

Ezriel Ben-Moshe

The Zionist Labour Party “Hitachdut” in Częstochowa

Among the Zionist parties with a marked Labour character, which operated in the Jewish street, the Zionist Labour Party “Hitachdut” stood out in particular.

This party’s lines were concentrated primarily on the strata of the working intelligentsia and also the middle-class, whose views were Zionist-Socialist.

This party made an effort, in its extensive activity amid the Jewish public, to impart the best of Zionist information for the Land of Israel and its efforts bore fruit.

In its first years, its activists included Izrail Danziger and Natan Gerszonowicz (who also stood at its head), Mordka Kaufman, Natan Szczekacz, Mrs Rozener, Chune Erlich, Sabina Szperling, Sonia (Hofman) Birnholc, Dorka and Nisan Rajch, Jossele Goldsztajn, Pola Appelbaum, Mojsze Ruzewicz, Kohn, Aron Warszawski, Gerszon Fogel, Esterka (Lieberman) Adler, Helka Ciaciura, Fridman and others whose names I do not now remember.

During its years of existence, this party also suffered ups and downs in the Jewish street and, sometimes, in a radically, notable manner.

In the 1920’s, there was an internal struggle between two factions, one of which aspired to unify with “*Poalei Zion*” Right. However, the other faction, which backed the independence of *Hitachdut*, prevailed in this ideological battle. This caused the “*Hitachdut*” movement to become established and to expand in the city. Its influence on Zionist public life also strengthened.

During that period, its activists were M. R. Straus (who dedicated himself, heart and soul, to his work), Fajnrajch, Abram Izbicki, Juda Fridman and others, whose names I’ve also now forgotten.

When elections were held for the 18th Zionist Congress, this party was surprisingly successful, winning one-third of the votes for its list to this congress. The people at the “*Hitachdut*” Centre treated the Częstochowa branch with great affection. They often came to our city, organised assemblies there and always spoke before a large audience. Among the orators was Dr Józef Lewi from Łódź and Dr Lerchenfeld from Warsaw.

Also, this party’s periodical “*Folk un Land*” [Yid. Folk and Land], with many copies being distributed in our city.

In those same years, its “*Vitkunia*” youth group was established, named after the thinker of the Zionist Workers’ movement, Joseph Vitkin.