

Cwi Rozenwajn

He was born in December 1918, in Częstochowa, to poor Chassidic parents and received a stringent religious upbringing. His parents wished to see him, in the future, as a great scholar and *Ben-Toire*¹, because he displayed great capabilities in *Kabbuleh*². [But] he went through an inner spiritual struggle and parted ways with the religious life and environment.

With a profound passion, he acquainted himself with secular Jewish European literature and all the currents in the Zionist movement, focusing especially on the social sciences. He was strongly influenced by the Jewish-German social thinker and philosopher Gustav Landauer³. He was [also] impacted by the ideas of A.D. Gordon, who called upon Jewish youth to break away from Diaspora life and philosophy.

With this theoretical and ideological preparation, in 1932, he joined the *Gordonia* pioneering organisation, in whose ranks he went on to occupy a respected position. From 1933, he represented the organisation in all the Zionist and Socialist bodies, making public appearances with lectures on Zionist and socialist themes.

In 1938, he became a contributor to the *Częstochower Zeitung* weekly, publishing a series of articles on the theme "*In the Shade of Doom*", which made a great impression on the serious-minded circles in Częstochowa, due to their profound content and their outspoken pessimism regarding the future of the Jews in the Diaspora.

With the outbreak of the War, all political life was paralysed. Cwi Rozenwajn immediately set upon the work of reviving the farm and organising the illegal activity of *Ha'Chalutz*. At the first meeting, in which the representatives of the Central [in Warsaw] Cywia Lubetkin and Josef Kapłan participated, Cwi Rozenwajn was elected to the first committee of management of *Ha'Chalutz*, taking part in all its illegal works. He engaged in the cultural and educational work of the pioneering youth, who gathered in the private homes of Małka Weltman at ul. Berka Joselewicza 1, Cela Kac at ul. Warszawska 21, Chaja Fridman at ul. Garncarska 5 and Mania Ciecziura at ul. Kiedrzyńska 14. He also called upon the youth to endure the difficult occupation times.

An entire array of labour activists was pulled into the forced labour, including Cwi Rozenwajn. He put himself at the head of creating an organisation to fight the Nazi regime and their aides, the *Judenrat*, distributing illegal flyers which he edited.

He made public speeches at workers' gatherings, inspiring full trust in him. He gained popularity with all factions of the Jewish workforce and, in the summer of 1940, he was elected with a majority of votes to the *Arbeiterrat* executive. Later, along with Mojsze Lubling and Mojsze Lewenhof, [he was elected] to the presidium, where he held the important office of financial manager. All the aid institutions - such as the kitchens, the HMO, the savings and

¹ [TN: Heb., "Son of Torah" – viz. a scholarly man versed in Torah study and assiduously adherent to all its precepts.]

² [TN: Aka "Kabbalah" in Sephardic Hebrew, meaning the esoteric interpretation of the Torah, which was reserved only for the most pious and intellectual individuals, and from which commoners were invariably discouraged from delving into.]

³ [TN: One of the leading theorists on anarchism in Germany at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century; he was an advocate of social anarchism and an avowed pacifist.]

loans fund, the unemployment fund and the fund for invalids and the politically persecuted - were under his supervision. He remained in this position until the deportation and dissolution of the *Arbeiterrat*.

At the same time, he took an active part in the political and cultural activity of the *Arbeiterrat* and the pioneering organisations, helping to organise the *Arbeiterrat* drama circle and choir. He organised the struggle to improve the living conditions of the workers by raising the wages and bread rations. For his selfless work in organising hunger and work strikes, he received threatening letters from the *Judenrat* and was arrested numerous times by the Jewish police, along with Mojsze Lubling and Izrael-Awigdor Szyldhaus. He also led a struggle, against the *Judenrat*, to free the youth from the Cieszanów and Hrubieszów camps.

Following the tragic deportation of Częstochowa Jewry and the establishment of the "Small Ghetto", Cwi Rozenwajn resumed his activity. Together with Rywka Glanc, he organised the *kibbutz*, which became the moral and physical centre towards which all gazes of the "Small Ghetto's" Jewish population were turned. Cwi Rozenwajn belonged to the committee of management of the *kibbutz*, alongside Rywka Glanc, Nute Slomnicki, Bolek Gewercman and Juda Cymerman (the latter two are currently in the Land of Israel).



Photo № 10: Cwi Rozenwajn with a group of Będzin partisans.

At the end of November 1942, orders arrived from the Central in Warsaw to the effect that several members were to travel to Będzin to organise the underground movement. Together with three other comrades, Cwi Rozenwajn went, at the appointed time, to Sznicer at the "White House" at Aleja 14. From there a Polish smuggler, Fajcuch⁴ from Ostatni Grosz, took

⁴ [TN: We have rendered this name literally as it appears in the original but have found nothing similar in any other source.]

them across the border of the *Generalgouvernement* to Będzin. While in Będzin, Cwi Rozenwajn was in constant contact with the Częstochowa underground movement.

In 1943, the *Ha'Chalutz* organisation in Switzerland sent Cwi Rozenwajn papers inviting him to South America. The result was that, in May 1943, Cwi Rozenwajn was arrested and sent away to an internment camp for American citizens in Laufen, Oberbayern [Upper Bavaria].

In the internment camp, Cwi Rozenwajn was in constant contact with illegal Jewish groups, sending them food parcels. He was also in contact with Switzerland, where he sent important information regarding the life and struggle in the ghettos.

He was freed from the internment camp in May 1945 by the American divisions and is currently in Bad Reichenhall.