

**Jakób Alebarde**

## **Conspiratorial Activities**

After the outbreak of the War, there remained in Częstochowa political activists of all tendencies and it did not take long before we began organising underground activity. We threw all the archives out the window and lit a great fire. During the burning of the papers, a fire broke out and we fled.

In October 1939, we gathered at the Jewish cemetery and divided the work amongst smaller groups. A party-member was appointed to each group.

The second, and already larger, meeting of Bundists took place at the same location. It concerned bringing the tragically demised futurist Michał Szymkowicz to a grave.

At the second meeting, it was decided, among other things, to move the large Medem library from Aleja 20 to ul. Nadrzeczna, to the librarian Rajzla Berkensztadt and, from there, to conduct illegal cultural work.

The Germans' first repressions, arrests and executions soon found our people. The Gestapo discovered our activity and major arrests followed. Among the detainees was Motek Kuznir (who died in advanced old age in Israel), who had escaped prison. The second was the writer of these lines, but they did not find me.

The Gestapo made the *Judenrat* answerable for us both, wherefore the party-committee decided that we were to leave the city of Częstochowa as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, the *Judenrat* reported that the Gestapo demanded that we both be turned in and that, if not, they would be held responsible. The Bundist party-committee held another discussion and Motek Kuznir declared that he was willing to turn himself in to the Gestapo, in order to avoid innocent victims. By a decision of the party-committee, I fled to Piotrków.

Motek Kuznir was taken, together with Rajzla and Mojsze Berkensztadt, to the gaol in Zawodzie and, each morning, they were conducted to the Gestapo for a "hearing". There, they would beat them for such a long time, that they would fall unconscious.

In the meantime, Kuznir was freed through the paying off of two Gestapo men. Later, Rajzla, too, was freed. Mojsze Berkensztadt was horribly tortured [and], later, was sent to Oświęcim, where he perished.

In our perilous work of reorganising ourselves, not only did old party activists take part, but fresh people also. A man from Piotrków named Berliner accomplished a great deal. He had had much experience in conspiratorial work in the pre-War years (his brother lived in Częstochowa - an old Bundist of [the revolution of] 1905).

We also attempted establishing contact with outside the ghetto, even with the help of children, such as the girl Lerner.

Both the conspiratorial work, and the missions upon which we were sent, were deeds of great peril and more than one activist paid for this with his life.