

The Case of Moses Schorr

Rabbi, Scholar, and Social Activist

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FOUR PROMINENT Jewish historians were active in pre-war Poland: Moses Schorr (1874–1941),¹ Majer Bałaban (1877–1942), Ignacy Schiper (1884–1943), and Emanuel Ringelblum (1900–44). They were all emigrants from Galicia, and all four died during the Second World War. Bałaban, Schiper, and Ringelblum fell at the hands of the Nazis, but Schorr died in exile in Uzbekistan after almost two years of detention in Soviet prisons. By a tragic irony of fate, all three of his colleagues who had remained in German-occupied territories survived for a time after Schorr's death.

The investigatory documents published here, which are been preserved in the Central Archive of the Federal Security Service (FSB) in Moscow, allow us to clarify the details of his confinement.

BACKGROUND

Moses (Moshe, Moisei, Mojżesz) Schorr was born in Przemyśl (in Russian, Peremyshl), Galicia. He received his education at the Jewish Theological Institute (also known as the Rabbinical Seminary) in Vienna² (he was ordained in 1900), and

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¹ On Schorr, see 'Schorr, Moses', *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 1966), xiv. 997–8; 'Schorr, Mojżesz', *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* (Warsaw and Kraków, 1994), xxxv. 603–4; articles by M. Bałaban and M. David, *Księga jubileuszowa ku czci Prof. Dr. Mojżesza Schorra* (Warsaw, 1935); *Kovets mada'i lezekher mosheh shor* (New York, 1945), pp. ix–xiii; Y. Gruenbaum (ed.), *Encyklopedia Galuyot* (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, 1953), i. 303–4; J. Guzik, 'Moshe Schorr', in S. K. Mirsky (ed.), *Ishim udemuyot behokhmat yisra'el be'eiropah hamizrahit lifnei shekiyatah* (New York, 1959), 207–22; R. Zakharii, 'Moses Schorr and Meir Balaban: Forgotten Eastern European Jewish Historians' (MA thesis, Central European University, Budapest, 1998); J. Goldberg, 'Moses Schorr—Pionier der Erforschung der Geschichte der polnischen Juden', *Judaica*, 2/51 (1995), 83–96; 'Shorr Moshe', in *Kratkaia evreiskaia entsiklopediia* (Jerusalem, 2001), x. 289–90.

² The Israelitisch-Theologische Lehranstalt, founded in 1893, existed until 1938.

at the universities of Vienna, Lwów, and Berlin. In 1898 he received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Lwów. In 1899 Schorr became a teacher of Jewish subjects at Lwów's Jewish Teachers' College, and in 1910 he began to teach Semitic languages and history of the Ancient Near East at the University of Lwów in the capacity of *privat-dotsent*.³ He became a professor in 1915. In 1923 he was invited to the post of rabbi of the Great Synagogue ('Wielka' in Polish) in Warsaw on Tłomackie Street.⁴ In 1925 he also became a professor of Semitic studies at Warsaw University—one of the few Polish Jews who were allowed to take such a position. In 1928 Schorr became one of the founders of the Jewish Studies Institute in Warsaw,⁵ where he taught Tanakh and Hebrew, and at one time served as rector.

As a historian, Schorr researched the communal organizations and institutions of Polish Jewry⁶ and studied the history of the Jews in his native city of Przemyśl.⁷ His work in the area of Semitic studies focused on attempts to regulate life through law in ancient Babylonian society (producing titles such as 'Ancient Babylonian Legal Documents' and 'Sources in Ancient Babylonian Civil and Procedural Law').⁸ For his scholarly contributions, Schorr was elected to the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences in Kraków. He received several awards for scholarship.

Schorr was a member of the Rabbinical Council of Warsaw, chair of the Warsaw Committee for Aid to Victims of the Crisis,⁹ chair of the state commission on qualifying examinations in Jewish Law for secondary school teachers, and deputy chair of several national and Warsaw-based Jewish social, charitable, and cultural organizations. Though he was not formally a member of any party, Schorr was by conviction a Zionist.

³ The title refers to an adjunct teacher at an institution of higher education, equivalent to a *docent* (senior lecturer).

⁴ The Great Synagogue on Tłomackie Street was built in 1878 and destroyed by the Nazis on 16 May 1943, following the suppression of the Warsaw ghetto uprising. Services in the synagogue were slightly Reform-oriented, to the extent that the Orthodox tradition allowed. Sermons were read in Polish. There was a choir, but it was made up of men only. There was an organ as well, but it was played only during weddings. The synagogue was attended mainly by the liberal intelligentsia and the middle and upper layers of society.

⁵ Instytut Nauk Judaistycznych.
⁶ 'Organizacya Żydów w Polsce od najdawniejszych czasów aż do r. 1772', *Kwartalnik historyczny*, 13 (1899), 485–529, 734–75; 'Vnutrenniaia organizatsiia evreev v Pol'she', *Knizhki voskhoda* (St Petersburg), 9 (1900), 138–63; 11 (1900), 94–115; 12 (1900), 21–46. In addition, Schorr's 'Tsentral'nye s"ezdy evreiskikh obshchin v Pol'she' was published in *Knizhki Voskhoda*, 1 (1901), 61–80; 2 (1901), 36–59.

⁷ *Żydzi w Przemyślu do końca xviii wieku* (Lwów, 1903).
⁸ *Altbabylonische Rechtsurkunden aus der Zeit der I. babylonischen Dynastie*, i–iii (Vienna, 1907–10); *Urkunden des altbabylonischen Zivil und Prozessrechts* (Leipzig, 1913).

⁹ The Central Jewish Aid Committee (Tsentraler Yidisher Hilf-Komitet) was formed in 1926 to assist victims of the economic crisis. The committee gave loans to ruined merchants and entrepreneurs for the purpose of starting new businesses, tried to prevent their eviction for non-payment of rent, and provided assistance in the form of food and clothing. Over the course of its existence (until 1938), the committee assisted 23,000 families.



Figure 1. The Schorr family

From the Schorr Family Archive. Used with permission

By virtue of his high standing in Jewish society, Schorr was appointed to the Polish Senate; he remained in this position until 1938. The Senate was the second house of the Polish parliament and, in distinction to the Sejm, one-third of its members were not elected but appointed by the president (in accordance with article 47 of the constitution of the Polish Republic).

In Poland in the last half of the 1930s, state policy aimed at encouraging Jewish emigration by forcing the three-million-strong Jewish population out of the political, economic, and cultural life of the country. From the beginning of the 1920s, the authorities tried to prevent Jews from working in government institutions. At the same time, institutions of higher learning were allowed to introduce quotas on the acceptance of young Jews. The quota system was abolished in 1926, but was effectively reintroduced in the second half of the 1930s.¹⁰ The boycott of Jewish businesses, goods, and services, which was often accompanied by violence and pogroms, increased in intensity over time. The crisis led to the ruin of thousands of merchants as well as the proletarianization and pauperization of the Jewish population.¹¹ The antisemitism existing within Polish society, including that of the Polish intelligentsia and the students, was even stronger than the state's antisemitism. At the same time, pro-Nazi attitudes increased among the ethnic Germans in Poland

¹⁰ On the quota system, see S. Rudnicki, 'From "Numerus Clausus" to "Numerus Nullus"', *Polin*, 2 (1987), 246–68.

¹¹ See e.g. E. Mendelsohn, *The Jews of Central Europe between the World Wars* (Bloomington, Ind., 1983), 73–6.

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after Hitler rose to power, and all political co-operation between them and the Jews came to an end. In these circumstances, Schorr, as a senator and recognized leader of Polish Jewry, constantly spoke out against discrimination against the Jews, encroachments on their civil rights, and antisemitism.

Having invaded Poland on 1 September 1939, the Germany army surrounded Warsaw on 16 September. On 18 September, the government escaped to Romania and from there to Paris. On 17 September, in accordance with the secret protocol of the Ribbentrop–Molotov Pact, the Red Army invaded Poland from the east, occupying the eastern regions of Poland and annexing them to the USSR. (In Soviet terminology, these territories were called western Belarus and Ukraine.)

Understanding that the Germans would have no mercy on him either as a Jew or as a leading figure who had spoken out against fascism in the Senate,¹² Schorr fled with his wife Tamar (Tatiana)¹³ from Warsaw to the east. There was nowhere else to run, and in any case these cities were the cities of his origin. In addition, the Schorr's daughter Felicja Kon¹⁴ was already in western Volhynia with three children, two of her own and her sister Sofia's¹⁵ son. Even if his own future did not appear bright under Soviet power, Schorr could hope that at least his wife, daughter, and grandsons would be saved.

¹² See Moses Schorr's testimonies from his interrogation file: Case no. 391 on the prosecution of Moses Oziashovich Schorr (Central Archive of the FSB RF, R-38952 (formerly archive no. 903807), sheet 20).

¹³ Tamar (Tatiana) Schorr was the daughter of a resident of Vilna, the merchant, banker, and Zionist Yakov Benyakob (1858–1926). During Herzl's visit to Vilna in 1903, the local Zionists organized a reception for him at the Benyakob residence. Together with her husband, Tamar left Warsaw on the eve of its capture by the Germans. Following the disappearance (arrest) of her husband in Ostrog, she searched for him and eventually found him in prison in Lviv. In April 1944 Tamar committed suicide in Vitelle in southern France. (The authors received this information from Yehoshua, the son of Moses Schorr, from his personal archive in Jerusalem (hereafter Y. Schorr Archive)).

¹⁴ Having completed school, Felicja (Tsipora, 1910–84) married Maks Kohn, an industrialist and deputy to the honorary consul of Sweden in Łódź. On the eve of the war, while her husband was in London, she took her two sons, Itsek–Yakov and Stefan–Amir, as well as her sister Sonia's son, Peter–Benjamin, from the Tatra resort town of Zakopane to Volhynia. After the war began, her parents joined her. After the arrest of her father, Felicja moved with her children and her mother to Lviv, where she found work as a waitress. She refused the opportunity to cross secretly into Romania with the children as long as her father was under arrest. She was in Vitelle with the children at the time of liberation. After the liberation, they lived in Paris, and from there moved to New York. Felicja worked in the pearl trade, mainly in Japan, but also for some time in Israel. In 1982, after her husband died in London (they had lived apart after the war), she remarried (Y. Schorr Archive).

¹⁵ Sonia (Sofia, Zofia–Sara) (1907–61) studied Germanic languages at the universities of Warsaw and Berlin and also studied poetry. She married Artur Miller, a highly placed lawyer in the Polish Ministry of Justice. In 1939 she left for Paris, where she learned to make fashionable hats. During the war years, after much wandering (southern France, Spain, Portugal), she and her husband made it to New York. In despair, the pair fought to rescue their parents and family members who remained in occupied territories. They were able to obtain for them passports to Costa Rica and Nicaragua, which ultimately saved the lives of Felicja and the children (Y. Schorr Archive).

The Schorrs left Warsaw on 7 September 1939, and by 27 September they had arrived in Ostrog.¹⁶ Schorr's appearance in the city was soon noted, and he was arrested on 9 October.¹⁷ He remained in prison in Ostrog for one week, and then he spent another week imprisoned in Lutsk. On 24 October he was transferred to Lviv. Schorr's captors forced him to fill in a form, photographed him, and took away his personal items: a gold watch, a fountain pen, a penknife, a bag, a packet of photographs, and a comb in a case.¹⁸ The first interrogation took place on 14 October 1939, while Schorr was still in prison in Ostrog, and was brief. They asked Schorr when, by whom, and why he was appointed to the Polish Senate, how long he had served as a rabbi, and to which parties he belonged. As usual, they were interested in his relatives abroad. Schorr replied that the president of Poland, Ignacy Mościcki,¹⁹ had appointed him to the Senate as the chief rabbi of Warsaw, and that he did not belong to any parties. The investigator underlined in the record Schorr's words indicating that he had been a rabbi since 1923 and that his daughter Sofia, who was living in Paris, was married to an official in the Polish Ministry of Justice.²⁰ Having determined the 'departmental' membership of the prisoner, the investigator sent Schorr to Lutsk to the jurisdiction of the state security apparatus.

On 15 October, an agent of the second department of the UGB²¹ (Directorate of State Security) of the NKVD of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, junior lieutenant . . . N8,²² certified that Schorr was suspected of 'conducting punitive

¹⁶ This is according to case documents (Schorr file, sheet 26). According to Y. Schorr's testimony, Moses and Tamar Schorr left Warsaw on the last train. They met Felicja and the children on 8 Sept. in Rivno, and then set out together for Ostrog (Y. Schorr Archive). Ostrog was a Polish city in western Volhynia on the border with the USSR. When Soviet forces occupied Ostrog there were 10,500 Jews there. (*Kratkaya evreiskaya entsiklopediya* (Jerusalem, 1992), vi. 218.)

¹⁷ Schorr file, sheet 26. According to other, obviously false, information, he was arrested 'while travelling from Warsaw to the city of Ostrog' (Schorr file, sheet 4). According to Yehoshua Schorr, two Jews called on his father in Ostrog and told him that Jakob Apenszlak, the ailing editor of the Warsaw Jewish newspaper *Nasz Przegląd*, was in the city and wanted to see him. Schorr went with them and never returned. Evidently, he was arrested at that time; Apenszlak was never in the city (Y. Schorr Archive).

¹⁸ Schorr file, sheets 6–7, 10, 12–13.

¹⁹ Ignacy Mościcki (1867–1946), a professor of chemistry and political figure. Before 1914 he was a little-known member of the Polish Socialist Party. As a result of Józef Piłsudski's *coup d'état*, Mościcki became president of Poland (11 July 1926) and occupied this post until 1939. After 1939 he lived in Switzerland.

²⁰ Schorr file, sheets 16–17.

²¹ In 1939, the second department of the UGB was the Secret-Political Department (SPO) of the Directorate of State Security. The SPO was responsible for the struggle against hostile political parties and anti-Soviet elements. A. I. Kokurin and N. V. Petrov (eds.), *Lubyanka: VChK-OGPU-NKVD-MGB-MBD-KGB, 1917–1960: A Guide* (Moscow, 1997), 12, 21.

²² Most of the documents from the Schorr file that have come into the possession of the authors of the present essay were hand-copied and then typed by Vladimir Prikhodko; only a few were machine-copied. The machine copies were made by an employee of the FSB archive who, following instructions, did not take down the case number, its archival number, or the names of the investigators and prosecutors involved in the Schorr case. Prikhodko took down some of this information by hand. At the time the title 'senior lieutenant of state security' corresponded to the military title of major; 'captain of state security' corresponded to the military title of colonel. Kokurin and Petrov (eds.), *Lubyanka*, 14.

activity in relation to communists and persons sympathetic to Soviet power', that is, of violating point 13 of article 54 of the criminal code of the Ukrainian SSR,²³ and that he could 'hide from the investigation and the court' and therefore should be held under guard in the Lutsk prison. The following day, the military prosecutor approved this decision.²⁴

The next day, senior lieutenant of state security Matveev continued the interrogation. He clarified the details of Schorr's scholarly career, and asked about his activities as a senator. He underlined Schorr's answer, 'I have always stood for the legal and cultural rights of the Jewish population', in red.²⁵ On 9 November, with the interrogation continuing in Lviv's prison number 2, investigator Zhabsky questioned Schorr for four hours, which resulted in just one page of the report. Obviously, much more was going on in the investigation than was reflected in the report.²⁶ The investigator tried doggedly to wrest from Schorr a confession of anti-communist and anti-Soviet activity, but Schorr categorically denied the charges. Despite this denial, the investigator wrote: 'While in the Sejm [in fact the Senate] [Schorr] was at the same time a rabbi and engaged in a punitive policy in regard to communists and sympathizers with Soviet power'; he determined that Schorr would be prosecuted under article 54, point 13.²⁷

On 2 December, that same Zhabsky conducted a new interrogation, this one lasting one and a half hours.²⁸ This time he required Schorr to discuss his ties to President Mościcki. Schorr denied any such ties. To a question about his activities as a senator, Schorr answered that he worked to obtain (a) the right for Jews to study in institutions of higher education;²⁹ (b) government credits for Jewish

²³ Article 54 of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian SSR corresponded to article 58 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR. Its thirteenth point stated: 'Activity or active struggle against the working class and the revolutionary movement manifested in responsible or secret (secret service) office under the tsarist system or in the counter-revolutionary governments during the period of the civil war'. The punishment for those convicted under this point was from three years' deprivation of freedom to execution.

²⁴ Schorr file, sheets 1–2.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, sheets 18–19.

²⁶ It is possible that the interrogation went on much longer. In the report, the time when the interrogation was completed was changed from 7 p.m. to 2.30 p.m. This correction raises obvious questions about the extent to which we can trust investigatory documents from the end of the 1930s. For example, we cannot be sure that Schorr was not subjected to physical pressures or that there were no unrecorded reports; moreover, we do not know to what degree the reports reflect the actual dialogue of the investigator with the prisoner. Investigators often wrote their reports at the end of the investigations, from memory and with a slant favourable to themselves, and then gave them to the prisoners to sign. On the other hand, it is worth considering that in 1939 the wave of the Great Terror, and with it the wildest fabrications of the investigative organs, was already over. In addition Schorr was a well-known figure, in whom there was constant interest from abroad. We may suppose, finally, that the leadership of the state security apparatus wanted not only to get the Schorr file 'sewn up', but also to get from him information on pre-war public life in Poland. Considering the above, we hope that the published reports in a certain measure reflect what actually happened in the interrogations.

²⁷ Schorr file, sheets 10, 21.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, sheet 22.

²⁹ Discrimination against Jews took on humiliating forms in the institutions of higher learning, where special benches were established for Jews. Special seating for Jews was first established at Lwów

businessmen; and (c) material assistance to poor Jews in the sphere of health care. Schorr explained that he had accomplished nothing by his activities in the Senate, since no one there had supported his demands. He once again rejected the interrogator's assertion that as a member of the Senate, he had spoken out several times against the working class, the Communist Party, and the Soviet Union.

In fact, as a moderate political figure in a Poland torn by conflict, Schorr spoke out against political extremism—both right and left. Thus in his speech of 9 March 1936 at the Senate, he said, among other things:

The dictatorship of the leftists, supported by the East, is extending its hand to the dictatorship of the rightists, supported by our neighbour to the West, in order to wrest power from the hands of the legal government by means of terror and force. The former incite the population against the bourgeoisie, ascribing to it all evil, while the latter incite them against the Jews, blaming them for everything. The two camps are identical in their application of the tactics of diversion and violence as a means to achieving power. . . . The Bolshevism of the communists and the Bolshevism of the National Socialists—with the dictatorship of the party and its leaders that is characteristic of both of them—are not of course more European phenomena than the parliamentary democracy of France, England, Belgium, and other European states where there is no antisemitism.³⁰

In the interests of fairness, it should be noted that the primary target of this and other speeches of Schorr was the antisemitism of the right, both official and social; but considering the conservative make-up of the Senate, he equated rightist extremists with those of the left for the purpose of discrediting the former in the eyes of his listeners—and as evidence that antisemitism was a threat to the stability of the government. In a speech given on 24 June 1936, Schorr explained the growing popularity of communism among Polish Jews in terms of antisemitism and the lack of equal rights. He declared:

We Jews wage war against communism just as we do against antisemitism, because it is hostile to all religions and all national ideologies and that means our religion and our national aspirations as well. From this high tribune, I declare and emphasize that as Jews we are against communism and approve any means the state chooses to root out the communist movement.³¹

Evidently, Cordell Hull, an official of the American State Department, was basing himself on this and other statements by Schorr when he wrote to the well-

Polytechnic in Dec. 1935. In Sept. 1937, the minister of education permitted rectors to introduce this practice to their own institutions. Some of the Jewish students refused to sit on the 'ghetto benches', preferring to stand during the lectures. For this, they were often beaten up. See E. Melzer, 'Antisemitism in the Last Years of the Second Polish Republic', in Y. Gutman, E. Mendelsohn, J. Reinharz, and C. Shmeruk (eds.), *The Jews of Poland between Two World Wars* (Hanover, NH and London, 1989), 130; B. Witz-Margulies, 'Jan Kazimierz University 1936–1939: A Memoir', *Polin*, 14 (2001), 224–5.

³⁰ Sprawozdanie Stenograficzne Senatowi, Session of 9 Mar. 1936, pp. 71–2.

³¹ Ibid. Session of 24 June 1936, pp. 85–6.



Figure 2. Moses Schorr
From the Schorr Family Archive.
Used with permission

known American Jewish public figure Cyrus Adler that Schorr had been convicted ‘because of his outspoken opposition to Communism during his residence in the former State of Poland’.³² On the other hand, Schorr’s Soviet interrogators had in hand neither texts of his speeches nor the testimony of witnesses to support the accusation of anti-communist activity.

On the basis of the interrogation of 2 December (which also yielded nothing), the investigator petitioned the prosecutor of the Lviv oblast to extend the period of the investigation and to maintain Schorr under guard for one more month, until 2 January 1940.³³ Zhabsky wrote that ‘[Schorr’s] punitive policy in regard to members of the Communist Party and its sympathizers had been proven’. He believed that all that remained was to define more precisely Schorr’s ties to the Polish government figures Mościcki, Beck,³⁴ and others. The investigator’s petition was granted.

³² Letter of 15 Feb. 1940 (Y. Schorr Archive).

³³ Schorr file, sheet 70.

³⁴ Colonel Józef Beck (1894–1944), a protégé of Piłsudski’s, was minister of foreign affairs of Poland from 1932 to 1939. He conducted a policy of rapprochement with Germany and an unyielding attitude with regard to the Soviet Union. As a result, Poland could not create a system of collective security that would have guaranteed her survival as a state.

Another two months passed, during which Schorr was not interrogated. On 3 February 1940, guided by an order from the Deputy People's Commissar V. N. Merkulov of Internal Affairs of the USSR, investigator Lopunov of the Lviv Directorate of the NKVD decided to transport the prisoner and his case to Moscow to continue the investigation.³⁵ Schorr was sent with a special convoy to Moscow to the first special department of the NKVD of the USSR. In the accompanying document, he was listed as 'healthy'.³⁶

Upon his arrival in Moscow's Butyrskaya prison on 21 March 1940, Schorr was fingerprinted and a new *anketa* (form) was filled in for him.³⁷ Junior lieutenant of state security Krukovsky, an investigator of the second department of the GUGB (Central Directorate of State Security), was given the task of continuing the investigation. Krukovsky received the case on 26 March,³⁸ and on 2 April arranged a lengthy interrogation for Schorr; it lasted from 10.15 a.m. until 9.40 p.m. with one break (see Document 1 below). The investigators focused on Schorr's ties to the 'Joint'.³⁹ In his application to the prosecutor of the USSR for an extension of the term of the investigation, a senior security officer of the second department of the GUGB, Lieutenant Khamaziuk, who had been present at the first interrogation as well, wrote: 'Schorr's connection to counter-revolutionary elements abroad and the American organization "the Joint", which engages in spying activity in the Soviet Union, is being established.'⁴⁰ Merkulov himself approved the request on 8 May 1940.

The next interrogation took place only after five and a half months had passed, on 17 September; Khamaziuk conducted the interrogation. Judging by the interrogators' questions and their notes in the report, the investigation was aimed at proving the facts of Schorr's nationalistic, anti-communist, and anti-Soviet activities: (a) as a member of the Polish Senate; (b) as a convinced Zionist; (c) as the rabbi of the Great Warsaw Synagogue; (d) and as a social activist and member of the committees of central Jewish organizations—and thus as someone who had

³⁵ Schorr file, sheet 71. Vsevolod Nikolaevich Merkulov (1895–1953) became a member of the Russian Communist Party (RCP (b)) in 1925; he had begun his career in 1921 in the Tbilisi Cheka. In Sept. 1938, evidently because of his closeness to Beria, he was appointed deputy head of the Main Directorate of State Security (GUGB) of the NKVD of the USSR; three months later he was appointed first deputy commissar of internal affairs of the USSR and head of the GUGB. In Apr.–July 1941 and in 1943–6 Merkulov was a commissar of state security. He was executed in 1953. See I. Ivkin, *Gosudarstvennaia vlast SSSR: Vysshie organy vlasti i upravleniia i ikh rukovoditeli, 1923–1991 gg.* (Moscow, 1999), 419–20. It seems that Merkulov's order concerned not Schorr personally, but prisoners of his category.

³⁶ Schorr file, sheet 14.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, sheets 7, 8, 100. The first *anketa*, from after his arrest, was filled in in his own hand.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, sheet 72.

³⁹ The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (the 'Joint') was founded in 1914 to provide assistance to Jews who had suffered in the First World War. Since many Jews lived in poverty after the war ended as well, the Joint continued to exist. The Joint participated in the funding of TOZ and CENTOS. From the beginning of 1938 to 1 Sept. 1939, the Joint distributed more than \$2 million in aid to Polish Jews.

⁴⁰ Schorr file, sheet 73.

contacts with Western Jewish social service organizations, above all the Joint, which in the USSR was believed to be a spy organization (see Docs. 1 and 2). The investigators collected no documentary evidence of anti-Soviet activities on Schorr's part, and Schorr himself denied each point of the charges presented to him.

It should be noted that the records of the interrogations create the impression that the investigators strove not only to denounce Schorr, but also to collect detailed information about Jewish social and political life in Poland, Jewish parties, and Jewish public figures. Although he answered these questions, too, Schorr imparted very little information on specific persons and made practically no mention of those who might have been in the territory controlled by the USSR at the time. Clearly he was aware that people could be persecuted on the basis of his testimony. He did not even give the addresses of his daughters in Paris. In this regard, it is interesting to compare Schorr's behaviour under investigation with that of Menahem Begin (1913–92), a member of the Central Committee of the Zionist-Revisionist organization in Poland and head of its youth organization, Betar. At the outbreak of the war, Begin fled to Vilna and in September 1940 was arrested there by the Soviet authorities. Because of his youth, it seems, and like many others at the time, Begin failed to understand the nature of the Soviet regime. At his investigation, Begin not only spoke in detail about the activities of his party, but also gave the names and addresses of his comrades in Vilna and Kaunas. For example, in response to the investigator's question 'Whom do you know of the members of the Zionist-Revisionist party and the organization of the Polish Betar now residing in Vilna?', Begin gave thirteen surnames, including 'Graev . . . 60 years old, member of the revisionist party, lives in Vilna, Teatralna Street number 5 or 8; Herzog (I don't remember his first name), 35 years old, a member of the revisionist party, lives in Vilna, Radneslaita 5', and so on.⁴¹ In the interests of fairness, we note that Begin, like Schorr, answered 'I don't remember' to a series of questions. However, what he did remember may have brought harm to his comrades.

At the investigator's request, the investigation of the Schorr case was extended several times. Beginning in August, these extensions were approved by public prosecutor of the USSR Bochkov.⁴² And here the unforeseen occurred. A defender was found for Schorr in the office of the prosecutor. Military prosecutor

⁴¹ M. Begin, *Beleilot levanim* (Tel Aviv, 1995), 92–3.

⁴² Schorr file, sheets 73–8. Viktor Mikhailovich Bochkov was a public prosecutor of the USSR from August 1940 to November 1943. He had no legal training, but he had graduated from the Frunze military academy of the Red Army in 1938. He began his career in the army, but in Nov. 1938 he became the head of the main prison directorate of the NKVD. One month later, he became head of the Fourth (Special) Department of the GUGB of the NKVD of the USSR. After completing his prosecutorial duties he headed the directorate of military convoys of the NKVD (MVD) of the USSR, and in 1951 he became the deputy director of the main directorate of camps (GULag). In 1959 he became a reservist. *Gosudarstvennaya vlast v SSSR* (Moscow, 1999), 230.

Kulchitsky, who in August of 1940 had agreed to an extension of the period of investigation, wrote to Bochkov in September in response to a new application: '*I object*. Schorr was interrogated once during the period when he was held for investigation beginning 10 October 1939. Other than his social situation, no other compromising materials were obtained. I submit this for your judgement.'⁴³ Of course, Bochkov approved the extension of the investigation this time as well. When another request for extension of the period of investigation was submitted at the end of November, Kulchitsky again objected on the grounds that 'the Schorr case has rested for a long time without forward movement'.⁴⁴ Again the extension of the investigation, and thus of Schorr's detention, was approved.

Meanwhile, Schorr's health worsened. It was particularly difficult for this elderly man, who was accustomed to a comfortable life, to bear the burden of Soviet prison—the more so as he had not received any provisions from outside in a long time. Even for a healthy person, it was difficult to survive Soviet prison without food and clothing provided by relatives. In addition, as a believing Jew and a rabbi—albeit liberal—Schorr evidently could not eat all the prison food (although of course there was no need to speak of the observation of *kashrut*), and this deprived him of the calories that in any case were insufficient. In April, when he was in the Butyrskaya prison, he applied (in Polish) to the prison authorities for the return of the 75 roubles that had been taken from him in Lviv, writing: 'In my decline, at the age of 66, I need certain products for the maintenance of my health.'⁴⁵ For months there was a fruitless correspondence with the prison in Lviv concerning the transfer to Moscow of Schorr's things, including money and the inscribed gold watch that had been stolen by the wardens.

The prisoner's health continued to decline. A medical examination of Schorr conducted on 14 August 1940 revealed 'a swollen face', 'dry wheezing in the lungs', and arterial and heart problems. He was declared unfit for physical labour. At Schorr's next medical examination, conducted on 7 April 1941, the examiner found dilation of coronary vessels, high blood pressure of 220 over 105, and difficulty in breathing. The doctor's diagnosis was 'arteriosclerosis, hypertony' and 'decompensation' of the heart.⁴⁶

This was Schorr's condition when his investigation was closed and on 12 April 1941 he was charged with defending the interests of the Jewish bourgeoisie. The justification for the accusation took half a page. The articles of indictment (58/13) remained the same. Prosecutor Kulchitsky agreed to the charges, and senior major Gorlinsky,⁴⁷ head of the third (secret-political) directorate of the People's Commissariat for State Security of the USSR, approved them.

⁴³ Schorr file, sheets 79–90.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, sheets 81–2.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, sheets 26–7, 83–9.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, sheet 92.

⁴⁷ N. D. Gorlinsky (1907–65), a senior major of the GB, corresponded to the military general-major. Gorlinsky achieved the rank of general-lieutenant. Kokurin and Petrov (eds.) *Lubyanka*, 73, 109, 123, 333.

One month later the Special Conference of the NKVD of the USSR pronounced the sentence: five years of exile to Uzbekistan (see Document 4). The sentencing document made no mention of the charges, but it stated that Schorr was being exiled as a socially dangerous element. We can only suppose that the reason for such a light sentence was the absence of a specific crime, or Schorr's poor physical condition and advanced age, or else international pressure. There is no doubt, however, that the fact of the Soviet court's lack of jurisdiction over Schorr's activities in Poland was of no concern to the members of the Special Conference.

On 7 June, Schorr headed to Tashkent in a prison transport.⁴⁸ The conditions of the transport were difficult for the elderly scholar to bear. In addition, having learnt of Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, he worried enormously about the fate of the family members he had left in Lviv. All of this together—the transport, the nervous tension, his progressive heart and vascular disease, and the hot climate in the Khorezemy oblast in July—hastened his demise. Schorr died on 10 July 1941 (see Document 5). His grave site is unknown.⁴⁹

RESCUE ATTEMPTS

The struggle to free Moses Schorr began soon after his arrest. In November 1939, the Jewish Agency approached the chief rabbi of Stockholm, M. Ehrenpreis, with a request that he help bring Schorr out to Sweden (a neutral country); he and his family could then be given a permit to enter Palestine. The Jewish Agency had no way of appealing to the Soviet government directly.⁵⁰ At the same time, the agency was trying to obtain British citizenship for Schorr, acting through the Polish provisional government, which was located in Paris at that time.⁵¹ The chief rabbi of Palestine, Yitzhak Herzog, pleaded for Schorr in London, but got nothing for his efforts.⁵²

Also at that time, in February of 1940, President Judah Magnes of Hebrew University sent a letter through the American consulate in Jerusalem to the ambassador of the United States in Moscow with a request to plead Schorr's case.⁵³ Apparently he did not know that the State Department had already refused to take up Schorr's cause on the grounds that he was not an American citizen.⁵⁴

At the beginning of April 1940 Yehoshua Schorr, who was a student at the Haifa Technion and who was at the heart of the struggle to save his father, learnt that Moses Schorr had been transferred to prison in Moscow. He quickly sent a request

⁴⁸ Schorr file, sheet 101.

⁴⁹ See Doc. 5. According to Y. Schorr, his father died on 8 July. See also Guzik, *Moshe Schorr*, 216 n. 1.

⁵⁰ Letter of A. Dobkin to Y. Schorr (1 Nov. 1939); letter of the immigration department of the Jewish Agency to Rabbi M. Ehrenpreis (16 Nov. 1939), Y. Schorr Archive.

⁵¹ A. Dobkin to Y. Schorr (20 Feb. 1940), Y. Schorr Archive.

⁵² Herzog to Y. Schorr (17 Mar. 1940), Y. Schorr Archive.

⁵³ Secretary of J. Magnes to Y. Schorr (25 Feb. 1940), Y. Schorr Archive.

⁵⁴ Cordell Hull to C. Adler (15 Feb. 1940), Y. Schorr Archive.

to the prosecutor of the USSR requesting permission to travel to Moscow to bring food and other things and to see his father after the investigation was completed.⁵⁵ Of course, he received no answer.

Nothing came of all these efforts, and many began to lose heart. The news of Schorr's death was published in American Jewish newspapers. On 5 November 1940 the well-known Jewish publisher A. J. Stybel wrote in despair to Cyrus Adler:

On each steamer arriving from Europe almost every Polish Jew who arrives in this country proclaims himself the head of Polish Jewry. They are people whose names I have never heard of, although I was born and raised in Poland, while Professor Schorr, who is really the leader of the Polish Jews, is still under Bolshevik arrest and no-one is making the slightest effort to save him.⁵⁶

On 17 July 1941 at a meeting between a board member of the Jewish Agency for Palestine,⁵⁷ Emanuel Neuman, and the director of the department of international relations of the World Jewish Congress,⁵⁸ Rabbi M. Perlzweig, with the ambassador of the USSR in the United States, K. A. Umansky,⁵⁹ the Jewish side raised the question of the exit from the USSR of certain Polish Jews, and Schorr in particular. Umansky replied that 'according to his information, Rabbi Schorr was in Moscow and had been at liberty for the last four or five months'.⁶⁰ In fact, Schorr was no longer among the living.

The fate of Schorr's family was as follows. His daughter Sonya and her husband Artur Miller reached New York towards the end of 1940. His son-in-law Max Kon survived the war in London. When the Germans captured Lviv, Schorr's wife, Tamar, and their daughter Felicja and the three children were transported to the Warsaw ghetto. One year later, after Schorr's other daughter Sofia had obtained Costa Rican and Nicaraguan citizenship for them, they were transferred to a prison in Warsaw and, ultimately, to the French village of Vitelle, where 300 Jews with foreign passports lived in the custody of the Gestapo. When the residents of the hotel learnt that they were to be transported the next day to the Drancy concentration camp (and from there inmates were usually transported to Auschwitz), the mother and daughter decided to commit suicide so that the children, as

⁵⁵ Letter of Y. Schorr (25 Apr. 1940), Y. Schorr Archive.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ The Jewish Agency (Sokhnut) was established for the purpose of securing the broader support of the Jewish public for the construction of a Jewish centre in Palestine. It was formally established in 1929. The statutes of the agency guaranteed equality of participation to Zionists and non-Zionists in its council, administrative committee, and executive committee. The president of the World Zionist Organization also headed the Jewish Agency. The first presidents of the JA were Chaim Weitzmann (1920–31) and Nakhum Sokolov (1931–5).

⁵⁸ The World Jewish Congress was founded in 1936 for the purpose of 'securing the existence and strengthening the unity of the Jewish people'. It brings together the leading Jewish organizations of more than sixty countries.

⁵⁹ Umansky (1902–45) died in a plane crash that may have been contrived by Soviet intelligence; G. B. Kostyrchenko, *Taynaya politika Stalina* (Moscow, 2001), 241.

⁶⁰ *Sovetsko-izraelskie otnosheniya: Sbornik dokumentov*, i (Moscow, 2000), 18.

orphans, would not be sent to the concentration camp. On 18 April 1944 Tamar took potassium cyanide. Felicja threw herself out of a fourth-floor window, but survived. She and her children in fact remained in Vitelle, where they were liberated by American troops.⁶¹

THE SCHORR FILE

The Schorr file was discovered in 2000 in the central archive of the FSB by the Moscow writer and journalist Vladimir Prikhodko. After Poland was divided in 1939, Vladimir's parents, the theatre director Aleksandr Lein (1906–42) and actress Nonna Prikhodko, were sent to Lviv. At first they lived in the apartment of Dr Oswald Schorr, Moses's nephew, and they became close to his family. During the war, Lein died at the front. His wife and son returned to Lviv after having been evacuated, and there they found and adopted Oswald Schorr's little daughter Anna, who was the only surviving member of the doctor's family.⁶² As an adult, Anna was able to find a relative in Israel: Yehoshua Schorr, Moses's son. At Yehoshua's request Vladimir Prikhodko began to take an interest in the fate of Moses Schorr, and it was he who obtained and copied the file at the archives of the FSB. Yehoshua Schorr passed along the file and other documents from his personal archive to the authors of the present article. To our great sorrow, neither Vladimir Prikhodko nor Yehoshua Schorr lived to see the work published, but it was they who brought about its appearance. In publishing 'The Schorr File', the authors are fulfilling their moral obligation to the deceased.

In the course of editing, spelling and punctuation have been corrected. Instead of 'Toz', Centos', and 'Ort', as in the original, we use 'TOZ', CENTOZ', and 'ORT'. At the same time, we have preserved words and phrases that should have initial capitals, but which in the documents are purposefully—but not always consistently—written in the lower case (for example the hebrew university in Jerusalem; the great synagogue; the Judaic institute; Warsaw university; jewish law; and the names of Jewish organizations and other entities) as they are in the documents. In those instances where an entire surname is written in capitals, we have preserved that as well.

In the present publication we do not present the entire Schorr file, which consists of 105 sheets, but only the most essential third, namely:

The report from the interrogation of 4 February 1940 (sheets 23–44 of the file)

The report from the interrogation of 17 September 1940 (sheets 65–9)

The charges filed on 15 April 1941 (sheets 96–9)

{96–8 below?}

⁶¹ H. Zaideman, 'Kurbana ha'aharon shel geveret profesor schor', *Haboker*, 10 May 1945.

⁶² On this subject, see N. Prikhodko, 'Asya', *Obshchaya gazeta*, 24–30 June 1994; and V. Prikhodko 'Neskolko slov o moei materi', *ibid.*

An excerpt from the report of the 17 May 1941 meeting of the Special Conference (the verdict) (sheet 99)

The death certificate of 17 October 2000

The contents of the other parts of the file have either been used in the writing of the introduction, or repeat the contents of the reports published, or are not substantive (for example, the correspondence about the transfer of the prisoner's personal items, receipts, certificates, and the like). The Schorr file is stamped 'preserve for ever'.

DOCUMENT I

The Report from the Interrogation of 4 February 1940

Sheets 23–44 [or sheet or page, but consistent, everywhere—MB]

Report of the Interrogation of Moses Oziashovich Schorr

2 April 1940

{dates don't
match - is this
the date it was
written on?}

Schorr, M. O., born 1874 in Peremyshl, Jewish, former subject of Poland. Before his arrest he served as rabbi of the great synagogue in Warsaw and as a professor at Warsaw university.

The interrogation began at 10.15 with a break from 16.45 to 21.40.

QUESTION: Briefly tell us your autobiography.

ANSWER: I was born in 1847 in the city of Peremyshl. My father was a bookkeeper for a private bank, and my mother was a housewife. Of my family, consisting of ten people, only I and my two older sisters survive at the present time.

In the autumn of 1893, after finishing school in Peremyshl, I went to Vienna and entered the philosophy department at the university there. In the same year I entered the higher Jewish theological seminary ('Izraelitish teologish leranshtalt'), which was maintained by the Jewish community of the city of Vienna.

I spent my last semester of study in 1898 at the university of Lviv, since the dissertation that I would defend in pursuit of the degree of doctor of philosophy was 'Organization and Situation of the Jews of Ancient Poland'. This work was published in 1899 in Polish, and in 1900 in Russian in the historical journal *Voskhod*.⁶³

From Lviv I returned to Vienna and continued my studies at the theological institute. I finished there in 1900 and was ordained a rabbi. In that year I came to Lviv, where I was hired as a teacher of Jewish law in the state seminary for teachers and in Lviv's school number 5, where I taught lessons on God's law, Hebrew, and the history of the Jews.

⁶³ See above, n. 6. Schorr does not explain here that *Voskhod* (from 1899 *Knizhki voskhoda*), which was published in St Petersburg from 1881 to 1906, was a Jewish journal.

Thus it went until 1923, except for three years when I went to study in Berlin and Vienna. In 1902–3 I studied at the university of Berlin in the philosophy department. I studied Semitic languages and the culture of the Ancient Near East. I spent 1905 in Vienna also studying Semitic languages. After that I wrote several scholarly works that made it possible for me to take the post of junior lecturer at Lviv university in 1910. In 1916 I was given the title of university professor, and in 1920 I became a member of the Polish scholarly society in Lviv. As a junior lecturer and then a professor at the university of Lviv [I] lectured on the philology of Semitic languages and the cultures of ancient Semitic peoples.

*At the end of 1923 I was selected as the rabbi of the great synagogue in Warsaw and I remained in that post until recently. Beginning in 1925 I was given the opportunity as a titular professor to teach at Warsaw university. I taught at the university until the beginning of the Polish–German war.*⁶⁴

*In 1928 I became a corresponding member of the history department of the Polish Academy of sciences in Kraków, and in 1937 I received from the higher Jewish institute in America ('Ravvniko-seminar of Amerika' in New York)⁶⁵ the title of *honorary doctor of Jewish studies*.*

In 1934 a book came out in honour of my sixtieth birthday, published by the institute of Judaic studies in Warsaw⁶⁶—of which I was a founder and where I taught.

QUESTION: Earlier you indicated that after finishing the Jewish theological institute in Vienna in 1900, you were ordained as a rabbi. Why then did you begin by serving as a teacher of Jewish law in Lviv, and become a rabbi only in 1923?

ANSWER: At the time a career as a rabbi did not appeal to me since I also wanted to engage in scholarly activities. Besides, the rabbinical positions in Lviv were already occupied, and as a young man I could not count on being selected. Therefore, when the competition for the position of teacher of Jewish law at the seminary was announced, I submitted my rabbinical and doctoral certificates, as candidates for the position were required to do, and I was accepted as a teacher. In 1922 after the death of the rabbi of Warsaw, Doctor POZNANSKY,⁶⁷ the board of the Warsaw *kahal* sent me a letter asking me to agree to take the post of rabbi of the Great Synagogue in Warsaw. Since I was ill at the time, I accepted the proposal only in 1923 and in December I went to Warsaw, where I was made rabbi.

⁶⁴ We have italicized all words and phrases originally underlined or marked by the investigators in the report.

⁶⁵ Of course, there was no such institution in the USA. What is meant here is probably the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

⁶⁶ *Księga jubileuszowa ku czci Prof. Dr. Mojżesza Schorra* (Warsaw, 1935).

⁶⁷ Samuel Abraham Poznański (1864–1921), rabbi, Zionist activist, scholar, and bibliographer. Poznański studied at Berlin University, where he earned his doctoral degree, and at the Lehranstalt (Hochschule) für die Wissenschaft des Judentums. He was preacher and spiritual leader of the Great Synagogue on Tłomackie Street in Warsaw. He was a delegate to the first Zionist congress. Poznański's scholarly interests covered the history of Hebrew grammar, medieval philosophy, the history of the *geonim* of Babylon, Hebrew and Arabic literature, Bible studies, and other fields.

QUESTION: Name all of your relatives. Indicate their occupation and where they are located at present.

ANSWER: My family consists of five persons: My wife SCHORR TATYANA (maiden name BENYAKOB)—55 years old, she was a housewife and participated in Jewish charitable societies (aid to the blind,⁶⁸ and the like). She taught cooking classes for Jewish girls and was a member of the central committee of ‘the Jewish Society for Aid to Victims of the Crisis’.⁶⁹ She worked in the department for food aid to homeless children. She left Warsaw with me on 7 September 1939. On 27 September we arrived in Ostrog at the home of our daughter KON Felicja, who was staying with GOLBERT, a distant relative on my wife’s side.

On 9 October I was arrested in Ostrog, and I remained under arrest there for a week. Then I was in Lutsk for the same amount of time, and on 24 October I was conveyed to Lviv. I haven’t seen my wife since 9 October. But when I was in Lviv I received some provisions from her, and the investigator told me that my wife was in Lviv.

MILLER Sofia (daughter), 34 years old. Married to MILLER Artur, who works in the Polish ministry of justice as the chief consultant in the legislative department. When the evacuation began Miller left with the ministry to Romania.

They lived in Warsaw at number 8, Lekarska Street. Since October 1938 my daughter Sofia has lived in Paris, where she studied in a fashion school. She came to Warsaw in the month of June 1939 but she went back in the middle of August. She intended to open a fashion salon in Warsaw. I don’t know her Paris address.

KON Felicja (daughter), 30 years old. Married. Her husband KON MAX is the former director of ‘Vidzevsky Manufacturing’⁷⁰ and beginning in 1932 he served as the honourable vice-consul to the Swedish ministry of foreign affairs in Łódź. They resided in Łódź at 32 Rokiti/ska Street. On 20 August Kon Max went to London on personal business and never came back. At the beginning of the military action, Felicja left with her two children and Sofia’s infant for Ostrog, where she took a room at GOLBERT’s and remained there.

SCHORR ESFIR⁷¹ (daughter), 18 years old. She has been in Paris since February of 1939. She is a student in an artistic photography programme.⁷² She lives with my oldest daughter Sofia Miller.

⁶⁸ The Jewish Society for Assistance to the Blind was established in 1926. ⁶⁹ See above, n. 9.

⁷⁰ Widzewski Manufacturing was the largest textile enterprise in Poland. Oscar Kon (Oscar Kohn, Asher Cohen), Maks’s father, was its owner.

⁷¹ Ula (Esfir, Esther, 1921–91), Schorr’s youngest daughter. After finishing the Warsaw Gymnasium ‘Yekhudia’ in 1939, she went to Paris to study art. The beginning of the war found her there with her sister Sonia and her husband. At the end of the year, her brother, with the help of the wife of Edwin Samuel (the son of Herbert Samuel, the first British high commissioner for Palestine), obtained a visa for her which allowed her to go to Palestine. She studied at the WIZO (Women’s International Zionist Organization) school in Nakhalat-Yitshak. In 1941 she joined the women’s corps of the British army (ATS), in which she served until her marriage to Herzl Ben-Kohav, who was also serving in the military. She died in Israel (Y. Schorr Archive).

⁷² In the interrogation of 16 Oct. 1939, Schorr said that Esfir was a student in an advertising school. (Schorr file, sheet 18.)

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SCHORR OTTO-EZVE and LUDWIG⁷³ (twin sons), 21 years old. In 1937 they left Warsaw for Haifa (Palestine), where they are studying at the Jewish technical institute.⁷⁴ One was studying to be a construction engineer specializing in roads and bridges, and the other to be an architect.

As I indicated above, I have two sisters. One of them, HERMAN EVA, 71 years old, a widow, lives in Warsaw and is supported by her daughter, a typist.

The other, GEKKEL TSELINA, 69 years old, a widow, is in Chernovitsy (Romania) and lives on the income from a house that she owns.

My wife has two brothers.

BENYAKOV IZAK, 58 years old. He lives in Bordeaux (France). He had a timber warehouse. I don't know what he is doing now.

BENYAKOV MARKUS, 39 years old. He lives in Tel Aviv and works in the Anglo-Palestinian bank.

QUESTION: *To what Jewish political parties or organizations did you belong?*

ANSWER: *I have never belonged to any political parties or organizations.*

QUESTION: But you had some political convictions?

ANSWER: *I sympathized with the Zionists and their concept of creating for the Jewish people a centre for religious, cultural, and social organizations in Palestine.*

QUESTION: As a representative of what organization were you appointed senator in 1935 by former Polish president MOŚCICKI?

ANSWER: In accordance with the constitution the president had the right personally to appoint one-third of the members of the Senate. And I was appointed as an individual, *as a learned person.*

⁷³ Ludwig (Lipman-Mordechai, 1918–63). After finishing the Warsaw Jewish *gimnazium* 'Askola', he moved to Palestine with his twin brother (1936). There he studied architecture at the Haifa Technion. After graduating from the Technion, he worked as a junior lecturer in his department for a while. Upon completing his military service, he opened his own office in Tel Aviv. He designed many buildings in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and other cities. He participated in several joint projects for which he won awards. He won the Tel Aviv Prize in Architecture for his design of the cinema Tsafon. He died of a brain haemorrhage on Yom Kippur 1963 (Y. Schorr Archive). Otto (Ezve, Yehoshua-Yitshak) was a construction engineer. He moved to Palestine and studied at the Technion along with his brother Ludwig. During the period of the Mandate, he worked mainly in British military and air force institutions in Haifa and Jerusalem, where he settled after marrying in 1942. He served in the Haganah, and then in the Israeli Defence Force. As an independent engineer, he planned the construction of various buildings in Jerusalem. He saw his sisters in 1954 in New York for the first time since 1938. From 1954 to 1963 he worked as the chief engineer for the construction of a new campus for the Hebrew University at Givat Ram. From 1963 to 1965 he headed the Group for the Development of the University of Gan in the department of international co-operation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From 1963 to 1983 he was the director of the technical bureau in the department of public works in the municipality of Jerusalem (Y. Schorr Archive). He died on 2 Feb. 2003.

⁷⁴ What is meant here is the Haifa Technion.

QUESTION: Did MOŚCICKI or anyone else discuss this question with you before your appointment?

ANSWER: No. The president's secretary called me only on the eve of the appointment informing me that MOŚCICKI wanted to name me senator and asking for my consent. I responded affirmatively.

QUESTION: During your tenure as senator did you often meet privately with MOŚCICKI?

ANSWER: I never met with MOŚCICKI privately either before my appointment or after, except for once a year on January first, when representatives of various strata of the population called on the president. Among the groups were Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant clergy, so I attended MOŚCICKI's receptions along with other Warsaw rabbis. *Other than that I attended receptions that the president organized annually on 11 November, the day of the formation of the Polish government. But there were about a thousand people at those receptions, and I didn't even see MOŚCICKI.*

QUESTION: Of what did your activities as senator consist?

ANSWER: *I defended the economic, religious, and cultural interests of the Jewish population of Poland. In this regard I always spoke in the Senate, whether it was on the general budget or on the budgets of the ministry of social welfare. Pointing to the difficult and unequal position of the Jews, I demanded credits for Jewish merchants and artisans and an increase in Polish government funds for religious communities (kahals); I demanded that measures be taken to counter the boycott of Jewish merchants and antisemitic demonstrations, and that Jews be granted the right to enter institutions of higher learning with no limitations.*

QUESTION: In what other socio-political activities were you engaged in Poland?

ANSWER: I didn't engage in any political activity. I was an *apolitical person* and carried out only scholarly, cultural, and charitable work. I was the chairman of the Warsaw committee for 'Aid to Victims of the Crisis' from 1926 until just recently, and deputy chairman of the 'Main Society for Friends of the Central Jewish Library'.⁷⁵ In addition, I participated in a number of societies whose activities extended throughout Poland. For example, I was the deputy chairman of the following societies: TOZ (society for the maintenance of the health of the Jews),⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Apparently Schorr is referring here to the library of the Great Synagogue, which was founded in 1880 and transferred to the building of the Judaic Institute in 1936.

⁷⁶ TOZ (Towarzystwo Ochrony Zdrowia Ludności Żydowskiej) was officially established in 1921, but it had its roots in the St Petersburg OZE (Obshestvo Okhranenia Zdoroviya Evreiskogo Naseleniya—Association for Protecting the Health of the Jews), which was founded in 1912. TOZ provided medical assistance to the Jewish population, which was suffering as the result of pogroms and the disasters of the war. It battled epidemics, opened clinics and hospitals, and disseminated information on basic sanitation and hygiene. TOZ continued to exist until 1942.

CENTOS (Central guardianship for orphans),⁷⁷ the society for the promulgation of Jewish studies,⁷⁸ chairman of the association of friends of the Hebrew university in Jerusalem,⁷⁹ chairman of the committee for aid to Jewish refugees evacuated from Germany to Poland,⁸⁰ chairman of the state commission for the examination of Jewish Gymnasium teachers in Jewish law, Hebrew, and the history of the Jews. I was appointed to the latter in 1928 by the minister of religion and education.

QUESTION: What independent associations or organizations did rabbis have in Poland?

ANSWER: Among the rabbis of former Poland there were two religious tendencies. *One was orthodox, conservative. The representatives of this tendency stress the ritual element, relate negatively to the general culture, and provide all kinds of support to the Talmud schools, the so-called yeshivas. The other tendency is the liberal one, which, stressing ethical ideology and universalism, strives to lead the Jewish population out of the cultural 'ghetto' and raise the younger generation in a spirit of harmony of religion*

⁷⁷ CENTOS (Związek Towarzystw Opieki nad Dziećmi i Sierotami; Federation of Societies for the Guardianship of Orphans in Poland) was founded in 1923 and consisted of nine regional committees. The First World War gave rise to the problem of orphans and unsupervised children (mainly Jewish). At first the Joint worked with them, and then, as Polish Jewish organizations grew stronger, the Joint transferred the care of orphans to CENTOS. At the same time, the Joint's part in financing CENTOS gradually diminished to 14.5% in 1929. It grew again to 46% in 1932. The contribution of state and local authorities was 25%. In 1938 the activities of CENTOS involved 218 children's institutions— orphanages, boarding schools, and so on. CENTOS had 327 local committees and about 60,000 contributing members. CENTOS's children's home in Warsaw, whose director was Henryk Goldschmidt (Janusz Korczak), was known for its humanitarian treatment of children and its innovative approach to teaching.

⁷⁸ The Society for the Promulgation of Jewish Studies (Towarzystwo dla Krzewienia nauk Judaistycznych w Polsce) was founded in 1925 for the purpose of establishing the Judaic Institute.

⁷⁹ The Association of Friends of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem was founded in 1925.

⁸⁰ On 25 Mar. 1938 the Polish Sejm adopted a law according to which a Polish citizen who had lived outside Poland for five consecutive years could be deprived of citizenship. On 6 Oct. the government announced that those who did not renew their passports by the end of the month would be deprived of citizenship. In response, the German authorities, not wanting to have stateless persons—especially Jews—on their territory, seized 17,000 Polish Jews residing in Germany and transported them to the Polish border. About 5,500 exiles were detained by the Polish authorities at the border town of Zbąszyn. The rest were allowed to enter Poland, but they, too, found themselves in a disastrous situation. In response Polish Jewry founded in Warsaw (on 4 Nov. 1938) the Association for Aid to Refugees from Germany (Ogólny Komitet Pomocy Uchodźcom z Niemiec). By July the committee had collected 3.5 million zlotys, one-fifth of which was provided by the Joint. The Joint also took upon itself the problem of the refugees in Zbąszyn. Under the chairmanship of Moses Schorr and with the support of the government, the Jewish Committee on Emigration and Colonization was founded. It was to do everything possible to bring about the emigration of a significant number of Jews from Poland. See Y. Bauer, *My Brother's Keeper: A History of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee 1929–1939* (Philadelphia, 1974), 243–50. For further details, see J. Tomaszewski, *Preludium zagłady: Wyznanie Żydów polskich z Niemiec 1938* (Warsaw, 1998).

and Jewish culture with general modern culture. I was a representative of this tendency, which was supported by the Jewish intelligentsia.

There were associations corresponding to these tendencies. Thus, rabbis of the orthodox tendency entered the Union of Rabbis in Poland,⁸¹ which was based in Warsaw, and the rabbis of the liberal tendency had an association that was called the Union of Rabbis with Higher Education.⁸² This union was formed six or seven years ago by myself and rabbi Braude⁸³ of Łódź, who was the chairman of the union.

QUESTION: Which of the associations named by you above were created by the union of rabbis in Poland with higher education?

ANSWER: We created only the society for the promulgation of Judaic studies, which then organized the institute of Jewish studies⁸⁴ in Warsaw.

QUESTION: How were all these Jewish religious, cultural, and charitable societies financed?

ANSWER: The financial sources for the associations indicated above were member contributions, one-time collections among the Jewish population, contributions from the ministry of social welfare, and the sums received through Paris from the American 'Joint' and the French association Alliance Israélite.⁸⁵ In addition to these funds the Jewish religious communities (*kahals*) disbursed funds from their own budgets. The annual budget of these organizations was about six million zlotys, and of this sum up to three million came from the Joint.

QUESTION: Who supervised the activities of the Jewish associations?

ANSWER: The relevant ministries of the former Polish government supervised them. The activities of the cultural and religious associations were supervised by the ministry of religion and education, and the activities of the charitable associations by the ministry of social welfare. All of the local associations of the city of Warsaw were under the purview of the ministerial department of the government (the Warsaw province).⁸⁶

⁸¹ The Union of Rabbis in Poland (Agudat Harabanim Bepolin) was founded in 1922 at a meeting of rabbis in Warsaw.

⁸² Unfortunately, we were not able to find information about this union.

⁸³ Markus Braude (Mordechai Ze'ev, 1869–1949) was a rabbi, educator, and Zionist leader. He was a delegate to the first Zionist congress. From 1909 to 1939 he was a maggid in Łódź. He established a network of Jewish middle schools in Poland. From 1920 to 1926 he was a member of the Polish Senate. He moved to Palestine in 1940.

⁸⁴ See above, n. 5.

⁸⁵ The Alliance Israélite Universelle was an international organization established in 1860 in Paris for the purpose of providing assistance to Jews throughout the world. It aided Jewish refugees and emigrants. It supported Jewish schools in North Africa, Palestine, and the Near East, as well as in France and other countries.

⁸⁶ This appears to have been recorded incorrectly; 'the ministerial department of the government' and 'the province' are two different offices.

QUESTION: What were the functions of the *kahal* in Warsaw?

ANSWER: The *kahal* (the Jewish religious community) represented the religious, cultural, and social interests of the Jewish population of the city to the appropriate government bodies. Among the tasks of the KAHAL were the creation, maintenance, and supervision of various types of institutions of a religious, cultural, and social character, organized within the Jewish population—for example, synagogues, cemeteries, religious schools, *mikvehs* (baths), out-patient clinics, hospitals, supporting rabbis, providing assistance to local Jewish charitable associations, and so on. For these purposes the *kahal* had a budget of approximately four million zlotys per year, which was raised from a tax on the Jewish population that was set by the *kahal* itself.

Administratively, the *kahal* was subordinate to the provincial governor (*wojewoda*), and its religious and other activities were supervised by the relevant ministries.

QUESTION: Who made up the council of the *kahal*?

ANSWER: There were about fifty people on the council of the *kahal*—representatives of various religious and political parties and socio-cultural organizations—and the board of the *kahal* was made up of about twelve or thirteen people.

In 1937 or 1938, after the previous council of the *kahal* was dissolved because individual political parties had begun to put forward their own declarations, the composition of the board was selected by the Warsaw governor JAROSZEWICZ.⁸⁷ MAISEL MAURYCY,⁸⁸ a commercial representative of some kind, and one of the former vice-presidents of the city of Warsaw, was appointed Chairman of the board. The board members were the engineer LABENTZ-LICHTENBAUM,⁸⁹ KAMINER,⁹⁰ a member of the Agudas Yisroel party, and others whose names I don't remember.

⁸⁷ Władysław Jaroszewicz (1887–1947) was the state commissioner of Warsaw. In the elections to the council of the community of Warsaw, which took place in Sept. 1936, the Bund won fifteen of fifty seats, which meant that the council was formed of three nearly equal blocs: the 'left' bloc, the 'national' bloc (Zionists and Mizrahi), and the 'orthodox'. After three months, the groups were unable to agree among themselves on the composition of the board. As a result Jaroszewicz stepped in, using his power to dissolve the elected council of the community and appoint a temporary chair, Maurycy Maisel, as well as a consultative council (*rada przyboczna*) made up of ten people, who together formed the board. These appointments were perceived as a slap in the face to the political leader of the Jews of Warsaw, who were unable to sacrifice their narrow party interests and brought about the interference of the authorities in the affairs of the community, an institution that symbolized Jewish autonomy. See A. Guterman, *Kehilat varsha bein shetei milhamot ha'olam* (Tel Aviv, 1997), 15–16, 386.

⁸⁸ In Sept. 1939 Maurycy Maisel fled Warsaw.

⁸⁹ Mark Lichtenbaum served as chair of the Warsaw Judenrat after Czerniaków's suicide.

⁹⁰ Meshulam Kaminer (1891–1941) was a Gerer hasid and religious authority. He was one of the founders of the party Shelomei Emunah Israel and an editor of the Orthodox newspaper *Der Jud*. From 1926 to 1939 he was one of the most active public figures of the Warsaw community. In the ghetto, he began to translate the Bible into Yiddish with explanatory notes. He died of typhus. Among

QUESTION: Of what did your participation in the *kahal* consist?

ANSWER: In keeping with state law and in accordance with the statutes of the *kahals*, every rabbi was required to participate in meetings of the *kahal* board. Since there were fourteen rabbis in Warsaw, I participated once or twice a year.

QUESTION: Why was the participation of rabbis at meetings of the *kahal* board required?

ANSWER: As representatives of religious interests.

QUESTION: Is that all?

ANSWER: I know of no other purposes.

QUESTION: You indicated above that representatives of various Jewish religious and political parties were elected to the council of the *kahal*. What Jewish bourgeois-nationalist parties existed in Poland?

ANSWER: There were three main ones: Agudas Yisroel, the Zionists, and the Bund. Agudas Israel ['Union of Israel'] was a religious political party of extreme conservatism, unifying the masses of religious Jews. As a political party it strove for cultural-religious autonomy in the territory of the former Polish state and at the same time for the improvement of the situation of the religious Jewish masses. Previously, the attitude of this party towards the Zionists was negative due to the fear that the system of the Jews in Palestine would be built only on nationalist and secular foundations, which would hinder the development of religion. Recently there has been a kind of rapprochement with the Zionists, namely with the Mizrahi faction, because to reject rapprochement with the Zionists would mean that they would lose the opportunity to participate in the Jewish system in Palestine and exercise their influence there in the cause of strengthening the religious cult.

Organizationally, however, this rapprochement has not yet been authorized or formalized. In addition to Poland, as far as I know, Agudas Israel parties existed in Lithuania, Latvia, Vienna, and Germany. The former chairman of the German Agudas Israel party, PAPPENHEIM,⁹¹ is in London. I don't know who was the chairman of Agudah in Poland, but among the members of the party were: LEVIN, a Warsaw rabbi; KAMINER, a merchant; TROCKENHEIM, the owner of a textile shop in Warsaw and a former senator and deputy of the Polish Sejm.⁹²

the council members was Adam Czerniaków (1880–1942), who later became the chair of the Warsaw Judenrat.

⁹¹ It is possible that Schorr misspoke, having in mind Yakov Rosenheim (1870–1965).

⁹² Yitshak Meir Levin (1894–1971) was a leader of the Agudat Israel movement. He was born in Góra Kalwaria, Poland and was the descendant of a family of Gur hasidim—the grandson of a *tsadik* on his mother's side. In 1924 he was elected to the council of the Warsaw community from Agudat Israel. In 1929 he was elected to the presidium of the international organization of Agudat Israel. In

The Zionists were a Jewish political party. The task of this organization was the establishment of a national world centre in Palestine through colonization by Jews of various countries under the protectorate of England, which had a mandate over Palestine through the League of Nations.

The governing body of the Zionists was the so-called executive, elected every two years at international Zionist congresses. Most of the executive, along with its chairman, chemistry professor Chaim Weitzmann, are in Jerusalem, and the rest, headed by his deputy, a professor of mathematics by the name of BRODETSKY,⁹³ are in London. The executive is made up of representatives of various factions; in effect it represents a coalition of these factions. Recently, supporters of Po'alei Tzion and Hitahdut have dominated on the executive.⁹⁴

It is not only the Zionists who bring questions concerning the Jewish organizational structure in Palestine to the English government, but also the so-called 'agency',⁹⁵ half of whose members are Zionists and half of whom are non-Zionists who support the establishment of one of the Jewish national centres in Palestine. Every two years, the non-Zionists choose their delegates to the agency at international conferences attended by representatives of Jewish charitable and cultural societies of various countries. These conferences take place concurrently and in the same city as the Zionist congresses. The Zionists also elect their representatives to the agency. The president of the agency serves simultaneously as the president of the Zionist party. The Zionist organization in Poland was part of the world Zionist organization and in addition to its general task worked to achieve national-cultural autonomy for the Jews of the former Polish state.

In Poland the organization of the Zionists was divided into the following factions:

The 'Algemein Zionists' ['General Zionists'] had two groups. Group A, the Al hamishmar ('On Guard'), were supporters of Jewish colonization of the land; they

1937 he became deputy to the president of the executive committee of the party. He fled Poland at the beginning of the war and reached Palestine in 1940. He was elected to the first Knesset of Israel and took the post of minister of social welfare. In 1954 he was elected president of the international executive committee and chair of the world executive of Agudat Israel. Yakov Trokenheim (1888–?) was one of the leaders of Agudat Israel in Poland. He was born in Warsaw into a family of Gur hasidim. He received a solid traditional education. From 1919 to 1936 he was a member of the city council of Warsaw. From 1926 to 1937 he was deputy chairman of the board of the Jewish community of Warsaw. From 1922 to 1927 and in 1938–9 he served as a deputy in the Sejm, and from 1935 to 1938 as a senator. He died in Majdanek.

⁹³ Zelig Brodetsky (1888–1954) was a mathematician and Zionist activist. From 1920 to 1949 he was a professor at Leeds University. In 1948 he succeeded Weitzmann as president of the British Zionist Federation. From 1949 to 1952 he served as president of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

⁹⁴ The party Mifleget Ha'avodah Hatsiyonit (the Zionist Workers' Party) was formed at the Paris conference in 1920 as a result of the unification (hence its alternative name Hitahdut, meaning 'unity') of Tse'irei Tsiyon, the majority party in the Diaspora, with Hapo'el Hatsa'ir in Palestine.

⁹⁵ See above, n. 57.

see the opportunity for the general development of the country in the organization and development of agriculture.

The supporters of group B, Et livnot ('Time to build'),⁹⁶ propagandize for the necessity of colonizing the cities for the purpose of developing industry and trade. They base their belief on the fact that, on the one hand, the Jewish nation for many centuries has been occupied in crafts and trade, and is therefore well adapted to these tasks, and on the other hand that Palestine, as the nexus of three parts of the world, holds unlimited potential for economic development and can become the centre of development of the Near East. In regard to farming the land, the 'Etlivnotists' propose to prepare the younger generation for work in agriculture.

Both groups of 'Algemein Zionists' united the middle bourgeoisie in the cities and assumed the possibility of establishing a life in Palestine on both co-operative and private foundations. The group Et livnot had the majority of supporters in the territory of so-called Lesser Poland,⁹⁷ and the group Al hamishmar had the majority in the territory of the former kingdom of Poland.

The leader of the Al hamishmar group was GRINBAUM,⁹⁸ an attorney, journalist, and former deputy of the Polish Sejm who left Poland in 1934 or 1935 and at the present time is in Palestine, where he is a member of the Zionist executive. After his departure the group had in effect no leaders, so GRINBAUM himself came to Poland periodically. Of the members of that group I knew: ELENBERG,⁹⁹ a representative of German metallurgical firms in Poland, and HARTGLAS,¹⁰⁰ a lawyer and former deputy to the Sejm. The leader of the Et livnot group in recent times was SZWARCBART,¹⁰¹ a lawyer and journalist. He lived in Kraków and was elected deputy to the Polish Sejm from Kraków in 1938. In Lviv, Et livnot was

⁹⁶ Et Livnot ('Time to Build') was a faction representing the middle class. Its leader was Leon Levite.

⁹⁷ 'Lesser Poland' (Małopolska) refers to a historical region of the Rzeczpospolita that included Kraków, Lwów, and Lublin.

⁹⁸ Yitshak Gruenbaum (1879–1970) was a Zionist activist and a journalist. During the First World War he was in Petrograd, where he published the Zionist paper *Togblat* and promoted the secularization of Jewish communities. In 1918 he returned to Poland, where from 1919 to 1935 he was a deputy to the Sejm (his last speech in the Sejm was in 1933), representing the radical faction Al Hamishmar. In 1933 he moved to Israel but sometimes travelled to Poland. He later served as minister of internal affairs in the temporary government of Israel (1948–9).

⁹⁹ Menahem Mendel Elenberg (1881–?) was a Zionist who was a rabbi. For many years he was a member of the city council of Warsaw and a member of the council and board of the Jewish community as a Zionist representative.

¹⁰⁰ Maksimilian Meir Apolinary Hartglas (1883–1953) was a lawyer, Zionist activist, and at one time chair of the Zionist organization of Poland. After the end of the First World War, he served as a deputy to the Sejm (1919–30) and for a while headed the Sejm's Jewish 'circle' (club of Jewish deputies). He defended Jews in several well-publicized antisemitic trials. He fled from Warsaw to Palestine in 1940.

¹⁰¹ Ignacy (Yitshak) Szwarcbart (1888–1961) was a Zionist leader in western Galicia. He served as a deputy to the Sejm in 1938–9.

headed by SCHMORAK,¹⁰² a lawyer and member of the Zionist executive, and a member of the group was RINGEL,¹⁰³ a Zionist living in Lviv.

Mizrahi ['Easterners'] was the rightmost branch of the Zionist organization. It unites the religious Zionists and insists on the necessity of religious cult in the national-cultural building of life in Palestine. Participants in the Mizrahi faction actively participate in the organization of all kinds of religious schools and yeshivas. The members of this group are for the most part of the older generation. Mizrahi has its own international centre, but I do not know where it is located.

The chairman of the Mizrahi faction is [fragment illegible]. The leader of Mizrahi in Poland was FARBSTEIN,¹⁰⁴ former chairman of the Warsaw *kahal* and deputy to the Sejm. In 1938, Farbshtein left for Palestine, but from there he travelled at times to Poland. At present, he lives in Jerusalem and is a member of the executive of Mizrahi. Of the members of Mizrahi, I know only NISSENBAUM,¹⁰⁵ a teacher in religious schools and a journalist who lived in Warsaw, and the Vilna rabbi RUBINSTEIN,¹⁰⁶ a former deputy to the Sejm.

The HITAHDUT ['Unity'] faction occupies the middle position between Algemein Zionists and Po'alei Tzion and represents rather the leftist democratic tendency among the Zionists. The supporters of Hitahdut stress the necessity of colonizing on co-operative foundations of a more or less socialist tendency. Recently this faction has been headed by TARTAKOVER,¹⁰⁷ a doctor of philosophy and

¹⁰² Emil Schmorak was a member of the Jewish delegation of eastern Galicia to the Versailles conference and a member of the Jewish national council of Lwów. He headed the Federation of Zionists of eastern Galicia.

¹⁰³ Michael Ringel (1880–?) was a lawyer and Zionist activist in Galicia in Austria-Hungary and Poland, and a journalist. In 1922–7 he was a member of the Polish Senate. After the Soviet occupation of Lwów, he was sent into exile and disappeared without a trace.

¹⁰⁴ Yehoshua Heschel Farbstein (1870–1948) was the founder and leader of the Mizrahi movement in Poland. He was chairman of the council of the Warsaw community and its board (1926–31), and from 1915 to 1918 he served as president of the Zionist organization in Poland. He was a deputy to the Sejm (1919–30) and to the city council of Warsaw. From 1938 to 1945 he headed the Jewish Community Council of Jerusalem.

¹⁰⁵ Yitshak Nissenbaum (1868–1942) was a rabbi, preacher, writer, and one of the founders of the Mizrahi movement. In 1900 he moved to Warsaw and served as the preacher in the Moriah synagogue. In 1937 he was elected president of Mizrahi. He died in the Warsaw ghetto.

¹⁰⁶ Isaac (Yitshak) Rubinstein (1880–1945) was a Jewish activist, and leader of Mizrahi in Poland. He was ordained as a rabbi and in addition completed studies in Moscow University's department of law. In 1910 he became state rabbi of Vilna and in 1919 he became a member of the Vilna rabbinate. From 1928 to 1930 and from 1935 to 1938 he served as deputy to the Sejm. He represented the Jews of Vilna in Mizrahi and in the World Zionist Organization. In 1941 he reached the USA and he taught at Yeshiva University until his death.

¹⁰⁷ Aryeh Tartakover (1897–1982) was a sociologist, demographer, and social activist. He was the founder and chair of the Hitahdut party. He went to the USA in 1939 and then in 1946 to Palestine, where he taught Jewish sociology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He was among the leaders of several Jewish organizations, including the World Jewish Congress. He was the author of many books in Hebrew, Yiddish, Polish, and English.

secretary of the union for the organization of Jewish *gymnasia* in Poland. He lives in Łódź.

Po'alei Tzion ['Workers of Zion'] was the Zionist faction of Jewish workers espousing the idea of establishing life in Palestine by colonizing it with Jewish workers as the main support in the construction of a collective socialist life. I don't know precisely, but it seems the head of this faction was Reiss, a mechanical engineer who lives in Warsaw.¹⁰⁸

The Revisionists—[were] supporters of JABOTINSKY. This party propagandized for the necessity of creating a Jewish state in Palestine. It was made up largely of young people. I don't know who headed the revisionists in Poland, but the leader of the international organization of Zionists is JABOTINSKY, who lives in Warsaw.¹⁰⁹ JABOTINSKY came to Poland once or twice a year and was last there, it seems, in 1939. Almost every Zionist faction has a youth organization; for example, Al hamishmar has the youth organization Hashomer Hatsair ['Young Guard'], and Mizrahi has the organization Tse'irei Mizrahi.

The *Bund* is the socialist organization of the Jewish workers. They are opponents of the ideas of Zionism and religious cult. They strove to achieve national-cultural autonomy in Poland. The Bund took a negative attitude towards the ancient Hebrew language. In Poland, the Bund was headed by the lawyer Ehrlich and by Alter,¹¹⁰ but I don't know this for sure.

QUESTION: Which of the Jewish bourgeois-nationalist organizations listed by you above enjoyed the greatest support from the former Polish government?

ANSWER: *The Polish government took a favourable attitude towards the general idea of Zionism and the emigration of Jews to PALESTINE. They therefore supported the*

¹⁰⁸ Anselm Reiss (1886–?) was an activist of the Po'alei Tzion party in Galicia. In 1926 he made *aliyah*, but in 1928 he was sent back to Poland to take up the post of general secretary of the Po'alei Tsiyon Zionist-Socialists (Ts S) party. He remained in this post until the beginning of the Second World War, which found him in Geneva. In January 1940 he returned to Palestine, where he did party and administrative work. He maintained his connections with Polish Jews and the Polish government in exile.

¹⁰⁹ It should be 'who lives in London'. Zhabotinsky was conducting negotiations with the Polish government on Poland's co-operation in the emigration of one and a half million Jews to Palestine. The revisionists broke with the World Zionist Organization in 1933.

¹¹⁰ Having survived the German military attack, the two leaders of the Polish Bund, Henryk Ehrlich and Victor Alter, were arrested by the NKVD—Alter at the end of September and Ehrlich at the beginning of October 1939. At the end of July and beginning of August 1941, they were sentenced to death for 'co-operation with international bourgeois elements and with Polish counter-intelligence', as well as with the Bundist underground that was supposedly operating in the USSR. The charges against Ehrlich included his criticism of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact as well. In September of that year they were freed in connection with the NKVD's plan to use them for the formation of the Jewish anti-fascist committee. The Soviet government soon rejected this idea, and the Bundists were arrested again: Ehrlich hanged himself in prison on 14 May 1942 and Alter was executed on 17 Feb. 1943. See S. Redlich and G. Kostyrchenko, *Evreisky antifashistsky komitet v SSSR, 1941–1948* (Moscow, 1996), 15–21.

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Zionist movement as a whole and took no interest in the activities of separate factions. However, they paid the greatest attention to the supporters of JABOTINSKY, which is to say to the revisionists, since JABOTINSKY came to Poland and in his speeches demonstrated the possibility of moving no less than one million Jews from Poland in the course of ten years. In addition, JABOTINSKY stressed and promoted the necessity of the physical education of Jewish youth, which was also in the military interests of the former Polish government.

QUESTION: What political activities did the Zionists undertake in Poland?

ANSWER: Under the conditions that held in Poland the Zionists in effect strove for true equality for the Jewish people and established national, cultural, and religious autonomy.

QUESTION: Tell us about the Zionists' activities against the revolutionary movement in Poland and against the Soviet Union.

ANSWER: I know no facts of the activities of the Zionists against the revolutionary movement in Poland or against the Soviet Union and I never heard anything about it.

QUESTION: The anti-Soviet activities of the Jewish bourgeois nationalist organizations are well known both from the official press and from public addresses. Besides, as someone with close connections with Jewish bourgeois circles, you knew very well about this. Why will you not speak about it?

ANSWER: I don't know whether the Jewish parties engaged in any anti-Soviet activities, but I speak the truth when I say that I knew nothing about this. As I already told you above, I did not engage in questions of politics.

[Entered by V.P.] The interrogation ended at 1.45.

The answers have been recorded from my words and I have read them personally.

[signature] Schorr

Interrogator: Investigator of the 2nd department of the GUGB NKVD USSR
JUNIOR LIEUTENANT OF STATE SECURITY

[signature] KRUKOVSKY

[signature] Khamaziuk.

DOCUMENT 2

The report from the interrogation of 17 September 1940

Sheets 65-9

REPORT OF THE INTERROGATION of Schorr Moisei Oziashevich,
17 September 1940

Schorr M. O. born 1874 in the city of Peremyshl, Jewish. Until his arrest he served as rabbi of the Great Synagogue in Warsaw and as a professor at the University of Warsaw.

QUESTION: In the report of the interrogation of 2 April 1940 you pointed to the presence in former Poland of Jewish charitable societies such as CENTOS, TOZ, ORT, and others. What further details can you give us of their activities in former Poland?

ANSWER: I have nothing particular to add. I can only say that each of the organizations I named had a publication in two languages, Yiddish and Polish. They wrote in them about the methods of raising orphans and homeless children, about hygiene and health and other questions, depending on the directions of the societies. In addition, the TOZ issued a calendar containing advice on *household customs* and child-rearing every year in two languages.

QUESTION: What else did they write in these publications?

ANSWER: Nothing other than what I told you.

QUESTION: You were a member of these societies?

ANSWER: Yes, I was.

QUESTION: Of what did your activity as a participant consist?

ANSWER: I took an active part in their activities *throughout the course of the existence of the Jewish charitable societies*. I was deputy chairman of CENTOS, TOZ, the credit society,¹¹¹ and others. I attended board meetings, signed letters that we wrote requesting aid to public organizations and to private persons—bankers, manufacturers, and others, both in Poland and in other countries. As an official representative of the societies I travelled abroad to Paris, London, Amsterdam, and Zurich, where I spoke about our activities in Poland in the name of the societies whose representative I was, and asked them to provide us with material assistance.

QUESTION: Where else did you travel as a representative of the charitable societies?

ANSWER: Nowhere else, other than the countries and cities that I already mentioned. I also travelled to Palestine in 1925, not as a representative of a society, but as a representative of the *kahal*, taking part in the opening of the Hebrew University. I went to Palestine for the second time in a private capacity in 1938 to visit my sons, who are studying in Haifa.

¹¹¹ The Jewish co-operative credit society was formed with the assistance of the Joint in 1922 for the purpose of revitalizing the Jewish artisans' co-operatives. There was also (until 1932) a Bank of Jewish co-operatives and then a centre for mutual credit.

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QUESTION: Name the leaders of the charitable organizations whom you know.

ANSWER: I don't remember all of the leaders. I know only the main leadership with whom I had some contacts through my work. Among these was the chairman of CENTOS, the banker Szereszewski Rafail.¹¹² who lived in Warsaw. Members of the board were Grodensky Mauritsel¹¹³, a merchant, and Zabludovsky Benyamin, also a merchant. The general secretary of TOZ was the physician Wulman.¹¹⁴ The chairman of the society was Doctor Lewin Gershon.¹¹⁵ In addition to myself, Schorr, another member of the board was Schiper Ignacy.¹¹⁶ They all lived in Warsaw. The chairman of ORT was Zages Karol, who also lived in Warsaw.

QUESTION: Tell us about the activities of the American Jewish Society, 'the Joint', in former Poland.

ANSWER: From 1919 through 1924, the Joint conducted its activities independently in former Poland; that is, without the participation of representatives of the Jewish community in Poland. In 1924, the Joint announced that it would continue its activities in former Poland on the condition that the Jewish associations existing in Poland take the initiative in collecting funds for the maintenance of the controlling institutions in former Poland. With these conditions the Joint promised to pay 50 per cent of the expenses of these associations.

These conditions of the Joint made it possible for Jewish associations to be founded in many cities of former Poland, which in the process of development achieved a certain independence from the Joint.

QUESTION: Whom do you know of the representatives of the Joint in former Poland?

ANSWER: The representatives of the Joint in former Poland were Giterman¹¹⁷ and Neustadt Leon,¹¹⁸ who had lived in Warsaw. They attended meetings of our societies and supervised our work.

¹¹² Rafail Szereszewski was a banker. He took on a number of social obligations in the Warsaw community. He belonged to the party of the moderate (so-called 'new') assimilationists, the Independent Committee of Jews in Poland. He was a member of the Senate from 1922 to 1927. Over the years he became closer to the Zionists and came out in favour of *aliyah* to Palestine.

¹¹³ The correct name is probably 'Maurycy'.

¹¹⁴ Leon Wulman was a physician and the general secretary of TOZ.

¹¹⁵ Gershon Lewin (1868–1939) was a physician, a publicist in Hebrew and Yiddish, a public figure, director of the Jewish hospital in Warsaw, and the chairman of the central committee of TOZ.

¹¹⁶ Ignacy (Yitshak) Schiper (see the Introduction) was a historian and public figure. In his youth he was a Po'alei Zionist, and later joined the general Zionists. From 1919 until 1927 he was a deputy to the Polish Sejm. In 1928 he became a professor at the Institute for Jewish Studies. His areas of interest were the history of Jewish economic life and national culture. He died on 10 June 1943 in the concentration camp Majdanek.

¹¹⁷ Yitshak Giterman (Gitterman) headed the Warsaw department of the Joint in the 1930s. He continued to organize the Joint's assistance under the German occupation and even in the Warsaw ghetto. He provided material assistance to the ghetto opposition movement. He was killed by the Germans in 1943.

¹¹⁸ Leon (Leib) Neustadt was Giterman's deputy. He was killed in the Warsaw ghetto in 1943. Giterman's second deputy was David Guzik, who survived the war and died in a plane crash in 1946.

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QUESTION: We have documentary evidence that the organizations indicated above conducted anti-Soviet and espionage activities against the Soviet Union under the cover of various 'charitable societies' and organizations. What can you tell us about that?

ANSWER: I know of no work on the part of the Joint and the Jewish societies in former Poland that was directed against the Soviet Union. And I have nothing to say on that question.

[Signature] Schorr

This report has been accurately recorded from my words and has been read by me.
Schorr

Senior Interrogator Operational Commissioner 2nd department of the GUGB
Lieutenant of state security

[Signature] Khamaziuk]

DOCUMENT 3

The Charges Filed on 15 April 1941

{96-9
above?}

Sheets 96-8

'I APPROVE'

HEAD OF THE 3RD DIRECTORATE¹¹⁹ OF THE NKGB OF THE USSR

(S)enior Major of State Security

[signature] Gorlinsky

15 April 1941

INDICTMENT

Investigation no. 391, of Schorr M. O., accused of a crime committed under article 58 point 13 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR.

SCHORR Moisei Oziashovich was arrested on 9 September¹²⁰ 1939 in the city of Ostrog as a former member of the Polish Senate and the rabbi of the 'great' Warsaw synagogue, accused of carrying out a punitive policy in regard to communists and Soviet sympathizers.

In 1902-5 SCHORR M. O. studied Semitic languages and culture of the Ancient Near East in the philosophy departments of the Universities of Berlin and Vienna.

¹¹⁹ The third directorate was the secret-political directorate. The head of the directorate at that time was S. R. Milshtein. The charges were confirmed not by him, but apparently by N. D. Gorlinsky, who became head of the third directorate at the end of July 1941.

¹²⁰ As in the original. In fact Schorr was arrested on 9 Oct.

In 1923 at the invitation of the Warsaw Jewish religious community SCHORR M. O. left Lvov for Warsaw, where he was elected rabbi of the 'great' synagogue.

From 1925 until the beginning of the Polish-German war, SCHORR was also a professor at Warsaw University.

In 1935 the former president of Poland MOŚCICKI appointed SCHORR senator. He was a senator until mid-1938.¹²¹

As a senator and as a rabbi, SCHORR was connected to the Jewish bourgeoisie. He defended its interests and conducted an active nationalist policy.

SCHORR indicated: 'I was deputy chairman of CENTOS, TOZ, the credit society, and others. I attended board meetings, signed letters that we wrote to the social organizations and to private persons—bankers, manufacturers, and others—both in Poland and in other countries about providing aid. As an official representative of the societies I travelled to Paris, London, Amsterdam and Zurich, where I spoke about our activities.'

'... I also travelled to Palestine in 1925, not as a representative of a society, but as a representative of the *kahal*.'¹²²

In terms of his political views, SCHORR M. O. was a convinced Zionist. On his attitude towards Zionism he indicated in the interrogation: 'I sympathized with the Zionists and their concept of creating for the Jewish people a centre for religious, cultural, and social organizations in Palestine.'

SCHORR M. O. did not confess to the charges presented.

On the basis of the account set forth above, SCHORR Moisei Oziashevich, born in 1874 in the town of Peremyshl, Jewish, to the family of an employee, former Polish subject, non-party, former senator in the Polish senate and rabbi of the 'great' Warsaw synagogue

IS CHARGED:

With carrying out an active nationalist policy and struggle against the revolutionary movement over the course of many years while occupying the post of senator and taking Zionist positions, that is, of crimes provided for under article 58 point 13 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR.

The investigation of the case now being closed, investigative case number 391 on the accusation of SCHORR Moisei is to be directed to the review of the Special Conference of the NKVD of the USSR.

The indictment was drawn up in Moscow on 9 April 1941.

SENIOR OPERATIONAL COMMISSIONER OF THE 5TH DEPT. OF THE 4TH SECTION OF THE 3RD DEPARTMENT OF THE NKGB

¹²¹ The Senate was dissolved by a presidential decree of 13 Sept. 1938.

¹²² In fact, what Schorr says here is: 'I also travelled to Palestine in 1925, not as a representative of a society, but as a representative of the *kahal*, taking part in the opening of the Hebrew University.'

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Michael Beizer and Israel Bartal

Junior Lieutenant of State Security
HEAD OF THE 5TH DEPT. OF THE 4TH SECTION OF THE 3RD DIR.
OF THE NKGB
Captain of State Security
IN AGREEMENT: HEAD OF THE 4TH SECTION OF THE 3RD DIREC-
TORATE OF THE NKGB OF THE USSR
Captain of State Security

CERTIFICATE: The accused SCHORR M. O., arrested 9 IX 1939, is detained at
the Internal prison of the NKGB of the USSR.
SENIOR OPERATIONAL COMMISSSIONER OF THE 5TH DEPT. OF
THE 4TH SECTION OF THE 3RD DIRECTORATE OF THE NKGB
Junior Lieutenant of State Security

DOCUMENT 4

An Excerpt from the Report of the 17 May 1941 Meeting of the Special Conference (the Verdict)

Sheet 99
Excerpt from report No. 50
Of the Special Conference of the National Commissar of Internal Affairs of the
USSR
Of 17 May 1941
HEARD: Case no. 391/ 3RD DIRECTORATE OF THE NKGB of the USSR
on the accusations against SCHORR Moisei Oziashevich, born in 1874 in
Peremyshl, Jewish, from the family of an employee, former subject of Poland, not
a member of any party.

RESOLVED: Schorr Moisei Oziashevich, as a socially dangerous element, is to be
sent to the Uzbek SSR for a term of FIVE years to be counted from 9 September
1939.
Head of the Secretariat of the Special Conference of the National Commissar of
Internal Affairs of the USSR
[signature, seal]

DOCUMENT 5

The Death Certificate of 17 October 2000

MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEK-
ISTAN

700029 Tashkent, Yu. Radzhaby Street-1

No. 7/4-P-785 of 17 October 2000

125239 Russia, Moscow

Koptevskaya St. 18B apt. 20

cit. Prikhodko V.A.

In response to your application we inform you that according to our data, Schorr Moisei Oziashovich, born in 1874, native of the city of Peremyshl, a Jew by nationality, professor of Warsaw University, was convicted by the Special Conference of the NKVD of the USSR on 17 May 1941 as a socially dangerous element for a period of 5 years. The exile was served in the territory of the Khorezm province. He died on 10 July 1941.

No information on the burial site, cause of death, or personal affairs of the former administrative exile Schorr Moisei Oziashovich has survived.

Head of subsection

M. Makhmudov

Translated from the Russian by Claire Rosenson