

A. Chrobolovsky

Częstochower Cooperatives

With the establishment of an independent Poland, the number of cooperatives increased strongly. The Popular Bakery, which during the First World War baked "*popularka*" (with plenty of potato skins and little flour), was the first cooperative in Częstochowa. At the time, like in other cities, we had a "Provisions Committee", which had branches throughout the entire city, where essential food products were distributed for coupons according to a designated norm. After the War, the Provisions Committee was liquidated and the cooperatives took over the distribution of food products. As a consequence, practically every party and organisation established a cooperative for its members.

In 1921-22, the following cooperatives were operating:

- *Jedność* [Unity],
- *Wyzwolenia* [Liberation],
- *Naprzód* [Forward],
- *Vereinigte*,
- *Selbsthilfe* [Self-Aid] (craftsmen),
- Workers' Home (*Poalei Zion*),
- *Zukunft* [Future] (Bund, tenants),
- *Beamte* [Civil Servants],
- *Handlowces* [Merchants],
- *Achdus* [Unity],
- *Shutfus* [Partnership] (retailers),
- *Tusia* [Resilience],
- *Przyjaźń* [Friendship],
- *Postęp* [Progress] and
- *Robotnik* [Worker].

The *Vereinigte* and *Zukunft* cooperatives later merged. The branches of these two cooperatives were on the [following] streets:

- the bakery - Garncarska 34;
- the first branch - Ogrodowa 27;
- the second - Senatorska 1;
- the third - Nadrzeczna 78;
- the fourth - Strażacka 16 (formerly *Zukunft*) and
- the fifth - Piłsudskiego 19. The cooperative's bookkeeping was also there, and later the branch of the Workers Emigration Union.
- The Central Bureau was on ul. Spadek, in Szlezinger's building.

In 1927, once the *złote* had stabilised and the mad jumps in prices no longer existed, the majority of these cooperatives ceased to exist, except for the *Vereinigte*, which had already liquidated a couple of branches and led a worn-out life. Then, with the aid of the Joint, a new Workers' Cooperative was established, managed by the Bund. During the times of inflation, the cooperatives had held the prices of the most essential food products to a certain extent, and they mostly served the poorer population.