

Warsaw (Watchmen)

Based on the novel by Shalom Asch

Play no. 76

Opening show: 25/01/1945

Creative team

Adapted for the stage by: Anatole Stern

Hebrew version: Abraham Levinson

Production : Z. Friedland

Settings: M. Matosovski

Music by : Fordhaus Ben-Zissi

Cast

Shlomo Horovitz, a teacher: A. Meskin

Leah Horovitz, his wife: H. Rovina

David Horovitz, their son: A. Ninio

Helena Horovitz, their daughter: I. Govinska

Zosia Horovitz, their second daughter: H. Hendler / S. Duar

Zacharya Mirkin, a lawyer from Peterburg: S. Finkel

Weinberg, a member of the "Bund": H. Amital

Zalman Koenigstein, A Zionist: Ben-Haim

Gedalya, a student of the "Yeshiva": A. Kutai

Isaac:] Recruits A. Kutai

Ruvke: Z. Friedland

Nechamke: H. Hendler

Mr. Shneur:] S. Bruk

Reb Jakov: Farmers] I. Rubinstein

Zalman:] M. Benjamini

Reb Jakov's wife: T. Judelevitch

Zalman's wife: F. Liubitch

Act 1

Early in 1914. Gedalya, A Yeshiva student, comes to the house of Horovitz, the teacher, who lives in the heart of the Jewish quarter in Warsaw. Gedalya seeks the help of Horovitz in his studies. However, the Horovitz family is preoccupied with another visitor, the son of a Petersburg millionaire, Mirkin, who under the influence of the Russian pogroms, has begun to be conscious of his Jewish origin. He had decided to renounce the luxurious life of his father's house and to devote himself to the liberation of the Jewish masses in Poland from their oppression. But to his amazement he finds that all who come to the Horovitz house have different solutions for Jewish salvation. Weinberg the Socialist who believes in the ideals of the Bund, sees the only hope for the Jews in the realization of Socialism. Horovitz' young son, David, a student at the "Gymnasium", who sympathises with the Social Democrats, looks for the redemption of the Jews in the struggle of the proletariat against International reactionism . Among these conflicting

ideologies may be heard the gentle voice of Horovitz' friend, Zalman Koenigstein, who realizes that the only true road in the redemption of the Jews is the road back to the ancient Jewish homeland...

Act 2

A May Day demonstration in the streets of Warsaw. Mirkin enters a small café in which Weinberg, Socialist leader, and a Socialist Underground worker are awaiting news from their comrades. He is followed by Helena, Horovitz' daughter, who has been in love with Mirkin since the first moment he appeared in her father's house. Mirkin tells her that he has given away all his money and has become a worker, for he wishes to be part of the Jewish masses. He has still failed to find a way to free his people from their bitter poverty and misery. He has begun to despair of rescuing the Jewish masses from the plight into which anti-Semitism and persecution has cast them.

Helena speaks encouragingly to him

Helena's parents, escaping from the Polish soldiers who are brutally attacking the demonstrators, enter the café. A moment later David rushes in, pursued by gendarmes. They find a pistol in his pocket. With the butts of their rifles they knock down Horovitz' wife, Leah, as she tries to protect her son, and they arrest both David and his father.

Act 3

The Horovitz home is in despair. For three months no news has been received of Horovitz and David who have been taken prisoner. The mother can scarcely bear to sit at home where everything reminds her of her misfortune. Finally Mirkin brings the terrible news that David has been tried and found guilty of firing at the officer who had ordered his detachment to attack the defenceless mob. He had been shot at dawn against the wall of the citadel of Warsaw. Horovitz is released, and returns home a broken man. The death of his son has completely shattered him and destroyed his faith in humanity. His daughter entreats him to keep the truth from their mother. But she reads the truth in their eyes, and curses the murderers of her son. Weinberg brings the news that war has been declared between Germany and Russia. "The imperialist powers will devour each other", exclaims Weinberg. "But the Jews – what will happen to the Jews?" asks Gedalya. "I believe", answers Mirkin, "that this night will pass and the dawn will rise again on the soil on our rebuilt Homeland. For the day is nearing when the agonized heart of Israel will cry: Not next year in Jerusalem, but now. We wish to return this day to our ancestral home and live again in peace and happiness, free from fear and oppression"!