

Ezriel Ben-Moshe

Details of the Last Municipal Council Elections (Before the Second World War)



In May 1939, just months before the outbreak of the Second World War, municipal council elections were held in Częstochowa. These were the last election in which the Jews of our city participated.

The antisemitic parties, the “*Endecja*” [National Democratic Party] and the “*Chrześcijańska Demokracja*” [Christian Democracy], conducted unbridled propaganda against the Jews at their rallies and, above all, printed and distributed provocative leaflets, mainly in Jewish neighbourhoods.

In their propaganda material, our haters dared to threaten the *Żydzi* not to participate in the municipal elections and that, as “foreigners”, they had no say in matters that did not concern them – otherwise, their end would be bitter.

To our great joy, the Jews were not intimidated by these threats. On the contrary, national sentiment and civil responsibility prevailed and they swarmed, in numbers, to the ballot. Affairs reached a state where, whilst only 60% of the Poles voted, the turnout of Jewish voters was 98%.

It should be noted that the Election Commission, obviously comprised by Poles mainly, formally harassed Jewish voters, by all legitimate and illegitimate means, in order to keep them away from the ballots, but the Jews stood the test and did not leave the polling stations, without first fulfilling their civic-Jewish obligation.

Although the Jews did not come to these elections as one body, and though two factions were actually waging a fierce electoral war against each other (between the “Civic Block” and the “Leftists”), the two currents, who fought in the Jewish street, succeeded in introducing ten of their members into the municipal council - eight from the civic circles and two as representatives of the workers. From the Civic Block, which was comprised of representatives of the Zionist parties and general associations in the city, the following were elected:

1. **Joachim Markowicz**, a lawyer, a proficient jurist and well-known public figure, as a representative of the financial institutions
2. **Dr. Leib Asz**, son of *Rabeinu* Reb Nuchem Asz, a lawyer, chairman of several public unions and a fighter for the defence of Jewish rights
3. **Chaim Weksler**, one of the founders of the “*Ha’Mizrachi*” union and its chairman, a seasoned public Zionist figure and representative of all the Zionist institutions
4. **Dr. Arnold Bram**, chairman of the Zionist Union
5. **Dawid Borzykowski**, chairman of the Association of Industrialists and Traders, one of the prominent figures in the financial field

6. **Dr. Mering**, one of the important teachers and educators at the Hebrew high school and one of the most distinguished public figures in activities for the [Israeli] national funds, "*Keren Kayemeth Lelsrael*" [Jewish National Fund] and "*Keren Hayesod*" [United Israel Appeal] and editor of the weekly Zionist periodical "*Darkeinu*" (*Unser Weg*) [Our Way]
7. **Józef Goldberg**, an active public figure in the Craftsmen Union; a proud and brave-hearted Jew in all senses
8. **Dr. Tanchum Lewkowicz**, a cherished public figure and important man of science.

The second party list, which included the workers' parties "*Bund*" and "*Poalei Zion - Leftist*", won two representatives and they were:

1. **Israel Jaronowski**, one of the heads of the "*Bund*" and a brave fighter for his views
2. **Abraham Brum**, one of the leaders of the "*Poalei Zion -Leftist*", who was very active in propagating the ideas of his party amongst the workers' circles in the city. (By the way, Abraham Brum is the only one of all the Jewish representatives then elected who remained alive after the Holocaust. He immigrated to Israel and now lives in Jerusalem.

The following characteristic fact should also be mentioned:

Dr. Mikulski, a Pole born and bred, who appeared in the Polish party list of "*Ozon*" [*Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego*; Camp of National Unity], was elected as a municipal council member in an electoral area that was entirely Jewish. They voted in gratitude for his humane attitude and esteem for Jews.

The following fact shows the extent to which antisemitism had spread in Poland:

The PPS party [*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna*] (Polish Socialist Party), which had received a majority in the city council in the previous elections, this time received a miniscule amount of votes, while the "*Endecja*" and "*Chrześcijańska Demokracja*" attained a significant majority and took control of the city and its institutions. The "*Ozon*" party, too, which had certain liberal views, also then left the political stage.

The cause was a sentiment of hatred towards Jews, which that increased from year to year. Its main goal was the annihilation of the Jews.

(This satanic goal was achieved with the help of the German Asmodeus, may his name and memory be obliterated, and it began in that same year as the elections - in 1939).

