddish theatre companies which may be traced on the basis of Polish and German press until the year 1888 (including the three performances of Abraham Goldfaden in 1885, 1886, 1887). She also notes their dependence on the theatre premises rented from German or Polish theatres and the comments of the Polish press concerning the necessity of creating a permanent Polish theatre which could resist the influence of Yiddish-language theatre. In contrast to Warsaw newspapers, the Łódź press devoted a lot of, usually unfavourable, attention to these performances. The author writes also about the Polish production of *Shulamis*, produced in Łódź by Józef Teksla and about the comedy *Matżeństwo Apfel* by Zalewski, performed with the Yiddish audience in mind at the inauguration of a permanent Polish scene in Łódź on October 6th 1888. Performances by Yiddish companies in the last decade of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century are mentioned only briefly.

Nineteenth century Yiddish theatre on partitioned Polish lands, banned in the Russian partition, was in addition dependent on Russian and German cultural influences. In addition, it was used by the Russian administration as a means of raising the tension in conflict situations among the various social groups, this being the reason why the ban could be ignored when some higher order interest was involved, or when attempts to create a Polish language Yiddish theatre appeared. Such an attempt is described in Chone Shmeruk's article „*Rozsiani i rozruceni*” („*Cezeit un Ceszprejt*”) *Szolem Alejchem w Warszawie, 1905 i 1910* („*Scattered and dispersed*” [*„Cezeit un Ceszprejt*”] by *Sholom Aleichem in Warsaw, 1905 and 1910*). The author describes the circumstances of the writing and publication of Aleichem's play, which was first written in Russian and then in Yiddish, and its popularity in amateur theatres. He discusses in detail the contents of the play which is devoted to the conflict between the generations and the uprooting of Jewish families when they leave the environment in which they were accustomed to live. It is one of the earliest examples of the literary repertoire of Yiddish theatre. The play entitled *Rodzina żydowska (The Jewish Family)*, translated and directed by Mark Arnshteyn, was performed in Polish by professional actors on the stage of Teatr Letni on the 24th and 26th of April 1905 and caused dramatic reactions on the side of the Jewish audience, who identified with certain characters in the play. The author came from Kiev for the second performance and the enthusiastic reception was, perhaps, a motive which con-

tributed to his decision to tie his fate to that of the Yiddish theatre. Polish newspapers did not mention this performance. The performance of the same play by Polish actors for a Polish audience in Teatr Mały in July 1910 had a completely different character and was unfavourably received by the author as well as by Yiddish circles at a time when a Yiddish theatre, giving performances on a constant basis, already existed in Warsaw.

All references to Yiddish theatre which had been printed after the banning of performances in Yiddish in the Polish-language Jewish periodical «Izraelita», are discussed by Mirosława Bułat in *Teatr żydowski w świetle «Izraelity» w latach 1883–1905 (Yiddish Theatre in the Light of «Izraelita» in the Years 1883–1905)*. The author divides the material according to subject. At first she discusses the problem of the ban on Yiddish performances issued in 1883 and iterated later when Yiddish theatre was not ceasing to exist. She is also concerned with the discussion about the role of the Yiddish language in the Yiddish community, which was taking place in the press at the time, and with the questioning of the *raison d'être* of theatre in this language and with proposals of replacing it with other forms of educational activity. The author sorts the texts discussing performances of Yiddish theatre troupes according to location. First of all she considers Polish cities, devoting the most space to Warsaw, Lublin and Łódź. In the case of the most important companies, she supplements information about artists and their voyages with data from other sources (mostly from Zylbercweig's dictionary). She then writes about those performances of Yiddish theatres outside Polish regions which were mentioned in the «Izraelita». Finally the author discusses longer articles in which the respective writers attempted to sum up the experiences following from the functioning and popularity of theatres playing in Yiddish – these include I. Suesser's *Kilka słów o żargonie i teatrze żydowskim (A Few Words about Yiddish and Yiddish Theatre)*, published in 1890, and a biography of Goldfaden published on the occasion of his 60th birthday. The materials printed in «Izraelita» contribute much to our knowledge about Yiddish theatres of this period, and also about their often friendly coexistence with travelling Polish troupes. In the appendix one finds correspondence concerning the Warsaw performances of Weisfeld reprinted from the Polish weekly «Kraj» (1897) appearing in St. Petersburg.

Theatricalities in a Yiddish periodical published in Lublin in Polish in the changed political situation during the First World War are the subject of Stefan Kruk's article *Teatralia w lubelskiej «Myśli Żydowskiej» 1916–1917 (Theatricalities in the Lublin Periodical «Myśl Żydowska» 1916–1917)*. The author makes note of references to amateur troupes and the tradition, by that time already a few years old, of their performances in this city, as well as descriptions and large reviews of performances by professional theatres (among others, of the company in which Ida and Ester Kamińska played). The periodical also hosted a discussion about the form and the audience of Yiddish theatre and about an evaluation of its past. The appendix contains the reprinted repertoire of the theatre companies of Herszkowicz (September–October 1916) and of J. Adler and H. Sierocki (December 1917). Joanna Godlewska presents a profile of Jakub Appenzlak

(1894–1950), the Yiddish theatre critic who wrote in Polish and who during the interwar period published reviews of Yiddish and Polish theatres in the daily «Nasz Przegląd», of which he was the Editor.

The period following the First World War is also the time when new forms of organization of Yiddish theatre, which was looking for greater stability and more effective sponsorship, were developing. It is also the time when professional actors were organizing themselves in their aspirations to ensure material guarantees and fair work conditions. In the article *Organizacja i samopomoc. Z historii ruchu zawodowego aktorów żydowskich w Polsce (Organization and Self-help. Notes on the History of Yiddish Actors' Trade Union Movement in Poland)* Marek Web, on the basis of surviving archival documents, discusses the social and legal situation, and organizational status of the troupes, and a detailed history of these aspirations as well as of the struggles and conflicts which accompanied them. The author divides the history of the Yiddish Artists' Trade Union, established in 1919 (as of 1924 known as the Trade Union of Artists of the Yiddish Stage), into three periods. The first period, 1919–1925, is the time of struggle for the status of Yiddish theatre actors and for the recognition of the Union as a representative of Yiddish actors. The second, 1926–1932, is the search for forms of organization and leadership of the Union, allowing for a solution of conflicts, a period marked by intense power disputes and a breakup of the organization. Finally, 1933–1939, a period of stabilization of the Union, lead uninterruptedly by Maks Brin in a deteriorating political situation, faced with a dropping number of theatre companies and a diminishing number of buildings which these companies could use.

The block of materials concerning Yiddish theatre in Warsaw is headed by a translation of the classic dissertation by Yankev Shatsky *Najstarsze dzieje teatru żydowskiego w Warszawie (The Earliest History of Yiddish Theatre in Warsaw)*, which discusses the oldest references to Yiddish theatre performances before Goldfaden. On the basis of a book by the German traveller Goehring, describing Warsaw in the 1830–ies, the author informs us about the first Yiddish theatre performances in the hall „Pod Trzema Murzynami”. He also attempts to establish the origin of the play *Of Moses Our Master (O Mojżeszu, naszym mistrzu)* also mentioned by Goehring, stipulating that this might have been the work of Shlomo Beloj, published by his brother in 1867. He mentions forged correspondence from Warsaw in the «Journal de Francfort», describing a Yiddish theatre performance purportedly organized under the protection of general Berg, identifying the play mentioned in this correspondence as a dramatic poem by Klingemann which was played in Polish theatres. Shatsky then discusses documents suggesting that there had been attempts to organize Yiddish performances in the years 1839 (by David Turkus) and in 1840 (by David Hellin). The next traces originate already in the 1860–ies – the anti-Chasydic theatre in Nalewki and Bellau's troupe performing regularly in the years 1868–1870.

Articles by contemporary authors supplement Shatsky's account with new documents, correcting or making more precise certain parts of it. Faustyna Toeplitz in „Pod Trzema Murzynami”. *Z dziejów teatru żydowskiego w Warszawie*

(„Pod Trzema Murzynami”. *From the History of Yiddish Theatre in Warsaw*) establishes the exact address of the hall „Pod Trzema Murzynami” and its history. She reprints also the relevant fragment from the property deeds of property number 821 in Ogrodowa Street, containing a detailed description of the hall „Pod Trzema Murzynami”. Zbigniew Raszewski’s article *Sześć glos do artykułu Jakuba Szackiego (Six Glosses to Yankev Shatsky’s Article)* adds new details. The first point: putting together all published documents and information concerning the earliest performances in Warsaw, it confirms beyond any doubt that public theatre performances in Yiddish took place in Warsaw in the years 1837–1839. The second point: the testimony of the German traveller is supplemented by a note, known from a second hand account, made by a Polish diarist (Władysław Bentkowski) who describes Yiddish performances in the hall „Pod Trzema Murzynami”. The third point: it supplements the information about theatre halls by a remark from a 19th century German encyclopedia *Allgemeines Theater-Lexikon* which tells about the existence of a Yiddish theatre building in Warsaw, built in 1838, presumably at Plac Muranowski. The fourth point: it describes in detail the story of the hoax of «Journal de Francfort», at the same time expressing doubt as to whether the motive for it could have been the performance of Klingemann’s play, which could not at this time be performed in Polish theatres. The fifth point: it adds new information about Bellau’s troupe, about the building in Plac Muranowski and about performances by the troupe in the Rapp and Alkazar theatres. The sixth point: it confirms without any doubt that the performances in the 1860-ies in Nalewki were by the Broder Singers. In the appendix one finds the reprinted correspondence between the «Journal de Francfort» and the «Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums», as well as notes made by Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki after seeing Bentkowski’s diary containing an account of Yiddish performances in „Pod Trzema Murzynami”.

The history of the building of Abraham Kamiński’s theatre in Warsaw in Oboźna Street is described by Ryszard Mączyński in *Teatr Kamińskiego (Kamiński’s Theatre)*. Edward Krasieński’s article *Teatry żydowskie w Warszawie między wojnami (1918–1939) (Yiddish Theatres in Warsaw During the Interwar Period, 1918–1939)* contains an outline of the history of Yiddish theatres during the interwar period, centered on the most important companies which performed in the city, on the performances most important for a Polish historian and on the main buildings where Yiddish theatres performed. The author mentions theatres playing both literary and folk repertoire, and also cabaret and stage shows. The detailed discussion of the interwar period is preceded by a short history of Yiddish theatres in Warsaw and by an outline of the social and historical background.

The history of Yiddish theatre in other cities is shorter and much more modest. The difficult beginnings of troupes playing in Yiddish and actors in Lvov (up to the thirties) is the subject of a recollective study by Josif Gelston *Błądzące gwiazdy na lwowskim firmamencie (Vagabond Stars on the Lvov Firmament)*, referring to the novel by Sholom Aleichem, cited by many scholars, whose plot takes place in Lvov in the local Yiddish theatre. It could thus be that the characters ap-

pearing in Gelston's study, which contains many anecdotes and biographical details, are the prototypes of Sholom Aleichem's fictional characters. Kazimierz Nowacki's article *Teatry żydowskie w Krakowie (Yiddish Theatres in Cracow)*, written on the basis of newspaper publications and city archives, has a totally different character. The author discusses in great detail the Krakowski Teatr Żydowski directed initially by Jonas Turkow, who did not limit himself to Yiddish literature, staging in particular the plays *The Judges (Sędziowie)* and *Daniel* by Wyspiański (considered to be the patron of the theatrical work of Percec). The author discusses the history of this stage under the management changing from one season to the next, drawing from theatre reviews published in the Polish language press. He also mentions guest performances, puppet shows (for which the puppets were designed by, among others, Sasha Blondel and Jonas Stern), as well as studios training actors and producing plays. A short episode from the history of Yiddish theatre in the Free City of Gdańsk is described by Mieczysław Abramowicz — *Teatr żydowski w Gdańsku 1934–1938 (Yiddish Theatre in Gdańsk 1934–1938)*.

A different type of material can be found in articles devoted to particular theatre companies. Małgorzata Leyko is concerned only with an episode in the history of the Vilna Troupe — their performances in Vienna during the season 1922/1923. These performances took place at a time when the troupe was in excellent shape, giving many guest performances all over Europe, and recognized as the symbol of modern Yiddish theatre. The author gives the repertoire of these performances and cites enthusiastic reviews. A confirmation of the renown of the theatre were, among others, the unrealized projects to establish in Vienna a travelling Yiddish Artistic Theatre, which was to be the model amalgamation of tradition with the style of modern theatre under the guidance of David Herman, the director of *The Dybbuk*. Małgorzata Magier writes, in a large article, about the three guest tours of the Hebrew theatre Habima (in the years 1926, 1930 and 1938). She tries to reconstruct what the performances looked like primarily on the basis of reviews published in the Polish language press. The reception of the troupe changed — from the first enchantments caused by the performance of *The Dybbuk* directed by Vakhtangov, to fatigue caused by the monotony of the homogeneous style of staging, independent of the character of the plays being staged, especially by the rhythmic schematism of the setting of actors on stage and the modelled, expressive make-up, which blurred the individuality of the players. The relationship of the troupe to the Yiddish tradition was considered, as well as the influences of modern Russian theatre. Reviewers writing for the Polish press devoted much attention to Hannah Rowina — the star actress of the troupe, who managed to preserve her own personality. The performances were very successful with the audiences, drawing theatre-goers even from distant places. The appendix contains a calendar of the performances and the cast of all the performances given. Of somewhat different character are the recollections of Jechiel Burgin about the organization and the activities of the puppet theatre Majdim, which existed in Vilna in the years 1933–1941, and also gave performances in other cities.

The recollections of Mikhl (Michał) Weichert (1890–1967) entitled *Studio Teatralne i Jung Teater* (*Studio Teatralne and Jung Teater*) about the theatre school directed by him, which was later transformed into Teatr Młodych (Jung Teater), are a precise exposition of his methods of working with the actors and his aesthetic framework. Weichert describes in detail the program of the school training prospective actors who were to work in his possible future troupe. This program made different use of space and of the text of the play, it required great technical proficiency, and thus also a knowledge of one's own body and capabilities, and it furthermore appealed to the emotional involvement of the players. A public performance given after three years of studies was received with great appreciation by the Polish artists present, including lecturers from the State Institute of Theatrical Arts. Weichert then goes on to describe the work on the first production of Teatr Młodych, performed on February 3rd 1933, based on a play by Bernard Blume about the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti, staged in Polish under the title *Boston*. He describes the course of the performance, the acting and the first reactions of the audience. The article of Elinor Rubel is devoted to three productions of Teatr Młodych. On the basis of available materials the author reconstructs the productions of *Boston*, *Krasin* and *Mississippi* and the reactions which they caused – the reviewers' opinions, the transfer of the production of *Boston* to Teatr im. Żeromskiego (a Polish theatre), the public discussion after the performance of *Krasin*. Descriptions of the productions are preceded by a discussion of the aesthetic assumptions of the theatre and a review of the theoretical, never actually realized, conception of simultaneous theatre of Pronaszko and Syrkus. The production which is considered to be one of the greatest achievements of Yiddish theatre in Poland – the production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* staged by Leon Schiller with scenography by Władysław Daszewski in the Folks un Jugnt-Teater in Łódź (October 9th 1938), shown also in Warsaw in the spring of 1939, is discussed by Jerzy Timoszewicz in „Burza” Szekspira w Folks un Jugnt-Teater. Inscenizacja Leona Schillera 1938/1939 (*Shakespeare's „The Tempest” in the Folks un Jugnt-Teater. The Staging by Leon Schiller 1938/1939*). The author describes the political background of the production. The significance of the cooperation of a distinguished Polish director with a Yiddish theatre was stressed by speakers at the banquet which took place after the première, while the reviewers uncovered the political undertones of the production. Daszewski's scenography realized on a shallow stage was a great achievement, as was the part of Prospero played by Avrom Morevsky (Abraham Morewski), one of the most eminent Jewish actors of the 20th century. The Łódź production also turns out to be an important reflection of the evolution of the interpretation of Shakespeare's play in Schiller's work, as well as an important element of his artistic achievement.

The final article in the present issue is an anthology of statements by Polish writers, actors and directors about Yiddish theatre. Rafał Węgrzyniak, the author of the selection, cites publications appearing before 1939, allowing no more than one statement from each writer and does not take into account reviews already used in the dissertations published in the present issue. The survey begins

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with a discussion of the first Polish production of Goldfaden's *Shulamis* from «Przegląd Tygodniowy» from 1887. Then follow: the reflections of a «Tygodnik Ilustrowany» columnist at the performance of *God, Man and Devil* (*Hirszele Dubrowner* [*Bóg, człowiek i diabeł*]) by Jacob Gordin (1909), the recollections of Lew Kaltenbergh about Gimpel's theatre in Lvov, a statement by Juliusz Osterwa concerning *The Dybbuk* by Trupa Wileńska (1925), an interview with Aleksander Zelwerowicz about Yiddish theatre (1927), an interview with Leon Schiller (1927), Tadeusz Sinko's review of the production of *Daniel* and *The Judges* (*Sędziowie*) in Teatr Żydowski in Cracow (1927), and Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński's review of *Night in the Old Marketplace* by Peretz performed by the Vilna Troupe (1928), a fragment of Zygmunt Tonecki's article *Yiddish Theatre in Poland* (1932), Maria Kuncewiczowa's impressions at a performance of Friedrich Wolf's *The Yellow Patch* (*Professor Mamlock*) (*Żółta łata* [*Profesor Mamlock*]) at the theatre at Oboźna Street, (1934), and a comparison of two productions – Anouilh's *There Was a Prisoner* (*Był sobie więzień*) in a Polish theatre and Urke Nachalnik's *Nacht Mensz* in a Yiddish theatre (1936), written by Jerzy Stempowski. Stempowski rates more highly the authenticity and unpretentiousness of the Yiddish production. The final item in the present issue is a review of Michael Steinlauf's dissertation *Polish-Yiddish Theater: The Case of Mark Arnshteyn. A Study of the Interplay among Yiddish, Polish, and Polish-language Yiddish Culture in the Modern Period*, Ann Arbor 1988.

Translated by *Michał Spaliński*

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