

KUSZNIR Motek Mordechaj (1915-1960), tailor, political and social activist. He was born on 6th July 1915 in Częstochowa, the son of Chaim (24th July 1880 Machnówka, Żytomierz County -) and Chaja Małka née Kożuchowska (24th October 1884 Koniecpol -), the brother of → Lejb. His father was an excellent tailor who, however, did not become wealthy, because he did not establish his own workshop and always worked for others. He belonged to the Bund in Częstochowa and introduced both his sons to the Bund youth organisation *Tsukunft* (*The Future*).

For many years, Kuznir was active in *Tsukunft*. At the beginning of the 1930s, when the children's organisation *Skif* (short for "Socjalistischer Kinder-Farband – Socialist Children's Union) was established, he became its chairman. He worked as a tailor and was active in the Bund-controlled Clothing Industry Trade Union (he later became its secretary). On 2nd April 1939, during the city's annual conference of trade unions, he was elected to the Trade Unions Council (as one of three Jews). He was also a member of the Częstochowa committee of the Bund.

In the first day of September 1939, he entered the party's headquarters and burned the archives in order to prevent the party members' documents from falling into the hands of the Germans. Thanks to → Liber Brener, a full-time employee of the Society for the Protection of the Health of the Jewish Population TOZ, this institution became a cover for the Bund's underground social activity. From mid-September 1939, he was TOZ volunteer. He was also active in other Bund activities. Together with his brother → Lejb Kuznir, he was involved in the technical side of the "Rasta" magazine.

In July 1941, he was arrested by the Gestapo as one of a group of Bund activists - he managed to escape. The Germans then took five hostages, including his brother, father and mother. They threatened to shoot them unless the *Judenrat* took Kuznir to the Gestapo. He then put himself at the disposal of the party authorities, which had no standing and so he surrendered himself to the police. The Gestapo released the hostages on the next day. He remained imprisoned for nine weeks and suffered many, harsh interrogations (including beatings and torture) at the Gestapo headquarters.

The Kuznir family, with the help of the Birncwajg brothers, managed to collect a large sum of money (35,000 zł) in order to bribe a Gestapo officer from the political department, who then released him from prison. Since the documents stated that he had been shot, he was required to go into hiding under an assumed name. Following the liquidation of the "Small Ghetto" in 1943, he

found himself in HASAG Pelcery. In mid-January 1945, he was taken to Buchenwald and, later, to Bergen-Belsen.

After the camp had been liberated, he returned to Częstochowa. He began working in the Bund committee. He co-authored party reports on underground activities. He endeavoured to leave for Israel. It was only in 1956 that he received permission to emigrate. In Tel Aviv, he again became active in the party, becoming secretary of the Bund. He had many plans which his premature death prevented him from implementing.

He died in 1960 in Tel Aviv. According to his contemporaries, Kusznir was a handsome man and a great orator, gifted with courage, energy and organisational skills, satisfying himself in his social and political activities.

In August 1942, he married Rywka née Litwin – they had no children.

Czenstochower Yidn, pp. III, 137, 138, 140, 141, 143, 144, 190, 224, 226; Brener, *Widersztand*, pp. 46, 54, 61–63; *Sefer Czenstochow*, vol. 2, cols. 421-424. – USC Częstochowa, marriage record No.213/1942.

Wiesław Paszkowski