

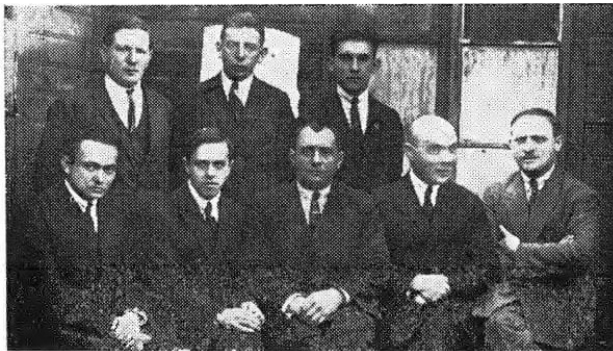
**Mojsze Oderberg**

## **Party-Discipline and My Experiences in My Young Years**

(A Few Memories)

As in other cities in Poland, in Częstochowa too, the influence over diverse professional workers' unions was divided amongst the different political workers' parties. Thus, "*Poalei Zion*", which was the smallest of the three Jewish workers' parties, received control over the Tailors' Guild.

It is true that, among the tailor-craftsmen in our city, only a rather small number employed apprentices in their workshops. But, nevertheless, their professional union of "*Workers of the Tailors' Guild*" was created.



*Sitting: Wajs, Prędkki, Danziger, Jurysta and Zajdman.  
Standing: Rozencwajg, Rapaport and Zajdman*

On a certain morning, the "Tailors Committee" declared a strike, after the tailor "*gvirim*" [Yid. from Heb.; moguls] ceased to agree to the demand that the working-day be shortened by a whole hour, thereby increasing wages by a whole rouble per week.

The tailors claimed that, at that time, their livelihoods were already limited and that they could not accept the demands. Among the tailors were those who used to sew "ready-to-wear garments", hired a peasant's wagon

and travelled, with their men's tailored work, to fairs in cities and *shtetls* around Częstochowa. They stood there all day, waiting for peasant customers and, when it had already turned quite dark, they returned home with their unsold goods.

Once, I received a command from my "Party Committee", that on a certain Tuesday before dawn, I should be on ulica Warszawska, next to the "three icons", and await further orders.

When I arrived, before dawn, to the appointed place, there were already another three members of the "*Poalei Zion*" youth. One was armed with a rusty, tin bucket full with some kind of liquid. The other two had sticks with them. They gave me a stick as well and an instruction that, when the tailor came by with his peasant, I was to deal the peasant such a strong blow with my stick, that he would drop the reins from his hands.

Half an hour later, the obstinate tailor arrived with his peasant's wagon. Our comrade quickly drenched all the merchandise with the potent liquid and, as a result, the startled peasant let go of the reins anyway, so that my knock with the stick was already completely unnecessary. Both of them - the tailor and the peasant - began shouting. There was actually a constable travelling in the wagon who was sleeping peacefully, who then woke up due to the screams and began blowing his whistle. At once, two other guards arrived and they started to chase us. See as how we were young men and the policemen were already not quite so young, they were unable to catch us. Following the instructions that I had received, I did not go home, but I hid away in a small alley by ulica Garncarska, where the striking workers lived and there I remained overnight.

As it later turned out, the tailor had recognised one of the four “assailants” and reported this to the police. There was a danger that they would arrest us all. I did not think long and, a couple of days later, after I had come up with a good excuse for my parents, I crossed the border and began wandering from city to city - first to Katowice, then to Breslau and finally to Köln-am-Rhein. From there, I proceeded further into the wide world.

The police in Częstochowa looked for me and arrested my older brother, Natan Oderberg, as a “hostage”, thereby warning my parents to present me no later than within a fortnight.

Obviously, I never returned to Częstochowa and, after a great effort with a good bit of bribing, my brother Natan was finally also released.

(My “Party-Discipline” of my young years saved my life from Hitler’s murderers.)