

Morris Sztern

## Częstochowa-Łódź Branch 324 of the *Arbeiter Ring* in New York



In 1929, when the left-wing faction of the *Częstochower* Branch 261 *Arbeiter Ring* split off from the branch and joined the leftist Order, the branch was left, as they say, “anaemic”, because the majority of the involved activists were in the left-wing faction.

Due to this, already back then, talk began of uniting with a suitable branch. There was talk, but little was done about it.

Gradually, though, members, who had earlier been passive, began to take an interest in the branch. One of them is me, the writer of these lines. I am actually not a *Częstochower*, but a *landsmann* of Tomaszów Mazowiecki [and] a member of the *Arbeiter Ring* since 1922. I saw that it would not come to unification. I consented to become the branch’s Finance Secretary. This was at the end of 1934. I invested much labour in making the branch stronger, both financially and in its morale and, with the assistance of a group of active members, I succeeded in doing so. A new spirit prevailed in all of us at the branch and we no longer wished to hear anything of unification. In February 1939, we celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a very nice banquet and, with the technical assistance of Flw Ab. Litman, we published a fine journal for this occasion.

With significant sums, we supported the *Częstochower* Relief and all the important Jewish organisations - the United Jewish Appeal, the Jewish Workers Committee, HIAS [Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society], the Histadrut Federation for Jewish charity, the ORT Association, Jewish schools and others.

I was the branch’s Finance Secretary until 1948, with a hiatus of just two years. I then began thinking, once more, about unification, because the membership had gradually decreased in numbers and, sadly, the *Częstochower landsleit* were passive in this respect - they did not take in any new members. The majority of the members, however, did not want to hear of uniting with another branch. I therefore did not wish to continue in my position and Flw Mojsze Gotlib became Finance Secretary. But the branch did not function properly and, bit by bit, the majority became convinced that unification was the best way out.

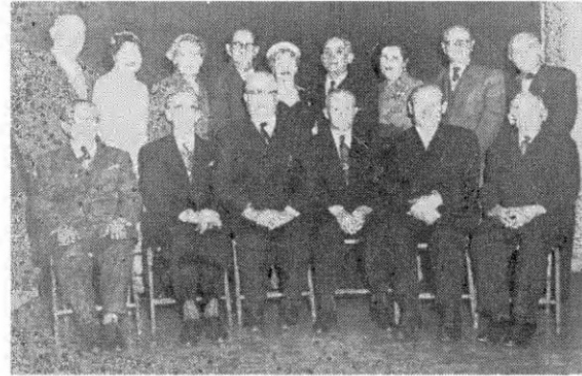
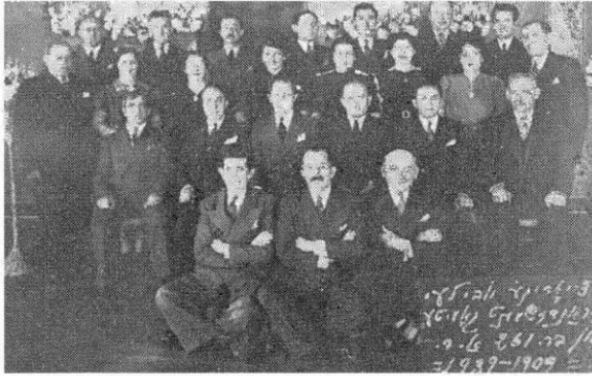
We sought and we found a very suitable branch - the *Łódźer* Branch 324 *Arbeiter Ring*. We negotiated, came to an agreement and the unified branch was established on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1950, under the name “*Częstochowa-Łódźer* Branch 324 *Arbeiter Ring*”, with a membership of 195, [of whom] 65 were from the *Częstochower* branch.

I then became the united branch’s Finance Secretary. The members quickly started getting along well and the branch leads very good [general] and cultural activity - it is now one of the finest branches in the *Arbeiter Ring*.

We have aided extensively in the building of the *Arbeiter Ring* home for elderly members and we also now help in its maintenance. With considerable annual sums, we support all the Jewish relief societies, Jewish institutions and the Jewish schools.

Now, after eight years, although many members have sadly passed on to the World of Truth, we have about 180 members, due to the fact that we constantly take in new members.

I am also now still the Secretary. Next year, on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1959, the branch will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The *Częstochower* Branch 261 was founded in February 1909 and the *Łódźer* Branch 324 was founded in that same year, in July 1909.



*The Executive of the Częstochower-Łódźer Branch 324 of Arbeiter Ring,  
and the members of this branch at their Anniversary Ceremony*