

**KONIECPOLER** Dawid (1897–1967) craftsman, trade unionist, Zionist, ghetto underground activist, author of memoirs. He was born on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1897 in Częstochowa, the son of carpenter Szlama Koniecpoler and Anna Cypra née Pytel.

In 1899, his parents moved to Noworadomsko (Radomsko). There, he spent his childhood and adolescence. He attended a *cheder* and, later, a secular school. He began working early in his father's carpentry workshop. In 1922, he moved to Częstochowa and opened his own carpentry workshop. He was active in the crafts movement, belonging to the board of the Częstochowa Craftsmen's Union.

As a representative of the craftsmen, he was elected to the Częstochowa Jewish Community Council. At the same time, he was active in the *Podleń Zion* movement. He was active in communal life. For example, he was a member of the committee to help Jews who had been expelled from Germany and who were in the camp in Zbąszyń.

He also published a series of articles in the Częstochowa press on economic, social, cultural and political topics, which aroused great interest, especially amongst craftsmen. He was also very active in the *Halutz Bal Mlacha* movement, which strived to obtain certificates for craftsmen to travel to Palestine.

At the beginning of the occupation, Koniecpoler found himself in a group of active Jews selected to the Council of Elders (*Judenrat*). Probably, his work in the Council mainly focussed on the problems facing Jewish craftsmen, who found themselves in a difficult situation. Important to his fate, and that of his immediate family, was the Germans' appreciation of Koniecpoler's professional skills. Hence, he was included in a protected group of "nützliche Juden" (useful Jews).

During the ghetto period, he ran a carpentry workshop in the tradesmen's house at Aleja 14. Along with other master craftsmen, he carried out private orders from prominent Germans. In the spring of 1942, he took part in the creation of sheds – workshops responsible to the *Judenrat*. Employment in them was supposed to mean protection against deportation to a death camp. Koniecpoler managed the carpentry shed. After the liquidation of the "Big Ghetto", he continued to run his workshop until March 1943.

His workshop and apartment were contact points for the emerging resistance movement. In January 1943 → Mojtek Zylberberg, later the commander of the

resistance movement in the “Small Ghetto”, handed him four revolvers to hide in his workshop. A series of strictly secret meetings was held in that same workshop. (Present at one meeting, held in February 1943, was Mordechaj Anielewicz, who later became commander of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.) In March 1943, the craftsmen’s house was shut down and all the professionals were sent to the “Small Ghetto”. As a specialist, Koniecpoler worked in the workshops there. When the Jewish Fighting Organisation (ŻOB) decided to produce hand grenades, Koniecpoler enabled them to connect their hidden factory into the electricity grid. Following the liquidation of the “Small Ghetto” in June 1943, he was put into barracks on ul. Garibaldiego and, later, into HASAG-Pelcery.

After leaving the camp on 17<sup>th</sup> January 1945, despite being physically ill and emaciated, he immediately joined into the work of helping Jews. He was one of the people who re-established the Częstochowa religious *gmina*. When he returned to health, together with his wife, he emigrated to Israel on. On 8<sup>th</sup> January 1949, he moved to Holon, in the Tel Aviv district.

While still in Poland, he wrote his wartime memoirs. His typewritten pages have been preserved in the Jewish Historical Institute Archives in Warsaw. They were to contribute to the occupation history of the Jewish community in the city. He published a number of shorts memoirs – *The Last 24 Hours in HASAG* and *Craftsmen and the Holocaust* which were published in the book *Czenstochower Yidn*, and a moving memoir *The Last Minutes of My Mother’s [Life]* in the book published by the Montreal *Landsmannschaft*. His chronical studies *Painful Dates* and *The Workshop at Aleja 14* were included, posthumously, in the second volume of *Sefer Czenstochow*, published in Jerusalem in 1968.

He died in Holon on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1967.

B. Orenstein, *Dawid Koniecpoler*, in: *Czenstochower Landsmanszaft in Montreal*, pp. 116–118; *Czenstochower Yidn*, p. LXXXV; Paszkowski, *Kronikarze częstochowskiego getta*, pp. 74–76. – APCz, Jewish community civil records 1897, birth record No. 84.

**Wiesław Paszkowski**