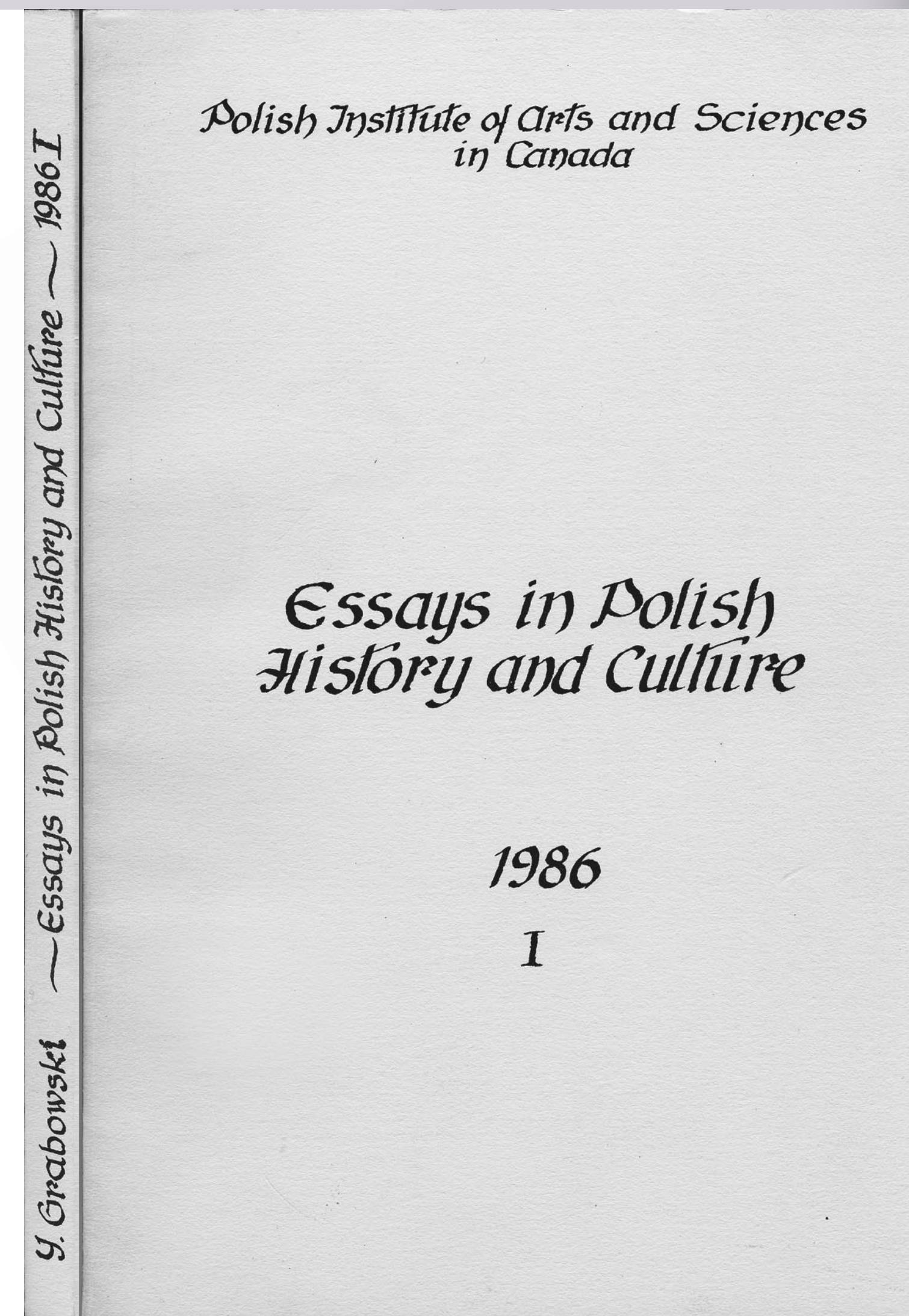


Yvonne Grabowski

(1929 – 1989)

Scholar, social activist



Culture shock is the experience of disorientation and frustration that occurs when an individual finds himself among people who do not share his fundamental premises.

Y. Grabowski, essay *Culture shock*

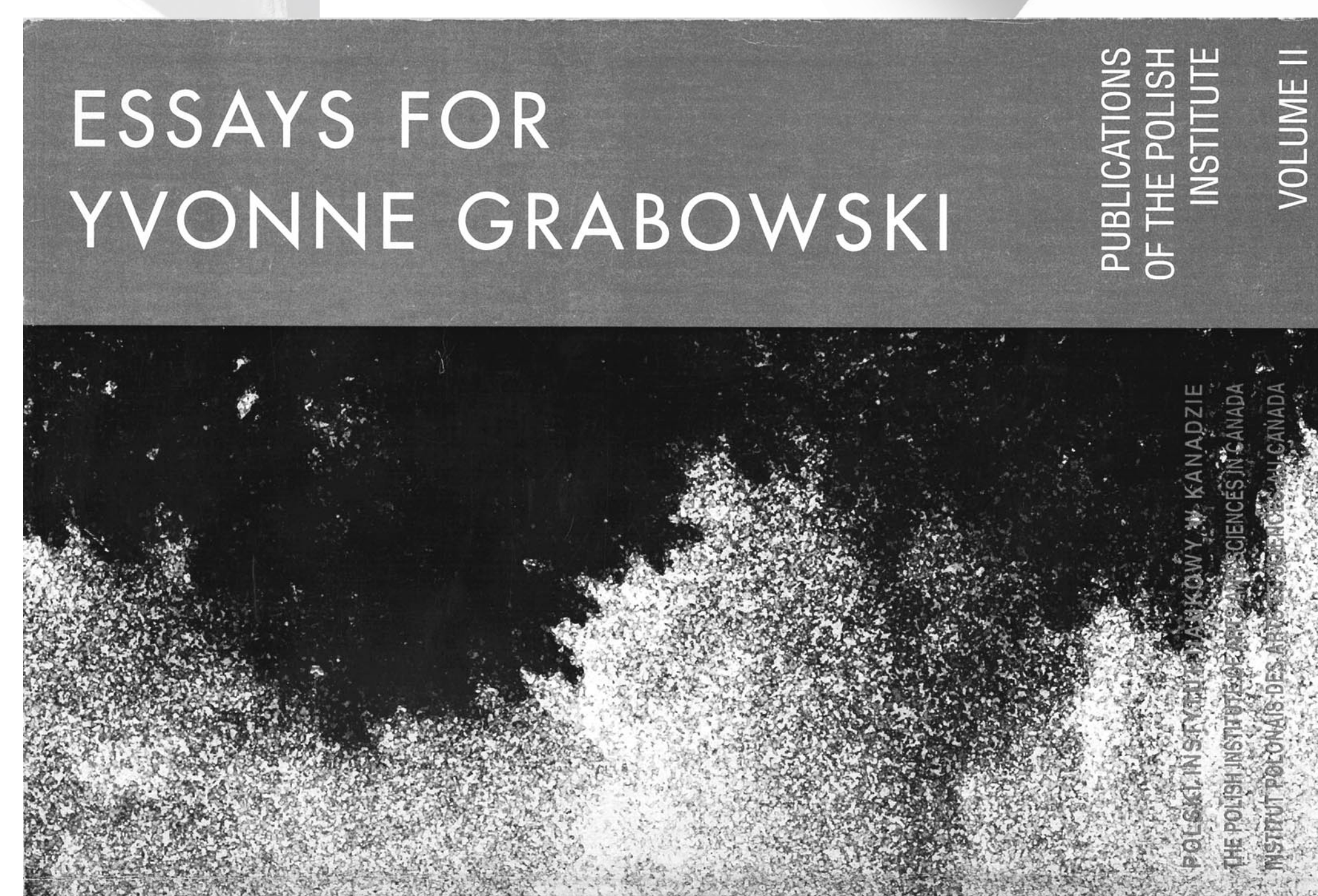
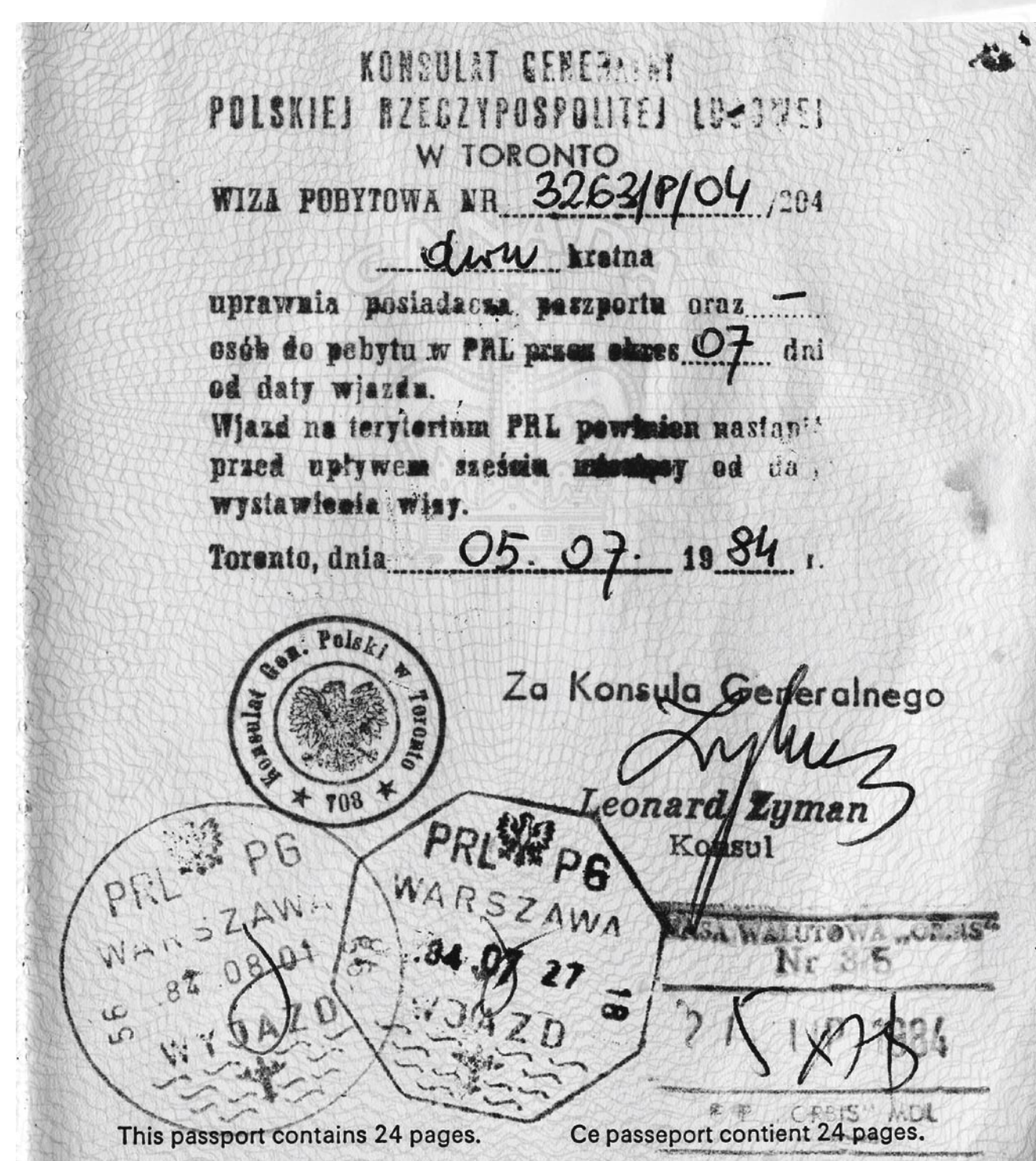
Born in Warsaw, Poland, Yvonne Grabowski earned a master's degree in English at the University of Lodz in 1951, and M.A. in French at the University of Warsaw in 1952. She began her doctoral studies at the University of Warsaw in 1953 where she was teaching until 1958. Supported by a Canada Council Fellowship to study Slavic languages at the University of Toronto, she completed her doctorate in 1969.

Her main academic interest was the interaction between two languages, Polish and English, and the way they influenced each other. Culture shock was the subject of her numerous articles and lectures.

As professor of Slavic Languages at Toronto's York University since 1974, she was active in learned societies: Canadian Association of Slavists, Canadian Society of Ethnic Studies, Canadian Society of the Comparative Study of Civilizations. Being president of the Ontario Modern Language Teachers' Association, she lobbied the Government in 1975-76 to offer Polish language courses as credit courses at high schools. She established Polish language courses available to Canadian students at York University. In 1988, she was appointed full professor at the Polish University Abroad in London, England. As Fellow of Stong College of the York University, she published a collaborative book *Tales of Heritage*, dedicated to the concept of multiculturalism.

As president of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences (Toronto chapter), she organized lectures and promoted cultural heritage of her native country. She acted as a consultant to the Board of Education and the Ministry of Culture, and translated into Polish many official Ontario Government publications. She developed Youth Leadership programs for the Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care. For her work in support of multiculturalism, she received in 1983 a Civic Merit Award from the City of North York.

In 1986, she published a volume of *Essays in Polish History and Culture*. After her sudden death, a Festschrift in her honour, *Essays for Yvonne Grabowski*, was written by her friends and academic colleagues, and published by the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in 1993 as the second volume of *Essays in Polish History and Culture* series.



Photos from top left clockwise:

• Prof. Yvonne Grabowski / Photo – family archives • Prof. Y. Grabowski's publications • Polish visa from Prof. Y. Grabowski's Canadian passport