

The Book Committee

Abram J. Gotlib

Abram Juda [Lejb] Gotlib was born in Częstochowa on 23rd Tishrei 5650 (15th October 1890) to his father Menachem [Szlojme Mendel] (a scion of the family of the Rebbe Reb Duwid of Lelów ztz"l) and mother Perla, the daughter of Chaim [Hersz] Berkowicz, who was a renowned Torah scholar in the city.

He received a traditional education. He first studied in *chederim* and, later, in Rabbi Jszajewicz's *yeshiva*. When this *yeshiva* was closed down, Reb Abram Juda was among those whom the rabbi taught in his home. He also learned Torah with famous teachers at the study-hall.

Gotlib decided to study at the local Professional School, which was directed by the engineer Assorodobraj. His parents only agreed to this on condition that he should continue to maintain the traditions of his forefathers and that he should dedicate some of his time to religious studies. Things went well for him and he became one of the Professional School's best students.

While Gotlib was still learning in the study-hall, he became close to the Zionist circles and, as a pupil at the Professional School, he participated in activities of the *Poalei Zion* workers' party.

In 1908-1909, when the activities of all the workers' parties subsided, Gotlib was among the only ones in his party who continued his political activism uninterrupted.

When he was in Warsaw, he contacted his party's Central Council and, through him, the connection with the members in Częstochowa was renewed.

During the First World War, Gotlib, as representative of *Poalei Zion*, was among the founders of the "*Populäre Bäckerei*" ["Popular Bakery"], which provided the population with bread at a lowered price.

In 1915, he travelled to Köln in Germany to study his profession. In Köln, he met Jewish workers from all parts of Poland and, with the aid of local elements and of the Jewish *kehilla*, he developed cultural activities for them.

In 1917, Gotlib returned to Częstochowa, where he found fertile ground for his political and professional undertakings. At this point, the party also set up a nice club called the *Arbeiter Heim* ["Workers' Home"], which was headed by Szymon Waldfogel. Gotlib co-opted to the club's council and he began to act vigorously in all areas of the party's work. He was also among the founders of the *Arbeiter Heim's* grocery store and was elected to its council.

Following the First World War, the Workers' General Council was founded in Częstochowa and he was chosen, by the Metalworkers' Trade Union, as member of the council.

In 1919, Gotlib and Natan Rozenzon established the "Institute for the Manufacture of Dies", which eventually also came to produce metal fixtures for construction.

Being self-employed, he was admitted as a member of the Union of Independent Craftsmen and was voted Chairman of the metalworkers' section and also as a member of the Union's council. When the Polish government issued its proposal regarding the Guilds Law, Gotlib was among those opposing this law, the main purpose of which was to limit the Jewish craftsmen.

Once the Guilds Law was put into effect, Gotlib was chosen as the Guild Elder and was also appointed by the government's Craftsmen's Bureau as a member of the examinations committee for craftsmen and trainees.

When, in 1933, the Craftsmen's *Ha'Chalutz* association was organised - with the purpose of preparing its members for *Aliyah* - Gotlib was among the organisers of the branch in Częstochowa. He was also chosen as its Deputy Chairman and as a delegate to the first assembly of Craftsmen's *Ha'Chalutz* associations, which took place in Warsaw in 1934. Gotlib also wrote articles for the Zionist newspaper *Unser Weg* in Częstochowa and continued his activity in the Craftsmen's Union and its central council.

At the end of September 1936, Abram Gotlib emigrated to the Land of Israel, together with his wife Ruchla and their daughter Dwojra. With his family, he went to Tel-Aviv, to their daughter Cypora, who had already immigrated in 1933. Gotlib immediately joined the *Histadrut*, by which he was sent to work in his profession. He began work as a technical manager, at first, at the Pliz Metal Works in Holon and, later, as a director in the military industry.

Abram Gotlib is very active in The Association of Częstochowa Jews [in Israel]. At the first assembly, which was held when he arrived in the country, he was elected as a council member and, later, as Secretary of the organisation - a position which he holds to this day.

His house has become a meeting-place for Częstochowers. As a representative of the organisation, he always endeavours to come to the aid of his landsmen in their times of trouble.

The news of the loss of his son Jakób *hy''d* at the hands of the [Nazi] enemy crushed his spirit. In addition, his wife Ruchla *z''l* passed away on 30th Sivan 5715 [20th June 1955].

Despite all his tribulations, he continues his activity in The Association of Częstochowa Jews [in Israel].