

**FEDERMAN** Rafał (1892-1972), sales assistant, political and trade union activist, city councillor, writer and journalist. He was the youngest son of → Dawid Paweł and Gitla née Rudnik, who ran a tavern on ul. Garncarska and also produced soda water. According to his belated birth certificate, he came into this world on 24<sup>th</sup> March 1892. (He questioned that date, claiming that his father had given an incorrect, earlier date, in order to reduce the age difference between him and his older son, Zalman, in order to protect the latter from serving in the Russian army.)

In his childhood, Federman was religious, going to the *shtiebel* with his father. He even travelled with him to the *tzaddik* in Rozprza. He attended the *cheder* of “Chil Sz.” (that was how he was called). He later attended Majer Gliksman’s [*cheder*] at ul. Warszawska 21 (in Goldman’s house). Even later, he attended the *cheder* of Fajwel Awigdor. In 1902, he was very affected by the anti-Jewish events in Częstochowa. In 1904, after his father had a win in the state lottery, he went to the city’s Jewish school run by → Markus Leder.

In that same year, what made a huge impression upon him was the fire at → Daniel Landau’s factory, in which four Jewish girls were killed (the majority of whom came from ul. Garncarska, where he lived). Without his parents’ knowledge, he attended their funeral. He attended the “SDKPiL exchange” (a meeting place for members of that party), which was held on ul. Ogrodowa, in that section from the corner of the Nowy Rynek (pl. Daszyńskiego) to “Kapeluszarnia” (later ul. Berka Joselewicza). He joined the party’s “jargon group”. In a near-city forest, he took part in the mass meeting led by → Leon Kopiński. Following the death of his father in 1905, he helped his mother run the soda water factory. In the attic of the factory, he collected illegally distributed literature. During a search, the police found this collection and arrested his mother as the owner of the storehouse. She was released after paying a fine.

Federman participated in the events of the 1905-07 revolution in Częstochowa. During the agitation prior to the elections to the Second Duma (1906), he was arrested. (His older brother Szaja then took care of running the tavern and supporting the family, The soda water factory was taken over by his brother-in-law, the husband of his oldest sister Hinda.) Following his release, he worked in the office of Maurycy Lipski. A few months later, he was dismissed.

Being acquainted with members of the Zionist-Socialist Workers’ Party and under the influence of → Mendel Szuchter, as well as Emanuel Klajnman, made him join that organisation. Under the threat of being arrested by the police, his brother Zalman (who worked in → Aleksander Wolberg’s paint factory),

persuaded him to leave the Russian partition. Federman left for Kraków, where he intended to gain his high school diploma. He lived in Podgórze and remained mainly within the milieu of emigrants from the Kingdom of Poland. When the authorities' repressions eased a little, he returned to Częstochowa and found a job as a shop assistant in the pharmacy of → Maurycy Neufeld.

He was active in the cultural sphere, taking part in the work of the theatrical section of the "Lira" Musical-Literary Society, as well as the Jewish Literary Society. He participated in the dispute over the Yiddish language, where he delivered a lecture in defence of this language (a response to L. Kopiński, who opted for Hebrew).

He continued to be involved in political activities. Together with his brother Zalman, he was in Vienna for the congress of a territorial organisation and a conference of the Zionist-Socialist Party. One of its organisers was from Częstochowa, → Icchak Górski. (→ Józef Kruk and Majer Fajnrajch were in Vienna at that time).

In 1913, he was conscripted into the Russian army. At the time, Federman was defended by M. Neufeld, who paid an intermediary (500 rubles in cash and a 500 rubles bill of exchange) for his release from conscription.

Under the influence of J. Kruk, Federman left his job at the pharmacy and began his party activity. He was the chairman of the *Farejnikte* organisation in Częstochowa. From November 1918, as its representative, he sat on the Częstochowa Workers' Council. In 1919, he stood for election to the Sejm on the list of the Jewish-Socialist Workers' Party *Farejnikte* (without success). In 1922, after a split in the party, he joined the Independent Socialist Party, then soon thereafter, the All-Jewish Worker's Union Bund. In the 1930s, together with → Mojżesz Lederman, he belonged to the leadership of the Bund.

Federman was elected three times to the Częstochowa City Council – in 1919 representing *Farejnikte*, and in 1925 and 1927 representing the Bund. Stanisław Nowak recalls Federman as a "record-holder in terms of the number of speeches given at sittings of the City Council". In 1927-30, he served as Secretary of the City Council. He worked on City Council Committees: Regulations and Legal, Sanitation and Social Welfare (in 1919-25), Budgetary Savings (1925-27) and Regulatory and Education (1927-30). He also sat on the City Development Committee and on the Municipal School Council. In 1921, he represented Częstochowa at the general assembly of the Association of Polish Cities.

Federman was a well-known union activist and a member of the boards of the Union of Office and Commercial Workers and the Bakers' Trade Union. In 1920, together with → Józef Aronowicz and → Jakub Żarnowiecki, he sat on the Central Council of the Workers' Trade Unions. In 1919, he was co-founder and, later, a member of the board of the "Zjednoczeni" Workers' Cooperative (at ul. Spadek 7, from 1931 Garibaldię). Federman was a co-editor of the periodicals "Dos Naje Wort" (1919-25) and "Unzer Weg", which were addressed mainly to Bund members. He published the "Arbeter Cajtung" weekly and published reports from Częstochowa in the Będzin "Bendin Anonsn-Blat" newspaper. He belonged to the Central Jewish School Organisation CISZO (*Centrale Jidisze Szul-Organizacje*) established by the Bund and was a member of that organisation's Częstochowa committee.

From 1924, he worked as a clerk in the County Health Fund, in the white-collar workers' insurance department. During the period of the *Sanacja* government, he was dismissed after refusing to sign a declaration of loyalty. He then sent his wife and daughter to Paris, to his sister-in-law (his wife's sister). He, himself, went twice to Paris, but returned to Poland at the request of the party's Central Committee. He came to Warsaw and served as one of the secretaries of the Commercial Workers' Trade Union. For a certain time, he moved to Łódź, where he worked in a trade union. In 1935, the National Council of Trade Unions nominated him as Secretary of the Central Board of the Printers' Union in Poland. He organised printers' strikes and was arrested twice.

Following the outbreak of war in September 1939, he left Warsaw (on 6<sup>th</sup> September) and, together with a group of party leaders, reached Pinsk on 17<sup>th</sup> September. The Soviets entered the city three days later. He remained in the city until 13<sup>th</sup> October 1939 and soon escaped to Wilno, with a group of companions. There, he joined the refugee aid committee and, together with Andzia Monowicz, organised a kitchen.

In 1940, he received an American visa, with transit visas through the Soviet Union and Japan. On 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1940, he left Lithuania and, on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1940, with a group of thirty people rescued by the workers' committee, he boarded a Japanese ship in Vladivostok. On 30<sup>th</sup> October 1940, he arrived in Vancouver and then Seattle (Washington state). He met with a well-known publisher from Częstochowa → Mosze Cieszyński.

From 5<sup>th</sup> November 1940, he lived in New York and was working in a shop. He was active in the United Tshenstochover Relief Committee. As its chairman, he

tried to convince his *landsmann* to take on a role in the Częstochowa *Kehilla* (*Gmina*), which was destroyed during the War. Throughout his time in the United States, he considered himself to be a member of the Polish Bund. He sought contacts with his party comrades. He was actively involved in the aid committee. Częstochowers, here, worked with various religious and political groups. They were united by the idea of publishing the book *Czenstochower Jidn* (*Częstochowa Jews*). After 1945, he became vice-president of the American Section of the World Federation of Polish Jews.

He published several works, the most extensive and most important of which is *Baj di tajchn Warte un Ist Riwer* (*On the Bank of the Warta and East River*) - his blistering memoirs written in 1953-55 and published in 1957 in New York. He used his expansive memoirs in *Fun majn lebn* (*From My Life*), published in 1947. (However, he changed it into a three-person narrative.) In 1958, he was the most important member of editorial team and author of many articles and memoirs in *Czenstochow* – a Supplement to the Book “*Czenstochower Yidn*”.

Federman was an energetic organiser, a good rally speaker and someone who could easily gain support and popularity within the Jewish community. However, he lacked education and sophistication, giving way to many Jewish leaders. Within the Polish community, he was received reluctantly. He could be ineffective due to his quick-temper and reluctance to make concessions. In party newspapers, he was the editor in charge, without having a decisive influence on the content of the articles. Although he wrote in Yiddish quite effectively, he was not an outstanding columnist. He was also one-sided as a writer. He strived to draw all Częstochowa Jews closer to the Jewish community, albeit in cultural and social forms.

He died on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1972 in New York, in the Jackson Heights (Queens) district.

His wife (from 1922) was Rywka Cukier. They had one child - Haja Sareła (circa 1923 – 24<sup>th</sup> October 1936 Paris). He reunited with his wife in the United States on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1947, after seven years of separation.

Mizgalska-Osowiecka, *Żydzi w samorządzie*, pp. 189–190 (biography). - B. Drobner, *Bez-ustanna walka. Wspomnienia 1919–1935*, vol. II, Warsaw 1965, p. 69; R. Federman, *Fun majn lebn* (*Z mojego życia*), w: *Czenstochower Jidn*, pp. 374–398; Nowak, *Z moich wspomnień III*, pp. 41, 49; - R. Federman, *Baj di tajchn Warte un Ist Riwer* (*Nad rzekami Wartą i East River*), New York 1957; *Czenstochow*, New York 1958. *Perspektiwn fun “Bund”*. *Gedanken un majnungen cum 70-joriker jubl fun “Bund”* (*Perspektywy „Bundu”*. Thoughts and Views Marking the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the “Bund”), New York 1968; *Onsztot a sach „dach-*

*organizacjes” ejn jidisze kehile* (Instead of many umbrella-organisations, one Jewish community council), New York 1971; Bąkowski, *Z dziejów walk klasowych*, pp. 71, 90, 91, 93, 208; R. Korsch, *Żydowskie ugrupowania wywrotowe w Polsce*, Warsaw 1925, pp. 22–52 i 71–82; Kozłowska, *Żydowski ruch teatralny*, pp. 45, 46; Mielczarek, *Organizacje robotniczych partii żydowskich*, pp. 44, 45, 48; Mizgalski, *Tożsamość polityczna*, pp. 145, 146, 181; Sobalski, *Związki zawodowe, stowarzyszenia*, pp. 132, 136; *Żydzi częstochowianie* (b.p., photo here). – “Goniec Częstochowski” 1916, No. 67, p. 3. - *Informator handlowo-przemysłowy m. Częstochowy na 1928 r.*, Częstochowa [1928?]. - APCz, MagCz 5583; Unit No. 58, birth record No. 115/1896 (belated). – Material from the ODDC collection.

**Wiesław Paszkowski, Juliusz Sętowski**