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**Haesh A. И.**

## **Materials of the first meeting with F.J. Zagorski on 8.01.1983**[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Memories of Fayvl Yosifovich Zagorsky**

Handwritten entry in Kaunas 8.01.1983

They wanted to squeeze me into the commission. I was a worker. But I refused, I said: "If I give, I will, but if I take, I won't."

A commission came. They measured the [living] area. Hayesh had a lot of houses. Several hundred square meters. And you could have had 60-80 meters. He had a lot, then he was nationalized.

He was brought that he had to sign [the reduction in living space]. The story was told: "Leiser Haesch cried for the 1st time in his life.

If he had been more energetic, younger, he had horses and could have harnessed and rode away, but he didn't, and not he alone, but hundreds like that.

When the Russians came, there was nothing, the artisans had no work, and I went to the shoe factory and never saw Hayesh again.

After the shooting of the Jews in August [1941], all the things were taken to the synagogue and an auction was held there. Fivel's sewing machine was bought by a Latvian, but when Fivel found out about it after the war, he said he had bought it, but the Germans had taken it away.

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Tape recording in Kaunas on January 8, 1983

А. Today we have January 8, 1983. I'm in Kaunas with Faivel Yosifovich Zagorski. He promised to answer some of my questions.

А. Faivel Yosifovich, will you please tell me what you just wanted to tell me about Meischa?

Ф. This is off the record. You said Meische and Leyser[[2]](#footnote-2) were in Penza. There was a woman there, Sora Abramovich, a widow. She had five daughters. Leyser and Meishe had a mother in Penza, your great-grandmother.

А. Feiga Haesh.

Ф. I was seven or eight years old, I didn't remember her name. In order for her to return to Jemely, they gave the mother to the widow and her daughters, instead of taking her themselves. She was already everbotel[[3]](#footnote-3) , how do you say, like an old woman, didn't remember anything. She was a burden. The widow had brought Feyga to Jaimeli and thought that Leyser and Meichet would follow, but they never came.

The widow and Feyga were in agony. I remember my father used to go to the rabbi. Feigah was, so to speak, like a rich woman. [My father] said [to the rabbi]: "She's lying around at some woman's house, and the children left her. What to do with her?" Rabin replied, "What can I do. Whoever has this misfortune, let him deal with it. They will come." They didn't wait, and Feigah took and died.

All I remembered was all the red tape, that they gave my mother away, they didn't bring her back from Penza themselves, they gave her to the widow. Of course, they paid her [something]. Sora was our neighbor. Father was a man after all, Sora was helpless, asking: "Go, Yosef, find out from the rabbi what to do with her? They gave it to me, I thought they would come tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, but they haven't been coming for weeks or months. There's nothing to feed her anymore." I only remembered that she died and only then did they come, Leyser.

А. I know that she left early. She didn't have a good life in Penza with her children.

Ф. They could have come right away with my mother. Why send her before? Well, I guess things haven't been settled. Leyser came and Meishe stayed there, I guess.

А. That's right, he stayed in Penza. I didn't think you knew about Feig. And who had her lying alone? Sora Abramovich?

Ф. Yes.

А. And who came to see Rabbi, who was the man?

Ф. My father. But Sora will not go to the rabbi: she is a woman. She goes to my father: "Please speak."

А. Where did Sora live?

Ф. Near a Lutheran church. We lived near the Lutheran Church. That's where Feiga lay. She kept calling, "Meishe! Leyser!" Old people, everbotel.

А. Out of your mind, senile dementia?

Ф. Yes, she didn't know where she was. She calls them.

А. Sora Abramovich, you say, had five daughters, and with her daughters Sora went to Lithuania.

Ф. To Lithuania from Penza. [Haeshi] knew her, I guess. They were from the same city, they were also from Žeimialis. They gave her [money], I guess. Sora was poor. They were men, they were probably stealing something in Penza. They took money with them.

А. Yes, of course.

Ф. Tell you, this? Maybe not from this area, not directly relevant [to the subject]. We lived there in Tambov in 1915, 1916, 1917, we knew no shortage. It was cramped. We lived there in one room. Three rooms were there. Each room was occupied by [refugees]. But this food, there was no shortage.

А. My grandfathers also lived well in Penza.

Ф. In spite of [the fact] that there was a war. Then they buried her. Of course, they came.

А. When was she buried?

Ф. In 1919, since my father died in 1919 in the spring, in the month of May, say. She died two or three months before that, in winter.

А. February, March?

Ф. Yes, in 1919 or the end of 1918, because we returned to Zeimialis in August 1918. And Sora Abramovich and Feiga came after us two or three months later. That was the winter of 1918/19 when she died.

А. How old could she have been?

Ф. Oh, a lot, about 80 years, I guess.

А. The synagogue, do you remember it?

Ф. It was demolished.

А. Do you know why it was torn down?

Ф. It was demolished because it was already in need of extensive repairs. In 1913-1914 they were building a synagogue in two halves. Besmedresh was called, was such for weekdays, and was more festive. It was tall with two halves under one roof.

А. The mundane side and the choral side.

Ф. A large building under one roof, with only a wall separating them. The choral was with a downward slope. Because there's a saying, "I speak to you from the depths. So they made it two meters lower, to make it look like "I am coming to you from the depths. When we arrived, this side wasn't finished yet. The everyday side was already working. There was still a lot unfinished. I think during that time the roof became holes, the floorboards [broke]. They thought it wasn't good for them to fix it, what they were going to do with it. So they tore it down.

А. This was after World War II?

Ф. Sure, I was there back in 1947-48, 50 the year we went, it was still standing.

А. Can you describe it? Any drawing, any sketch?

Ф. It was quadrangular, no features.

А. What was the roof?

Ф. Ordinary, the walls were ordinary, only the windows were big.

А. Wooden?

Ф. No.

А. Stone?

Ф. Clay.

А. Earthenware.

Ф. Stuffed with clay. Rocks are laid out near doors and windows.

А. How many meters.

Ф. It was about 20 meters. The half, called besmedresh, was about 10 meters, and the other half was also about 10-12 meters wide. I remember going to the in kipper, when a lot of people gathered, the candles would melt [go out], there wasn't enough air. It was about five or maybe seven meters high. The weekday one had a flat ceiling, and the choral one had a ceiling like the sky.

А. Semicircular?

Ф. Semi-circular, like a bridge.

А. Spherical or cylindrical?

Ф. Cylindrical. You notice, where the synagogue was, there was a wooden house and a brick house like that in the back. That was the rabbi's house, the public house. Then there was a bathhouse. All of these things had leaked out.

А. What kind of meetings you had with Lazer. You said you saw him.

Ф. I saw a lot of him. He knew me when I grew up, as there were dozens of boys like me. I told him that I was involved in collecting donations. I went up to him, and to Freida all the time. That's the communication we had. Then he shut down [closed himself off], didn't participate in anything. A rich man like him aspired to some kind of honor, to be the head of a synagogue.

He had no inclination for it, no patience for it. Then he was in the flax trade. The peasants grow it, then bring it to the town to sell. In the town, the merchants were like the buyers. They would buy, then he would sell in Siauliai. He was such a small [merchant]. We had one, Abramovich, in his heyday he sent directly abroad, to French factories.

Haesh, he sold his flax in Šiauliai. They bought in Žeimelis, Pasvalys, Vaškai, and then sent large quantities to Šiauliai. There were big [procurement] offices there. They already had connections with abroad. Flax is of great military importance. It is used to make tarpaulins. For example, for kirzov boots. It is also the raw material for linen tablecloths, which are more honorable than cotton.

А. Were there any competitors besides him [Hayesh], the flax traders in Jemelah?

Ф. Yes, Abramovich was, Milunsky was. Then there were other small [traders]: Iosel Man was buying. Who would let him [Hayesh] into such a profitable [place] to be a monopolist.

А. A profitable trade?

Ф. Yes, but she was fluctuating. I was 17 or 18 years old, that is, in 1927-28, when Russia was reduced to ruin, it dumped flax on the world market at a dumping price in very large quantities. Then everything collapsed.

In Lithuania it was called shiffing, 10 poods of 150 kg. [So at F!] Such a variety cost 700-800 rubles. There are better ones, which are washed, up to 900 rubles. And became 400-500 rubles. Dropped by 40%. A lot of people went bankrupt.

А. Was Haesch involved in flax processing?

Ф. No, only overprocessing. No one had any processing. This is already a big factory, you can't [do it] in a homemade way.

А. And the sorting?

Ф. They did it themselves. Flax came in long bundles of 8 kg (half-poods). They felt with a knife the softness, the moisture: "reysting", "cinz", "SPK", "PK" - four varieties of it were.

А. Did Haesh have workers, helpers?

Ф. There was a temporary clerk, such a boy messenger. Then, if it had to be carried, they would put 8-10 bindleh (bundles), they would tie them with ropes into a bale. They paid a certain amount per day for packing. A day or two of work and it was all [done].

А. Did Haysh trade anything else besides linen?

Ф. Not a trader, but an agriculturist. He rented land from someone at one time. I wouldn't say all the time. If I had known I would have to tell it [I would have known better]. People used to say, "Lazer Haesch is fiddling with the land again. There was nothing there for him, no benefit. Everything had to be paid for. He couldn't [himself] plow or mow. It was just a way for him to kill time, a hobby. He had enough money. He got a lot of rent. He had a restaurant in his house, two stores, a bakery. If you tell me what he was getting for Meishe Haesh, he himself had 500-600 litas a month of income.

А. Is that a lot of money?

Ф. Of course, you could get by on 100 litas. It was still cheap.

А. Isn't it known what condition someone had, how much he might have had? Was it concealed?

Ф. Money? Who knows? In cash. It doesn't matter if it's a hundred thousand or two hundred thousand. They don't spare them [apparently, they don't save them]. How much can old people spend?

А. Do you remember which houses had what?

Zagorski had an excellent memory. From his words, I drew a plan of the old part of Zeimelis and made an explication of it, minimally supplementing it with information from my father's recollections.



**Fig. 1. The plan of Žeimialis according to recollections of F.J. Zagorski 8.01.1983.**

**Explanation of the Žeimelis plan before 1941.**

In the center is Bazarnaya Square. From it (on the plan) vertically upwards to the left - Linkowska Street, to the right - a dead end to the Lutheran Church, to the left horizontally - Paswalio Street, to the right horizontally - Joniska Street, downwards vertically - Bauska Street. Below the house 7 - the church, the organist lived opposite it.

1-7. The Homes of Hayesha

1. Imenavicius[[4]](#footnote-4) - Lithuanian. Grocery store

2. Leyser Haesch's living quarters. 2a - Leiser's kitchen

3. Schlema Green, left in 1928. manufactory store. Later unknown.

4. Directions

5. Pečulis Restaurant

6. Wanted to make a mill, then a local bathhouse, a brick barn

7. Kaulinas Bakery

8-12. House with columns (8-9 Izraelson, 11-12 Vilenchik)

8. Israelson. Manufacture store

9. Lepar Hawa. Grocery store

10. Directions

11. Gitel Vilenchik Restaurant

12. At first there was a farmyard, then a steam mill for coarse and fine grinding, since they stopped dropping in

13. House of Hera

14. Ksendz Kurlandchik[[5]](#footnote-5)

15. Haya Haesh

16. Fleischmann

17. Meische Trumpf

18. Alley

19. Wolfson. Manufacture store

20. Lithuanian police

21. Barbershop

22. In 1935 Freiman (a Lithuanian) had a shoemaker, then Berman Benyomin, a tailor

23. Iso Gurwitz Bagels, Home Bakery and Herring Smokehouse

24. Meishe Milenchik[[6]](#footnote-6) , tailor

25. Matislav Vytautas. Shoemaker, Drunkard

26. Nisha Zagorsky

27. Ozolis[[7]](#footnote-7) . On his lands was an old Jewish cemetery, on an elevated

28. Synagogue. Built ~1910-1914.

According to the recollections of my father Ilya Haesh, the block between Linkovskaya St. and the dead end contained the post office, his father's house (second), later the three-story Shulgeifer house built on its place[[8]](#footnote-8) , Abramovich's pharmacy. In the house, located on the plan in the upper right corner of Bazarnaya Square, lived my father's friend Eizik Ehrlich[[9]](#endnote-1) .

Additions to the plan. Where Leyser's barn, they built a gasoline-powered mill. It was just rented space from him. There's nothing left of it.

He also owned a long one-story earthen shack in the Bazarnaya Square, across from the Hayes' house. Then the apothecary Shulgeifer bought from him for 7,000 litas the plot from the post office to his pharmacy, demolished the shack, and built for 60,000 litas a large two-story white house.

On Link Street we lived.

А. How much did houses cost at that time? For example, the house of Leyser [Little tavern].

Ф. 25-35 thousand lit. We have to find a merchant [buyer].

А. I would like you to tell me a little bit about charity. You've been doing it.

The following account of charity is presented very sparingly in the brochure "To the History of the Jewish Community of Zeimelis"[[10]](#endnote-2) , also quite detailed in articles about national-cultural autonomy, but quite differently and on the basis of YIVO documents[[11]](#endnote-3) . Zagorski's account is valuable.

Ф. The state didn't help much, so the Jews set up their own organization in the community. There was a "Bikur Heilim" (visiting the sick). The Jews, when they read the Torah, would call someone to read it. When he reads, he donates 1 lit. to "bikur heilim" and 1 lit. to the Talmud teira.

А. What is a talmud teira?

Ф. To spread the science. To teach. So there were 30 children in Zeimelis. The state gave one teacher. How many could he teach them? They [the community leaders] gathered the parents and [with their consent] hired an additional teacher and paid him some amount per month. He was giving extended science.

Then another. A man fell ill. There is no hospital. Relatives are busy. One or two days are fine. And when a person is sick for a month, we go on duty. I myself have been on duty many times. One night I'm on duty, the other night it's someone else. They [relatives] are all asleep: they have to go to work. I have to work, too, but one night I can stay awake. Then the other one stays awake. Unless, of course, you have to be on duty. Well, if an old man [apparently not on duty], and if young, then give a drink. In case he gets sick. They can't leave a sick man alone. Something might happen. There are people on duty in the hospital.

А. There was no hospital in Zeimelis?

Ф. I didn't. In Panevėžys it was, in Siauliai it was. Somebody doesn't have enough for medicine. He gets help. We had a very heavy workload, these public donations. There was no time for it to be empty. There was a rabbi, there was a carver. They were on the maintenance of the Jewish community. A chicken cost 2 or 3 litas, and it cost 60 kopecks to cut a chicken. Twenty kopeks for the carver and 40 kopeks for the rabbi. This was an asset [of the community]. Since the carver was an asset of the community, you had no right to carve, only he could. To buy a coupon for the carver. This coupon is given to the carver. Then he comes with coupons, how many there are at 20 kopecks, and he gets paid. To cut a calf or a sheep cost 3 litas, and a big cow 10 litas. Three or four litas went to the carver, and seven went to the community. She paid a rabin from that.

These were the local ones. Then the Lithuanian ones began: the Rabina seminary, that is, the yeshiva. Every six months there were such pickers [collectors] with receipt books, orphanages, they also sent out to pick up.

Then the third was all-Jewish: Palestine "Keren kaemes. There were probably four or five boxes [cannon] hanging in the houses. A tin box like that. On Friday a Jewish woman prays the candles, she throws pennies there, there, and there. Five piggy banks: for the yeshiva, for Keren-kaemes, for Meir-ba'almes.

А. Who is he?

Ф. There was such a saint. Lived in Armenia(?). He did some miracles. There was some community [named after him] that collected money for a yeshiva.

А. Did these collectors come directly to you and get this money?

Ф. That's change. Then they'd ask for big ones, 5lt each, that she'd throw in there. Somebody makes a big deal, throws it. It's on Keren-Kaemes once a month.

Then there were still such poor [beggars] walking around. They came in carts. They went door-to-door to pick up 5 kopecks, how much you would give them. One left, the other came.

Then there were more such lecturers, magicians. Comes to a place on the Sabbath, holds a sermon, explains how it is so, some religious law. One tells this, then another one comes, he didn't know what he was telling, repeats the same thing. Then they go on Sunday to pick it up.

I think we live like kings now. No one bothers us. And so people lived poor, poor life. There were a few rich men. And so in the sweat of his face, as [when] Adam ate the forbidden apple, he [God] cursed him: "In the sweat of your face you will earn your bread. This curse was on the Jews: in the sweat of their faces they earned their bread. In the fall, in the very bad weather, they had to take the grain on wagons, and the roads were muddy and it was raining. So they had to drive 17 hours to Siauliai, 70 km - 17 hours. They're leaving today at 3-4 o'clock. It's still nighttime, and it's only at night that they get to the warehouse.

А. What was the correct last name? Hayes or Hayesh? Was the last letter "sh"?

Ф. Hayes. The last letter is an "s." Since "Hayes" is you know what it is, it's Hebrew for "beasts," numerous beasts. So it's "s," if from that root. "S," not "sh."

А. Were they called Haetas?

Ф. No, Laser Hayes. I didn't go any further. Then I wrote to you about this Hai. Her husband must have been a relative of Mates, Leyser's father. A nephew he may have been. He was legless, [or rather] not legless, but legs under him, and he didn't own them. She was probably an old maid and they were married and given a house as a dowry. I remember well in '20 or '21 they came back. Their house was occupied, some blacksmith was living there. They arrived, unloaded outside their own house [demanding from the blacksmith]: "Go away!". That's when the police came right away.

А. How old was Hae?

Ф. She was not old. Most recently, in 1940, when her son married, the son was from 1913.

А. Where was he born?

Ф. In the Jaemels before the First World War. Then I still remember in the year 25. [Hai's] and a neighbor had a border coming together. [There was an entrance, shows] The neighbor wanted to flatten and made a fence so flat. She ran to the synagogue to see Lazer.

О! [Neighbor] wants to rob me! Make me a beggar! - She had a big plot. Everybody ran. Leyser took off his thales, ran.

А. How far did she live from Leyser?

Ф. Not far away, about 50-100 meters down Yonish Street. And he settled right away, they didn't start building and she was left with this corner.

А. What did she do?

Ф. She was a dressmaker, she could not make dresses, only linen. A white seamstress. Son was a photographer. Learned. Bought a big good machine. And the father died right away [upon arrival], a year and a half later. He was a cripple. He was Haesh. Instead of giving her a dowry, they gave her a dowry.

А. What was the son's fate? Did he die?

Ф. Died, of course.

А. Did he stay in Jaimele?

Ф. In the Jaemels. He got married in the last year, and no one else showed up, of course.

А. So there's no Hayesh left there. Someone told me that there was a Hayesh in Tashkent, as if he worked for the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Ф. You should know better than that. Because all the children stayed in Russia. They could be Meische's children, or maybe already grandchildren.

А. How did the study take place?

Ф. Different years in different ways. I studied in a heider. There was a rebbe with a beard. He only explained the Talmud, the khumash, the gemorah, and the tanach to us. Then, at one time, the rich hired a teacher. He would teach them secular things. But that had to be paid for. And since I told you, in 19, my father died, I was left with my mother, what could she do as a widow. We didn't have any fortune. I was learning how to count. We paid the community. Then in '23 I went as a messenger to the store, to run errands. So I had to learn very little. And then in '24, '25 it was already settled, the heider had already gone away, the state gave a teacher. So that he would teach intensively and have more lessons, that there was two times a week for an hour for religious [subjects], then they hired another teacher to work all the time [to work]. The community took great care that the children should be literate. But that, too, was only up to a certain point. In the thirties it all went downhill. There was no more Talmud-teira. No one was interested. As much as the teacher gave, so much was good. Maybe the children who went to school, they paid to have this second teacher, who knew religious [subjects], give some more hours, because the teacher himself was four classes, two classes, and could not cope. But I wasn't interested in that anymore. I went sometimes to collect [for the teacher].

А. How much was given roughly. You said that Leyser didn't pay much. How much did Abramovich, for example, pay? What was the difference?

Ф. I don't remember. They donated a lot to religious [expenses].

А. How much is a lot? And what is religious, on "Kerem-kayemes"?

Ф. No, it's for Israel. The synagogue must be heated. The psalmist has to be kept. You have to buy firewood in the winter. You have to pay for electricity. Where does all this money come from? The rich kept it themselves. The in-keeper comes in, roshe-shone. There are "alies"[?] for sale. You don't know that. That one, that one, that one is called to Teira. And on big holidays you have to buy this privilege already. 50 litas, 40 litas for everything. [reads in Hebrew] They always bought that: Leyser Haesh, more Isser, Abramovich. They bought it all on in-keeper.

А. I still don't understand, what did you buy?

Ф. In the middle of the prayer, the Torah is taken out and read, each with a specific piece. It is read by such a reader. You have to be able to read it. They read it in the presence of someone. If it's the Sabbath, they call me first. There are seven of them. They read a piece to everyone. But on big holidays, only at the Roche Schoen, the in-keeper, you have to purchase this honor for money.

А. Clearly, in order to get into these seven people, an auction was held.

Ф. Five litas at Levi's, tuk, six litas at... That's all the rich people bought. Honored to be present at the reading of Teira's passage. Poor man, if he is called upon, what can he do? Gives a lit. Then that lit he does not pay for three years. Who will take it. He hasn't written a bill of exchange. If he wants to pay, if not. We had one Milunsky. He got married. Then everything is civilized, all the guests. They go to the synagogue. Already they are the only ones called to read. The others are not allowed. It's already their privilege. Milunsky is like a bridegroom - 18 lit. Haya is life - 18, for life. He sacrificed. Then he never gave. Every year a report is posted, who owes how much, how much he paid. And so he stood like that, stood for a long, long time. And so he took it with him.

А. So you say Hayes donated a lot to such causes?

Ф. Yes. For Israel he seems to have donated, too. There was an English pound. That's 15 lt, then it became 30 lt. Maybe that was snatched from him once a year. I wasn't interested in that anymore. It was the more honorable people who did it. We only did small donations. And the big ones are the more honorable people.

А. Didn't Freud have a case?

Ф. No, she was half-crazy. She used to grab me and start. I would come in for business. There were calendars like this, the orphanage in Kaunas, I told you about it, sent them out. In addition to months, they had all sorts of notes, information, phone numbers. They [Haeshi] always asked me to bring them these calendars. I don't remember every time [the visit]. But there were times when she would grab me and start talking about all sorts of illnesses and everything, telling me some gossip. I want to leave, but I'm selling, and I can't say the first [goodbye] for decency's sake. They said, "You got into Freida's clutches again." She liked to [talk]. Maybe she didn't have any girlfriends. I never saw her with any other broads. So she grabbed who.

Then there was a case like this. There was a poor woman. She also picks up: she wears teiglahs on Friday to sell to the rich. She went. And Freida seized her: telling, telling. And this poor woman is holding two litas, a piece of paper. Freida told it so that the woman reluctantly [involuntarily] took it and tore the two litas out of impatience. Then she came to my master (I was already working in the store) and complained: "What a misfortune. She [Freida] talked me up, and I tore up all my wealth.

А. What did she look like roughly, Freida?

Ф. Not tall. A nightstand. With glasses. Quite pretty [for her age]. You know, you can be old with a long nose, or warts.

А. There were no obvious such defects?

Ф. It wasn't.

А. Her mother was very beautiful.

Ф. You know, Leyser's wife and Meichet's wife too - they were sisters. I don't remember that, of course, but then they told me that they had stores next door to each other. And they fought so much between them, they fought so much, like market women for some customer, that one took over from the other. They were two brothers and two sisters.

А. Yes, I've heard that story.

Ф. Now a completely separate [i.e., different] life when we were young. My son got married, took a Russian. It didn't occur to us. There were several of us boys: seven, eight, ten, and a few girls. We only went among ourselves, or in neighboring townships. And to look at the other [nationalities]. They didn't look, and we didn't have the slightest idea. It didn't even go into our heads like that. It makes me very, very sad. Well, okay, that's another thing. What else do you want to know?

А. Who was among his circle of friends, Leiser, with whom did he have more rapport?

Ф. There was, Velvl Ehrlich. They were standing here in the synagogue, the most important place. There was a shop like that, maybe you noticed. Standing. That was his neighbor. He stood near the most honorable place, near the oren keidesh, the place where the Torah is kept. On one side stood the rabin, that most honorable seat, and on the other side stood Leizer Hayes. This circle of his acquaintances-it was only by synagogue. When they came back and went [walked]. And so he didn't go to anyone like we did... [space in the transcript] And so no one went to him and I'm sure he didn't go to anyone. Didn't take visitors and didn't go to visitors.

А. So you say he was withdrawn.

Ф. Closed-minded, closed-minded. In the courtyard, on market day, the men were coming and going, he was chatting. And so after the evening prayer, mayres, he [went home], I imagine so, I didn't follow [him]. He never. went anywhere or participated in anything, [like] a wedding somewhere. When I was an adult, I never saw him. Or somewhere on the bris (that's circumcision) I never saw him. Maybe he went somewhere, but I never saw him.

А. Have you ever been to his house?

Ф. Byval.

А. What was at home, did he have an office of some kind?

Ф. No, I wasn't. Such a table. Most of us, I confess, he didn't let us into the kitchen anymore, and [I] didn't go. I went into the first room, there's the kitchen or the study, no, not the study. And what's next, I never went in, what's in his bedroom and I don't even know what kind of furniture he has. I think I noticed once that he had such a nickel-plated bed, antique with those heads. I don't know his inner world any more. He was happy, he was glad. Whether he longed for his sons or not. Who knows? Why didn't he want to go anywhere? There was this opportunity, Intourist, to go see his son.

А. You know, the Haeshis are not hot relatives.

Ф. Son, what kind of relative is this?

А. Freud went when the Soviets came to Lithuania, she went, he didn't.

Ф. Was she? In Leningrad?

А. Yes. Could you tell me if he had any horses?

Ф. There were, there were, a few, probably, horses. He was an agriculturist and had horses.

А. Didn't you know his groom, Tsunkas?

Ф. Zunkas I knew, he was a Latvian. [but that he was a groom for Faivel is not known], maybe he used to be. He [Leyser] hadn't been involved with the land lately either: in 1938-39. There was a big barn there.

А. Did you know Ozolis?

Ф. Yes, that's where they lived across the river.

А. Father said that Leyser had a relationship with Ozolis.

Ф. Yes, of course, he was a kulak, 80 hectares of land, Leyser the merchant.

А. I see then what they had in common. What kind of business did you write about that Leyser didn't get involved in?

Ф. We had Rabin go to Palestine in 1928. He got a new assignment or found a better place. They took another rabbi. That one left. That was in 1936. The passions flared up. Some were for one rabbi, others for another. Thirteen candidates stood. But he didn't care.

А. You told me that someone came to see him. Would you tell me about that visit?

Ф. He came from Palestine, I remember that she [the meeting] was hanging around the synagogue. He went to the synagogue. He was given Teiru, the fattest [apparently to read for the most expensive fee]. Hebrew has two dialects: Sephardic and Ashkenazic. We read in Ashkenazic. The Palestinian ones are all in Sephardic, with an "a." If we say "baruch ato," they say "baruch ata." That was in the 20s, 25s, 30s. We were very interested in how he recited the prayers.

А. What was he like, how old?

Ф. He was so thin, tall, with a beard, about 40 or 35 years old. I wouldn't say black, he was brown-haired, reddish.

А. Whose relative was he?

Ф. Either his or hers, I won't say, I don't know. And what he was doing at home, how they went out, where they went, I wasn't interested.

А. How long did he stay?

Ф. Two weeks, maybe.

А. What year was that?

Ф. Before the 1930s.

А. That is, in the year 28-29?

Ф. Or maybe later, it doesn't matter.

А. What did Leyser himself look like?

Ф. Not tall, I wouldn't say short, but not tall either. Stocky. Neck and head, like one piece. Short neck. I went to the barbershop with him once. He had a beard called "Weizmann's". A moustache and a beard like that.

His glasses were so thick, he must have been nearsighted. I also want to say something about the shoes. He had such painful swollen feet. He always had [difficulties], there was no way to please him, so we made him some kind of leggings, rubber on one side, made out of this kind of chevro. Cobblers would come to us to make [order] blanks for him. He didn't know if he would or wouldn't like them. Maybe it was his whims, or maybe he had sore feet.

А. Probably sore feet, because my father also has sore feet[[12]](#footnote-9) . He must have inherited it. He bandages them all the time, he tightens them somehow, his veins are sick.

Ф. Life in the place flowed like a quiet river, and people slowly grew old.

А. What was told about the history of the Jews in Zeimelis? How long had they settled there?

Ф. Pinkas[[13]](#footnote-10) community did not exist. In 20-25-30 years, we found an old monument in the cemetery, a matzevah, and found out that this matzevah was already a hundred years old. It was not the last one, but even older matzevahs could be seen further in this old cemetery, which had grown into the ground. The first of them must have been a hundred years older. Another 50 years have passed since then. So we have to assume that the first matzevs were 250, maybe 225 or 300 years old. Who knows?

The first Jews in Lithuania were artisans and merchants. At that time Lithuanians were still fire-worshippers.

Ф. There was a pharmacy. Rosa and Hirsch were in it. She was limping. Then, in 1927, she married Schulgeifer. Since she was "kripele," inferior, unable to give birth, they took a boy from an orphanage.

Charity was developed in Lithuania. The society initiated two houses: the Orphan House and the Children's House. In the orphanage they took older people, but in the children's home they took them right from birth. The boy's father was a bricklayer, he fell from a "stolova" [probably from scaffolding] and fell to his death. The mother remained pregnant and died in childbirth. The boy was eight months old in an orphanage. The Schulgeifers came and took him away in 1928. The boy's last name was Kagan. We had to go through court to adopt the child. He had a metric. The boy was renamed Joseph Schulgeifer. In 1940 he was 12 or 13 years old. I remember him well, a handsome boy,

The Schulgeifers, when Joseph was about a year old, hired a German governess for him. Then they gave him the opportunity to learn to play the violin from the church organist. Joseph went there to play. Then he became naughty. Rosa complained a lot, attributed his disobedience to his working-class background. I listened to Rosa's complaints when I went to Shulgeifer's pharmacy to do "kerem-kayemes. I was his "soldier," one of the fundraisers. He was the commissioner. Everything was on a voluntary basis.

А. Tell us what you know about the shooting.

Ф. The priests, Zeimyalski and Lauksodzie, arrived. Lauksodze is four kilometers from here. They said that the apothecary confessed to them secretly that the boy was not Jewish, that the Shulgeifers had picked him up somewhere. The priests gave the boy to the priests, and he stayed with them. Then the priests died. Joseph became a grown man and went to Panevėžys. He [introduced himself] as a Lithuanian. He started drinking. I lost sight of him.

I know about the execution by word of mouth. The Jews were gathered in the evening, at night, near the pit. The barn was like this, it was already falling on its side. They were shot the same night.

А. Haven't you heard that some Tarsis has escaped?

Ф. Not Tarsis, but Tarutz ran away. A boy like that. Then he was captured. He was caught, of course. He's gone.

А. Is anyone else alive who is Jewish?

Ф. I know many, but they all left. There was Yakushok, Lakunishok. Singer. Two more girls, broads now. They live in Vilnius. But they won't tell you anything like that. They're my age, maybe two or three years apart.

А. Don't you have their addresses?

Ф. No. Their last name was Singer, but they're all married now. You can't find them. There was another Milunskaya, so she died. Her niece (mishugane?) went to Israel. You can't find anyone now. There used to be a lot in Kaunas. Seven or eight families were evacuated.

А. How did you escape?

Ф. We left Žeimelis on Thursday evening. On foot. A caravan of submarines with children. [In the leadership] was Haim Glezer. They had communication with Siauliai all the time. They were afraid. They were activists. They ran away.

I had a sister in Moscow. I thought I would go, too. We had many evacuees from Poland... A year after I left, on July 4, 1942, I was taken to "labor" in Karaganda. I stayed there until May 3, 1946.

А. How many Jews left Zeimelis at that time?

Ф. I'll list them: the Yakushok family-he, the daughter and her husband, three sons, another one was in the army, Faive-Girsha is his name, he and his wife, their married son Tzemach with his wife and mother-in-law, an old woman, then the second son with his wife and a little girl, about five or ten months, and two more sons, four sons total; Lakunishok, he, the old man with his wife and his son with his wife and two or three little brothers, then many more went away, got lost: me, then this Glezer Haim, they went, the Polish ones there [refugee Jews] were.

А. You left on Thursday. On foot?

Ф. On foot, kept near the submarine.

А. Are your parents gone?

Ф. The old woman's mother remained. She said: "Where will I go? Aren't you coming back soon?" - "Of course, I'll be back soon."

[Beginning a survey of people listed in the "All Russia" directory]

Ф. Ehrlich, grocery store. He and this Hayesh stood side by side in the synagogue. It was a comrade to him. But only as far as home. I don't remember Haesh going with his wife to Erlich or Erlich going with his wife to Haesh.

А. Ehrlich Wolf or Gut Eisikowicz? Two were Erlichs [in "All Russia 1911/1912"[[14]](#endnote-4) ].

Ф. Wolfe, Welvle. Isaac was his father's name, for his eldest son was Isaac.

А. Are they dead?

Ф. The Ehrlichs died, and Aizik, his son and second son left in 1922 to live in Africa. He also had a daughter, [inaudible Ferka, Feigel] Feigel, she worked in Kaunas in a pharmacy. Elia. Kantilevich? It was him, Elia. But maybe it was in her name. It was a manufacturesman.

А. It's "Groceries." Maybe before the war they were "Bakaleya. What merchants they are! Pathetic shops! They struggled to live every day. Pulling a "majuna?" to get by.

А. They bought guild certificates: second or third guild. Here Ehrlich was of the second guild. [further unintelligible].

Ф. Third, third.

А. Itkin was also here.

Ф. Yes, he was a watchmaker.

А. Yes, he used to have "gold and silverware.

Ф. He died before the war, and his son, that's a good comrade of mine, we had races with him [?nrzb], went to school together, he died, of course.

А. Where his watchmaking enterprise was located.

Ф. Let me show you.

А. I'll ask you about that separately. There were also the leather goods of Tarusa Sora Chaimovna.

Ф. I know, I worked there for a while in the 1930s. There were also hardware stores there. She had already died. My sons took over the business.

А. Is this the Tarutz who escaped?

Ф. Yes, the youngest. It's better to say not escaped, but tried to escape.

А. How do you know he was caught?

Ф. He doesn't exist.

А. Further, Abramowitz Hersh Movszewicz Manufaktura.

Ф. This is Rosa's father.

А. Then Ger Arius.

Ф. Yes, Ger was a merchant. He was a linen merchant.

А. Who was shooting?

Ф. The Lithuanians shot them. Not a single German was there.

А. Virbalis?

Ф. Yes, yes. His mother-in-law came to see us. We lived across the street from the Lutheran church. She lived in a wooden house across the street. My husband used to bring potatoes. Pours them out. And my wife wants to have some kopeck. She sells the potatoes to us. By the time her husband arrives, she takes the pud. We pay her. She has her money. He goes away again. She sells us another pood.

А. Zagorskaya Dweira Leiserovna, also a chiropractor, is this not a relative of yours?

Ф. No.

А. Haet Leizer Matysovich. Is that Haesh?

Ф. Yes.

А. There was also the "bread-and-grain" Milunsky Meichet.

Ф. Yes, I knew him. He died in 1928. He had five daughters. I went to see the youngest one. Nursed, not nursed. They were rich. I was poor, of course. We were socialist Zionists by ideas. In this organization.

А. And you said someone was alive from the Milunskys.

Ф. The penultimate daughter survived. I met her once. Then Milunsky's daughter married Shug in Shauliai. One granddaughter also survived in Vilnius, but she went to Israel.

А. There is practically no one left of the Jaemelsky's.

Ф. They died. Of the Jemelsky's, the only ones left are myself and in Israel.

А. Then "bread-grain" Haesh Movsha Matysovich. So that's it.

End of entry 8.01.83.

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1. Formatting, illustrations and explanations of the text - the author of the publication. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Leyser Haesch is the author's grandfather and Meishe Haesch is Leyser's sibling. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. While working on this text, I asked Dr. Valery Aronovich Dymshitz, a Yiddish expert, for help. Here is his answer: "The word you are asking about is עובֿר-בטל - oiverbotl. In Lithuanian Yiddish, as you know, "oi" is pronounced like "ei", so you get eiverbotl. It means "decrepit, senile old man," a person in senile marasmus, literally "having fallen into disrepair." 09.01.2022 17:39. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Compare: in the book *Haesh A. I.* The Jews of Lithuania: Studies and Materials. St. Petersburg, 2013. C. 532 Hirsch Kremer's record of Baltras Iminavicius. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Compare in the same book p. 519 ksendz Kurlandchik. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Compare: in the same book S. 539 Movsha Milechik. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Compare: in the same book S. 528 Ozolins. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. [ZEIMELIS 2005 - ZEIMELIS 2005 - E\_1245 (mannbarry.net)](http://www.mannbarry.net/Zeimelis/Photos/Zeimelis/album/slides/E_1245.html) Accessed 9.01.2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Haesh I. L. Memories. P.3, 132; HaeshiGl07.doc. С. 312. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
10. ***Anatoly Haesh*. To the History of the Jewish Community of Zeimelis // Jewish Heritage Society Preprints and Reprints Series. Issue 56. М., 2000. С. 1-6.** [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
11. *A. I. Haesh.* National-cultural autonomy in the Lithuanian town of Žeimialis (19191925‑) // Jews of Europe and the Middle East: History, Languages, Tradition, Culture: Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference in Memory of T. L. Gurina. April 26, 2015. St. Petersburg Institute of Jewish Studies. - St. Petersburg, 2015. С. 93-101. (Works on Judaic Studies. Ser. "History and Ethnography". Issue 10).

*А. I. Haesh.* National-cultural autonomy in the Lithuanian town of Žeimialis (19191925‑).‑ Article Two // Jews of Europe and the Middle East: Tradition and Modernity, History, Languages, Literature: Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference in Memory of V. Ya. April 17, 2016. St. Petersburg Institute of Jewish Studies. - St. Petersburg, 2016. С. 253-261. (Works on Judaic Studies. Ser. "History and Ethnography." Vol. 11). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
12. Dad had thrombophlebitis, which he suffered a lot. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
13. The Pinkas is the deed book of the Jewish community. It recorded important community events, ordinances and statutes, official appointments, intra-community taxes, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
14. All of Russia. Reference book... Kyiv, publishing house of L.M. Fish. 1911/1912. Pp. 1246-1248. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)