

The Book Committee

The Merchants and Manufacturers Union

During the first years following the [First] World War, Polish Jews felt that they needed to ensure their economic existence, which had been hit due to two reasons:

1. the loss of the great Russian sales-market, which had been literally flooded with the production of the steadily expanding Polish industry, of which the Jews had always been at the forefront, both in the production and in the distribution of the merchandise, by their skilled merchants and trade-agents, who had reached even the furthest and most isolated areas of the great Russian Empire; and
2. the broadened actions of the Polish antisemitic press in independent Poland, organising the Polish broad masses and inciting them against Jews, with the evil intention of ripping commerce and industry out of Jewish hands and creating *Pure-Polish* cadres of merchants, craftsmen and even producers of their “own” industry. Ventures needed to be organised in order to guard their economic existence from going under.

At the initiative of Waclaw Wislicki, Adolf Truskier, Adolf Gefner and other personages, the Central [Bureau] of the Jewish Merchants Union was created in Warsaw, with the objective of protecting Jewish trade and industry and to ensure their subsequent existence.

Częstochowa was among the first cities in Poland which, at once, comprehended the importance of the matter and, very soon, a branch of that union was opened there. It encompassed almost all the merchants and, later, the manufacturers of Jewish Częstochowa also.

(Sadly, together with the destruction of the Częstochowa Jews, this union’s building was destroyed, together with its entire archive.)

We are, therefore, only able to present, in “*Sefer Częstochowa*”, details of one of the union’s last annual general meetings and the names of its last board of management.

The annual general meeting was held at the Union’s own premises, with many members participating.

In his annual report, Dawid Borzykowski told of the hard battle which had been conducted to defend their economic interests, to not allow the trade and industry to be torn out of Jewish hands by antisemitic elements, which were also publically supported by the government factors.

The management was always required to stand guard and intervene in the “*Izba Skarbowa*” [government Treasury], trades-chamber and City Council, through Jewish representatives, in order to, as far as possible, save its members from the approaching danger.

Next, M. Galster delivered a financial report and mentioned, in passing, that the lawyer Hasenfeld had given his legal assistance completely free of charge, for which the meeting expressed its gratitude.

The meeting also approved the projected budget and printed it out for the meeting.

The following were elected to the administration and council: *Prezes* Z. Sztyller, *Vice-Prezes* M. Neufeld and, as board of management members, Altman, Dawid Borzykowski, Grandapel, Dawidowicz, A. Warszawski, Wajnsztajn, I. M. Zilberberg, Jakób Lewit, Faust, F. Proport, Pruszycki, Krauskopf, L. Rodal, Z. Rotbart, G. Szwarcbaum, Sztajnic, Józef Szelezynger, Selcer and as alderman, F. Szapiro.

The audit committee comprised S. Ajzner, Manela, J. Kohn, L. Kopinski, J. Kornwaser, Sztokman and Szajkewicz. Lawyers Hasenfeld and Kromołowski were employed as permanent secretaries.



The Manufacturers and Merchants Union also opened its own cooperative bank, which expanded from year to year and conducted its business by the standards of the largest, most modern banks in Poland.

The bank was famous for its solid work and precision and earned the trust of the Polish National Bank and the largest financial institutions in the country and even abroad.

The bank had its own fine premises at the Second *Aleja* 22. Until its final day, its Director was Mr Pruszycki.

Those most active in the administration and council were Dr B. Tempel, Jakób Lewit (now in Israel), M. Neufeld, M. Koniarski, L. Rodal, Z. Sztyller and Dr Szlajcher.



Directors and personnel of the Manufacturers and Merchants Bank. Among others, in the picture are: Blausztajn, Cesia Kozak, Dir. Pruszycki, Haibinowa [?], Goldman, Koczylas, Cela Dorfman, Stasia Zelikowicz, Fela Rotbart, Renia Wachtel, Lola Staszewska, Lila Fajgin, Halina Szylit, Mala Kohn, Jadzia Sobol, Wargman, Ester Abramowicz, Guta Zborowska, Marysia Najman, Reginka Przyrowska, Irka, Szaja and others whose names are unknown.