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Activity of the Jewish *Ordnungsdienst* (Jewish Police)

(An excerpt from the Statistics Book published by the *Judenrat* in 1940)

As inferred from the appended transcript, the *Ordnungsdienst* had a different name to begin with. Very soon, some members of the leadership were arrested by the German *Schutzpolizei* under various accusations and for abusing their power. A new leadership was appointed. From April 1941, the IRU¹ was given the name “Jewish *Ordnungsdienst*” [Security Service].



A typical Jewish policeman

Even though, compared with the Jewish Police in other cities, the *Ordnungsdienst* in Częstochowa behaved tolerably well, they did nevertheless carry out their lamentable role of serving the German organs of power. The Jewish policemen were sure that, by doing so, they would save themselves and their families from annihilation. During the entire time of their existence, they collaborated quite energetically in that all the regulations of the German organs of power should be fully adhered to by the Jews in the ghetto - they seized people for work, sought out those who had hid themselves from work, [and] guarded the transports which were to be sent away to various labour camps. Their role, during the period when the “resettlements”, began was particularly deplorable. It was they who called out the people to go to the *akcja*, all across the courtyards where the Jews lived; [it was] they

[who] called the Jews who were hiding in diverse bunkers to emerge, for the *akcja* had ended - and hundreds of Jews, believing them, paid with their lives in Treblinka.

The most grievous role the Jewish Police played was in the “Small Ghetto”. Here, their power was unlimited – and, indeed, they put it to use in its full measure. They engaged in uncovering thefts - except those in which they themselves were involved - and penalised the offenders. [They] drove the people off to work and snooped out those wriggling their way out of work. [They] played the main role in uncovering bunkers containing hidden Jewish possessions.

At every deportation *akcja*, each *Ordnungsdienst* office was required to provide a certain quota of elderly folk, or mothers with children – a task which they fulfilled to perfection. In all those hiding places, where there were mothers with children, in which the Germans and the Polish *Policja Granatowa*² had not been able to find people, or had been scared to search – the Jewish policemen did find people and, with their active cooperation, the Germans were able to uncover and annihilate the majority of the few surviving families, who had hidden themselves at such great risk to their lives.

Their sorrowful role came to its end on 20th July 1943 when, together with their wives and families, they shared the fate of the more than 400 victims who were then murdered at the Częstochowa HASAG concentration camp.

L. Brener

¹ [TN: “Inspekcja Ruchu Ulicznego” (Inspection of Street Traffic).]

² [TN: Pol., “Navy-blue Police”; popular name for the Polish police during the Second World War in German-occupied Poland.]

Protocol³

Following the deportation of the Jews, 6,500 Jews were still left in Częstochowa. They were confined to a small ghetto. At initiative of the Bund, an inter-party conference, regarding the formation of a resistance movement, was called at the premises where the Zionist youth were living (this later became a *kibbutz* [(fighting) commune]). The Bund, Left-wing *Poalei Zion*, Communists, *Ha'Shomer [Ha'Tzair]*, Gordonia and general Zionists participated in this conference.

As a result of the conference, a [branch of the] Jewish Fighting Organisation [ŻOB] was created, which set itself the goal of defending the ghetto in the event it should be liquidated by the Germans. A defence committee was created, which included Comrades L. Brener, M. Kuszniir [and] H. Prozer - Bund; A. Szymonowicz - Left-wing *Poalei Zion*; S. Abramowicz - Communists; Juda [?], R. Glanc, Gewircman [and] Kantor - Zionist groupings, and Mendel Fiszlewicz - "Nadrzeczna 66 Group"⁴. The military leadership was given over to the independent Jewish captain, Dr A. Wolberg.

Weapons began to be made and a plan of resistance was formulated, in case of an *akcja*. Petrol and other flammables, with which to set fire to the ghetto, were also prepared. Comrade Fiszlewicz was put in charge of carrying this operation out. Comrades Frajman and Jochimek took it upon themselves to break through the barbed wire at different points in the ghetto. The Fighting Organisation was divided into *drużyny* [teams/squads] according to their political affiliation, as well as mixed *drużyny* according to their workplace.

Thus, the work was conducted in a deeply clandestine manner until 4th January 1943. On 4th January, when a small number of fighters remained in the ghetto - all the others were at work outside the ghetto - the Germans carried out a "selection" amongst those who were employed inside the ghetto. The small group of combatants, who were in the ghetto, could not decide how to proceed. Then, on his own, Mendel Fiszlewicz began shooting at the gendarmes, wounding one. Twenty-five victims fell on that occasion, including Mendel Fiszlewicz and Izio Fajner of the Nadrzeczna 66 Group and Herszl Frajman of the Bund.

A serious divergence of views followed this episode, which led to a schism within the Fighting Organisation.

The standpoint of the Bund and the Left-wing *Poalei Zion* was that individual offensives were to be avoided, and that all attention needed to be focused on defending the ghetto in the event of an *akcja*. All the other groupings maintained that they had to give up on the idea of defending the ghetto, and make every effort to go out into the forest.

Two parallel movements with two separate goals began to operate in the ghetto. On one side were the Bund and Left-wing *Poalei Zion*, with the Fighting Organisation of more than 150 members under the leadership of Captain Dr A. Wolberg. On the other side were all the other groupings, with over 200 members led by Mojtek [Zylberberg] - Zionist; R. Glanc, Heniek Pejsak, J. Kantor, Gewircman [and] Jehuda [Gliksztajn] - *Ha'Shomer* and Gordonia, [and] Somek Abramowicz - Communist. Nevertheless, the two movements maintained contact during the entire time through the liaisons - L. Brener of the Bund and Left-wing *Poalei Zion*, and H. Pejsak of the "*kibbutz*" Despite the schism, the Bund and Left-wing *Poalei Zion* did not withdraw their members back from the mixed combat groups.

³ [TN: The intended "protocol" regarding the *Ordnungsdienst* is missing; the one which appears in its place is connected to the subsequent article (also by M. Kuszniir), "Activity of the Bund Under Hitler's Occupation" (pp.226-230), where much of it is repeated.]

⁴ [TN: Group of young resistance fighters, named after the house where they lived.]

Thus, both movements carried their work out – cold, calculated combatants under a conventional [military] leadership on the one hand, and youth filled with ardour, commitment and temperament on the other. The two movements had different *modus operandi*. The former conducted their work in a very clandestine manner. They robbed the German warehouses and sold the materials. With the money, they purchased weapons. Funds were also collected from well-situated and trustworthy individuals for that same purpose. The latter began to confiscate money, clothes, boots, sewing machines and other effects from Jews, which brought much unwanted publicity to the conspiratorial combat movements. This made the difference of opinions even more acute. Various underworld types took advantage of this situation, and began to extort money from Jews at gunpoint, in the name of the Fighting Organisation. These individuals were eliminated by the *kibbutz*. The *kibbutz* began sending out people to make contact with the non-Jewish underground fighting organisations. This was the hardest and most terrible work. Rywka (Glanc) was in charge of it. As result of the connections formed, the first group of five went, from the ghetto, into the woods. But they died in a battle against a large group of AK⁵. Among the fallen were Romek Fajgenblat (Ha'Shomer), Mojsze Rozenberg (Bund) and three Communists whose names we do not recall.

Afterwards, when a delegate of the AL⁶ came to the ghetto and delivered the news regarding those killed, a protocol was compiled, which he signed. This protocol was placed, along with other important documents, inside a bottle and buried.

It turned out that it was very difficult to establish contacts and that not only the AL operated in the woods, but the AK did also.

Of the ten groups, of five in each, who were later sent out, the only ones who survived were four people who hid in a bunker in the town of Koniecpol. Among those killed was the leader of *Ha'Shomer*, Juda.

Then, more attention began to be paid to the ghetto's defence. Underground tunnels started to be built. With primitive equipment [and] lacking suitable specialists, three gigantic [viz. very long] tunnels were built over the course of three months, of which not even the best civil engineers would have been ashamed. The first tunnel led out from ul. Nadrzeczna 80/82. The well-hidden entrance was through a regular cooking range and led to the storm-drain sewers. Its exit point was at the end of ul. Jaskrowska, in the middle of a field. The second and most important tunnel led from ul. Garcarska 42 to the Stary Rynek [Old Market], where the exit to the "Aryan side" was located. In the building of these two tunnels, every day, hundreds of men were employed daily in two shifts. These men did not go to any work and were provided with night shift workers' certificates, thus being able to receive ration cards and not be persecuted by the German camp leaders. These certificates were issued by a member of the Fighting Organisation, Marzej Krauze, who was an employee of the printing press of the Workers' [Council]⁷. Kantor, from *Ha'Shomer*, was in charge of building the tunnels.

To a certain extent, the cover of the whole operation was also blown by failed contacts - after coming to an agreement with an underground organisation regarding the supply of weaponry, a delegation of the Fighting Organisation - Comrades "Mojtek", Ch. Kantor and Renia Lenczner - went out to Kamionka⁸ to accept delivery of a shipment of short weapons [viz. handguns] for the sum of 250,000 *złoty*. When they emerged with the weapons, they were surrounded by Gestapo officers and gendarmes. They started shooting back at them. A few gendarmes fell. "Mojtek" and Kantor

⁵ [TN: "Armia Krajowa" (Home Army); the dominant resistance movement in German-occupied Poland during the Second World War.]

⁶ [TN: "Armia Ludowa" (People's Army); a communist partisan force set up by the communist Polish Workers' Party (PPR).]

⁷ [TN: The "Arbeiterrat"; an official body which represented the Jewish forced labourers in Częstochowa before the local Judenrat and fought for their welfare.]

⁸ [TN: A large hill next to Raków in Częstochowa.]

were able to break through and escape. Comrade Renia Lenczner was injured, and yet she continued shooting at the gendarmes for as long as she still had bullets. She was captured alive, with a gun in hand. But she betrayed no one and perished at the [hands of the] Gestapo during the course of the interrogation. By then, the Gestapo was already certain that something was happening in the ghetto. They did, in fact, take steps against these activities. They removed the camp leader and replaced him with two gendarmes - the two of the bloodiest hounds - and spread out a net of collaborators.

It was confirmed that "Makel Kulebaika" ([Mordche] Herman) was in contact with the Gestapo. The Fighting Organisation soon eliminated him. The rumour that was spread in the ghetto was that he had fled the ghetto in the company of an SS officer. Later, it was discovered that a Jewish policeman, Rozenberg, was providing the Gestapo with information regarding the Fighting Organisation. He was arrested during the night by the Fighting Organisation. A hearing was held. He obstinately refused to answer the questions that were put before him. A death sentence was issued, which was carried out immediately. The provocateur was buried together with the verdict. The verdict was placed inside a bottle. Among the survivors who participated in this hearing was Abram Czarny, nowadays secretary of the Jewish Regional Committee in Częstochowa.

When the acquisition of armaments became harder by the day, a workshop was established in the ghetto, where home-made grenades, with great explosive power, were manufactured. The necessary equipment and explosive materials were smuggled in from the munitions factories HASAG, Enro [and] Wulkan and the *Möbellager* [Furniture Camp], where the Jews were employed. This workshop was run by "Jacek" (Heniek Wiernik). The workshop and the grenades, which were made there, were of a high standard. When Comrades Marek and Władek, from Warsaw, toured the workshop, they decided to take it outside the ghetto and expand it, in order to produce grenades not just for Częstochowa. This was never carried out because, two days later, the ghetto was liquidated.

Two more incidents hastened the liquidation of the ghetto and the attack on the combat organisations which they totally expected it. A group of five men, who belonged to the "Nadrzeczna 66 Group", went out to conduct diversion work at the *Ostbahn*. They were caught red-handed. Four men fell, and twenty-five of the fifty Jews, working at the *Ostbahn*, were shot in reprisal.

The second incident was when a delegation of three people – Rywka, Hipek [Hajman] and "Lalka"⁹ – travelled to Warsaw to buy weapons. However, they did not have enough money for the expedition. Hipek returned alone late in the evening and entered the ghetto, together with the workers from Enro. A random search took place at the entrance and a *Kennkarte* [German ID card] was found on him. He was arrested and held by the Jewish *Ordnungsdienst*. The Central Command was not in the ghetto and the fighters had no weapons. They then borrowed weapons from the Bund, with which they terrorised the whole police station and freed Hipek. This made the Germans burn with great rage.

During the time the ghetto was in existence, two announcements were published in the Yiddish and Polish languages. One was a May Day announcement and the other was an appeal to the Polish population to aid the Fighting Organisation.

On 23rd June, the commander of the Bundist Fighting Organisation, Captain Dr Wolberg, was unexpectedly taken away and murdered by the *Schutzpolizei*. The Fighting Organisation suddenly found itself without military leadership and it became completely disoriented. Two days later, on 25th June 1943, the Gestapo and gendarmerie mounted an attack on the bunkers with held weapons and the tunnels. A tragic battle ensued, in which the majority of the fighters fell, including Mojtek,

⁹ [TN: "Little Doll"; Icek "Lala" Windman.]

Rywka and other Zionists, as well as the Bundists [sisters] Dosia and Pola Szczekacz [and] P. Lewensztajn. The commander and representatives of the Communists perished, a few days later, outside the ghetto. But numerous gendarmes and Gestapo officers also fell. The [Small] Ghetto was liquidated and over the course of the liquidation, more than 1,500 Jews were killed then and there.

Signed:

L. Brener
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