

**NEUFELD** Maurycy (1861–1942), Częstochowa city councillor, commerce, independence and social activist. He was born on 15th May (according to another source 26<sup>th</sup> February) 1861 in the village of Białaczów, in the Opoczno District. His father was Zygmunt Salomon (Szlama), a merchant in Białaczów, later in nearby Opoczno and, then, the owner of a pharmacy in Częstochowa. His mother was Franciszka Frymeta née Batawia (1833-1908), who came from a wealthy family in Opoczno.

Neufeld grew up in an assimilated Jewish family. He graduated from the Real School in Poznań, then studied at the Commerce College in Wrocław. After graduating, circa 1883 he came to Częstochowa, where he took over management of his father's commercial enterprise. In 1885, a fire broke out in the family's pharmacy.

After the fire damage had been repaired, Neufeld expanded the range of products so as to attract customers in the following years. The Wholesale and Retail Pharmaceutical Warehouse, in 1913, was one of the thirteen largest companies of this type in the city. Apart from "pharmaceutical preparations", one could stock up on "freshly-drawn mineral waters", chemicals, dyes, paints, oils, photographic accessories and its perfumery section was quite extensive. Neufeld became one of the most respected (and wealthy) citizens in Częstochowa.

In 1891, together with a few well-known, local merchants and industrialists, he applied to the city authorities for permission to build a telephone network. In that same year, he participated in the signing of an agreement with representatives of the Postal and Telegraphic District, as a result of which the construction of the telephone network began.

In 1893, he became involved in an industrial initiative. Together with → Henryk Markusfeld, he co-founded and, later, co-owned the Glue and Gelatine Factory. The plant was located outside the, then, city borders of Częstochowa, on the road to Mstów (now ul. Warszawska).

He also invested in real estate. Together with → Ludwik Batawia and F. Silber, he was the owner of mostly undeveloped land in the centre of the city, at the intersection of ul. Teatralna 18 (after 1917, the corner of ul. Kościuszki 1/5) and the II Aleja.

Neufeld was active politically. He belonged to the Intelligentsia Circle of the PPP. In 1904-1906, he quite often remained abroad and, also, in the border town of Herby Prussian, which was a customs checkpoint. These trips related to his commercial interests, but also to his underground activity for the PPS – transferring literature and weapons from Germany to the Kingdom of Poland. Neufeld's apartment (at I Alei 10) served as a meeting place for PPS members. His pharmaceutical warehouse housed the PPS press, which was then distributed in Częstochowa. Thanks to information obtained from their agents, in October 1906, the local gendarmerie confirmed that the warehouse was also used by such parties as the Bund, the Zionist Socialists and Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania. Neufeld was also a member of the underground Pharmacy Workers Trade Union. In 1911, he was arrested for being a member of this union and, for a short time, was detained in the Częstochowa Remand Centre.

In 1905-1907, he was involved in various of the city's social initiatives, including the opening, in Częstochowie, of a Polish gimnazjum. From mid-1906 until August of that same year, he participated in the work of the Polish School Committee and, later, together with its members, he took part in the signing of a contract with the gimnazjum's future headmaster, Walerian Kuropatwiński. As a member of the finance committee of the I Polish Gimnazjum, from September 1906, he participated in meetings of the gimnazjum's Pedagogical Council.

Neufeld was well-known as a local government activist. In the 1917 elections to the Częstochowa City Council (held under an electorate system), he was elected as a councillor representing Electorate No.2 (where owners of larger commercial or industrial enterprises had the right to vote). He worked on the Council's Taxation and Finance & Budget Committees. He had experience in these areas having, since 1915, been a member of the Council's Finance Committee.

He frequently spoke at Council meetings including, in October 1917, during a debate regarding the removal of municipal funding for Jewish medical treatment. He also spoke, on 21st November 1918, advocating for a petition to the Polish government to accelerate the issuing of a new electoral law.

On 28<sup>th</sup> November of that same year, when, at the request of the Częstochowa Workers Council, Romuald Jarmułowicz presented a proposal to supplement the City Council with representatives of workers' parties, Neufeld, in contrast to an overwhelming number of councillors, supported the proposal that workers' representatives should constitute one-third of the composition of the Council.

From 1919, Neufeld was twice elected to the Częstochowa City Council – in 1927, representing the United Jewish Electoral Committee and, in 1934, representing the United Jewish Economic Bloc. During both these terms as a councillor, he sat on the Budget & Finance Committee. He also served on other committees regarding power plants and budget considerations. He was also appointed as a committee chairman, e.g., in 1928, he chaired a joint meeting of the Technical and Finance-Economics Committees (devoted to the asphaltting of Częstochowa streets). Jewish councillors entrusting him as chairman of the Jewish City Councillors Caucus. In 1935, he handed his resignation to the Mayor, Jan Mackiewicz, citing old age and health problems.

In September 1920, during the war with the Bolsheviks, Neufeld joined the independent Provisional Civic Committee, which was to collect funds to supply provisions for the city. He was twice elected to the District Council of the Częstochowa Health Fund – in 1924 and again in 1928, when he stood as a candidate, with a group of employers, from the list of the Association of Jewish Industrialists and Merchants, and Jewish Craftsmen.

Neufeld was involved in parliamentary election campaigns. In February 1928, prior to the elections, he took part in a meeting of Jewish political parties and associations, at which it was decided to form a joint list of Jewish residents. During that meeting, Abraham Truskier was proposed to stand as a senator from the Częstochowa-Radomsko region. In Warsaw, Neufeld held talks with Truskier and, later, co-organised the election campaign of the Jewish United Electoral Bloc.

He was active in various branches of associations within the city. From 1906, he was a member of the board of directors of the Częstochowa branch of the Polish Merchants Association (SKP), in which he served as treasurer and as a member of the arbitration committee. In 1913, in Częstochowa, he was co-founder of Association of Merchants and Manufacturers (from the mid-1920s, known as the Association of Merchants and Industrialists). Over a number of years, until 1939, he was elected to the board on which he served as vice-president.

From 1928, he belonged to the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IPH) in Sosnowiec. He was part of the Chamber's trade section and, in May 1929, was elected as its vice-president. During the Regional Congress of Industry and Trade, held in Sosnowiec on 2nd February 1931, organised by the local Institute of Hygiene, he delivered a lecture on "The Economic Development of Częstochowa in the Past Fifty [Years]".

At that time, Neufeld was also a board member of the Association of Kielce Province Druggists. From 1902, he was a council member of the Municipal Loan Society and, in later years, he served in the Supervisory Board of the Second Częstochowa Savings and Loan Society. In the second half of the 1920s, he was a member of the council and board of the Industrialists and Merchants Bank.

Despite the burdens of his professional, governmental and association work, Neufeld also devoted a great deal of time to social, charitable, cultural and educational activities.

In 1889, he was a co-founder of the “Dobroczytność” Charitable Society for Jews (TDdŻ). Later, he was repeatedly elected to the board of that organisation. Together with → Natan Gerichter, → Izydor Geisler and J. Rubinstein, he headed the TDdŻ’s Nursing the Poor Department. He also financially supported TDdŻ’s Summer Camps Department.

As a member of the Society for the Spreading of Knowledge (from 1906), he financially supported the Society’s E. Orzeszkowa Library and Reading Room. From 1907, he was a member of the “Lira” Musical and Literary Society and, in 1909, was a member of its board. Beginning in 1915, he was active on the Jewish Committee of Emergency Aid, as well as on the main committee of Częstochowa Emergency Aid.

At that time, he was a co-founder of the “Piekarnia Popularna” [“Popular Bakery”], which was to serve the greater part of the city’s population. During the crisis<sup>1</sup> of the 1930s, he was involved in the activities of committees to support the unemployed. In 1935, he was vice-chairman of the trades and crafts section of the Citizens’ Committee for Winter Assistance for the Unemployed. In 1937, he was a member of a similar committee. From the second half of the 1920s, on several occasions, he co-organised a campaign of health promotion – “Anti-Tuberculosis Week”. From 1935, he served as chairman of the Committee for the Building of Jewish Schools in Częstochowa. That committee erected the building of the Jewish Gimnazjum (at ul. Jasnogórska). Over many years, he was an actual member of the Volunteer Fire Brigade. From 1933, he was a board member of the Częstochowa branch of the Association of Jewish Participants in the Fight for Independence.

In the 1920s and 1930s, he lived in a tenement at II Aleja 33 and continued running his pharmacy at I Aleja 10. In 1929, he involved himself in an enterprise

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<sup>1</sup> [TN: It can be assumed that this refers to “The Great Depression”.]

of a financial-cultural nature. On part of a plot of land at ul. Kościuszki 1/5, together with → Dr. L. Batawia and F. Silber, he built a cinema. The “Express Częstochowski” praised this initiative, which “enriched the cultural and architectural state of the city”. In 1938, when Jews were being persecuted in Germany, Neufeld, together with the preacher → Dr. Joachim Hirschberg (chairman) and Cwi Szpalten, headed the committee to help Jews who were escaping German into Poland.

On the day after the Germans entered Częstochowa, 4th September 1939, he was arrested and, together with others, was forced onto the square in front of the cathedral to bury the bodies of the city’s inhabitants who had been shot. The Germans abused him. After several days, he was released. At the time, he supplied bandages and medicines to Jews, held by the Germans, in the barracks in Zacisze in Częstochowa.

In the second half of 1940, the Germans took away his business which, despite the fact that it was still operating under the name “Maurycy Neufeld Pharmaceutical Warehouse (*Apothekengrosshandlung*), was run by a “Trustee” (Treuänder) appointed by the Germans. From October 1939, Neufeld belonged to the Council of Elders (*Judenrat*). Until the beginning of 1940, he was a member of the Council’s executive. In April 1941, he was forced to live in the ghetto, where he moved, with his daughter Wanda, from a tenement at II Aleja 33, to an apartment at I Aleja 6. There, he died on 13th September 1942, and was buried in the Jewish cemetery (grave No. 1110 II, the headstone being destroyed).

His wife was Klara née Sachs (1862-1919), the daughter of Sandel and Rachel née Landau, who was on the board of the TDdŻ welfare section for poor pregnant women in Częstochowa. The couple had three daughters and one son: Wanda, the eldest → Wanda (Kopecka), next → Natalia Anastazja and the youngest daughter Antonina (1891 Częstochowa). Their son was → Stanisław.

Paszkowski, *Żydowska służba zdrowia*, p. 51; J. Pietrzykowski, *Hitlerowcy przed sądem w Częstochowie*, Katowice 1964, pp. 18, 19; J. Sętowski, *Maurycy Neufeld (1861–1942). Portret częstochowskiego samorządowca, działacza gospodarczego i społecznego*, “Prace Naukowe WSP w Częstochowie”, seria: Zeszyty Historyczne 2003, z. VIII, pp. 147–156. – “Częstochower Cajtung” 1933, No. 32, p. 5; “Goniec Częstochowski” 1920, No. 226, p. 4; “Nasz Głos Powszechny” 1936, No. 3, p. 4; “Nowy Express Częstochowski” 1927, No. 70, p. 4; “Ostatnie Wiadomości Częstochowskie” 1932, No. 135, p. 4.

**Juliusz Sętowski**