

Jechezkel Kantor

He was born in Częstochowa, in 1917, to the industrialist Lajbel Kantor, the owner of the Stradom mill and a colonial goods shop. After completing general school, he studied metalwork at the Craft School at ul. Garncarska 8-10. He became independent and opened a printworks on I Aleja, which he later relocated to ul. Warszawska.

For many years, he was active in the "Askola" Sports Club, where he distinguished himself in football and table-tennis. He also became known as a good player in the chess club.

From his earliest youth, he belonged to the Betar revisionist youth organisation and stood out for his developed political sense and indomitable will and character.

As a twelve-year-old boy, when bloody events took place in the Land of Israel in 1929 and Jews in Częstochowa recited psalms, Jechezkel Kantor declared that the solution to the unrest could only come by way of an organised armed youth.

In his social life, he was noted for his humour and occupied first place in composing up-to-date political jokes. During the War, he married Miss Brzezińska.

Events in Częstochowa were unfolding at a tumultuous pace. The hail of Nazi regulations degraded Jewry to the lowest level.

Jechezkel Kantor was raging to do battle against the Nazi forces and went about with the idea of organising an armed resistance movement. During the most tragic epoch for Częstochowa Jewry, from 22nd September to 4th October 1942, when 48,000 Jews were annihilated by the Nazi regime, he lost his entire family. In the "Small Ghetto", he put to action his plan of organising a resistance group. He sought connections with the Polish underground movement, obtained weapons for himself and the group, and made contact with the officer Langewicz from the Polish underground movement. Jechezkel Kantor held several consultations with him at ul. Kucelińska 61, regarding the organisation of partisan detachments, military training, armament and methods of combat.

Once the united Jewish Combat Organisation (ŻOB) – to which all the youth belonged, regardless of politico-ideological convictions – was established, he joined its ranks, taking an active part in all its work and operations. During the liquidation of the Small Ghetto, he fell in armed combat as a heroic soldier on the battleground.

Arje Mandelbaum

Born in Częstochowa in 1916. From his earliest childhood, he lived as an orphan under difficult material conditions. Nevertheless, he managed to complete the *gimnazjum* and afterwards to master the general social sciences.

In his youth years he was active in the Communist ranks and later joined the Gordonia pioneering youth organisation, where thanks to his innate intelligence he became one of the most active and revered members. In 1935, he travelled for “*hachshara*” to Zduńska Wola, where he held the office of *kibbutz* secretary.

In the times of the Big Ghetto, he was an involved Ha’Chalutz activist and the official secretary of the *Arbeiterrat*. In the Small Ghetto, he worked in the *kibbutz* and actively participated in organising the armed resistance.

He was captured due to some mishap and sent away with a group of other Jews to Skarżysko near Radom. He could not calm down and strove to return to the underground movement in Częstochowa. Together with Alter Szyldhaus and Berl Rudnicki, he escaped from Skarżysko. The Nazi authorities managed to catch Arje Mandelbaum, and he perished under severe torture.

Arje Mandelbaum was one of the most ideal figures that Ha’Chalutz and the underground movement in Częstochowa produced.

Berl (Bolek) Gewercman

Born in Częstochowa in 1914 to the haberdashery merchant Jankel Gewercman. He was active for many years in the Ha’Shomer Ha’Tzair movement and in the League for a Working land of Israel.