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Częstochowa Jews During the Nazi Era*



The beginning of the Second World War was, at the same time, also the beginning of the pain, suffering, annihilation, martyrdom and heroism of the Częstochowa Jews.

On Friday, 1st September 1939, in the early morning hours, Nazi Germany attacked Poland. And already on the third day, on Sunday 3rd September, at nine o'clock in the morning, Nazi motorised units began to penetrate Częstochowa and, one day later, began the first slaughter. [That day] has received the name "Bloody Monday."

Bloody Monday

On Monday 4th September, under the ruse that Jews had shot at the Germans, a horrific pogrom took place which lasted three days. The first victim was Naftoli Tenenbaum, the owner of a button factory on ul. Piłsudskiego 7. The second victim was Luzer Proport, who was known by the nickname "Po Pięć" ("five each" [or "for five" (*złoty* or *groszy*)]). The third was Kac, a carpenter by trade, [who] was known as a leader in the craftsmen's guilds.

Among the numerous victims in the three-day pogrom was the son of the head of the *yeshiva*, Jakubowicz.

The first three days of Nazi rule over Częstochowa were marked by bloody murder and looting. Jewish economic life was completely paralysed. Cultural, social and political life, as well as the entire school system, was completely dissolved.

Repressions and regulations poured down like hail, the aim of which was to psychologically suffocate Jewish life, rob Jewish property, exploit the Jewish labour force for free and to set Jewish life into a *hefker*** state.

Persecutions and Repressions

The persecutions and repressions included a curfew, meaning the prohibition of being on the streets from eight o'clock in the evening until five o'clock in the morning, the seizure of all radios, carrying [people] off for unpaid forced labour and, in addition, murderous beatings at work, the confiscation

* The following work was written based on the [author's] own observations, experiences, and collected materials. The writer of this article walked on the road of suffering, together with the Częstochowa Jewry, in the HASAG-Raków and HASAG-Pelcery camps, and, after forced evacuation, in the German concentration camps: Buchenwald, "Dora" [Mittelbau-Dora] and Bergen-Belsen. Following liberation, the author was active in the Central Management of the *Częstochower Landsmannschaft* in the American zone in Germany, as Chairman of the Commission of Culture. He has published an entire series of publications regarding Częstochowa Jewry in the Nazi era.

The Editors

[TN: Most of the material presented in this article appears in the author B. Orenstein's book "Churban Czenstochow" (1948). As that book is written in Yiddish but in Latin characters, we have endeavoured to render all the names of individuals mentioned here as they are spelled in the original book. These spellings may vary from those used in other parts of our work.]

** [TN: Halachic term meaning "ownerless." In the present context, it implies dehumanisation, and being stripped of one's rights.]

of the goods of Jewish businesses without any compensation, the seizure of Jewish houses and even forcing the owners to pay rent for their apartments, monetary contributions, various valuable objects seized such as all furs and metals, the expulsion of Jews from their apartments on the nicer streets and the looting of all their possessions, forcing Jews to wear marks of shame, instituting a ghetto, deportation to camps and robbing Jewish factories through the interposition of [German] "trustees".

In order to carry out all the persecutions and repressions, the Germans appointed a *Judenrat* [Jewish Council] and, later, a Ghetto Police who would be responsible for order.

The *Judenrat*

The *Judenrat* in Częstochowa was established on the basis of an order from the Nazi authorities and the same occurred in all cities. Today, it is accurately known that this was not an order from the individual Nazi local authorities, but was a general ordinance issued directly from Berlin on 21st September 1939, under the name "Heydrich's Express Letter". The full text of the Express Letter was printed in the "YIVO *Blätter*" [Y. Pages], Volume 30, pp. 163-168, New York, 1947. In that letter, the functions of the *Judenrat* are accurately defined, namely, to carry out Nazi orders precisely and obediently.

The *Judenrat* in Częstochowa comprised:

- Leon Kopinski - President
- Zelig Rotbard - Vice-President
- Moric Kopinski - *Arbeitsamt* [Labour Council]
- Bernard Kurland - representative of the *Arbeitsamt*
- Dawid Nusen Berliner - *Finanzamt* [Tax Office]
- Natan Gerichter - *Finanzamt*
- Samuel Kac - member of the *Judenrat*
- Szmul Niemirowski - member of the *Judenrat*
- Konieczpolder - member of the *Judenrat*
- Weinryb - liaison officer with the *Gestapo*
- Moryc Galster - member of the *Judenrat*
- Leib Bromberg- -member of the *Judenrat*
- Szymon Pohorile (lawyer) - member of the *Judenrat*
- Dawid Borzykowski - member of the *Judenrat*
- Jeremjasz Gitler (lawyer - member of the *Judenrat*

The two lawyers, Józef Broniatowski and Mendel Goldberg also belonged to the *Judenrat*. But, after three weeks, they resigned their positions and left the *Judenrat*.

The *Judenrat* quickly expanded as the result of consecutive regulations of the Nazi authorities. In December 1940, the *Judenrat* had twenty-one departments, with a staff of higher and lower officials totalling 676 people.

All the German decrees were aimed at degrading Jewish morale, plundering Jewish possessions, exploiting the Jewish workforce for free, murdering Jews through hunger and cold, giving rise to diseases, carrying out arrests for alleged investigations for wholly untrue crimes (those arrested were, in most cases, shot), providing Jews to be sent to the camps and evicting them to the death camps. It

was required of the *Judenrat* that it carry out these regulations. It is self-evident that the Jewish population had a negative attitude towards the *Judenrat*. The Jewish population did not trust the *Judenrat* and the *Judenrat* did not represent the currents of the Jewish population.

The Ghetto Police

The Jewish Police in Częstochowa was established under an innocent name - "Inspectorate of Street Traffic" and its tasks were also almost as "innocent" - namely guarding the offices and warehouses of the *Judenrat*, keeping peace and order in the streets and, primarily, ensuring that Jews should not appear on the streets after curfew, as breaching this was on pain of being arrested by the "ketchl" [paddy wagon] and even falling victim to a German bullet. At first, the "Inspectorate of Street Traffic" numbered fifty personnel which, later, was increased to sixty. In December 1940, [it became] eighty. A [proper] "*Ordnungsdienst*" [Security Service] was [then] established, meaning real police, into which it was incorporated. The innocent "Inspectorate of Street Traffic" became part of the Ghetto Police. Shortly before the liquidation of the ghetto, the police already numbered 250.

The difference between the "Inspectorate of Street Traffic" and the Police was that the members of "Inspectorate" were not uniformed. They only wore armbands, whereas the police were uniformed - [they] wore blue-white caps [and] armbands, with rubber cudgels in their hands. The commander of the "Inspectorate" was Cederbaum and that of the police, during the period when it was first established, was] Galster.

The Police were established by decree of *Kreishauptmann* [District Commissioner] Wendler and his representative Kodner. After the merging of the "Inspectorate" with the Police, Galster was arrested Parasol was appointed as Commander.

The members of "Inspectorate" consisted of [people from] a "better echelon" of the Częstochowa assimilated bourgeois circles and they performed their service without any payment. The police, in contrast, received a monthly salary and was made up of non-conscientious individuals. Additionally, many were protégés of the German authorities. This bias from the German authorities was for those who were "bearers", viz. informers and denouncers, and they, primarily, pursued material interests.

The Police were a plague on the Jewish population. It is clear that there were no eager volunteers to go to unpaid, forced labour. There were also no volunteers, who would let themselves be sent away to the camps to be overworked, tortured, beaten and to suffer various punishments or eager volunteers to pay the different contributions. Nor was anyone eager to give their merchandise away to the Nazis. The police carried this out by coercion – through house searches, both during the day and at night, arresting, beating with the rubber cudgels and with other torments.

The attitude towards the police was embittered, filled with hatred and rage.

The Ghetto Police was a general scourge in all ghettos. This is attested to by all the books on the Era of Destruction which write about the Ghetto Police in other ghettos. Shneier Wasserman writes the following about Chełm:

The murderers (the Nazis) were not satisfied with personally murdering. For the sake of their sadistic pleasure, they instituted that the extermination of the Jews should also be carried out by Jewish hands. This, by the way, was the satanic tactic in the whole of Poland and everywhere that their bloodied paws reached. The Jewish Police was recruited from the scum of society ("Yizkor-buch Chełm" [Memorial Book], Johannesburg, 1954, pp. 90-91).

Meilech Neustadt explains:

Between the broad Jewish masses and the ghetto policemen, a thick wall was raised. The entire population of the Jewish quarter had an attitude of deep hatred towards the servants of the Germans. (Destruction and Rising, The Epic of the Jews in Warsaw, New York, 1948, p. 84).

B. Mark characterises a ghetto policeman with the following words:

He has power, he is able to rule; he is allowed to shout at his brethren, beat them [and] chase [them]. He is not armed with any weapon. The German is distrustful. The German thrust in his hand only a rubber cosh with which to teach his blood-brothers submission and obedience (B. Mark, "Der Aufstand in Warschauer Ghetto" [The Revolt in the Warsaw Ghetto], p. 12).

Dr Mark Dworzecki writes:

The ghetto population in Wilna related to the Jewish Ghetto Police with distrust and hatred. Many policemen were people without scruples, without shame and without ethics. During akcje [(exterminatory) operations], they more than once opened hiding places and betrayed hidden Jews. ("Yeruschalayim D'Lita in Kamf un Umkum" [The Jerusalem of Lithuania in Battle and Destruction], Paris, 1948, p. 302).

In *Pinkas Mława* [The Record Book of Mława], we read:

As commander of the Jewish Police, the authorities nominated Szulim Gutman, who became the terror of the ghetto. He collaborated with the Germans with all his being and brought about great troubles for the Jews. He informed about everything that was happening in the ghetto. He killed and administered beatings. He carried out the German decrees with pleasure. ("Pinkas Mława," edited by Dr Yaakov Shatzky, New York, 1950, p. 406).

[Even] with the best will, it impossible to present all the quotes on this [subject] in a limited and condensed work. But the quotes cited [above] suffice as a comparison with the Ghetto Police in Częstochowa, [showing] that the phenomenon was a general one in all ghettos.

The Ghetto

The concept "ghetto" is to be understood as an isolated area in which Jews were forced to live, on pain of death.

Initially, in Częstochowa there was a [designated] area of residence, then a closed ghetto or, as it was called the "Big Ghetto", [then] the "Small Ghetto" and, after that, the "Small Ghetto" was converted into a forced labour camp.

The various ghetto designations were an expression of specific economic models, which were additionally bound up with idiosyncratic forms of repression, persecutions, arrests, banishments, shootings, executions, selections and deportations.

Residence Area

Immediately after the Nazis had marched into Częstochowa, Jews were driven out of the nicer streets and more comfortable residences and were crammed into the Jewish quarter. This was expressed by the term "Jewish residence area", which delineated the boundaries of the later ghetto. During that

time, Jews were still able to do business with Aryans, to move about in the city and to utilise the railway. The repressions and persecutions were [the] curfew, the seizure of radios on 16th September 1939, the wearing of the badge of shame from December 1939, the kidnappings for uncompensated forced labour, the arrests of individual public figures and the individual executions.

The Implementation of the Ghetto

The ghetto was implemented on 23rd April 1940. Based on the decree of the General-Governor Hans Frank, it was forbidden for Jews to use the train under penalty of death. For leaving the ghetto [meant a] death sentence and for every smallest infraction, a death sentence. Maintaining business relations with the Polish population was absolutely forbidden. Jews were completely isolated from economic, social, political and cultural life. Complying with the [forced] contributions [and] with the confiscation of merchandise gave rise to great impoverishment. The crowded conditions inside the ghetto, as well as the hunger, cold [and] need, brought about epidemic illnesses. From 22nd September 1942, with small interruptions, until the end of October 1942, mass murders, selections and deportations to Treblinka took place, thus ending the existence of the "Big Ghetto".

In November 1942, the "Small Ghetto" was established on the site where the destroyed ghetto [had] stood, in the smallest streets near the Old Market - [*ulicy*] Jaskrowska, Nadrzeczna, Garncarska, Kozia, Senatorska and Mostowa. In the "Small Ghetto" were young men and women who were employed in the HASAG factories and in other workplaces.

Shortly before the liquidation of the "Small Ghetto", it was denominated as the "Forced Labour Camp" by the Nazi authorities. The liquidation of the "Small Ghetto", or as the Nazis called it, the "Forced Labour Camp", took place during 26th-30th June 1943.

Deportations to [Labour] Camps

The deportations of Częstochowa Jews to the camps began in 1940. The first deportation was to Hrubieszów, to the fortification works. Subsequent deportations were to the entire length of the River Bug, to Bełżec, Cieszanów [district], in order to dig deep trenches on the border of the then [German] General-Government and the Soviet frontier. Further deportations were to the ammunition factories in Skarżysko-Kamienna and Bliżyn. The final deportation was on 21st March 1943 to Bliżyn. The number of Jews sent in that last transport was 300.

[Labour] Camps in Częstochowa

From the beginning of the Nazi occupation in Częstochowa until the liquidation of the "Small Ghetto", there were dozens of workplaces where Jews were employed as forced labourers. Following the liquidation of the "Small Ghetto", Jews were in four HASAG camps - HASAG-Pelcery, HASAG-Raków, Warta, and Częstochowianka.

Hitherto, no classification has been made regarding the character of these camps - whether they were work camps, forced labour camps or concentration camps. To explain the character of the Częstochowa camps, it is necessary to make the following assertions:

- 1) The camps which had a supervisory organ comprised of inmates and a civilian German administration, belong to the category of labour camps and the inmates are considered forced labourers.

- 2) The camps which had a supervisory organ comprised of inmates, a civilian German administration and a uniformed, armed *Werkschutz* [factory security force] organ, belong to the category of forced labour camps and the inmates are considered forced labourers.
- 3) The camps which had a supervisory organ comprised of inmates, a civilian German administration, a uniformed armed *Werkschutz* organ and a supervisory authority of SD or SS, belong to the category of concentration camps and the inmates are considered prisoners.

The four [HASAG] camps mentioned above were under a regime that falls under point three of the classification. One must therefore assert that the Czestochowa camps were concentration camps.

Life in the “Big Ghetto” and in the “Small Ghetto”

The “Big Ghetto”

The area of the “Big Ghetto” was much smaller than the territory which the Jews had occupied prior to German occupation. In addition, the size of the Jewish population almost doubled as a result of the great influx of refugees from the surrounding small localities and from a whole array of cities in Poland.

For the most part, the refugees arrived without any means of sustenance and physically exhausted. They populated the mass-quarters. Tiered bunk-beds stood there, but they had no means of sustaining themselves. There was no possibility of washing oneself [or] cooking and, as a result of constant hunger and cold [and] bad sanitary conditions, they were the first victims of typhus and various other epidemics. In Warsaw, there were also suchlike mass lodgings and they were called “death houses”, because their residents died *en masse* from illness and hunger.

Mostly, the Jews lived by selling off their possessions. This was a general phenomenon in all ghettos.

An economic decline ensued in Jewish life. The Jewish industrialists and wholesalers were ousted from their enterprises. The salaried workers, the business and office employees and also those engaged in the independent occupations, lost their jobs. Hunger and need drove everyone to the street, to sell their last garment in order to be able to survive the day.

Sz. Tykocinski characterises the situation with the following words:

In the majority of Jewish homes, hunger and need began to prevail and one saved oneself any way one could. Such salvation was usually sought in the clothes cupboard, from which to later have a day's worth of food. There was bartering of furniture, clothes, footwear and jewellery for bread. A large-scale sell-off ensued amongst Jews. (Blätter far Geschichte [Pages for History], Volume 1, parts 3-4, p. 207.)

Life in the ghetto was a continuous wrangle and a struggle. The struggle was manifested in various forms, namely to retain one's life and not to perish from hunger, cold and forced labour - so as to survive until the defeat of the Nazis. [It was] a struggle to maintain Jewish honour, the honour as a people and the Jewish soul of the ghetto Jew - [a] battle against the Nazi authorities and their servants of all kinds.

The “Small Ghetto”

Life in the “Small Ghetto” resembled a flickering candle. All [were] orphaned, lonely [and] embittered, with a strong will to fight against the Nazi destroyers, who had quelled Czestochowa's pulsating Jewish life. Economic life bore the character of “snatching”, [then] smuggling in the “snatched” things and,

through others, smuggling the items out to the workplaces, where Jews worked together with Christians, trading them for food and then further smuggling the food into the "Small Ghetto". In the battle to maintain the physical survival of the ghetto, an entire smuggling ring was formed.

Resistance and Culture

Every cultural activity in the "Big Ghetto", the "Small Ghetto" and the concentration camps must be considered a component of the resistance struggle. This is because all Jewish cultural activities, the *gimnazja* and the schools, were dissolved by the Nazis. The same needs to be said of the religious activities that were conducted at risk of death, both in the "Big Ghetto", the "Small Ghetto" and in the concentration camps.

Distinct evidence, that the cultural activities constituted a component of resistance, is inferred from the fact that nearly all the songs that were written during the Nazi era in Częstochowa bear a fighting character. Several short quotes shall demonstrate this.

The last stanza of the song "Ghetto":

"Into fists my hands clench themselves,
To demolish the ghetto gates, [and] walls,
To remove the pricking wires,
May the wraith vanish like a devil."

(*B. Orenstein, Częstochowa Small Ghetto, March, 1943*)

Fragment of the song "Revenge":

"Like automatons, robbed of life and soul,
We stand at work and think of revenge."

(*Frania Kornfeld, HASAG-Pelcery concentration camp, 1943*)

Fragment of the song "HASAG":

"A HASAG Jew has no way out,
Like a dog, he carries a number on the shoulder,
He is handled the same as a beast,
Yet he fights for a new world."

(*Dawid Zisman, HASAG-Pelcery concentration camp, 1944*)

The battle motif is interwoven into all the songs.

The cultural activities included the illegal, so-called *kompletn* ["sets" - teachers teaching small groups of pupils] and personal lessons.

Of particularly important significance is the illustrated publication "RASTA", which was published in a large number of copies. The name "RASTA" comes from the abbreviation *Rada-Starszych (Judenrat)*. The newspaper appeared for a long time and was issued by the opponents of the *Judenrat*.

The foremost position in cultural activities was occupied by the *Arbeiterrat* [Workers' Council].

Arbeiterrat

Among the idiosyncratic and remarkable institutions of Częstochowa Jewry in the Nazi era was the *Arbeiterrat*.

The *Arbeiterrat* arose, naturally, as a movement of the forced labourers. The forced labourers belonged to the poor strata of Częstochowa Jewry. The affluent Jews bought their way out with money. The poor, not having a livelihood, suffering hunger and want, were additionally compelled to toil at forced labour, being bullied, terrorised, tormented and beaten by the *meisters*, the foremen and the *kapos*. It often occurred that forced labourers fainted from hunger and exhaustion during the hard work.

On 12th May 1940, the forced labourers came straight after work to the *Judenrat's* premises and held a mass meeting. Speakers were Szyldhaus, Szmulewicz and Cwi Rozenwajn. The demonstration of the forced labourers, who locked the doors of the building and did not allow the members of the *Judenrat* out, made a huge impression. After an entire series of incidents and negotiations, the *Judenrat* partly yielded to the demands of the forced labourers for kitchens to be created and distributions of bread [to be made]. Later, the forced labourers received wages.

The *Arbeiterrat* was divided into the Presidium, the Executive and an Advisory Council.

The Executive [sic Presidium] comprised Mojsze Lubling - Chairman, Mojsze Lewenhof - Secretary, and Cwi Rozenwajn - treasurer.

The Executive comprised Mojsze Lubling, Cwi Rozenwajn, Izrael Szyldhaus, Icchok Rozenfeld, Mendel Wilinger, Mordechaj Openhajm, Icchok Opoczynski, Chaim Birenholc, Izrael Szymonowicz and Mojsze Lewenhof.

The Advisory Council comprised Dawid Szlezinger, Gerszon Prędko, Awrohom Brat, Abram Szczekacz and Jankiel Kaufman. Influential personalities such as Jakób Roziner, lawyer Konarski, lawyer Lajb Fogel, the well-known writer H.L. Zytnicki and many others, participated through advice and activity.

The duties of the *Arbeiterrat* were to conduct political, cultural and professional activity, and to create a series of institutions, such as a fund for the sick, a mutual relief fund, a fund for the disabled, workers' kitchens, children's homes, public schools, evening courses, drama circles, workers' choir and publishing an illegal newspaper.

The *Arbeiterrat* conducted broadly intense activity and was the forerunner of the future ŻOB [Jewish Fighting Organisation] in the "Small Ghetto". The *Arbeiterrat* existed until 22nd September 1942, when the mass slaughters, selections and deportations of Częstochowa Jews to the gas chambers of Treblinka began.

The *Arbeiterrat* issue has been addressed by an entire array of prominent researchers of Holocaust literature. Dr Filip Friedman, the leading scholar and bibliographer of Holocaust literature wrote

A rare institution in the in the era of Nazi tyranny ("Unser Yuhrzeit" [Our Death Anniversary], Bamberg, 1948, p. 10).

Another authority in the field, Dr Rafael Mahler, stated:

Like a great beam of light, the description of the activities of the Arbeiterrat weaves itself through [the literature]. ("Yiddische Kultur" [Jewish Culture], New York, April 1949, #4, P. 9).

Selections and Deportations

Every deportation entailed a selection, meaning that with every deportation, those fit for work were selected, and sent to the *Metalurgja* [plant] and, from there, to be barracked in various workplaces, until the "Small Ghetto" was established.

The first tragic mass-murder of Częstochowa Jewry came the day after *Yom Kippur*, 22nd September 1942. On that day, the Częstochowa streets turned into a river of the blood of those shot. Seven thousand Jews were subsequently deported to the mass grave of Polish Jewry - to the gas chambers of Treblinka.

Two days later, on Thursday 24th September, the second horrifying mass-murder by way of deportation took place.

Following a short interval, on Monday 28th September, the first day of *Chol Ha'Moed Sukkos*, under the same gruesome conditions, the third deportation ensued.

The fourth deportation came for those Jews who had concealed themselves in various hiding places at the time of the first three deportations.

The fifth deportation took place on 4th October 1942, one day after *Simchas Torah*.

The five deportations sealed an entire cycle of events which severed Jewish life in Częstochowa and, with it, the "Big Ghetto" went under and a new chapter of events began in the "Small Ghetto".

The Jewish Fighting Organisation [ŻOB]

With the establishment of the "Small Ghetto", the youth who were organised in the *Arbeitsrat* formed the nucleus of a resistance movement. With a realistic gaze, these youth observed the events that were playing out in the world, in the strategic situation on the battle-fronts and on the outcome of the War.

All were 100% convinced of the complete defeat of Hitler's Germany. Meanwhile, however, the extermination of the Jews continued, day in and day out. Meanwhile, the demonic gas chambers and crematoria were poisoning and burning masses of Jews on a daily basis.

The Jewish youth of the "Small Ghetto" took the fate of the [Jewish] Nation into their own hands and chose the one remaining path - the honourable path of battle!

The ŻOB in the Częstochowa "Small Ghetto" was a union of all political tendencies and organisations. In view of the general catastrophe on the [Jewish] Nation, all previous party standpoints and ideological differences disappeared and all were now united with the greatest willingness to sacrifice their lives against the Nazi authorities.

The goals of the ŻOB were:

- 1.) to train ghetto fighters to protect the population in the "Small Ghetto" and to prepare themselves for the fight against the Nazi authorities in an overt armed uprising!
- 2.) to organise partisan groups in the forests, so as to wage war against the Nazis in an offensive manner [as well].

Ghetto fighters could only conduct a defensive struggle, whereas the partisans were able to engage in offensive warfare.

The primary duties of the ŻOB were to disrupt the German assault force and to hasten their defeat. In order to achieve this goal, armed operations were affected, which bore the following character:

- 1.) disruption of trains conveying Nazi military transports to the fronts;
- 2.) disruption of trains carrying ammunition and food;
- 3.) attacks on Germans on the roads, highways and in the forests;
- 4.) disruption of bridges, disruption of railway junctions in order to paralyse German communications, disruption of machinery which was meant to serve German military production;
- 5.) seizure of agricultural products set aside for German contingents from peasants and the distribution of them amongst the needy population;
- 6.) undermining German commands and regulations;
- 7.) war against denouncers, informers [in secret] and provocateurs.

The high command of the ŻOB in the Częstochowa "Small Ghetto" comprised Mojtek Zylberberg, Sumek Abramowicz, Heniek Pesak, Jehude Glikstejn and Szymon Młodynow.

The squad's council comprised Heniek Wiernik, Rywka Glanc, Josef Kantor, Włodowski and Szyldhaus. The High Commander was Mojtek Zylberberg.

Leader of the partisans and armed operations was Jasek Kantor.

In charge of contacts with other ghettos and the Warsaw ghetto, receiving couriers from other ghettos and sending out couriers from the Częstochowa "Small Ghetto" to other cities was Sumek Abramowicz.

The Finance Commission comprised Szymon Młodynow, Leon Zelewer, Baruch Szyldhaus and Włodowski.

The chemist Heniek Wiernik was in charge of the grenade production. Working together with him were his wife Natka Wiernik, Heniek Kaufman, Benjamin Mandelbaum, Eliezer Szmulewicz, Zyskind Szmulewicz, Mojsze Rużanski, Benjamin Erenfryd, Abram Czarny and Wilinger.

The ŻOB carried out a significant number of armed operations. In the days of the liquidation of the "Small Ghetto", a heroic armed resistance arose, which bore the character of an uprising.

The Murderers of Częstochowa Jewry

The head murderer of Częstochowa Jews was Degenhardt. He had an ape-like face. His appearance provoked terror, as if he were a devil, a bloodthirsty animal. His accomplices were Ibischer, Roon, Werner, Kulfisch, Dzierzan, Schott, Hantke, Schimmel, Hiller, Passow, Zoppart, Laszynski, Kinnel, Schlosser, Bartel, Opitz, Schmidt, Kessler, Jarzynski-Marbach, Rachner, Willi Onkelbach (Degenhardt's agent), Schoenfelder, Fischer, Kirsch, [Klemm] and the Extermination Command.

Among the murderers of Częstochowa Jewry must also be included the *meisters* [viz. head foremen] of HASAG-Pelcery, who have on their conscience [the murder of] three hundred Jews during the selection held on 20th July 1943. These *meisters* are Oppeln, Francke and Niziolek.

Forced Evacuation

When things became desperate for the Germans in Częstochowa, they began to evacuate the Jews from the four concentration camps - HASAG-Pelcery, HASAG-Raków, Warta and Częstochowianka. The first transports were in December 1944 and the last on 15th and 16th January 1945. The men were sent to Buchenwald and the women to Ravensbrück. From these concentration camps, they were again sent to various other concentration camps in Germany. The number of forced evacuees was no fewer than 7,000 (1,200 in December 1944 and on the days 15-16 January 1945 - 5,800).

Statistical Information Regarding the Częstochowa Jewry

As Częstochowa Jews must be categorised as follows:

- 1.) those born in Częstochowa;
 - 2.) old settlers (those who settled in Częstochowa before the War);
 - 3.) refugees who came to Częstochowa in the times of the "Big Ghetto" and "Small Ghetto" and
 - 4.) the Jews who were brought in forced transports to the Częstochowa concentration camps.
- The forced transports were from the Lodz ghetto, Płaszów, a concentration camp near Krakow, Skarżysko-Kamienna, Bliżyn, Piotrkow and Dęblin.

The total number of Jews in the Częstochowa "Big Ghetto", "Small Ghetto" and in the concentration camps was 58,200 - 50,000 were annihilated and 8,200 were liberated by the Allied armies.

These two tables corroborate the numbers given:

Table of the Bloody Events in Częstochowa

Date	[Circumstances]	Number Of Victims
04/09/1939	"Bloody Monday"	150
1939-40	Individual shootings of communal activists	200
1940-42	Mortality from typhus and other epidemic diseases	400
22/09/1942	The beginning of mass deportations to Treblinka and shootings on the streets	
04/10/1942	The last day of mass deportations	40,250
	[Total]	41,000
1942-43	Individual and group shootings of people captured in hiding places, cellars, attics and bunkers	850
04/01/1943	Shooting of the fighters Izio Fajner and Mendel Fiszlewicz	2
04/01/1943	Shooting of young people	25
04/01/1943	Deportation of 500 Jews to Radomsko to the <i>akcja</i> [operation], to be removed to Treblinka	500
05/01/1943	<i>Akcja</i> against old people and children	250
07/03/1943	Sent to Bliżyn	25
21/03/1943	Sent to Bliżyn – 300. Of this number, a few individuals survived. Those killed:	300
19/03/1943	Execution of six partisans, and individual shootings at the <i>Möbellager</i> [Furniture Camp]	20
20/03/1943	<i>Akcja</i> against the intelligentsia; shooting of Jews with academic education and the <i>Judenrat</i> , at the cemetery	157

April	Selection at <i>Ostbahn</i> [Eastern Railway (a forced labour workplace)]	24
	[Total]	2,128
26-30 June	Liquidation of the “Small Ghetto”; mass shootings; those fallen in the resistance battle	1,500
30/07/1943	Burned alive	500
	[Total]	2,000
20/07/1943	Selection in HASAG-Pelcery	300
20/07/1943	Selection on <i>ul. Garibaldi</i>	100
July 1943	From arriving transport of Dęblin Jews, the Nazi tyrant Bartenschlager shot children	15
Dec. 1943	Evacuation of 1,200 Jews to Germany. Men to Buchenwald and women to Ravensbrück. Perished:	1,000
1944	Individual shootings; fatal cases of typhus and other diseases; Jews captured with [fake (?)] identity cards; fallen partisans, and those killed by the AK [<i>Armia Krajowa</i> , a right-wing, anti-Semitic partisan group]	457
	[Total]	1,872
15-16 Jan. 1945	Forced evacuation transports to Germany from the HASAG camps Pelcery, Raków, Warta, [and] Częstochowianka – in total, 5,800. Perished:	3,000
	Total number of victims	50,000

Table of the Freed Częstochowa Jews

Date	[Circumstances]	[Number Of Rescued]
17/01/1945	In Częstochowa, freed by the Soviet Army	5,200
15/04/1945	In Bergen-Belsen, by the English Army	
27/04/1945	In Türkheim, by the American Army	
01/05/1945	In Buchberg, by the American Army	
05/05/1945	In Ravensbrück, by the Soviet Army	
	All together:	3,000
	Total	8,200

General Conclusions

In the general destruction of the European Jewry, the city of Częstochowa contributed 50,000 victims. These victims embodied Jewish faith, Jewish tradition and the struggle against Nazism. To die for Jewish faith, tradition and struggle - these are the highest forms of national sanctity, which is expressed by [dying for] the sanctification of God’s name and [for the] sanctification of the Nation. At every opportunity, *Landsleute* [fellow townspeople] must honour the fallen victims, the martyrs and the heroes.

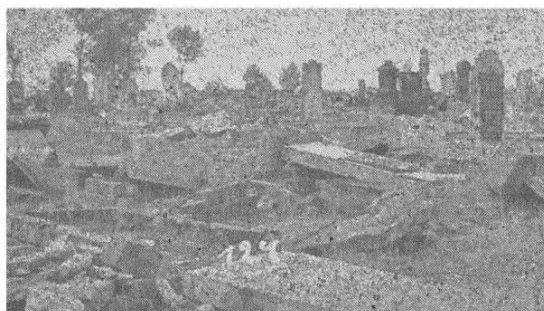
Honouring the fallen victims, martyrs and heroes means uncovering all the issues that were bound up with their life, struggle and destruction. Honouring the fallen victims, martyrs, and heroes means to simultaneously express eternal contempt for those who lost all spark of humanity and turned into aberrant barbarians, murdering in a bestial manner, with the greatest murderousness and sadism, the sons and daughters of the Jewish people - the Jews of Częstochowa.



A fragment of the destroyed cemetery.



What remained after the liquidation of the "Small Ghetto"



This is what the destroyed cemetery in Częstochowa looked like in 1946

