

The General Jewish Labour Bund

The Rise of the Bund

The Jewish socialist movement arose in Congress Poland later than in Lithuania and White Russia [Belarus]. In the last years of the 19th century, there were already Jewish salaried workers in many cities in Poland, but they were not yet organised. With the exception of Warsaw and a few other cities where the Bund was already active at the end of the 19th century, the Jewish socialist movement only spread a few years later - particularly in the first five years of the 20th century, when the ripples of revolution reached all corners of the country.

One of the reasons for the late arrival of the Jewish labour movement in Congress Poland was doubtlessly the fact that the traditional, religious life of the masses was more strongly rooted amongst the Polish Jews – and it held up longer. The old-fashioned life of the Polish masses in Poland only first began to crumble more vigorously in the epoch of 1905.

It is also during this period that the emergence of the Bundist movement in Częstochowa falls.

The first time the Bund came into contact with the city was in 1902. That year in the summer, the pogrom took place. The Bund sent at the time one of its most important activists, who later became the famous leader of the Bund and of the Russian Revolution of 1917 – Mark Liber¹. After thoroughly investigating the events, Liber published a detailed account of the Częstochowa pogrom in the Bund's organ abroad, *Последняя Известия* [The Latest News] (№92, 30th October 1902). With the vigorous Tsarist censure, and in the absence of a suitable Jewish press, Liber's printed account – which revealed the truth about the pogrom – was of extraordinary importance.

During the Revolution

The Bundist movement in Częstochowa only first expanded widely outwards in 1905. In that revolutionary year, great strikes, demonstrations and other important operations were carried out.

Several of them are worth mentioning here.

In August 1905, the Bund in Częstochowa took part in conducting a three-day political strike.

At about that same time, the local Bundist Organisation conducted a widespread operation in connection with the great misfortune that happened at Landau's factory. In the fire in August 1905, five female workers and two male workers were burned [to death]. In addition, several people suffered serious burns.

On the day of the funeral, the Bund called to a general strike. None of the Jewish labourers presented themselves for work. Starting before daybreak, great masses began streaming to ul. Garncarska, where a dead worker lay - a victim of the fire. A crowd of 6,000 people gathered. The windows, balconies and rooftops were covered with people.

¹ [TN: Usually known as Mikhail Isaakovich Liber.]



**A group of Bundists in Częstochowa in 1905;
On the ladder is Abram Goldsztajn. Next to him is Mendel
Braun; Standing to the left – Grajcer**

The Bundist speakers were lifted up on [people's] arms and, on their comrades' shoulders, they spoke to the thousands assembled. Sharp words were cast, laden with extraordinary bitterness and the sorrow that pervaded everyone's hearts. Nine speeches were delivered. This unique funeral gathering, in front of the working victim's house, lasted twelve hours.

At one o'clock, the burial took place at the cemetery where, once more, speeches were delivered before the agitated masses.

The Bund also published two thousand copies of an illegal announcement. This announcement, which began with the words "*On Behalf of the Victims*", made a strong impression.

An interesting financial report from the Częstochowa Bundist Organisation, for the six months from 1st September 1905 to 1st March 1906, gives us a concept of the scope of the Bund's work during that period²:

Income: Literature – 21 roubles and 14 kopeks; Zawiercie – 83₽, 50κ.; Nowo Radomsko – 30₽, 20κ.; lottery 10₽, collected – 405₽, 20κ.; remaining – 59₽, 39κ.; Sosnowiec – 9₽, 70κ.; tailor – 2₽, 72κ.; joiner – 3₽, 5κ.; baker – 20κ.; counterman – 95κ.; barber-surgeon – 10κ.; watchmaker – 10κ.; tinsmith – 2₽, 15κ.; factory [worker] – 1₽, 95κ.; ironer – 5κ.; box-maker – 10κ.; gaiter-maker – 20κ.; cap-maker – 1₽; confectionary baker – 50κ.; girl³ – 5κ.; turner – 35κ.; lost leaflet – 50κ.; for A.R.⁴ – 4₽; Staś⁵ – 2₽, 50κ.; through Waj-⁶ 6₽; Blond 50κ.; legal literature – 9₽, 98κ.; pictures – 7₽, 40κ.; recouped – 30₽; for a special purpose⁷ – 300₽; for the Relief Committee for the strikers – 29₽, 38κ.; borrowed – 12₽, 50κ.; intelligentsia – 5₽, 45κ.; acquittances⁸ – 5₽; through Ch. – 10₽; through H. – 7₽; through Sz. – 5₽; a worker – 1₽; R. №10 – 40κ.; №2 – 4₽, 50κ.; miscellaneous – 22₽; from the Bund Regional Committee – 160₽; from the Committee abroad – 73₽, 50κ.; "Little Bund" – 50κ.

In total, 1,329 roubles and 77 kopeks.

Expenditures: District [authorities?] – 98 roubles and 7 kopeks; travel expenses – 54₽, 75κ.; support to workers – 41₽, 72κ.; technical – 62₽, 3κ.; arrested – 49₽, 30κ.; Bund's Polish Regional Committee – 366₽, 46κ.; debts repaid - 110₽, 16κ.; flats – 60₽, 75κ.; post – 13₽,

² [TN: This report was obviously for internal use, and is written in a very cryptic manner; we have been unable to fully decipher all the entries, but we have presented them as they appear in the original.]

³ [TN: מייירעל in the original – a word that does not exist; most likely misprint of the very similar-looking מייידעל, or "girl."]

⁴ [TN: Possibly initials of "Arbeiterrat," or the Workers Council.]

⁵ [TN: סטאש in the original; as this is not a word in Yiddish, we have rendered it as the given name Staś, the diminutive form of Stanisław. Although this interpretation is uncertain, the word is followed by what appear to be the personal names of two people, as follows.]

⁶ [TN: Viz. moneys obtained through an individual whose surname began with "Waj-".]

⁷ [TN: Traffic of weapons, as explained on the following page.]

⁸ [TN: Written receipts attesting the settlement of fines or debts.]

45к.; for a special purpose – 394Р, 15к.; [protest] meetings – 35Р; travellers passing through – 34Р, 20к.; passes – 2Р; unemployed – 166Р; strike – 85Р, 28к.; on legal literature – 25Р, 60к.; bookbinding – 12Р, 25к.; miscellaneous – 7Р, 85к.

In total, 1,619 roubles and 2 kopeks. Deficit – 289 roubles and 25 kopeks.

Under the poor conditions of the time, the expenditure of 1,619 roubles for six months was a considerable sum and it shows the scope of the movement. What strikes the eye is the lack of paid salaries - this indicates that the entire diverse work was carried out voluntarily by the members. From these proceeds and expenditure, we may see that the Częstochowa organisation also served the surrounding towns. Only three towns are mentioned in the financial report but, in reality, the number of nearby towns, in whose work Częstochowa assisted, was much larger.

As regards Nowo Radomsko, which is mentioned in the finance report, a very lively activity was conducted there. In a report made public in the *Volkszeitung* № 49, dated 8th May 1906, we read:

There are some 400 Jewish workers here, the majority of whom are under the influence of the local Bundist group. This group conducts its work very energetically and its influence is growing ever more in the city, as well as in the surrounding shtetls - Pławno, Przedbórz and others.

The lives of the working masses still relate to their employers are in old, patriarchal times. Their wages are very low, [and] their needs are still very small. The Christian masses are even worse. Most of them lean towards Narodowa Demokracja [National Democracy - Endecy].

Despite the backwardness in both the Jewish and the Polish neighbourhoods, the Nowo Radomsko Bundists conducted vigorous, revolutionary activity. Their work amongst the large military garrison was particularly selfless. They had connections with many soldiers of the artillery division and other formations. Among other things, in 1906 the Nowo Radomsko Bund organisation distributed, amongst the soldiers, proclamations which the military-revolutionary organisation in Warsaw had published regarding the pogrom in Białystok, which had been perpetrated by the local [Russian] garrison.

From the treasurer's report, we may also see that Częstochowa and the Bund's Polish Regional Committee were in close contact. An array of Bundist activists, who helped arrange the work better and appeared with speeches at gatherings, were sent as emissaries of the Regional Committee. Among others, the activists of the Polish Regional Committee, Jidel Motolski and Alter Epszajn, visited Częstochowa several times. The renowned Bundist leaders, who came, were A. Litwak and B. Władek.

One entry in the treasurer's report requires clarification, both in the revenue and in the expenses. There is an entry denoted as "for special purposes" - income of 300 roubles and expenditure of 394 roubles and 15 kopeks. This "special purpose" was for armaments.

At the time, the local Bundist organisations had special combat squads, or "BOs"⁹, as they were called. Their duties were to protect the movement against police spies and to defend the Jewish population against pogroms. The Częstochowa Bundist organisation also had one such BO. In his book of memoirs, *In Lojff fun Jorn* [Over the Years], Lajbeczke Berman recounts that the prominent Bundist activist Dawid Kac ("Taras") travelled to Częstochowa regarding this purpose. He travelled

⁹ [TN: Initials of Russian "Boevyye Otryad" (Боевой отряд), or "Combat Squad."]

there as representative of the “Maim”¹⁰ Commission, which was part of the Bund’s Central Committee, and which was tasked with organising, instructing and arming the BOs in the [different] localities.

[Here are] a few examples regarding the work of the BO in Częstochowa:

In June 1906, a horrific pogrom was organised in Białystok by the Russian powers-that-be. People in other cities also prepared for something similar. It was then that the BO appeared on the scene and organised special self-defence squads. A letter, published in the Bundist daily paper *Volkszeitung* №109, dated 20th July 1906, tells about Częstochowa:

Lately, the mood here has been a very agitated one. The Białystok pogrom has aroused fear in the entire region and even more so in Częstochowa which, a few years ago, already had the taste of a pogrom.

The Polish and Jewish revolutionary parties (Bund, PSD¹¹ and PPS) have begun to conduct vigorous agitation amongst the working masses. In addition, self-defence has been made ready and its [squads] have been allocated to different streets in the city. Part of the self-defence has also been prepared for the region, should it be needed there.

The local Jewish community has been indifferent to self-defence. It is actually no wonder that, nowadays, a large part of the Jewish population has little faith in self-defence, because everybody knows that the pogroms are perpetrated by the police, abetted by soldiers - and against rifles, one can do nothing with Brownings [pistols]. That said, we should not have expected indifference - as the pogrom in Białystok has proved the effectiveness of self-defence.

We must note the despicable attitude of numerous Jewish manufacturers towards self-defence. They wanted to deduct, from their workers’ pay, the couple of days that they had been compelled to participate in self-defence and had been unable to work. One of the local rich men, Mr W., bolted the doors of his house and did not let in a self-defence squad, who wished to use his flat for a couple of hours until the procession ended.

Polish society [made] no protests and adopted no resolutions regarding the Białystok pogrom - they only held a ball, the proceeds of which went to the unfortunate victims. For the local Polish community, [even] this is a wonder. The Jewish community does not let itself be heard at all. It adheres, as it would seem, to the tactic of the “achievers” - and it keeps silence. It is only the proletariat that do not stay quiet. Lately, many mass gatherings have been held, where the Białystok pogrom and other political issues of the current age have been discussed. Two such meetings were held by the Bund organisation, each of which had an attendance of over 600 people.

¹⁰ [TN: On p.301 of the aforementioned book, “In Loff fun Jorn,” the author L. Berman, who was part of this commission, explains that the name “Maim” was given as a “double conspiracy” – it’s “real” name was “Fire”, but they reversed it to “Water” to make it more conspiratorial, and then translated it to the Hebrew “Maim”, to make it doubly clandestine.]

¹¹ [TN: Abridged initials of the SDKPiL (Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy) – the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania – as stated below on p.128.]

In series of locations, the BO had occasion to go out not only against the police and pogrom perpetrators, but also against Jewish hooligans, who aided Tsarism in combating the revolutionary “Achdusnikes”¹² - with the blessing of employers and the rabbi.

The BO deployed weaponry against these hooligans, who had serious crimes on their consciences. In the second half of 1905, employers in Piotrków and Częstochowa hired “Good Boys” who, under police protection, attacked the workers, beat them cruelly and also put them into the hands of the Tsarist police. Armed Jewish workers retaliated for this by shooting some of the organisers and participants in these attacks, [reminiscent] of the Black Hundreds¹³ in Piotrków and Częstochowa.

The Party’s Internal Life

At the end of 1905, the Bund Committee in Częstochowa was made up of Mbrs. Abram Lipnik, Aleksander Golde, Uriel Flajszer, Ester Alter, Henia Gorelik and “Anjuta”.

Lipnik was chairman of the Committee (in later years, he became known as a Bundist activist and medical doctor in Grodno). Ester Alter (a sister of the future leader of the Bund, Wiktor Alter) was active in independent Poland as was lawyer Estera Iwińska in Warsaw, where she was a popular Bund activist and a Councillor on the Warsaw City Council.

The Częstochowa organisation took an active part in the Bund’s internal life, debating and deciding an array of issues that were on the daily agenda.

On 8th October 1905, a gathering of 200 Bundists was held in honour of the Bund’s eighth anniversary. After the speeches, the party meeting adopted a resolution which expressed satisfaction with the Bund’s successful struggle and activity. Particular emphasis was put on the success in the battle against all the bourgeois currents within the Jewish people themselves, and on the determination and struggle of the Jewish proletariat, who were at the forefront of the worker fighters in the whole of Russia.

The assembly expressed gratitude towards the Bund’s sixth convention for making the decision to establish a Polish Regional Committee and to the Central Committee for executing this decision swiftly.

The resolution, adopted by the gathering of the Bundist organisation, concluded with the following words:

We, Częstochowa’s Jewish workers, as we celebrate the Bund’s eighth anniversary, express our full readiness to fight against the existing political and social order for full political and social freedom, without stopping at any sacrifices. We furthermore vow to wage a continuous ideological war against those who wish to put to use the energy and readiness for battle of the Jewish proletariat for causes that are foreign to it.

Acknowledging the full importance of the organisation and [its] methodical mode of combat, we pledge ourselves to be at the ready upon any call from the Częstochowa Bund organisation, and to uphold its successful activity with all [our] strength.

¹² [TN: According to the yet untranslated Yizkor Book “Gqbin – The Life and Destruction of a Jewish Town in Poland” (p.170), these were members of an early secret society named “Achdus” (Unity), that had close ties with the Bund, and which was comprised of young atheist-revolutionaries.]

¹³ [TN: Ultra-nationalist movement in Russia, noted for its racism, incitement to pogroms, etc.]

As they voted for this resolution, those assembled viewed it as an oath - as a sacred commitment which they had taken upon themselves.

We shall mention a few others of the various Bundist party meetings which took place during that period:

On *Purim* 1906, a festive gathering dedicated to 1st March¹⁴ was held. A series of orators spoke about various topics and especially about the 1st of March (revolutionary organisations celebrated this date as the festive anniversary of the assassination of the Russian Tsar, Aleksander II). In the speeches, a connection is made between the Haman of olden days and the Tsarist Hamans.

The Bundist party meeting in the summer of 1906 was of very great significance. It was then that, in the Bund, the question was discussed as to whether to reunite with the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party¹⁵. Heated debates were held in all the country's Bundist organisations as to the conditions of this unification. Two main currents developed, which were known as "hard" and "soft" - viz. yielding to a lesser or greater extent. The Częstochowa organisation sided with the hardliners. The general meeting of the councils (meaning the leaders of the separate Bundist groups – [each] city's central "*skhodka*"¹⁶) in Częstochowa, after heated debates, adopted the resolution of the hardliners with sixteen votes in favour, with seven abstentions. The most important points of the resolution were:

- 1) *The Bund is the social-democratic organisation of the Jewish proletariat, [and] is not limited in its activity by any regional constraints.*
- 2) *No other organisation included in the Russian Social Democratic [Labour] Party, except for the Bund, may set itself the goal of conducting social-democratic activity among the Jewish masses.*
- 3) *The Bund will have its representative in the Russian SD Party's Central Committee.*
- 4) *The Russian SD Party's programme is that of the Bund, but regarding the national¹⁷ question, the Bund reserves its right to remain with its own programme, which was adopted at the Bund's sixth convention.*
- 5) *The Bund has the right to independently make any changes in all matters pertaining to their organisations.*
- 6) *The Bund's organisation sends its representatives to the Russian SD Party's general conventions and conferences on the same basis as the organisations of the Russian party.*
- 7) *The fundamental points may be changed, at the Russian SD Party's general convention. only with the Bund's consent.*

On 27th and 28th March 1907, a convention of representatives of the Bundist organisations in Poland was held, in order to elect delegates to the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party's fifth convention, which was to be held in London. The Częstochowa district was also represented at this electoral conference of the Bundist organisations.

Like in many other cities, a "Little Bund" also existed in Częstochowa - that now legendary revolutionary children's organisation, which distinguished itself with its guilelessness, heroic

¹⁴ [TN: The significance of this date is explained subsequently. *Purim* of 1906 fell on 11th March – a full ten days after the date they were commemorating; to celebrate the 1st of March itself would certainly have been considered an act of treason under the Tsarist rule, as follows.]

¹⁵ [TN: This party was formed in order to unite the various revolutionary parties in Tsarist Russia, and was the predecessor of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.]

¹⁶ [TN: Ru. *Сходка*, lit. "congregation/assembly"; in this context, a secret board or committee.]

¹⁷ [TN: Pertaining to Poland, meaning that the Bund's Polish District Committee would retain its authority inside Poland.]

ebullience and selflessness. In the Częstochowa "Little Bund" organisation, there were, among others, the later renowned lawyer Stanisław Neufeld and Szlomek Birenbaum, the son of the famous cantor, Abram-Ber.

The Struggle to Improve the Economic Situation of the Jewish Workers

The political struggle of the awakening Jewish workers went hand in hand with a struggle to improve their economic situation. Professional unions of different trades were also active alongside the political organisation. These unions, which were run by the political organisation, carried out larger and smaller strikes. At the head of each union stood a management committee, which saw to the interests of the workers in that given trade. In the early days, there was a tendency amongst the workers to employ quite primitive means of battle, such as utilising economic terror, threats and similar methods. The Bund organisation strove to combat these same dispositions and it undertook widespread work to explain as to why these methods were unfeasible and inappropriate for conscientious labourers. The work of distancing these savage fighting methods did not come easily. But the workers themselves eventually became convinced, from their own experience, that the path recommended by the Bund is a much better and surer one [and] that, with a strongly disciplined organisation, it is possible to achieve more long-lasting victories, than by giving the employer a beating or destroying merchandise.

In those times, the professional unions were politically affiliated. The Bund ran the metal and construction unions, those of the leather trade, of tailors and of other professions. In 1906, the Bund ran a total of five local professional unions.

The Bund embarked upon an operation to form a central bureau of Częstochowa and the region, which would encompass all the professional unions of both the Jewish and the Polish workers. To this end, at the end of 1906, a conference of the management committees of the Jewish professional unions was called, and the decision was made to approach the PSD (Social Democracy [of the Kingdom] of Poland and Lithuania) with a proposal of unification. Lively professional activity was conducted during that period and many strikes were won.

The Last Revolutionary Chords

Tsarism mobilised all its gigantic empire's dark forces and its entire apparatus of power in order to stifle the revolution. Exhaustion and resignation began to dominate the ranks of the workers. The great number of victims, the overfilled prisons [and] the shootings and hangings broke the fighting spirit. The revolutionary wave began to subside and, for a long time, the workers waged rearguard battles, fighting from groups which retreated under the pressure of the out-weighting attacking forces. During this period, new tasks surfaced everywhere, which the Częstochowa Bundist Organisation also had to carry out.

One of the important duties at the time was helping the victims of the revolution - the fighters locked up in the prisons. This work was carried by the Bund Organisation's so-called "Red Cross".

In a letter from the Częstochowa Bundist "Red Cross," printed in the daily Bundist *Volkszeitung* (20th Nov. 1906), we read:

The plight of the incarcerated and the deported is, from day to day, increasingly worsening and becoming bitterer. The variety of means, which once supported the deportees and were never sufficient - and even more so nowadays, with such a fearsome number of arrestees and deported - certainly has almost no significance at all. It is absolutely necessary that every

compassionate person, to whom the fate of the hapless victims is dear, should spare from his own necessities in order to aid the wretched exiles, in the desolate wildernesses, with at least something.

In particular, a sacred obligation lies upon our comrades to take all kinds of measures to raise money for them. If every individual town and shtetl sends something, this will become a large sum. And, although we can imagine that this will still be just a drop in the ocean, we nevertheless cannot say that it will be of no aid at all.

Just let the old call of "Help the arrested and exiled!" be spread everywhere - and aid will come from all directions.

Meanwhile, in Częstochowa, twenty-eight roubles and fifty kopeks have been collected, for this purpose, from some of the members of the Bund.

May this letter serve as a signal for a diligent collection [of funds] for our languishing comrades in bleak Siberia.

It is not only with aid for arrestees and exiles that they had to busy themselves. The local Bundist organisation also had occasion to extend aid to Jewish workers emigrating abroad, who stayed in town until they were smuggled across the border. As one may imagine, the organisation did not possess the necessary finances for this. The most it could do was to give some small monetary support. People often set out on the long road without the necessary financial means and they asked for greater aid. The only feasible aid that could be - and was, in fact - given to emigrants was seeing that they did not fall into the hands of swindlers, who promised to take the emigrants across the border, and [then] fooled and swindled them. Several times, the local organisation published warnings about this in the workers' press. Here is an excerpt from one of these warnings (end of summer 1906):

The Częstochowa Bund organisation reports that large numbers of workers come [here] to cross the border. The organisation does not have large funds and, as a result, the newly-arrived wander about in the streets and starve to death. The organisation, therefore, warns not to rely upon its support. Only those, who possess the necessary means, may come. These will be aided by the organisation so as not to fall into the hands of swindlers.

It would, however, be a mistake to think that, during the revolution's downhill period, the Bundist movement occupied itself solely with relief activity. Despite the mounting apathy, fear and even hatred on the part of the surrounding bourgeois environment, the Bund strove to keep up the fighting spirit of the Jewish workers.

At the end of 1906, before the elections to the Russian Duma, the Bundist organisation, regardless of the strong apathy, made efforts to awaken the broad public. During those Duma elections, a total of 3,398 voters were registered in Częstochowa, of whom no more than a thousand were Poles - Jews constituted the majority of those registered. The Bund conducted its campaign amongst the working strata. In connection with the electoral campaign, the Bundists held a series of meetings of different professions and, a few, inside factories. During that period, the Bundists also implemented a self-imposed tax of one day's wages for the treasury of the Bund's Central Committee.

These operations already had to be carried out under a hail of repressions. The police even stopped passers-by in the street, searching their pockets and frisking their bodies. Police raids on houses were a regular occurrence. Detainees were beaten.

But, despite the repressions, the Polish and Jewish labour organisations published announcements for 1st May 1907. The evening before, red flags were hung up on the telegraph poles and on the chimneys of the factories. On 1st May itself, the entire police force was on its feet, and they had a difficult job in taking down the red flags. Almost all the workers from the workshops and factories went on strike. Only in two factories did people not strike, because the majority of the workers there were *Endecja* supporters.

The picture would not be complete were we not to mention the acute ideological battles (which not always took a solely ideological form) between the Bund and the SS [Party]. Częstochowa was one of the few cities where the SS were strong. The SS movement there started early and, later, lasted the longest - while it had already collapsed everywhere else. The PSD also had some influence in the Jewish street, albeit quite a small one. The Jewish intelligentsia was usually [either] assimilated or nationalistically oriented. As a result, the majority was distanced from the Jewish labour movement.

Under the Yoke of Severe Reaction

The reaction that followed the revolutionary period of 1905 hit hard the labour movement in the Tsarist Empire. The masses were terrorised and apathetic. A great number of activists were being held locked up in the prisons and in Siberia, [and] the organisations had collapsed. Only here and there, in a small number of towns, did groups of loyal and indefatigable [activists] hold together. Small remnants of the once mighty organisations led a conspiratorial existence, deep underground. These were the rare oases in the enormous desert. All the revolutionary parties experienced such circumstances, although not all in the same measure. The Bund, in this respect, was no exception - although it possibly salvaged more from the reaction catastrophe than did others. It has its massive size to thank for this, and the deep roots that it had struck in Jewish life.

Częstochowa was also one of these oases. The city belongs amongst the fortunate exceptions, where the Bundist movement was not interrupted, even during the harshest years of the reaction. Once it had struck roots in the soil of the Jewish working life in Częstochowa, even the dark downpour of reaction did not have the power to tear it out from there.

Understandably, the activity in the years 1908-1915 had to be limited, due to the general conditions in the country. The important thing, however, is that an organisation continued to function regularly, and - within the framework of the limited possibilities - continued to maintain the faith and aspirations of the Jewish workers.

As stated, the work had to be extremely conspiratorial - only on rare occasions were signs of life publically displayed. One such occasion was the death of the Bundist leader, Bronisław Grosser. At the start of 1913, the following short announcement was printed in the organ of the Bund, *Die Zeit* [The Time], № 2, which was published in [St] Petersburg:

Częstochowa. A group of friends from Częstochowa express their commiseration over the untimely death of B. Grosser.

That same year, on Saturday, 2nd October 1913, a mass-arrest of Bundists took place in Częstochowa. A [Bundist] gathering was being held in the field next to the *Klejarnia*¹⁸. The meeting was surrounded

¹⁸ [TN: Glue factory founded by Henryk Markusfeld.]

by a great number of policemen and gendarmes, headed by the chief of the gendarmerie and chief of police, Arbuzow¹⁹. Some sixty individuals were arrested.

The majority of those arrested were workers in the tailoring [industry] and there were youths amongst them. Under heavy guard, all of them were taken to the police station and, from there, to jail. On that occasion, the following people were arrested:

Abram Rotbard, Abram Granek, Jakow Laska, Abram Kaczka, Tujwa Mas, Icek Gelbard, Abram Walman, Josef Rozenblat, Benjamin Rozenblat, Ruben Luks, Lajbe'le Rajzblat, Szlojme Haneman, Chaim Buchalter, Jakow Dlugonoga, Lajzer Berkensztadt, Mojsze Grynberg, Abram-Tujwa Frajermauer, Mordche Wajsfelner, Nachman Epsztajn, Józef Izraelowicz, Wolf Topenberg, Lajbisz Dilewski, Dawid Paryzer, Kalman Gelber, Szlojme Markowicz, Kalman Szklarz, Wolf Wien, Jakow Kogun, Jojneson Gutman, Henech Feldman, Herszl Wargon, Juda Frajermauer, J. [?] Yasnur, Mordche Wajntraub, Izrael Gutfrajnd, Abram Ferenger, Daniel Goldberg, Kopel Tajchner, Daniel Chłopak, G. Drajzner, Ajzyk Libgot, Judl Lypszyc, Aron Niedziela, Szmul Enzel, Perec Funtowicz, Juda Kernik, Fajgla Fridman, Nacha Sztorkman, Majer Goloch, Abram Fridman, Chaim Grynblat, Szlojme Buchner, Dawid Futerhendler, Mojsze Ferszt, Izrael Lublinski, Szlojme Lewkowicz, Lajbisz Zajdman, Izrael Iman [?], Jakow Kogut, Marian Staszkowski and Władysław Szuster (the latter two were Poles).

A total of sixty-one individuals were arrested. The detainees were administratively sentenced to three months of imprisonment. Twenty-five of them were sent with the *étape*²⁰ to Piotrków. The rest sat in the Częstochowa jail. Only one of them, Lajbe'le Rozenblat, was freed.

This had been a gathering of Bundist workers. The arrest made a huge impact in the city. The police and gendarmerie, who had undertaken to eradicate the "*Kramola*" [Old Ru.; dissidence] from Częstochowa's soil, were not satisfied with the great arrest and conducted a further series of raids and arrests.

At the start of 1914, the Częstochowa Bundist organisation sent off a petition to the Social-Democratic faction of the Russian Duma regarding this harsh persecution, to the effect that it should bring an interpellation²¹ before the government, thereby giving the matter wider publicity. As a result of this story with the interpellation, the Russian press of the time wrote about the raids and the arrests among the Jewish workers and Socialists in Częstochowa.

Most of the detainees were members of the professional unions - which existed, despite the monumental hindrances on part of the Tsarist powers-that-be.

Shortly before the onset of the First World War, in the summer of 1914, Bundist activist Wiktor Szulman came to Częstochowa in connection with the Bund's eighth convention, which was to be held in August 1914 in Vienna, and was called off due to the outbreak of the War. Częstochowa and Nowo Radomsko were to have sent a joint delegation. Besides this, Szulman was to have established connections in Częstochowa, Będzin and Sosnowiec regarding taking the delegates across the border.

¹⁹ [TN: It is unclear whether Arbuzow was both chief of the police and the gendarmerie, or if the gendarmerie was led by a different individual (there are no commas in this sentence in the original – thus our uncertainty).]

²⁰ [TN: Road Prisons; a type of a prison in Russia used for temporarily housing inmates on their way to Siberia or similar locations.]

²¹ [TN: An occasion when questions are formally asked of a government minister in parliament (Cambridge Dictionary).]

During the Years of the First World War

Częstochowa was occupied by the German legions at the very outset of the First World War. Then, too, the Germans displayed brutality in various forms. But taken as a whole, their rule was more civilised than that of the previous Russian satraps. As a result, with the arrival of the Germans, a communal revival began.

The Bundist organisation frequently held public lectures, which drew a large crowd. Among those who held lectures in Częstochowa was also the famous leader of the Bund, Vladimir Medem. At his lecture on 17th January 1917, the hall was overflowed with a crowd of 800 people, who listened to the lecture captivated. Not only workers, but also people from all different Jewish factions came to listen to Medem's lecture on *Social Currents Amongst Jews*. Another important means of information among the Jewish workers was the, then, only Jewish workers' newspaper in occupied Poland - the Bundist weekly *Lebensfrage* [Question of Life], which was published in Warsaw under the editorship of Vladimir Medem. In 1916, one hundred copies of *Lebensfrage* were sold in Częstochowa every week. The paper was disseminated amongst workers in the trades of wood, leather, paper, clothing, celluloid and others. By 1917, the number of copies of each edition of *Lebensfrage*, sold in Częstochowa, already passed 200. At the end of 1916, the Bundists founded a club in commemoration of the deceased Bundist leader, Bronisław Grosser. The Bund members and sympathisers gathered at this club. The club was not just a home where one spent time in a familial environment, but it was also a centre of cultural activity. In 1917, the club received large financial support from Bundists abroad. During the first three months of its existence, the club held nine lectures and meetings, with an attendance of 1,800 people.

During the period of the German occupation during the First World War, the Częstochowa Bund Committee consisted of Jakow Rozenberg – Chairman; Józef Aronowicz – Secretary; Herszl Frajman, Abram Rotbart and others. Among the active Bundist figures in those days was also Comrade Straus, later a Bundist activist in Lemberg [Lwów], and correspondent for the Bundist *Volkszeitung*, known under the pseudonym "A. Galicjaner".

The most revered leader of the local Bundist organisation, at the time, was Józef Aronowicz. With his lectures, he helped break the communal influence of certain assimilationist circles in the city.

During the First World War, the electoral campaign to the City Council occupied an important place in communal life. The electoral regulations, instituted by the occupying forces, were very unfavourable to the poorer echelons of the population. There were six curiae²² and, for the workers, they only left a couple of mandates in the sixth curia. The Bund went to the elections independently and contested against the bloc of Jewish bourgeois parties. One of the Bund's electoral announcements from the end of 1916 stated:

The Poles of the faith of Moses, the Zionist and the Chassid - all those who, during the War, speculated with the grosz for which we had toiled with sweat and blood, and who cast the workers and commercial employees out of their factories and businesses when the War broke out - have formed a bloc. Now, they speak of the interests of the Jewish People as a whole. We, the workers, do not believe their fine phrases. We know what hides behind the words of peace and unity.

The veracity of these words was confirmed by the actions of the Jewish bourgeois bloc, which was about to seal a union with the Polish bourgeois parties as regards dividing, amongst themselves, the mandates in the first five electoral curiae.

²² [TN: Viz. electoral colleges.]

At the time of the electoral campaign, the Jewish group in the Polish Social-Democratic Party²³ (PSD, later the Communist Party) split away and joined the Bund. In a public proclamation, the defectors showed that they considered the Bund to be a social-democratic party and its demands, for equal rights [for Jews] as a nation, to be an expression of the aspirations of the Jewish proletariat. The declaration goes on to state that, having thoroughly assessed the Bund's national programme, they had become convinced that the demands were just, and that the Jewish workers needed to say this loudly and openly.

The four years of the First World War were a period of transition in Jewish life - a transition from Tsarist rule to the altered conditions in independent Poland. A new era began, which was the most intensive and colourful in the history of the Jewish community in Częstochowa.

In Independent Poland

In the twenty years between the two World Wars, the Bundist Movement rose ever higher and gained ever more strength. New fields of activity emerged - in the City Council, the *Kehilla*, the HMOs, [etc.] The [scope of the] political, professional and cultural work was broadened. New branches of the movement also appeared, such as the *Zukunft* Youth Bund, the SKIF²⁴ children's organisation, the *Morgensztern* [Morning Star] Sports Organisation, the YAF²⁵ women's organisation, the *Unsere Kinder* [Our Children] scholastic organisation, general workers' cooperatives and the *Kultura* cooperative printing press.

To the old activists and members were added new ones - young people, from the generation which grew up after the First World War. The former had tradition, experience [and] awareness; the latter - enthusiasm, daring [and] dynamism. And both circles - the old and the young - were fused together into one entity through their idealism and boundless loyalty.

On a New Foundation

Under new conditions, in a new communal atmosphere, with a stream of youthful forces, the Bund embarked upon wide-ranging work in independent Poland.

The first broader activity was connected with the rise of the Workers Council. All the city's labour factions belonged to it - from the Polish workers - the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), the Communist Party, the nationalist grouping "*Narodowy Związek Robotniczy*" [National Workers' Union] (NZR) [and] the Christian Democrats (ChD); from the Jewish workers - the Bund, *Vereinigte* (SS) and *Poalei Zion*. Józef Aronowicz, Zalman Tenenberg, Maks Brum, the bakery worker Abram Rozenblat and others belonged to the Bundist faction.

Józef Aronowicz's speeches made a grand impression - especially his appearances against the antisemitic proposals of the *Chadekes*²⁶. Among other things, the *Chadekes* proposed that the Jews not be permitted to form part of the Workers Council. The *Chadekes* were left isolated - all the other groups rejected this insolent, antisemitic proposal.

Apart from the Workers Council, which was an expression of the workforce's revolutionary spirit in the first period after the World War, a people's militia also existed for a few weeks. Many Jewish workers were part of it. Armed with rifles, Jewish workers stood guard, patrolled the streets or

²³ [TN: Meaning the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania, as stated above (p.128).]

²⁴ [TN: *Socjalistischer Kinder-Farband* (Socialist Children's Union).]

²⁵ [TN: *Yiddishe Arbeiter Frau* (Jewish Worker Woman).]

²⁶ [TN: Members of the *Endecja* and *Chadecja* were called "*Endekes*" and "*Chadekes*," respectively, in Yiddish.]

carried out other policing functions. But the people's militia, as stated, lived even for a shorter time than the Workers Council.

The City Council remained a longstanding institution of first-rate significance for the city. Its significance was greater than that of its competing communal self-management organs. It served simultaneously as a local political tribune²⁷.

The Bund had its representatives there, elected by the Jewish working people. In the first City Council of independent Poland, which was elected in 1919, the Bundist representative Józef Aronowicz, in [his] primary declarations and speeches, gave expression to the Bund's stance on a series of the city and the country political and social issues. The Bundist representative also issued a sharp declaration against the Polish-Soviet War.

In connection with this same sharp declaration, strong repressions began against the Bund (the same happened throughout the entire country). The Polish authorities arrested the entire Częstochowa Bund committee, with Comrade Józef Aronowicz at its head. In the subsequent years, Aronowicz settled in Wilno, where he was a respected activist in the Bund, in the professional unions and in the secular Yiddish School Organisation (TSBK²⁸). In October 1939, he was arrested by the Soviet government along with an array of other Bundist activists and, since then, all traces of him have vanished.

The following additional Bundist activists were arrested alongside Aronowicz in Częstochowa in 1920: Zalman Tenenberg (later a Bundist activist and head of the *Kehilla* in Piotrków; perished during the Second World War in the Oświęcim death camp, following a sweeping arrest of Bundists in Piotrków, when a shipment of illegal literature was seized), Grynbaum, Rzonczyński and Chaim-Dawid Wolhendler. They also then came to arrest Cyna Orzech (now in Canada), leader of the bakery workers. They released him due to the fact that he was convalescing after a bout of typhus. Orzech threw himself into the work of aiding the detained members. He established a cross-party relief committee (together with *Vereinigte* and *Poalei Zion*). He, himself, was later arrested in Kraków, when he arrived there with aid for the detainees, who were being held at the Dąbie camp near Kraków.

The first committee of the Częstochowa Bund in independent Poland comprised Józef Aronowicz, Zalman Tenenberg, Mojsze Lederman, Cyna Orzech, Józef Izraelowicz, Abram Fridman, Abram Rotbart and M. Borzykowski. During the period when some of the committee members were imprisoned in the Dąbie camp, a few others were taken into the military. The only member of the committee who continued working was Cyna Orzech. When he had important issues to decide, this remaining committee member would go to the military barracks and talk things over, through the barbed wire, with Mojsze Lederman, Abram Fridman and Mojsze Tuchmajer. That was the manner in which the committee's "sessions" were conducted at the time.

The arrested Bundist activists were held at the Dąbie concentration camp until the end of the Polish-Soviet War. In connection with the arrest of Councillor Józef Aronowicz, the representative of *Vereinigte*, Councillor Raphael Federman, submitted a proposal to the effect that the City Council [should] demand that the detainee be released, in order to enable him to continue fulfilling his functions as an elected representative of the population. The PPS councillors also supported the proposal and the City Council adopted it.

²⁷ [TN: *Viz. platform/rostrum.*]

²⁸ [TN: *Tsentraler Bildungs Komitet (Central Education Committee).*]

Of the appearances in the City Council in the first days, it is particularly worth mentioning the declarations and resolutions proposed by the Socialist councillors regarding the 1919 pogrom, which supposedly started because a Jew was alleged to have hurled a stone at a soldier of [General Józef] Haller's army. At the time, the speech delivered by the Bundist representative, Józef Aronowicz, made a great impression.

A few years later, the Bund also became part of the Jewish *Kehilla*. The Bundist *parnosim*²⁹ waged a war for the *Kehilla* to have a secular character. They also took every opportunity to raise political issues that had a direct bearing on the state of the Jewish population. The greatest struggle against the bourgeois majority was conducted when working out the *kehilla* tax. The Bundist representatives demanded that no tax be imposed upon the poorer population and that expenditure be mainly directed towards satisfying the needs of the disadvantaged, in order to raise the social and spiritual situation of the most wronged echelons.

During the first few years of the Polish independence, the Bundist movement in Częstochowa greatly expanded. The number of organised Bund members increased, as did also its influence amongst Jewish workers in general. The professional movement, which was under the influence of the Bund – such as the unions of the workers in [the branches of] clothing and wood, bakers and others – also grew. The Bund's influence rose in the large organisation of commercial employees – in that assimilationist “*stowarzyszenie*” [association], where the Bundists, led by Józef Aronowicz and Jakow Rozenberg (later head of the Częstochowa *Kehilla*), waged a war against the ruling assimilationists and for a Yiddish-proletariat character of the association.

A line of new activists arrived. They operated within the most diverse fields of Jewish life in Częstochowa. From time to time, revered Bundist leaders and central activists would travel here from Warsaw.

***Vereinigte* Joins to the Bund**

The SS [Zionist-Socialists] who, since 1919, had called themselves “*Vereinigte*”, were one of the oldest and strongest organisations in Częstochowa. The process of decline, which seized this movement everywhere, also did not pass Częstochowa over – even though, here, *Vereinigte* held out the longest. The first large crisis took place in 1922, when a considerable section, headed by the chairman of the local [*Vereinigte*] committee and City Councillor, Raphael Federman, switched over to the Bund.

Not long afterwards (February 1923), a public Bund gathering was held in Częstochowa at which, besides Federman, one of the most revered founders and leaders of the SS also appeared as a speaker – Aron Singalowsky (Aron *Częstochower*).

Apart from the disappointment in *Vereinigte*'s basic principles, there was another reason a great section abandoned this party. It had effectively liquidated itself, as such, and had merged with a small, splinter group of the PPS headed by Dr Drobner. Together, they had formed the so-called “Independent Socialist Party”.

The newcomers from *Vereinigte* helped propagate the Bundist influence even more and they also aided a few labour institutions to go over to the Bund – among others, the *Kultura* printing press.

²⁹ [TN: Monthly *kehilla* representatives.]

Its Own Newspaper

In February 1923, the Bundist organisation began publishing its own newspaper, which served Częstochowa and the surrounding area. Its name was “*Arbeiter-Zeitung*” (for more details, see the article *Yiddish Press in Częstochowa*).

The Work of the Yiddish Secular Schools

In June 1922, by request of the Central Yiddish School Organisation [CISZO] in Poland, all the Yiddish secular schools, which each party had built separately, were unified. Three factions were included in the joint Częstochowa organisation – *Vereinigte*, the Bund and the left-wing *Poalei Zion*.

In February 1923, a branch of the *Unsere Kinder* [*Our Children*] Society - through which the local Bundist organisations conducted their educational work - was opened in Częstochowa. At the founding meeting, where the tasks and obligations of the Jewish workforce towards the Yiddish secular school were discussed at length, the contemporary dealings of the bourgeois Jewish Sejm deputies were also heatedly condemned. The Jewish “*Koło*” [Circle] - the union of the Jewish deputies and senators - had voted against the secular schools [using] the Yiddish language. The gathering adopted the following resolution regarding this matter:

By voting against the Yiddish school, the Jewish “Koło”, which is made up of Zionist and Orthodox deputies, has shown the entire world that it stands within the camp of the haters of Yiddish schools and that it strives for its undoing. The Jewish “Koło” has indirectly taken all the repressions against the Yiddish education system under its wing, and has given the government a certain justification to continue with the repressions. The Jewish masses brand this handling as a criminal one. The meeting implores the Jewish working masses to stand guard on their school and, with even more energy, to protect it from the reactionary wave.

The representatives of the professional unions of the workers in [the branches of] clothing, wood, food and paper, as well as the delegation from the *Zukunft* Youth Bund, issued declarations to the effect that their organisations supported the protest.

The Bundist organisation surrounded the Yiddish secular schools with love and warmth and did everything to strengthen their standing. In 1925, the Bundist faction on the City Council led a campaign for the city to help the Yiddish secular schools by giving them subsidies. This campaign was also supported by the “*Rada*” [Council] of the professional unions (Polish and Jewish). The struggles and efforts of the City Council’s Bundist faction were crowned with success. The municipal authorities decided to grant the Jewish workers’ schools subsidies.

By request of the Bundist Councillor Raphael Federman, in December 1926, the City Council decided to raise the subsidy for Yiddish secular schools to 4,000 *złoty*, instead of the previous 1,500. The Bundist weekly, the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (24th December 1926), wrote about this decision:

This time, the Jewish bourgeois councillors - such as Goldsztajn and others, who would always abstain from voting or leave the hall when such issues were being handled - also voted for the proposal. Those who abstained (this time) were the outspoken “Endekes”, such as Dr Nowak and his cronies, who had [hitherto] always voted against. Only four “Chadekes” voted against.

During that period in Częstochowa, there were a well-established six-class primary school and a kindergarten, run by the Yiddish School Organisation. This primary school bore the name of the great Yiddish writer, I.L. Peretz.

In 1936, the government liquidated the Yiddish School Organisation's (CISZO) Częstochowa branch. At the initiative of the Bund, a branch was once again opened in 1938. A new management committee was elected, which comprised A. Perec, M. Berkensztadt, I. Jaronowski, W. Fajga, Sz. Jakubowicz, A. Bratt, G. Prędkie, J. Kaufman and I. Szymonowicz. At the start of 1939, the new CISZO branch opened an afternoon school for children from the Polish state-run "Powszechny" [General] primary schools. In this afternoon school, they studied Yiddish and Jewish History.

The Struggle in the City Council

The Socialist faction on the Częstochowa City Council - Jewish and Polish - led an embittered fight against the bourgeois majority. The City Council prolonged its existence for a couple of years after its term had ended. In 1925, the Socialist factions finally decided to leave it, thus forcing elections to be held for a new City Council.

At the session of the City Council on 24th June 1925, a declaration relating to this matter was read on behalf of the Bundist faction, which gives us a picture of how badly the city was run and of the struggle of the Bundist councillors. Among other things, the declaration states:

During the six years of its existence, the City Council's policies have been based on a majority of Polish-Jewish petit bourgeois and capitalist elements, who gained the support of the supposed workers' representatives of the "Chadekes" and "Enprowces"³⁰. The latter have walked hand-in-hand with the right-wing groups against the interests of the working class.

At every opportunity, our faction has - be it upon appraising the budget or through urgent proposals - endeavoured to unmask the anti-labour policies and to, at least, partially ease the plight of the working masses, who have always borne the full brunt of the wartime conditions or industrial crises - in the form of unemployment.

Just for belonging to the Bundist City Council faction and for his public activity in this field, Councillor Józef Aronowicz was interned in a concentration camp and, only after eight months, under pressure by the Socialist councillors, did the City Council decide to adopt a decision regarding his release. In the end, he was forced to leave our city altogether.

The proposals concerning giving subsidies to the Yiddish primary schools, which are run by the workers, where up to 200 children from the population's poorest strata study, have been rejected several times.

The antisemitism of the City Council and municipal authorities are clearly shown by their stance on the excesses³¹ of 27th May 1919, as well as by the fact that, to this day, no Jewish worker or clerk is employed by the municipality.

³⁰ [TN: Members of the NPR, or Narodowa Partia Robotnicza (National Workers Party).]

³¹ [TN: Viz. outbursts of antisemitic violence, in the form of riots etc. This term appears often throughout the literature in this context, and is commonly used in Polish and Yiddish.]

Regarding the question of the further existence of the old City Council and the municipal authorities, just like in the other important cases, one front was established by the Socialist councillors - Polish and Jewish - against the united front of the bourgeois and reactionary councilmen of both ethnicities.

A short-term City Council followed the prolonged one. It existed for a year and a half and was dissolved in May 1927. At the last meeting before its liquidation, a declaration was read on behalf of the Bundist faction in which among other things, it was pointed out that, although the workforce had a majority on the City Council, the municipal authorities were still serving the interests of the owner classes. This was possible due to the fact that the non-Socialist labour factions - above all the *Chadekes* - had made an agreement with the representatives of the capitalists. The *Chadekes* (Christian Democrats) walked hand-in-hand, in all economic issues, with the Jewish and Polish bourgeoisie, to the detriment of the working masses.

The Fight for the Democratisation and Secularisation of the Jewish *Kehilla*

There were a few other overt and legal institutions on Częstochowa's soil, in which the Jewish workers participated through their elected representatives.

One of these was the Jewish *Kehilla* leadership. Inside the *Kehilla* Council, the Bundists always made efforts to elevate the state of the institution. They, therefore, combated disorder and negligence, rigidity and bias, as well as other detrimental characteristics that were so typical of many Jewish *kehillas* in Poland. The Bundist representatives endeavoured to turn the *kehillas* into institutions which would serve the poor levels of the population, aid their cultural development and also satisfy their other necessities, such as the health system, aid in need, etc.

Regarding this issue, a bitter war was waged against the Orthodox, who wished the *Kehilla* to see solely to religious necessities, and also against various overbearing types, who wished to rule with a strong arm - be it with their own might or that of their protectors, the representatives of the government.

The Bundist *parnosim* also endeavoured, at appropriate opportunities, to deal with issues of general Jewish interest. One such occasion was during the notorious pogroms in Romania. The following proposal was submitted, by a representative of the Bund, at a session of the *Kehilla* Council, on 9th January 1927:

The Częstochowa Kehilla Council protests, in the most energetic manner, against the continuous policy of the Romanian reaction, which has found its latest expressions in the bloody anti-Jewish pogroms in an array of Romanian cities. The Częstochowa Kehilla Council protests against the shameful policies of the bourgeois-reactionary Jewish parties in Romania, which support the antisemitic Romanian government and who went to the last elections to the Romanian parliament, hand-in-hand, with the antisemitic reaction. The Kehilla Council protests most energetically against those grovelling politicians in our country, who have more than once expressed their sympathies for the answerable representatives of the Romanian reaction.

The bourgeois majority of the *Kehilla* Council rejected the Bundist proposal and adopted a text of its own as a protest resolution.

Above all, the Bund fought for the democratisation of the *Kehilla* management committee and for it to listen more to the needs of the broad Jewish masses, and not to become an instrument in the hands of the religious functionaries.

In elections, which were held in September 1936, the Bund received 478 votes and two mandates [seats]. The Bundist *parnosim* elected were Aron Perec and Izrael Jaronowski.

During different periods, the Bund was represented in the Częstochowa *Kehilla* by the activists Raphael Federman, Aron Perec, Izrael Jaronowski and Mojsze Berkensztadt. The last head of the *Kehilla* was Jakow Rozenberg - a former Bundist.

In addition to the City Council and *Kehilla*, the Bund also represented the Jewish workers in the HMO - a mandatory institution, which ought to have served all labourers and employees with medical assistance. The Bundist faction, alongside other workers' representatives, led a struggle for the improvement of the institution to benefit the workforce. Above all, the Bundist faction fought for Jewish labourers and employees not to be wronged. In connection with this, it also demanded the right to use the Yiddish language in the HMO, and to also conduct the information activities in Yiddish.

The First of May

The international workers' holiday – the 1st of May – had become a firmly rooted tradition amongst Jewish workers in Poland. On this day, they did not work. At the meetings and demonstrations - in many towns together with Polish workers - the past year was summarised and the short and long-term tasks were indicated. More important than the dry self-appraisal, was the spirit that revived every Jewish worker on that day - the young as well as the old. The day was an absolute holiday, in the Socialist sense.

The Częstochowa Jewish workers were also no exception in this respect. They celebrated the 1st of May every single year. The Częstochowa Bundist weekly, the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, dated 6th May, wrote about the celebration in 1927:

The Jewish masses poured out from their lairs, narrow cellars and little attic dwellings. With their calloused hands, the tailors, cobblers and other workers arrived. The porters came dressed in their Shabbes clothes.

The Bund's information work has brought about the desired results. People everywhere have joined the ranks of the Socialist camp. Countless workers put themselves at their party's disposal, demanding to be led in the street. The bourgeoisie looked on with envy and wonderment as the Jewish workers marched in close formation, drenched with the rain that poured down all afternoon.

With great satisfaction, the Bund may take pride in [the fact] that its camps are growing from year to year. The cadres, which huddle together under its wing, are becoming ever larger. This was shown by this year's demonstration in Częstochowa, where the entire organised Jewish workforce demonstrated under the flag of the Bund.

The demonstration itself is described in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* in the following manner:

The heroic flag of the Bund was carried foremost, then the flag of the Jewish Cultural Bureau, [and] afterwards the flags of the Zukunft Youth Bund, [and] those of the professional unions

of clothing, wood, meat, transport (who were marching for the first time with the Bund), food [and] chemicals. The members of the professional unions marched under the flags of these unions. Banners were carried in the demonstration, bearing the legends "We demand political amnesty!", "Long live a government of workers and peasants!", "Long live the national-cultural autonomy!", "Long live the eight-hour working day!", "Down with night work in the bakeries!" and others.

Over seven hundred workers took part in the Bundist demonstration march. Besides this demonstration, several [protest] meetings were also held.

In the subsequent years, the 1st of May celebrations looked similar. It was not just the young adults who marched in the demonstration marches, but also workers of advanced years, some of whom had been active fighters against Russian Tsarism.

The Bund almost always demonstrated on 1st May, together with the Polish labour organisations. A few times, Jewish workers were assaulted by antisemitic hooligans during the joint demonstration with the Polish workers. In such cases, the well-organised PPS militia came to the aid of the Jewish workers and helped them to drive away the roguish attackers.

In the last years before the Second World War, the Polish government, which was becoming ever-more antisemitic, did not permit any joint demonstrations of Polish and Jewish workers in an array of cities. This was also the case in Częstochowa. And, on top of everything, the government did not permit any separate street demonstrations by the Jewish workers. As a result, they were forced to only hold [protest] meetings, which drew great crowds (up to 1,000 people), who expressed their anger and protested against the government's handling [of affairs]. That is how it was in 1937, for instance, and in the subsequent years.

Zukunft Youth Bund

The Bund had a large youth movement throughout the entire country. From the first moment on - during the First World War and in subsequent years, when the renewed Bundist Youth Movement was formed - the young workers began to gather under the Bund's flag - also in Częstochowa. Like in other cities, here too, they retied the severed threads of the former "Little Bund" and, in 1919, founded the *Zukunft* Youth Organisation.

Youth sections were founded (in 1922) in the professional unions, whose task it was to see to the financial interests of the young workers. At the start of 1925, three youth sections existed - in the trades of clothing, wood and brushes. The *Zukunft* Youth Bund educated the Jewish working youth politically, raised its cultural level, created a communal home for it and included it in the struggle that the entire workforce was leading. The *Zukunft* Youth Bund's self-education circles were for the children from the poor Jewish streets, like the universities were for the sons and daughters of the rich. From time to time, this youth organisation also held public lectures and gatherings, attended by a large youth public. Among other things, there were undertakings called the "Youth Newspaper in the Living Word." Speakers and activists came from within the masses of youth themselves. The *Zukunft* Youth Bund was the first communal school for more than one Częstochowa Jewish labour activist.

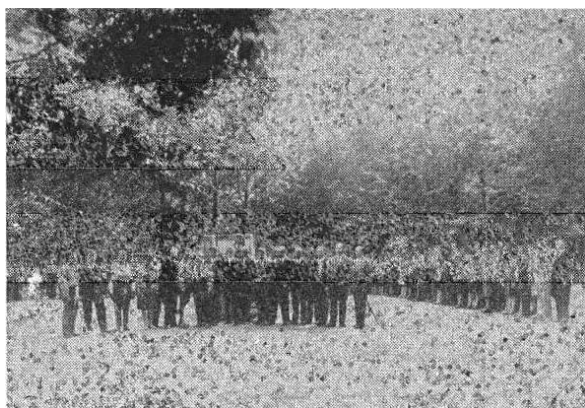
In the later years, the Bundist SKIF Children's Organisation and Morgensztern Sports Organisation were established.

The Bundist youth maintained contact with the Polish Socialist youth and, sometimes, held joint public appearances. For instance, on 17th June 1933, a joint meeting was held, dedicated to the fight against nationalism. A great crowd of youth attended. All wore blue blouses and red cravats - which was the uniform of the Socialist youth. Red flags flutters over the heads of the youth. Speeches were given in two languages - Polish and Yiddish. The youth sang the Polish workers' anthem, *Czerwony Sztandar* (The Red Banner) and the Jewish workers' anthem, the Bund's *The Oath*. This manifestation of Polish-Jewish fraternity and of cross-ethnic workers' solidarity took place in the royal seat of Polish clericalism – to where, every year, hundreds of thousands of Catholics from all corners of the land made the pilgrimage to the “miracle-working” icon in the Jasna Góra church.

Among the various activities that the Bundist youth organisation conducted were the summer camps and outings. The Warsaw *Volkszeitung*, dated 23rd August 1936, tells about one such summer camp:

Like every year, this year too, the Zukunft Youth Bund organised its own summer camp in the beautiful Chrzostów³² region behind Częstochowa. The necessary sum was collected from the savings and voluntary taxation of members and friends. Our youth indeed spent a joyful time in an environment of Bundist camaraderie in their own camp, which was run by Comrades M. Lederman and M. Kuszniir. Our “Zukunftists” have returned full of life and lusting for battle, and are taking to the work with renewed vigour.

The Częstochowa “Zukunftists” participated in an array of outings - countrywide or in the vicinity - which the *Zukunft* youth Bund arranged.



Zukunft Youth Bund, the outing in the municipal park

One such outing - in 1935 - took place in Częstochowa itself. Besides [those] from Częstochowa, “Zukunftists” from Zagłębie (Będzin, Sosnowiec, Dąbrowa Górnicza), Piotrków, Radomsko and other neighbouring *shtetls* participated in the outing, which made a great impression in the city. The Socialist municipal authorities provided the municipal park in order to arrange a parade. The Polish Socialist movement participated with a delegation. Socialist Movement participated with a delegation.

The Bundist sports organisation, *Morgensztern*, was only founded in Częstochowa in 1937. By the summer of 1938, on the first anniversary of its foundation, *Morgensztern* was already able to prove itself with achievements. A gymnastics tournament was held in the *Makabi* hall. The success was so great, that it had to be repeated a short later. The second time, the gymnastics tournament was held at the firefighter's hall and, on that occasion, Zalman Frydrych, the representative of the central management committee of *Morgensztern* in Poland, also delivered a lecture on the significance of sports for the Jewish workers and youth. (Zalman Frydrych later played a huge role in the underground movement and in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising of April-May 1943. He perished during this period.)

In 1939, the Częstochowa *Morgensztern* organisation was one hundred strong. Its activists also set up organisations in neighbouring towns, such as Sosnowiec, Radomsko, Zawiercie, Kłobuck and others.

³² [TN: In Koniecpol.]

Over the course of the years, the Bundist youth organisation was headed by stood Icek Stopnicher, Zysse Cincinatus, Herszl Prozer, Motl Kusznir, Jadzia Stopnicher, Szymson Jakubowicz, Elias Sztajnic, Symcha Zylberberg and others. All these were activists from within the youth itself. At the head of the *Morgensztern* sports organisation stood the old Bundist activist Aron Perec, Henryk Lajzerowicz (a former SS activist who switched over to the Bund), Gerszonowicz, Kusznir and others. The SKIF children's organisation was headed by teachers Liber Brener, Melman [and] Krul, the Bundist activist Mojsze Lederman, Itka Lazar (killed by the Nazis in Warsaw during the Second World War) and others.

Antisemitism & Boycott

In the dense Catholic atmosphere of the city, where great multitudes of fanatics were clouded by exaltation and superstition, the bacilli of antisemitism had a suitable place in which to multiply. Częstochowa very much belonged amongst those cities where antisemitism was intense and belligerent. During the last years leading up to the Second World War, the *Endekes* and the *Nara*³³ people (Polish fascists), conducted a fierce boycott campaign and organised various anti-Jewish excesses.

Thus, in 1937, one week before *Shavuot*, they proclaimed a propaganda campaign "for the Polish merchant and craftsman". An intensive boycott was carried out in the week of 2nd-9th May. Special boycott announcements and posters were published. Picketers, wearing green armbands, stood by Jewish businesses and shops, not allowing Polish customers to enter. Their slogans were "You [would] not want to be a fool - buy only from Poles!" [and] "You [would] not want to bring down Poland - buy only from Poles!"

From time to time, the *Endekes* held anti-Jewish demonstrations. At one such street demonstration of this kind - on 15th August 1938 – in unison, they shouted, "*Żydzi na latarnie, niech zginą marnie!*" (The Jews hang on lampposts, let them perish miserably!).

The *Endecja* demonstrators also attacked Jews and began smashing window panes. When they entered the Jewish area, groups of Bundists went out onto the street and put the hooligans to flight. Several of them were bloodied in the process. Many policemen arrived and "restored order".

At the end of 1937, Polish workers – Socialists-PPS members – organised groups to fight against the *Endecja* picketers and drive them off the street.



*The Bundist militia in Częstochowa.
Seated first (R-L, second row): J. Pendrak*

The Polish Socialist Movement and its Solidarity with the Jewish Worker

The Polish Socialist Party (PPS) was strong in Częstochowa. Its great influence was expressed in various elections and at [protest] meetings and street demonstrations. It was strongly represented in the city government, HMO and other institutions.

³³[TN: Members of the "Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny" (National Radical Camp).]

The Bund had a friendly relationship with the Polish Labour Movement. There were many occasions when Polish Socialists actively came out against the antisemitic bacchanalia [viz. rampant, depraved revelry].

Częstochowa was a nest of Catholic clericalism and it could not remain this way without influencing a certain part of the Polish workforce. Precisely in this city, the ChD (Christian Democrats) and NPR (National Workers Party) - both of which were nationalistic, anti-Socialist workers' organisations - had a relatively great influence. The majority of the Polish workers were not with them. They mainly belonged to the Socialist Party and a much smaller portion also to the Communist movement. The PPS always had a large faction on the City Council, although not the majority. With the votes of the Jewish Socialist councillors, and also the bourgeois ones, PPS members were elected several times as mayor or deputy mayor.

In the years when the Sanacja³⁴ government took a sharp course against the opposition, the repressions let themselves be felt in Częstochowa also. There was a time when the supporters of the ruling regime began aping the methods of Rome and Berlin. During this period, they distanced all the Socialist employees from the municipal administration and the HMO. There were also repressions against the Bund, because the Bund had refused to deliver a declaration of loyalty to the government. The Bundist activist, Raphael Federman, who was the only Jewish employee in the HMO, was dismissed from his position. Upon doing so, they informed him that he would be able to remain, were he to renounce his official stance towards the government.

The repressions reached their highpoint when a band of *Sanators* (supporters of the government camp) attacked the PPS' party premises. They took out the red banners and publicly burned them. In retaliation, the municipal official Jan Kostrzewa - an old PPS *bojowiec* [fighter] - carried out a terror attack upon activists of the *Sanacja* (the governmental camp), shooting six people. At the end, Jan Kostrzewa also took his own life. That is how an old Polish revolutionary washed away the disgrace of his party's flag being burnt.

It was not only against the *Sanacja* that the Polish labour movement had to fight bitterly – it was also forced to do so with the *Endecja*. More than once, Polish Socialists came into direct clashes with the *Endekes*. One of these bloody encounters with the *Endekes* took place on 1st May 1937. On that day, the PPS led 12,000 workers in the street under their flags. When the procession marched past the *Endecja* premises, bottles with poisonous liquids were hurled from there and shots were fired. The PPS members put up a fierce resistance. They fell upon the *Endecja* premises and demolished it. One of the *Endekes* was killed and eleven were left lying wounded. On part of the PPS militia, two were injured slightly and two seriously.

We have already mentioned, in an earlier chapter, the active public appearances of Polish Socialists against picketers who led the boycott against Jews. They also combated the antisemitic operations in other forms. The Warsaw *Volkszeitung*, dated 13th August 1938, reports:

Factory meetings have lately been held in a series of larger factories in the Częstochowa area, where representatives of the "Rada" have given out flyers from the National Council regarding the fight against antisemitism and for the rights of the Jewish masses.

(The "Rada" was the central municipal leadership of the professional unions - Polish and Jewish - in Częstochowa; the National Council was the highest leadership of the Jewish professional unions in Poland. The Polish labour organisations also distributed the National Council's flyers against antisemitism in an array of workers' centres.)

³⁴ [TN: This movement, headed by Józef Piłsudski, ruled Poland between 1926 and 1935.]

In the Polish capital of Catholicism, in the stronghold of clericalism and hatred of Jews, Polish and Jewish workers, more than once, displayed their cross-ethnic solidarity. One of the last acts of this kind - before the catastrophic September of 1939 - was the city's annual conference of professional unions, which was held on 2nd April 1939. Alongside the representatives of the Polish workers, a representative of the Jewish workers was also elected to the presidium - Raphael Federman. Among the 134 delegates from 29 professional unions, there were 23 delegates who represented the professional unions of the Jewish workers. Three representatives of the Jewish workers were elected to the new municipal central management committee - to the "Rada": the Bundists Izrael Jaronowski, Mojsze Berkensztadt and Motl Kuszniur.

The Bundist Organisation and Its People

The Bund in Poland expanded immensely during the last five years leading up to the Second World War. In every little corner of the country, it widened its influence and drew, to it, the broadest Jewish common masses.

The growth and spread of the Bundist movement let itself be noticed also in Częstochowa. The Bund's political organisation had various institutions growing around it, whose goal was to satisfy an array of necessities of the working echelons, and to aid them in their need in every possible manner. The Bundist organisation, itself a confederation of the progressive and conscious part of the workforce and the populist intellectuals, was both a servant and a guide for the broadest classes of the people.

The ordinary Jewish masses responded warmly when the Bund called them to political campaigns and to go out [on protests etc.] In the last years before 1939, the Bund itself called or was the initiator of large political strikes against the antisemitic bacchanalia in the country. It called the entire Jewish population to walk out, which conducted the protest strikes with extraordinary solidarity. Częstochowa, in this respect, was no exception.

One of these strikes, on 19th October 1937, a half-day strike against the introduction of *ghetto-benches*³⁵ in the higher education institutions, appeared thus:

All Jewish workshops, businesses and shops were locked up. Jewish workers in all trades, without exception, went on strike. In the factories and workshops, with a mixed staff of Polish and Jewish workers, the Polish workers also participated in the strike, as a sign of solidarity with their Jewish colleagues. In an array of other factories, the Polish workers went on a one-hour strike. The following factories with Polish workers went on strike: Horowicz, Wulkan, Kosmos 1 and 2 [and] Stal. In these factories, the Polish workers delivered short speeches on the significance of the protest strike. Heedless of the fact that the Bund's [protest] meeting was forbidden, thousands of strikers streamed towards the courtyard of the party's premises. All around, the streets were dark with the giant mass of people. Police surrounded the courtyard, not allowing anyone in. Nevertheless, the crowd assembled in the surrounding streets. In the course of dispersing those gathered, the police detained several youths. Those arrested were later released. More than 15,000 people took part in the strike. In all the state-run 'Powszechny' [General] primary schools for Jewish children, as well as in the cheders, the children also went on strike. Large signs, bearing the slogan "We protest against the ghetto-benches", were hung at the front of four schools.

(*Neue Volkszeitung*, 20th October 1937)

³⁵ [TN: Separate benches for the Jewish students inside the classroom.]

That same year, at the end of 1937, the Bund's 40th anniversary was celebrated in an impressive manner. Five hundred people attended the festive gathering.

The meeting's presidium comprised the veteran of the Bundist movement in Częstochowa, Aron Perec, the emissary of the Bund's Central Committee in Poland [and] engineer Abram Blum (during the Second World War, he became a legendary figure in the Warsaw Ghetto - one of the pillars of the underground movement. He perished after the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1943, in which he played a leading role). There were also representatives of the Polish workers (PPS and the "Rada" of the professional unions) sitting at the presidium.

The renowned Socialist activist, Józef Kaźmierczak, gave a welcome on behalf of the PPS Regional Committee and, in a sharp speech, described the situation in the country, declaring that the Polish workers would not cease to combat antisemitism.

Motl Kusznir spoke on behalf of the *Zukunft* Youth Bund. He brought the Bund a present for its anniversary - twenty-five members of the *Zukunft* Youth Bund were made members of the Party.

Izrael Jaronowski spoke on behalf of the Central Council of the professional unions of the Jewish workers. Speeches and congratulations were delivered by an array of other Jewish and Polish organisations, among whom were also [representatives] from the "Rada" of the professional unions, from the Polish Socialist cultural organisation TUR³⁶ and from the PPS Women's Organisation.

The most festive act was presenting the Częstochowa Bundist organisation with an anniversary banner. The act of presenting the banner was performed by the envoy from the Central Committee. As he received the banner from Comrade Blum, Comrade Izrael Jaronowski declared that the Częstochowa Bundists would serve the ideals of the Bund loyally and would not let the red flag to drop from their hand.

Hundreds of boys and girls from the *Zukunft* Youth Bund marched in, wearing blue blouses and red cravats. Twenty-five of them joined the ranks of the Party and Liber Segal spoke on their behalf. He swore an oath of boundless loyalty to the Bund. The representative of the Central Committee, Abram Blum, then delivered a brilliant address about the forty years of the Bund.

The years of work and struggle, the efforts invested and the sacrifices had not been in vain. The Jewish workers had become a force - a conscious, creative collective, advancing towards its goals with a clear gaze and a confident stride.

The people who made up the Bundist movement in Częstochowa were diverse - from a qualified intellectual to a porter, from an effervescent youth to an elderly man with a grey head, from highly educated people to the illiterate, [and from the] sons of illustrious families to the children from the backstreets. But they were all united by one and the same ideal. They were welded together in the movement and, from them, a single harmonious entity was formed - the Bund in Częstochowa. Hundreds and hundreds, year in and year out, over the course of forty years, the Movement built and developed it further. It is impossible to enumerate all of them. We shall only mention a few here.

Aron Perec – a relative of the great Yiddish writer I.L. Peretz³⁷. He was already in the Bund back in 1905 and served the Jewish labour movement loyally, without interruption. In the last years before

³⁶ [TN: Towarzystwo Uniwersytetu Robotniczego (Society of the Workers' University).]

³⁷ [TN: Although both had the same surname, we have used the international spelling for the celebrated author – as it appears throughout the literature – and the Polish spelling for his less well-known relative.]

the War, he represented the Bund in the *Kehilla*. He worked extensively to raise the cultural level of the Jewish masses in Częstochowa. He was greatly loved in the city. By profession, he was a dentist. He was always prepared to aid the needy. In the last period prior to the Second World War, he was a Bundist member on the City Council and chaired the School Organisation. He continues to be active in the Bund³⁸.

Mojsze Lederman – a *gegriveter*³⁹ cobbler by trade. He was already active in the Bund during the First World War. He was a member of the Bundist Committee for many years and an important activist in the union movement. From 1935, he was active in Łódź with the clothing workers, among whom he was much loved. In the years of the Second World War, he was a member of the Bund's underground committee. He held out for the entire period in the Łódź Ghetto and is now, once more, active in the Bundist movement in Częstochowa.

Icek Stopnicer – a cap-maker. From his childhood, he was active in the *Zukunft* Youth Bund. For many years, he was chairman of the *Zukunft* organisation and the main leader of the Clothing Union's youth section. He also brought great benefits to the Bundist Youth movement in the *shtetls* in the Częstochowa vicinity. He served the *Zukunft* organisation of the surrounding region with advice and action⁴⁰. Before the Second World War, he settled in Będzin, where he was a respected activist of the party and the youth organisation. His subsequent fate is unknown.

Motl Kusznir - a tailoring worker. For many years, he was an activist of the Bundist youth organisation [and] a good orator. He later became the secretary of the Clothing Union. During the last war, he went through all the pain of the ghetto and was finally dragged off to the German Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Following liberation, he once more turned himself towards Bundist work in Częstochowa.

"Karl Marx" - that is what we called him due to his external appearance - for his head of hair and his beard, which made his face closely resemble that of Karl Marx. This was an older man, who was noted for his extraordinary loyalty and bond to the party. Even though he was poor, he was always the first to pay when [internal] taxes were levied. He never missed any Bundist meeting or demonstration - just like a fervently religious Jew who is unable to forego praying with a *minyán* [prayer quorum of 10].

Wolfowicz - an older man, a bakery worker. He exhibited a vigorous allegiance to the Bund and the professional union. He was a religious Jew and displayed a truly religious attitude towards the organisation to which he belonged. For him, a strike was a matter of sanctity and he treated strike-breakers as blasphemers. He was utterly unable to comprehend how one could break away from unity. Wolfowicz was burdened with nine children. During a strike, hunger came to his house. His wife and children demanded food. The old bakery worker was afraid that he would, God forbid, not be able to withstand the test, and crumble. On such occasions, he would not go home and slept in the Bund's premises.

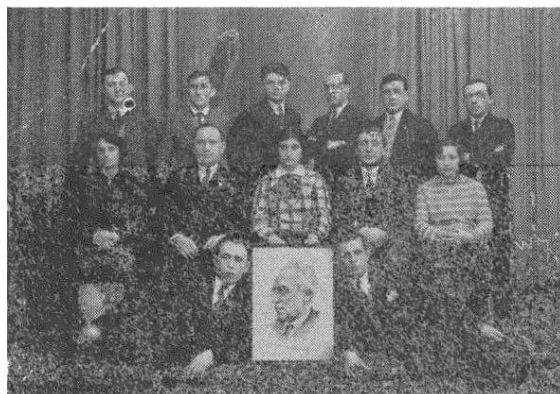
Abram Rozenblat - also a bakery worker. He was already active in the Bund back in 1905. He belonged to the Bund's "Iron Guard". He came from the lower echelons. Refined and elevated, he gave his entire soul away to the Jewish labour movement. He was greatly loved among the workers and was frequently sent to Warsaw to the party's conventions, or to those of the professional unions.

³⁸ [TN: Aron Perec died on 1st April 1957 in Gliwice (Czenstochov (1958), p.146).]

³⁹ [TN: The meaning of this word has been lost; it is invariably used in tandem with "cobbler," and may stem from the Yiddish "griv" (from the Polish "grzywa"), or "mane." If so, the term may denote a cobbler who makes shoes decorated with fringes or fur (source: Jewish Post, Indianapolis, Marion County, 15 January 1997, p.10).]

⁴⁰ [TN: "Rat un tat"; Yiddish expression meaning with both brains and brawn.]

Izrael Jaronowski – a meat worker. He also came to the Jewish labour movement from the lower strata and elevated himself to a moral height from which he never again descended. The butchery trade - and working with kosher meat in particular - presented one with opportunities for fat, un-kosher profits. As leader of the professional union, he was a guardian of cleanliness and honesty. He became an esteemed labour activist and, eventually, the Chairman of the Bundist organisation and a *parnes* in the Częstochowa *Kehilla*. Many times, the city's Jewish and Polish food workers elected him as their delegate to the national conventions of the food workers' professional union. On different difficult occasions, he showed strength of character and justified the trust in him. Also, in the underground movement in the ghetto, under the horrific rule of the Nazi murderers, he was among the leaders of the underground movement. He also participated in the preparations for armed resistance. When the Nazis came to arrest him, he jumped from the second floor and broke a foot [or leg]. He fell into their hands and perished.



Mojsze and Rajzla Berkensztadt – husband and wife. He was a leather worker, she a teacher. Both of them joined the SS organisation during the First World War and, from 1922, were active Bund members. Mojsze was the child of poor parents. The vision of a more beautiful life always shone in him. Regardless of the difficult circumstances, this man, who excelled in simplicity and tenderness, never lost the pleasant smile on his lips. For many years, he was the secretary of the local Bundist organisation. During the Second World War, he was a member of the Bund's underground committee. On 6th June 1941, the Gestapo arrested him and his wife and tortured them horribly during the interrogations. Mojsze Berkensztadt was taken away to Oświęcim, where he perished.

Rajzla Fajertag-Berkensztadt was a child of the Meat-Market Street, the daughter of a butcher. Her environment of toiling folk did not prevent her from acquiring much knowledge and a high intellect. She felt her best in the world of thought and books. She became a Fröbelian teacher and was one of the founders of the I.L. Peretz School. In the later years, she was the librarian at the Medem Library. She performed these same duties for almost two years under Nazi rule. The 20,000 books were taken to her house and over one thousand people secretly took books from her to read. She was arrested and tortured alongside the men. In the end, the Częstochowa Bundists managed to tear her out of the claws of the Gestapo. She later perished.

The Bund constituted an true cross-section of the Jewish masses in Częstochowa - a meeting point for all those who wished to harness themselves to the heavy yoke of serving the cause of the liberation of all the oppressed and the wronged.

The Bund's last Committee, before September 1939, was comprised the following members: Izrael Jaronowski – Chairman [and] Mojsze Berkensztadt – Secretary. Other members of the Committee were Mojsze Tuchmajer, Motl Kusznir, Rajzla Berkensztadt, Abram Rozenblat, Icek Rozenfeld and L. Brenner.

In different years, Members Józef Aronowicz, Raphael Federman, Abram Fridman, Herszl Frajman (who fell in battle against the Nazis on 4th January 1943), Henech Fefer (long-standing secretary), Mojsze Lederman, Dawid Klin and an array of others also served on the Committee.



***Herszl Frajman and
his family***



***The Bund's Wilno Committee,
with Józef Aronowicz (standing in centre)***



A. Perec and his family



Mojsze Lederman



Rajzla Berkensztadt



Mojsze Berkensztadt



Motl Kuszniir



Zalman Tenenberg



Henech Fefer

The majority of all the activists and members, who bound themselves to the Bund's ideals for life and death, perished in the Częstochowa Ghetto, in various other ghettos or in concentration camps. Only a small group managed to withstand the seven gates of the Nazi hell and continue the work in the new, liberated Poland.



The Częstochowa Bund Committee in 1929.

***Standing (R-L): Mojsze Tuchmajer, Z. Cincinatus, L. Kamiński, A. Rozenblat, Zilberberg.
Seated (R-L) : Z. Cincinatus' wife, R. Federman, Ch. Halberg-Cincinatus, Mojsze Lederman,
Ch. Lederman.***

By the portrait of B. Michalewicz: Szymson Jakubowicz (right), Icek Stopnicer (left)