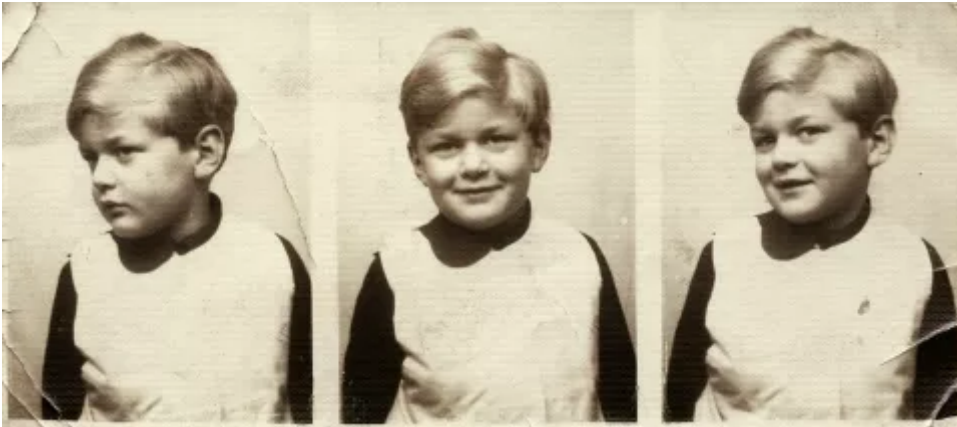


## Wacek Kornblum As A Little Boy



This is my triple photo. This photo was sent to my uncle Mosze who was in the United States. That's how it survived the war. On the backside there's a dedication: 'Anu feter. Vi gefel ikh dir? Ikh bin avoyler ziser bukher un ikh ken vershidene kinzen. Far mayn feter Moyshe, Izyo Kornblum.' - 'To my uncle. Do you like how I look? I'm such a sweet boy and I can do different tricks. For my uncle Mosze, Izio Kornblum'

When I was 6 years old I went to school on Krochmalna Street, Chmurner school number 36 because of Bundist sympathies at home. I started going to Freblowka, a pre-school ran according to the pedagogic system of F. Froebel in the same building where the school was. I have very funny memories from Freblowka - I fell in love with a girl, Nomcia, I think Apfelbaum, who I later met in the ghetto, after such a long time, and it turned out Father knew her father, who was also a writer. I remember a boy, I can't remember what his name was, but he had a runny nose all the time and he never wiped it, even when he would eat a bun. I remember a girl, I think Hanusia, who left Poland with her parents and went to southern America, which was a big deal. The entire pre-school walked her to a bus, which was strange, and that bus was to take them somewhere. Maybe to some port somewhere?

On Krochmalna the teaching language was Jewish, except history and Polish which were in Polish of course. There were crafts, once I hurt my finger with an iron file. In the gym there were ladders on walls. We had to climb them. I wasn't good at gym, I couldn't jump over any vaulting horse.

I remember that the school corresponded with another school in Vienna, possibly also a Bundist school, we wrote letters, to various kids, in Jewish. I remember a gentleman used to come over, I think his name was Melech Rawicz who used to show us slides from Africa. I always liked geography, biology, animals.

I don't remember the school on Krochmalna well. I think it was in the back premises, because we used to exit onto a yard. I remember a big room, where they used to show us the slides, a classroom, double door, a blackboard on the right, desks on the left, I always wanted to sit with Pola Boznicka. She was my sweetheart. They caught me once when I cut out the name Izio and Pola from a newspaper, from an obituary I think, and I glued it in my notebook, everyone laughed at me. It must have been in the 1st or 2nd grade.

There was a hole for an inkstand in the desk, we used to write with a pen called 'mendelowka' or 'krzyzowka,' those were nib pens. 'Mendelowka' was long, ended with a kind of a flat circle, it wrote completely differently than 'krzyzowka' which had a cut in shape of a cross. I didn't have good handwriting, the teacher didn't like it. We were 30 in the class. There were lunches at school, but I never ate them. I used to go home for lunch, and bring breakfast from home.

I remember the action of drinking cod liver oil. We had to go to school and it annoyed me that I had to do the trip again from Sliska to Krochmalna in order to drink that horrible cod liver oil, and there wasn't always a lemon to kill that taste in your mouth.

I remember the Nowosci Theater. I used to perform there with a group of kids from Freblowka, we walked in a circle there, and my hat fell off, I didn't pick it up, it was a horrible experience. I remember hallways at the back of that theatre, where artists got dressed. It was terribly cold there, dimly lit, they were dressing us up in something. We used to go there to various shows, I remember some show with Ida Kaminska. I remember a verse of a song: 'Khotsmekh iz a blinder, hot er nikht kayn kinder' - 'Khotsmekh is blind, he doesn't have children'.

At home we used to read a magazine for children Grininke Baymelekh, there were columns for children, various stories, books printed in series. We subscribed to books, there was a large library, also for children. There was a Jewish publisher in Warsaw called Kinder Fraynd and they published known youth fiction in Jewish. I probably read the entire children's fiction in Jewish. For example The Pickwick Club, Emil and The Detectives, although whatever I read and recited later on various celebrations and shows in an amateur theatre, all that was in Polish.