

GÓRSKI Icchak (1885-) politician, cooperative activist, industrialist. He was born on 2nd April 1885 in Częstochowa, the son of Abram and Hena née Weksler. His grandfather, → Herszlik Górski, was the founder of the first weaving mills in Działoszyn. His father, Abram (or *Abramete*, as he was called), received a nationalist, Jewish education (at home, reading “Hatzefira” and “Izraelita”).

Górski attended a *cheder* and Edelist’s *folk* school. He later passed the examination to enter a *gimnazjum*. Due to the prevailing restrictions, he went to Pabianice, where the first commerce school had opened, with 40% of the places for Jews. He would return to Częstochowa for holidays and kept in touch with his friends: → Józef Kruk, Lajzer Broniatowski, Szymek Prusicki, Olek Tempel, Ajzyk Szwarc, Hela Birman, Matwiej Dawidowicz and others who, later, belonged to the intelligentsia of the Zionist-Socialist Workers’ Party. In 1902, just like all his friends, he was influenced by the Zionist organisation. But, at the same time, he was influenced by revolutionary and socialist ideas.

He became one of the leaders of the Zionist-Socialist Workers’ Party, distinguishing himself with his idealism, energy and practical, common sense. He was Kruk’s closest associate. Górski was one of those who, at the beginning, planned and persuaded the Zionist-Socialist organisation in Częstochowa to organise the Jewish workers in the Weinberg factory, and in smaller factories, in order to win, for themselves, better working conditions and higher wages. He appeared at mass party gatherings, taught political economy and other subjects in courses, and agitated the workers in Wały. He spoke in synagogues, when there were protests against the Zionists and when the Jewish populace was called upon to help in self-defence.

In February 1906, he was arrested and sent to Siberia. But, at the time, he was sick and sent to St Maria Municipal Hospital. Leading comrades would meet in the room where he was lying, which became a repository for illegal literature. In May 1906, an amnesty was announced and Górski was released from prison.

In the prison, where he had been held for three months, he met many members of the PPS [Polish Socialist Party], among them employees of the Herbski Railway. Thanks to their influence (and being an acquaintance of the chief accountant, socialist Grigory Cwietajew), he was employed in the railway as a clerk – as one of the first Polish Jews. His PPS comrades entrusted him with the organisation of the railway workers’ trade union. He accomplished this task with great success, but was fired soon after. The railway workers and officials

presented him with a badge bearing the words “Zjednoczeniem silni” [“A Union of the Strong”].

Threatened with arrest, he could no longer continue his party activities. He was transferred to the Łódź organisation. At that time, he was already a law student at the Dorpat University. In Łódź, he tutored and devoted all his free time to the organisation. In 1909, when again threatened with arrest, he left for Vienna, where he continued his law studies. Together with Latzky-Bertold, Dawidowicz and other leaders of the Zionist-Socialist, who had come later to Vienna, he formed a party grouping. He published the “Freiland” journal and, in 1912, helped organise a Territorialist congress. He was elected president of the union of Jewish students from Russia, which numbered about 1,000 members.

During World War I, he was not interned, but was mobilised as a censor of correspondence of prisoners-of-war. He headed the department. As a censor, he had the opportunity to make contact with Jewish prisoners-of-war in the camps. In a camp near Linz, he was in close contact with a group of prisoners-of-war from Częstochowa. He also helped to organise libraries and supported other cultural activities for Jewish and non-Jewish prisoners-of-war in other camps.

At the same time, he worked together with a group of Austrian socialists, who were against supporting their government in the war. They were led by Friedrich Adler, who had shot and killed the then Austrian Chancellor, Count Sterk. From them on, he had devoted his energies and abilities to the Austrian workers' movement. He was co-founder of the *Freie Schule i Kinderfreund* unions. He was active in the cooperative movement. He was an instructor in rational management of a cooperative and a board member of the *Großeinkaufsgesellschaft für österreichische Konsumvereine*. On several occasions, he was a delegate to international socialist congresses. As a close associate of Dr. Karl Renner, with great success, he led the Russian-Austrian Association exchange of goods and worked together with all economic institutions of the Workers' Bank (*Arbeiterbank*).

Following the Dolfuss-Schuschnig putsch in 1934 in Vienna, he was arrested, together with other socialist leaders. When the *Freiland* movement reorganised itself in 1936-38, he was one of the most active, and also a member of the world executive, together with → Dr. A. Syngałowski, Dawidowicz, Feineleb, Kruk and others. It was then that, in Vienna, he set up a large Territorialist organisation, which had thousands of members and published its own “*Freiland*” journal in

the German language. He also supported orphanages in Częstochowa. A pharmacy was set up there with money sent by Icchak Górski from Vienna.

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In March 1938, Hitler annexed Austria. At the end of June of that year, Górski, together with his wife, Hela née Birman and their two children, managed to reach America. They settled in New York. He remained active in the *Freiland* movement, in the Austrian socialist group and in the aid committee for Częstochowa.

During World War II, the Optical Corporation, which he had founded, produced articles for the war industry. His son Julian, born in Vienna, graduated as an electrical engineer and studied English at the University of London. In America, he worked for his father as an engineer and factory manager. He achieved several important inventions in this field. His daughter Irena, also born in Vienna, studied medicine at universities in Vienna, Rome and, in America, at the Philadelphia Women's Medical College. She specialised and practised as a cardiologist.

Czenstochower Yidn, pp. XV–XVII. – APCz, birth record No. 75/1885.

Wiesław Paszkowski