

Noach Edelist

***“Agudas Yisroel”* in Częstochowa**

In order to strengthen religion and faith after the great destruction to the spirit and soul that came as a result of the First World War, the world *“Agudas Yisroel”* [Union of Israel] party was established and a branch was then also established in Częstochowa.

As its main goals, the branch set out to unite all the ultra-Orthodox, the true Jewish believers, in order to fight as one against the breaches that came from the east and west and which endangered the existence of traditional Jewry who lived according to the laws of the Torah.

Educational matters

At the start of their activities, the *“Agudas Yisroel”* union in Częstochowa established *“Beis Yaakov”* [House of Jacob] cheders and yeshivas, as well as schools for Jewish girls. It also saw to the arrangement of charitable institutions to help the poor, mainly to male and female pupils in their schools and their parents who lacked money.

This system of *“Agudas Yisroel”* also helped, in a certain manner, to hold back the assimilation that was spreading and to strengthen Judaism.

Delegation to the Land of Israel

In 5684 [1923-24], a delegation, on behalf of *“Agudas Yisroel”* in our city, left for the Land of Israel in order to purchase land and establish a God-fearing colony in the Land of Israel. However, due to the financial crisis that had broken out then in Poland and also because of the bloody events in the Land of Israel, the delegation was unable to carry out the affair and the members of *“Agudas Yisroel”* in our city, who had given of their money for these purchases, lost it.

The Representation’s Stance in the Municipality and in Public Institutions

“Agudas Yisroel’s” representatives in municipal institutions and the rest of the general public institutions fought as one, together with the representatives of the other Jewish parties, against discrimination against Jews and for their rights. They demanded the municipality’s participation in the maintenance of Jewish institutions, as well as in the imposition of fair taxes on Jews for the needs of the State and the city.

In Financial Life

“Agudas Yisroel” did not limit its activities to spiritual matters alone. It also saw to the material needs of its members and sympathisers.

To this end, it established its own bank, *“Bank Kupiecki”* [Merchant Bank], whose goal was to aid, as far as possible, the establishment of businesses and means of livelihood for those in need in order to sustain their families.

At the head of the bank stood the best of the active and finance people in the religious circles, who dedicated much of their time and energy to the development of the bank and the widening of its activities.

Details on “Aguda’s” Management and its Active Members

In the periodical “*Der Yud*” [The Jew], from [the weekly reading of] *Parshas Shemini* [Leviticus 9:1–11:47], 5679 [1919], an article was printed about a general assembly of “*Agudas Yisroel*” in Częstochowa, from which we quote the following details:

On Sunday of Parshas Shemini [23rd Mach 1919], a general assembly of “Agudas Shloimei Emunei Yisroel was held.

It was opened by Reb Szmul Zelwer and, with him, sat at presidency Reb Icek Majer Justman, Reb Józef Dziobas, [and] Reb Michal Leib Mindecz. The protocol was conducted by Reb Icek Kaplan.

Orators: Reb Jakob Edelist and Reb Szyia Zeligman, who stressed the importance of the issues being discussed; a few of those present added to their words and afterwards appropriate decisions were made.

To the new council, [the following] were elected: Abram Naftuli Horowicz, Icek Kaplan, Ze’ev Borensztajn, Nachman Kryman, Kalman Rajcher, Szmul Zelwer, Icek Majer Justman, Józef Silman, Szyia Zeligman, Pałtyjel Borzykowski, Szlojme Gold, Całel Potasewicz, Izaak Dziobas, Menachem Fogel, Mnasza Margules, Jakob Zvi Fajerman, Dov Gwircman, Józef Dziobas, Izaak Piotrkowski, Dawid Zelwer, Faywel Rybsztajn, Dov Goldrajch, Dawid Szmul Warszawski, Józef Borzykowski, Zendel Lewenhof, Mojsze Borzykowski, Szlojme Ruzewicz, Natan Dawid – the son-in-law of [the Chassidic] Rebbe Reb Shulem, Zysza Lincfeld and Abram Epsztajn.

As “delegates” were chosen Abram Zomper, Chune Gold, Chaim Don Lipszyc, Lipman Dawid Klajnman, Simche Ferleger, Szlojme Częstochowski, Jakob Majer Prajs, Zalman Szmulewicz, Menachem Zelwer, Zvi Stobecki, Luzor Horowicz, Dawid Stobecki, Lewi Wargon, Szmul Faywel Rubinsztajn, Majer Szczekacz and Abram Faywel Tobiasz.

“Agudas Yisroel” Youth Council

The following were elected to the above council: Józef Edelist, Aba Baumatic, I. Kaufman, Anczel Borzykowski, Aaron Justman, Abram Rusiecki, M. Brum, Mojsze Bromberg and Zelig Szacher.