

Raphael Federman

Herszl Frajman (Herszl *Blacharz* [Tinsmith])

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Herszl *Blacharz* – he was known by this name to the Jewish workforce in Częstochowa, since back in the years 1904-1905. He was the son of middle-class parents. He worked from childhood (his father, Wolf, was called *Der Groiser Wolf* [The Big Wolf]). He was a tinsmith by trade and, along with this, he had been part of the Bund from his earliest youth.

Silent and modest, he carried out his underground activities at the millstones field [quarry?] by the mill. He was the commander of the [Bundist] *Boyevoy Otryad* [боевой отряд; Ru. Combat Squad]. In this movement, he met his future wife Rywka who shared in all his joys. She was the daughter of Moszek and Fajgla [Jenta] Rubel, and a sister of Szymon Rubel, a housepainter who was active in the Bund during the 1905 [Polish] Revolution.



Herszl and his wife Rywka made the entire combative way during the Tsarist times. They were arrested several times. In 1905, Herszl was involved in revolutionary activities in the military garrison and was arrested together with Abram Goldsztajn, Mendel Braun, Mordche Meryn and others.

[Once,] when the Częstochowa *Boyevoy Otryad*, the self-defence group, was practising shooting in a field near Częstochowa, a stray bullet found Rywka and she was seriously wounded. With the greatest secrecy, they were forced to take her to an apartment of the underground, where a difficult operation was carried out. It took several months until her life was no longer in peril.

Herszl and Rywka lived a happy life together for many years. Their home later became the guest-friendly house for the Bundist *liames*^{*}, in which Vladimir Medem, Bejnisz Michalewicz and other Bundist leaders also participated. Herszl Frajman was a member of the Bundist Committee for many years. One may say [that he was] one of those who re-established the Bund in Independent Poland. In 1920, during which period the Polish government carried out mass arrests of Bundists throughout the country, Herszl Frajman, too, was detained and, along with other Bundist activists, was sent to a camp (in Dąbie).

During Hitler's invasion during the Second World War, Herszl Frajman (he was also nicknamed "*Der Schwartzter Herszl*" [H. the Black]), was forced to leave his flat at *ul. [aleja] Wolności 19*, which was decorated with artistic paintings and filled with Jewish books. He was forced to move to *Stary Rynek [Old Market] 24*. Herszl did not rest. In the ghetto, where he could not work for himself, but was compelled to work for the Germans [instead], from his own earnings, in his house, he organised a kitchen which distributed around 50 lunches to the hungry - completely free of cost. In that same period, during which many did business and thought only of themselves, Herszl and his wife toiled hard and bitterly, and shared every morsel with the unfortunate poor and hungry.

In the ghetto, he was the Bundist representative in the Resistance Committee and his task was to cut the barbed wire surrounding the ghetto. Herszl also engaged in distributing illegal literature. On 4th

* [TN: The term "*liame*" is a uniquely Bundist slang word meaning party or banquet.]

January 1943, when the two young heroes Izio Fajner and [Mendel] Fiszlewicz, holding weapons, hurled themselves at German gendarmes, twenty-five Jews were led out to be shot as an act of revenge. Among these twenty-five martyrs was the man, the Jew, the Bundist with the great, idealistic heart - Herszl Frajman. His wife Rywka perished in the general *akcja*.