

Memorial Stones

Mojtek Zilberberg z''l

He was born in Kalisz, where he studied and completed high school. From an early age, he dedicated himself to activity in the Zionist movement and yearned to emigrate to Palestine. With the outbreak of the Second World War, when German troops invaded Poland and the blow of persecutions and decrees fell upon that country's Jewry, Mojtek was one of the many, deported from Kalisz and the local area, who arrived in Częstochowa in 1940.

As a refugee in a strange city, he suffered all the hardships of a homeless person and, even though the Jewish community endeavoured to aid the deportees, it could do little.

Mojtek fought the hardships, and tried to endure. During the Great Deportation, he survived the *akcje* and was sent to the HASAG-Pelcery camp. There, he saw depressed and despondent Jews everywhere, the last remnants of the families that remained after the continuous murders. They were in terrible conditions. The Germans and their Ukrainian helpers assaulted them day and night. Seeing all this, Mojtek began to formulate the idea of self-defence.

The Idea Becomes a Reality

In December 1942, the camp was moved to the "Small Ghetto" and, there, Mojtek's idea began to take shape. There, he found underground groups which were operating separately - the *kibbutz*, the "66 Group," communists, and others. **His goal was to unify all these groups into one organised force and his efforts, in this direction, were crowned with success. As a result of his activities, the Jewish Fighting Organisation - the ŻOB - arose in Częstochowa.** The Central Command comprised Mojtek (commander), Juda Gliksztajn, Rywka Glanc, Somek Abramowicz, Heniek Tencer, Fiszlewicz and, later, Heniek Wiernik.

An intense debate raged as to the organisation's aims and modes of operation. Some favoured concentrating a great force inside the ghetto which, should it be decreed that they fall at the hands of the enemy, they should do so holding a weapon in their hands. On the other hand, there were those who argued that the framework should be broadened, meaning that they should send [people] to the forest and organise partisan group, and make contact with the Polish underground movement.

Mojtek decided to take both courses. He organised the collection of funds from among the inhabitants of the ghetto, into whose awareness the goals of the organisation had begun to penetrate and this was also apparent from the [fundraising] campaign's success.

One day, Mojtek travelled to Koniecpol to contact a local farmer who had agreed to help establish a partisan point in the nearby woods. Consequently, members went out and set up the point which, over the course of time, including after the liquidation of the ghetto, took in survivors from the ghetto and the labour camps.

Following the tragic events of 4th January 1943, it became clear that the quantity of weaponry which the organisation had at its disposal was insufficient to meet its constantly growing needs. Mojtek proposed that they should manufacture armaments themselves and helped to acquire the necessary

materials to do so. Simultaneously, [also] at Mojtek's suggestion, the fighters began digging tunnels to the "Aryan side", building large bunkers and stockpiling weapons.

Mojtek also organised the act of sabotage of the railway tracks. In one of the acquisition operations in Kamionka (near Raków), he was wounded in a clash with German gendarmes, but he managed to escape and make it back to the ghetto.

On 25th July 1943, the Germans surrounded the ghetto and Mojtek was, at the time, at his post in the organisation's central bunker – which is where he met his demise.

With this, the heroic chapter of a fearless warrior ended, but was not completed. The commander of the ŻOB in the city of Częstochowa put his life at stake to avenge the blood of his people and swore not to fall alive into the hands of the enemy. He fulfilled his oath and, with his tragic death, he carried his sacrifice through to the very end. Blessed be the memory of this hero and martyr.



Somek Abramowicz z''l

He was one of the old guard of the city's Communist Party, an expert versed in all facets of clandestine work. His contribution in this area, towards the goals of the ŻOB, was of great importance.

Being one of the main organisers of the P.P.R. (the Polish Labour Party) in 1942 in Częstochowa, he was immediately taken by the idea of protecting the ghetto - from within. Thanks to his contacts within his party on the "Aryan side", the first connections for joint action were made.

Despite his typical Jewish appearance, he dared to go out to the "Aryan side", armed with just a homemade, Finnish [?] knife, in order to organise and maintain the connection with the underground movement on that side.

He was very active in the manufacture of weapons, in the acquisition [thereof] and the organisation, and was considered one of the prominent members of ŻOB. His demise at the hands of the enemy has remained a mystery. All that is known is that, one day, he went out to a meeting on the "Aryan side", in the Kamionka area, from which he never returned.



Chaim Opatowski z''l

Born in 1922 in Włocławek, in his youth he belonged to "*Ha'Shomer Ha'Tzair*." He was also a member of the "*Kibbutz Ha'Ma'apilim*"⁴⁷ group. Despite his young age, he was composed and loyally carried out all the dangerous missions he was sent on in the "Small Ghetto." He was particularly good at raising money for purchases and an extremely gifted negotiator. Opatowski was also among the first to leave the ghetto and to seek contacts with the Polish Resistance. He left the ghetto on a mission for the last time in March 1943, from which he never returned. How and where he met his death is unknown.



⁴⁷ [TN: "*Group of the Brazen Ones*"; apparently a sub-group of *HaShomer HaTzair* in Poland.]

Dudek Altman z''l

A member of the "*Ha'Shomer Ha'Tzair*" movement, he was one of the youngest members of ŻOB in Częstochowa. Brazen and quick to make decisions, with all his might, he was devoted to ŻOB's operations and he sometimes went beyond permitted norms with his daring. Sharp-witted, he managed to extricate himself from seemingly hopeless situations.

Dudek participated in almost all of ŻOB's operations, although no details are known of his last deeds and moments, as no witnesses remained.



Lolek Blank z''l

Born in Częstochowa in 1923, he completed the high school there and, at a young age, joined the "Zionist Youth" movement. When rumours spread of the deportations, murders and liquidations of the ghettos, his mother wished to hide him and his young sister with Polish acquaintances, but he refused to leave his mother and remained with her until the tragic liquidation of the ghetto. In the "Small Ghetto," he joined ŻOB and distinguished himself with his devotion and bravery, traits which caused him to rise to positions of great responsibility.

Lolek was one of the three who shared the command over the groups in the Żłoty Potok woods, together with Pinek Samsonowicz and Harry Potaszewicz.



Due to a betrayal, they were attacked by German gendarmes, and Lolek was the only one who managed to escape and return to the ghetto. He was killed there during the liquidation.



Lusia Gutgold z''l

Born in Praszka on 15th November 1921, she completed from high school in Łódź in 1939 as an excellent student, and enrolled in the Faculty of Agriculture in Belgium. When the persecutions intensified in the Łódź ghetto, where she was living, together with her family, she moved to the Częstochowa ghetto. Lusia organised clubs for poor children and illegal courses, in which she taught, which served in place of the schools which the Germans had closed down. In the "Small Ghetto", together with friends, she established the nucleus of the underground "66 Group", named after the house where she lived – at ul. Nadrzeczna 66.

On 4th January 1943, Lusia was arrested, together with several friends, and was imprisoned in the Polish police gaol. They remained there for two days. Their endeavours to acquire poison, in case their attempt to escape from the railway carriages did not succeed, were in vain. With other people from the ghetto, they were loaded onto the train and, during the journey and despite the other passengers' objections, Lusia jumped off the train. The last reports



about her were that, upon leaping from the train, she had broken her arm and the leader of one of the villages had handed her over to the Germans.



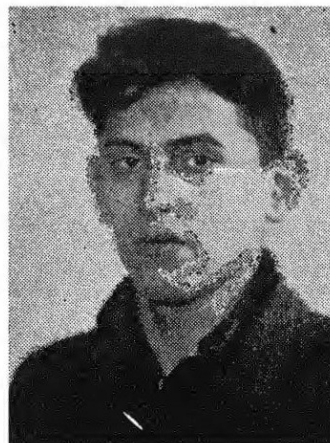
Harry Gerszonowicz z''l



Rysia Gutgeld z''l



Jakób Gotlib z''l



Rywka Glanc z''l

Born in 1915 in Konin, she was an activist of the *Freiheit* movement from her early childhood. She underwent "training" in Plock, Łódź and Gdynia. With the outbreak of the War, Rywka returned to Łódź, from where she contacted the movement's central office in Warsaw, which placed upon her the responsible and dangerous duties of a contact person.

When the Jews were put in ghettos and, anyone going outside them faced capital punishment, Rywka travelled to cities and towns, to organise the youth, which she roused to action by warning them of the impending perils. Her Aryan features and extraordinary courage helped her extricate herself from hazardous situations - from roadside inspections or when suddenly being accosted by Germans in railway stations, etc. Rywka always returned refreshed and calmly recounted the troubles she had experienced along the way.

She arrived in Częstochowa in 1941, in order to organise and instruct the *kibbutz*. She succeeded where others had failed. They listened to her attentively in the Jewish institutions and valued her.

Following the Great Deportation from the Częstochowa ghetto in 1942, Rywka became the driving force behind the establishment of the ŻOB and she developed a multi-branched operation. She travelled to Warsaw, to Zagłębie, established connections with fighting organisations, brought weapons [back] with her, distributed underground flyers and emissaries came to her and went. Thanks to her and her [broad] shoulders, the atmosphere of isolation gradually disappeared. A sentiment of activity and enterprise was born and Rywka was always at its centre.

In the great debate regarding the modes of warfare and the organisation's operations, Rywka leaned towards concentrating all the combatants inside the ghetto - to fight, holding a weapon, to the very end. She was proud of all the preparations and the readiness to engage in battle. One saw Rywka everywhere, with her blonde hair and beaming countenance, wearing her short leather coat,

encouraging and instilling within her comrades, who considered her their model and followed her, a resolve and energy.

On the tragic day upon which the ghetto was liquidated, Rywka was in the main bunker with Marek Fulman, the emissary from Warsaw. While all the fighters were at their posts, in a state of alert, a meeting was held in the bunker and Marek reported on the battles during the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto, on the fighters who had fallen and on those who survived and had continued fighting.

After the state of alert had been called off and all the combatants, barring Mojtek who was ill and Lutek Gliksztajn, had left the bunker, the Germans suddenly fell upon the ghetto and destroyed it.

Rywka exited through a tunnel, which had not yet been discovered and, with Marek and other members, crossed to the other side. They were able to reach an abandoned house and obtain cover there. But they were shortly discovered by the Germans there and a fierce battle ensued. Marek threw a grenade and managed to escape. Rywka kept shooting her small pistol to the last bullet and fell at the edge of the ghetto. One German murderer was killed and several others were wounded in the course of the clash. Rywka Glanc fought to the bitter end and fell at her post, defending the honour of the Jewish People in the Częstochowa ghetto - as a loyal daughter of her persecuted nation. In acknowledgement of the heroism which she displayed, the Polish government awarded her the *Virtuti Militari* [Lat.; "Military Virtue"] decoration for heroism.



Juda Gliksztajn z''l

Born in Warsaw in 1920 to a traditional family, he attended the *Tarbut* [Heb.; "Culture"] gymnasium. In his youth, he joined the *Ha'Shomer Ha'Tzair* movement and, prior to the War, he worked at the *Centralna Biblioteka Judaistyczna* [Central Judaic Library] in Warsaw. Once the battles had ended in 1939, he developed a wide range of activities at his workplace, which became a centre for the ZTOS [*Żydowskie Towarzystwo Opieki Społecznej*; Jewish Mutual Aid Society] and the Joint. He conducted informational operations among the homeowners' associations, under the supervision of the statistician Menachem Linder. At the end of 1940, when the Germans appeared in front of the library to take the collection of books away, Juda managed to smuggle out, concealed upon his person, a very rare little book (an incunable⁴⁸) and two silver vessels (religious objects), which he hid in the cellar of his apartment. In that same cellar, Juda listened to foreign broadcasts on a radio receiver, which he hid at the risk of his life.

In 1942, with the members of the *Ma'apilim* group, Juda moved from ul. Nalewki 12 to the farm in Żarki and, from there, to Częstochowa. When the "Big Ghetto" was liquidated, he actively participated in the establishment of ŻOB in the "Small Ghetto" and was also among the founders of the *kibbutz* at ul. Garncarska 71. In the debate that raged in the central command regarding the ways of defence and combat against the Germans, he sided with expanding the operation and taking a group of fighters from the ghetto to the forests. Juda was among the first to go out to the Koniecpol area where, together with some members, he set up a base for the group of fighters from the Częstochowa ghetto. In an encounter with an underground Polish fascist force, Juda was killed while giving aid to the wounded Fela Zborowska, who also fell in that same confrontation.



⁴⁸ [TN: An incunable is a text printed (not hand-written) in Europe before 1501.]

Lutek Gliksztajn z''l

Juda's brother, Lutek, was born in Warsaw in 1924, and was active in *Ha'Shomer Ha'Tzair*. In the first *akcja*, he was sent from Warsaw to the death camp at Majdanek. Lutek was one of the few who managed to escape from this camp of horrors. He reached Częstochowa and joined the *kibbutz*.

In the "Small Ghetto", Lutek was counted among the most active and dedicated combatants. He was the only witness to the death, in the line of duty, of the organisation's commander, Mojtek Zilberberg. At the central bunker, next to the arsenal, when the Germans stormed the bunker, Lutek opened fire and wounded several of them, as they were crawling in the tunnel towards the hidden exit. In the dead of night, Lutek took advantage of the changing of the guard of gendarmes around the bunker and he truly, miraculously, managed to escape from the tunnel and to go through another tunnel, which had not yet been discovered by the Germans. Equipped with two pistols, which he had taken from the arsenal, Lutek joined the group of fighters in the Koniecpol region, where he was reunited with his brother Juda. L

utek lost his life in an encounter with the underground Polish fascist NSZ, which excelled more in murdering Jews than in operations against the invaders.



Hipek Hajman z''l

Born in 1925, he studied at the school of the famous educator Zofia Wajnsztok. On the day of her death, he wrote a poem in her memory.

In town, he was in the same class with the circles of enlightened youth. Like many among this ebullient and stormy, yet proud of spirit youth, Hipek did not come to terms with the humiliation and oppression of the German troops. He rebelled with all his being and also withstood severe tests. He occasionally fulfilled extremely dangerous missions and, together with Lala Windman, he maintained contact with the centre of the underground movement in Warsaw. The small group of students was the main pillar of the ŻOB.

Hajman was distinguished for his composed manner, in spite of his huge energy, and in his kind-heartedness was always willing to help others. Upon returning from one of his journeys to Warsaw with instructions and underground literature, he was stopped at the ghetto gate and, during the body-search, a Polish identity card was found on his person. He was imprisoned in the Jewish police's gaol and, on the following day, they were to hand him over to Degenhardt and the Gestapo. The ŻOB decided to free him and, indeed, a unit headed by Pinek Samsonowicz managed to free him in a clash with the police. He was taken outside the ghetto under the cover of darkness and was sent back to Warsaw.

A few weeks later, when he was with Lala in Warsaw, they were both detained. Lala was able to escape, whereas he was taken to the Gestapo and was then sent to the Trawniki camp, where he perished.



Pinek Winer z''l

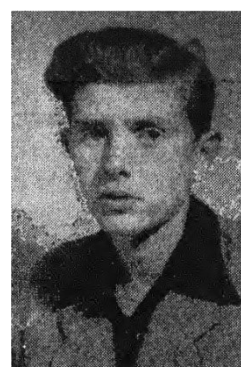
Born in Częstochowa in 1920, a graduate of the Professional School, he was active in the *Hapoel* group. In the "Small Ghetto", he worked at the *Möbellager* [Furniture Camp] and, in May 1943, he joined the ŻOB, together with his brother Dudek. Both were sent to the Złoty Potok woods, where the group of fighters from the Częstochowa ghetto operated. In one of the operations against the Germans, he was wounded by shrapnel from a grenade and, on the way to the ghetto, where he hoped to receive medical attention, he was murdered together with his brother by Polish policemen.



Lala Windman z''l

Born on 24th September 1925, he studied at Dr Axer's gymnasium and belonged to *Ha'Shomer Ha'Tzair*.

In the "Small Ghetto", in the years 1942-43, the ŻOB was making plans to send an emissary to Warsaw. Upon learning of this, he volunteered to go on this mission, despite all the sensible arguments against this demand of his. In his obstinacy, he was able to persuade the organisation. He went on the mission, and was successful in establishing the connection with Warsaw.



Once the ŻOB had been liquidated in the ghetto, Lala joined the partisan group in Koniecpol and put, at their disposal, the money and gold he had been able to take from the bunkers. He was very young and his appearance justified his nickname - he was as beautiful as a *lala* ([Pol.:] doll). It was not very long before he went off, together with Krzaczek, to buy weapons with this money, but he never returned from this mission.



Mietek Wajntraub ("Marduk") z''l

Born in Częstochowa in 1923, his father was a merchant and he lived with his parents on the first *Aleja*.

Mietek was one of those youngsters who immediately understood that the German invaders intended to completely annihilate the Jewish population and that the only answer to this terrible plan was – to resist! To fight!

Being true to his convictions, Wajntraub joined a group which began gathering funds to purchase weapons and to teach the people of the ghetto how to use them. Following the liquidation of the "Big Ghetto", he joined the "66 Group" in the "Small Ghetto" and became one of ŻOB's active members.

Within this organisation, he was given the responsible and dangerous task of taking groups of fighters to the Koniecpol woods, as well as of purchasing armaments on the "Aryan" side. He was also among those brave, Jewish combatants who freed Hipek Hajman. He perished during the liquidation of the "Small Ghetto."



Machel Wajskop z''l

Born in Częstochowa in 1920, he was orphaned by his father in infancy, and experienced a difficult childhood. He completed the Professional School. In 1938, he joined the "*HaShomer HaTzair*" movement, where he became an instructor. In the ŻOB in the "Small Ghetto," he particularly excelled in the acquisition of weapons, munitions and German uniforms, which with extraordinary courage he stole from the German gendarmerie's warehouses where he worked. Until after the liquidation of the ghetto, he worked at HASAG, from where he managed to escape in order to join the comrades in the Koniecpol forest. But on his way to the woods, he was killed by the Germans.



Sara Wermut z''l

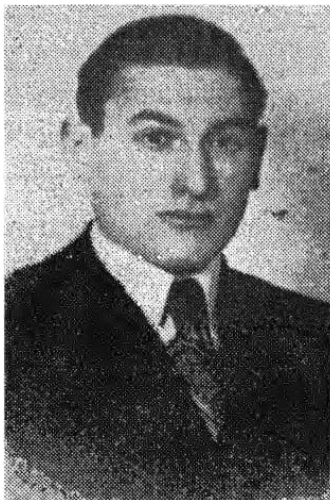
She came from a middle-class Warsaw family. During her studies in secondary school, she joined Ha'Shomer Ha'Tzair. During the War, she belonged to the Ma'apilim first kibbutz of seniors at ul. Nalewki 23 and, in 1942, moved with the kibbutz to Żarki and, from there, to Częstochowa.

Her lust for life and social awareness helped her overcome the immense hardships of life with the kibbutz, as well as in the fighters' commune in Częstochowa. She fell together with the last group of fighters to emerge from the underground passage on ul. Garncarska.

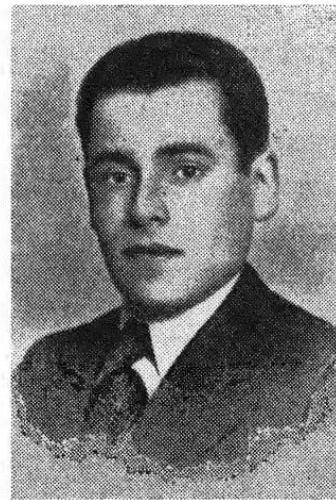
Moniek Wilinger z''l



Jerzyk Zborowski z''l



Natan Zborowski z''l





Izrael Dawid ("Srulek") Tenenbaum z''l

The son of Kune Zorach and Sara Chana, he was born in 1920, and graduated from the Professional School. From boyhood, he was an active member of the Zionist movement and was also the leader of the "Zionist Youth" movement's cell.

His personality exuded liveliness and amiability, which always pervaded his surroundings with the joy of action and enthusiasm.

With the outbreak of the Second World War and the Nazi occupation of Poland, he served as contact person between the "Zionist Youth" organisations in provincial towns. Equipped with "Aryan" papers and armed with a pistol, he travelled regularly, putting his own life at risk, on the Warsaw-Sosnowiec railway line.



In the Częstochowa ghetto, he organised an armed group to go to the forest and, nearing the liquidation of the ghetto, he went with his wife Natka and his group to the woods near Przyrów.

Filled with a sense of self-respect, he used to say, "I will not be oppressed and humiliated down to the ground. They will not take my life cheaply". And, indeed, he did not sell his life cheaply. During one of his infiltrations into the ghetto, he was caught by two S.S. men, with whom he fought, until he was overpowered and slain. He was very young, just 23, when his thread of life was cut off.



Heniek Tencer z''l

With the onset of the War, Częstochowa was among the few cities in Poland in which there remained a large number of young activists who began to organise underground operations, in preparation towards a general, resistance movement.

Heniek Tencer was also among the organisers of this movement - the grandson of the renowned Częstochowa resident, Mr Zysser. Already in pre-War times, he was a member of the Communist Party and was incarcerated on several occasions for communist activity. During a certain period, he was also sent to the well-known camp for political prisoners in Kartuz-Bereza.

After he was released from the camp, Heniek Tencer studied Law at the University of Warsaw. With the outbreak of the War, he moved to Lwów, which had been conquered by the Russian army. He returned from there to his hometown, when the city fell to the Germans. In October 1942, in the thick of the Great Deportation, Tencer organised, together with other both political and non-political activists, a combat unit at the *Möbellager*.

Following the liquidation of the "Big Ghetto", Tencer lived on the "Aryan side". But, once the "Small Ghetto" was established, he returned and became one of the organisers of the "66 Group". During that period, he took upon himself the difficult and hazardous task of acquiring arms and organising partisan groups. One time, when he went out to the "Aryan side", Poles denounced him and he fell into the hands of the Gestapo men, who murdered him.



Martel Lewkowicz z''l

Born in Częstochowa in 1920, he was orphaned in infancy and experienced a difficult childhood. He completed the Professional School. In 1938, he joined the *Ha'Shomer Ha'Tzair* movement, where he became an instructor. In the ŻOB in the "Small Ghetto", he particularly excelled in the acquisition of weapons, munitions and German uniforms which, with extraordinary courage, he stole from the German gendarmerie's warehouses where he worked. Until after the liquidation of the ghetto, he worked at HASAG, from where he managed to escape in order to join the comrades in the Koniecpol forest. But, on his way to the woods, he was killed by the Germans⁴⁹.



Mojsze Lubling z''l

He was born in 1902 in the town of Wolbrom, in the Kielce district, where he received a traditional education, in *cheder* and in the study-hall. In the days of the First World War and the Austrian occupation, he joined a Zionist youth group similar in character to the *Ha'Shomer* scouts.

Upon reaching adulthood, he joined *Poalei Zion* [the Socialist Jewish Labour Party], in which he occupied a prominent position in the different localities where he lived. In 1929, he was arrested in Katowice by the Polish police for participating in a demonstration against the British Consulate, in protest of the events in Palestine. Before the Second World War, when he lived in Sosnowiec. He was the secretary of the League for a Working Land of Israel and, with the German invasion of Poland in September 1939, he was forced to flee. In November 1939, he arrived with his family in Częstochowa and fell on hard times, for the lack of means of livelihood.

He began organising the workers and, from this, was born the body known as the *Arbeiterrat* ["Workers' Council"]. Mojsze Lubling, who was the organisation's chairman, did not suffice with only dealing with the monetary claims, but also saw to the organisation of cultural life and helped to establish the *kibbutzim* of the pioneering youth movements in Częstochowa. He rallied the radical intelligentsia of Częstochowa around him, from which was born the city's resistance movement. The *Judenrat* persecuted him for this and he was arrested by the Jewish police several times.

When the first news came of the annihilation of entire Jewish communities, he issued a call to rise up against the Nazis with weapons in the hands, as an honourable way out. The vagueness of this information, and the lack of opportunities to obtain arms, prevented any large-scale operation. At the close of *Yom Kippur*, when the end had come for the Jews of Częstochowa, the last meeting of the *Arbeiterrat* was held, in presence of the author Zytnicki. At this meeting, it was proposed to leave the ghetto and to contact the Polish Resistance, with which he was connected. However, he refused to relinquish the ghetto. Although, during the *akcja*, he had the opportunity to remain inside the ghetto, he chose to go with his wife and daughter to Treblinka, where he worked in the clothes storeroom. Upon seeing the carnage in Treblinka, he sent a letter to Częstochowa, urging the people to engage in armed conflict against the Nazis. He was once offered [the chance] to escape from Treblinka with a forged certificate, but he preferred to stay in the camp to organise an uprising there. And, indeed, later, a rebellion in Treblinka broke out, with Lubling at the head of the rebels in the camp. He met a warrior's death on 2nd August 1943.



⁴⁹ [TN: This article is word by word exactly the same as above on col. 298 about Machel Wajskop. It is unclear whether this is a misprint, or if the two men actually shared the very same circumstances.]

Zvi Lustiger z''l

Born in 1924, he was educated in the *Ha'Shomer Ha'Tzair* movement. In the "Small Ghetto", he joined the movement's collective at the shared premises of the *kibbutz* at ul. Garncarska 71.

In everyday life, we saw him as introverted and modest and we were quite surprised to see him volunteering for every audacious mission. He glowed with joy when he managed to convince us to add him to the delegation on the eve of 4th January 1943 to Radomsko, to bring aid and encouragement to our comrades, the combatants who were being sent to Treblinka, following the first attempt to defend the ghetto by force.



One could see the delight in his face when he was appointed leader of the group that set out to sabotage the railway tracks in the area. As is known, the mission was unsuccessful. Zvi, wounded and gushing with blood, was the only one to fall into the hands of the enemy. We feared for him, because we knew what he would face. We were worried about the Gestapo's cruel torture. Would he crumble? But Zvi was not broken - he endured with sublime heroism. At first, he was taken to hospital and, only once he had recovered from his injuries, did the questioning and torture begin. Eyewitnesses told that he was almost cut to pieces when they demanded of him to reveal his commanders [and] the plans and goals of the organisation. But Zvi withstood the torture and he died without revealing anything.



Pinkus Samsonowicz z''l

He was a dynamic and ebullient man, who projected his personality on all his surroundings and inspired us with hope, even in our darkest hours. He inflamed us youngsters - the boys and girls of the Nadrzeczna "66 Group" - to deeds and operations to defend the honour of our People and his name will remain forever etched into the memories of all our townspeople who survived.

This quiet and modest young man knew no tiredness and one could find him anywhere an operation was required or an organisation took form. The amalgamation of his physical and spiritual power was just like the "Book and Sword"⁵⁰ and strengthened his firm stance in the struggle against the German legions.



Pinek drew his inspiration from within his own nature, for he had been rebellious from the dawn of his youth. Despite not having a sense of nationalistic Life, his very first steps were to approach a Zionist youth movement. Being a driven and dynamic man of action, he thought at the time that the appropriate framework for him would be "*Betar*" and there, his full energy developed.

At the Jewish high school, he was an excellent student, but he sometimes rebelled against his teachers and educators. It was at school that he met his girlfriend, Sala Sibek, a young lady full of temperament, whose character fitted his own. The War, and the events that came in its wake, brought Pinek to Sala Sibek's camp. But the tragic fate that she met, as one of the first victims transported to their deaths

⁵⁰ [TN: Reference to a concept which appears in many ancient Jewish sources – the Sword and the Book, although seemingly contradictory, "came down from heaven intertwined."]

in the days of the ghetto's liquidation, made him a broken man and left him lonely and crushed. All the beauty of life, which he had only begun to know, was taken away from him. From that time, he focused his entire energy on fighting the enemy.

As a combatant in the ranks of the organisation, he displayed great aptitude and unlimited selfless devotion.

He fell in combat in one of the operations, defending the honour of the Jewish People. We shall never forget his personality and deeds.

A.D.



Harry Potaszewicz z''l

With the outbreak of the Second World War, Harry Potaszewicz was fighting in the Polish army against the Germans at the Modlin front. As attested to by [his] comrades, he showed exemplary bravery and self-control in battle. When he returned to Częstochowa, after a month of fighting, he began working in his parents' printing-press. But the Germans requisitioned it and Harry was left unemployed.

Afterwards, he fell ill with typhus and was hospitalised. Once recovered, he began working as the manager of the community's workers' kitchen. As such, he encountered severe problems regarding the scarcity of supplies but, with his excellent organisational talents, he managed to overcome these difficulties.

When the idea of organising in order to fight the Germans was first put forward, Harry stood at the head of the group of initiators, which included S. Kuperszmit, Nik Groman and the members of *Ha'Shomer Ha'Tzair's* agricultural training farm. The group's primary concern was to acquire weaponry, but they had no financial means to invest towards this goal. As manager of the kitchen, Harry managed, in exchange for foodstuffs, to obtain from Ukrainians, several revolvers and other weapons, which were hidden inside loaves of bread or other comestibles. After a while, it became necessary to find alternative methods of concealment, as Degenhardt and Unkelbach would visit the kitchen frequently and selections often followed these visits.

In 1943, announcements appeared, calling upon Jews to sign up to emigrate to the Land of Israel. Despite Harry and his friends' disapproval, many signed up. They were, of course, tricked by the Germans and were shot. Meanwhile, rumours came regarding the imminent liquidation of the "Small Ghetto" and Harry Potaszewicz and his five friends left the labour camp. We maintained contact with him for a while, but that was later discontinued.

When I was already in Italy in 1945, I found out about Harry's last moments. He and his five friends decided to escape with the aid of a German, who had promised to drive them outside the city in a freight vehicle. But instead of taking them to a safe location, from where they intended to join the partisans, he took them to the Gestapo. Harry was viciously tortured, because they knew him to be the group's leader. The Gestapo demanded of him the names of partisans, but he stoically refused. He sent word to his brother, with a Polish constable, that he would be killed, rather than reveal names. And, indeed, he kept his promise - he put an end to his own life, without revealing anything to the enemy.



Lipek Potaszewicz z''/

Lipek was born in 1920 in Częstochowa. From his youth, he was a member of *Hapoel*. In the ghetto, he was given the task of digging underground passages. The death of his brother Harry, who was savagely tortured at the hands of the Gestapo, brought about a great depression in him, which never loosened its grip. Following the liquidation of the ghetto, he arrived in HASAG-Pelcery, where he died of typhus.



The Fajgenbaum Brothers z''/

Pinkus was born in 1915 and Aba in 1920, in the town of Parczew, Lublin Province. Pinkus leaned towards *Betar*, whilst Aba was a member of *Gordonia*.

In January 1942, they were both able to escape from the hands of the Gestapo and, in perilous ways, reach the Warsaw ghetto. In August 1942, the two brothers arrived with fake documents in Częstochowa, where it was still relatively quiet. They worked in the HASAG factories and, when the selections took place, they managed to hide for several weeks.

When the "Small Ghetto" was set up, they joined the *kibbutz* on ul. Garcarska. They would both sometimes go to work outside the city, escorted by guards, and they were in contact with the underground movement. But, two weeks before the liquidation of the Częstochowa ghetto, a group of S.S.



Aba Fajgenbaum



Pinkus Fajgenbaum

men arrived unexpectedly and, during a surprise search, they found a newspaper of the Polish Resistance in Aba's possession, which brought about his immediate arrest. The attempt to smuggle in a pistol to him was unsuccessful, but they did manage to procure potassium cyanide poison for him. A Pole, who had sat with him in gaol, later recounted that Aba had indeed taken his own life with the poison, without having exposed anyone.

One day, before the ghetto's liquidation, a group of resistance members – with Pinkus among them – was standing near the entrance to the ghetto. The atmosphere was tense. There was a feeling of impending doom. The order of the moment was that if any suspicious preparations were perceived on the outside, the fighters were to present themselves at the general command's bunker, to be equipped with weapons.

Several cars of S.S. men, with guns cocked, suddenly appeared and stormed into the ghetto at high speed. The men of the underground began running towards the bunker. The murderers also probably knew about the underground's place, because they, too, turned in the bunker's direction, shooting any people who happened in their way. Pinkus ran to the bunker together with Ziskind Szmulewicz. Ziskind managed to jump into an abandoned room and saw from, the slit of the shutters, how Pinkus suddenly turned around, fell upon one of the soldiers with his bare hands and made a desperate attempt to strangle him. He was assaulted by the other murderers and fell, drenched in blood.



Izio Fajner (Faia) z''l

He was born in Częstochowa, where he completed high school prior to the outbreak of the War. His frequent conversations with Mendel Fiszlewicz, who had returned from Treblinka with the horrifying news of the annihilation of our People, moved him to dedicate himself to the cause of rebellion and of saving our People's honour.

At the end of 1942, he joined the "66 Group" and, by smuggling foodstuffs into the ghetto and selling them, he and his friends raised money for acquisitions [of weaponry]. On 4th January 1943, the Germans surrounded the ghetto to carry out a new "*akcja*". Faia, with several of the organisation's members who were inside the ghetto at the time, decided to go to the place where the population was being concentrated and act as circumstances would dictate. Once they realised that the end was nigh, they decided to act then and there!

Mendel Fiszlewicz sprung from the rows, with pistol drawn, towards the fiend Rohn, but the pistol malfunctioned. At the same moment, Faia fell upon Lieutenant Sapport with a knife and wounded him. Panic broke out in the German ranks, who had not expected such a response from the Jews. Some of the Jews took advantage of the panic and fled in all directions. But the Germans recovered straight away and began shooting people. The first round hit Faia, who fell to the ground seriously injured. The Germans left him dying for several hours, until he had breathed his last. The heroic deaths of these two warriors stoked the fire of rebellion in the Częstochowa ghetto, which did not die down to its last days and continued smouldering with its liquidation.

Fajner was buried inside the ghetto and, after the War, his bones were reburied in the Jewish cemetery, where a monument in commemoration of the heroes was erected.



Mendel Fiszlewicz z''l

Born in 1922 in Radomsko, he completed high school there and was active in youth organisations. In the Great Deportation from Radomsko, he was sent to Treblinka, where he witnessed the mass annihilation in the death camp. He managed to escape and, in November 1942, arrived in the "Small Ghetto" in Częstochowa, where he warned against complacency and called for revenge on the Germans.

His firm determination to act found a sympathetic ear amongst the youth of the "Small Ghetto". On 4th January 1943, the Germans organised an *akcja*, which was overseen by the murderers, Lieutenants Rohn and Sapport. The group gathered to hold counsel in an attic and resolved to oppose the Germans' plan by force.

Mendel Fiszlewicz drew the organisation's only pistol and pointed it at Lieutenant Rohn but, unfortunately, it malfunctioned. Once the Germans had recovered from the panic, they shot Mendel, who fell, gushing blood. The Germans took twenty-five people from the rows and shot them against the wall in front of all those assembled. Several hundred people, among them elderly and children, were sent to the Radomsko ghetto and were added to the transport to Treblinka.

Mendel fulfilled the testament of the Treblinka martyrs and raised the flag of rebellion in Częstochowa.



Lolek Frankenberg (Franczek) z''l

He was born in 1925. When he was just seventeen, he was already known in the "Small Ghetto" as one of the ŻOB's livelier characters. He joined the "66 Group", whose framework suited his aspirations - to fight the invaders.

Due to his Aryan appearance, he took upon himself dangerous missions outside the ghetto and, together with Mietek Ferleger, was active in operations to acquire weaponry.

On one of the operations, he was stopped by a railway guard (*Bahnschutz*), who recognised him as a Jew. Frankenberg tricked the guard into going with him to the toilet, where he strangled him with his bare hands.

After Mietek Ferleger was killed, the entire responsibility of acquiring weapons was laid upon Franczek's shoulders. Putting himself in constant danger, he moved between the ghetto and the Aryan side in order to carry out the tasks he was given. He was in the group of members which waited outside the ghetto for the Polish contact people, who had promised to lead them to the partisans. The Poles did not keep their promises, and they were forced to return to the ghetto.

When Hipek Hajman was arrested, Frondek was in the group that set Hipek and his comrades-at-arms free. On 25th June 1943, Franczek left the ghetto through an underground passage to meet with a member of the general command, Sumek Abramowicz, and to reach the Koniecpol group - the ŻOB's base outside the ghetto. He did succeed in passing through the tunnel to the "Aryan side" but, since then, all traces of him disappeared.



Wolf Pressman z''l

Wolf was born in Częstochowa in 1913. He was a member of *Poalei Zion*. In the ghetto, he was engaged in digging tunnels and other operations. He withstood innumerable hardships and perils, until it seemed that the "Day of Liberation" was nigh. But Fate was cruel with him and he met his demise, literally, on the threshold of Liberation. He died during the infamous Death March (to Germany).



Szlamek Kaufman (Mikros) z''l

He was born in 1920 and, already in his childhood, he displayed his love for natural [science], closeting himself in his room, which became like a laboratory. There was nothing in nature in which he was not interested, particularly in insects, butterflies and plants.

But not just this. Already in primary school, he was such an expert on electricity, that he was able to build a radio receiver and transmitter with his own hands. At the Jewish high school, Szlamek was distinguished for his talents. His extraordinary characteristics were so outstanding that, more than once, they



put his teachers in an awkward situation. He sometimes developed ideas in which world-famous researchers were engaged and everyone envisaged a brilliant future for him. However, his youth was veiled in sadness for having lost his mother, an event which cast its shadow on his whole life. He always went about sad.

In 1939, Szlamek was about to travel to Paris to continue his studies, but the outbreak of the War put an end to all his dreams. He experienced the hardships of the war, until the Great Deportation in September 1942, together with all the Jews of Częstochowa. He suffered in their suffering, struggled to maintain the family and felt the painful shame of the humiliation which the Nazi enemy had brought with his invasion of Poland. With the foundation of ŻOB in the "Small Ghetto", when the necessity arose to manufacture weapons for the defence of the ghetto, Mikros was the only one who took it upon himself to solve the complicated problems this entailed - problems which experienced engineers, chemists and technicians did not know how to solve. We wondered how his frail body had the strength to withstand the colossal effort which continued for months - spending sleepless nights in cellars and attics, which served as laboratories for conducting experiments.

Conditions were oppressive, the gases suffocating, but Szlamek persevered with his fierce willpower, until reaching the goal, proving that, even in the ghetto, grenades, Molotov cocktails, etc. could be produced. "We will no longer go as sheep to the slaughter", he said, and a smile of joy appeared on his features when he found out that the first grenade made had been tested successfully.

These results inflamed him to continue working and his enthusiasm infected and swept up his friends, [pushing them] to make greater efforts. New ideas sprouted in his genius mind. He attempted to manufacture dynamite - nitro-glycerine. His experiments were progressing well, but the ghetto's sudden liquidation put an end to all hope. Mikros was transferred to the Raków labour camp, where he met with a handful of ŻOB members, who continued the struggle after having recovered. He became the source of inspiration of daring sabotage schemes inside the great factory, where thousands of Polish labourers worked.

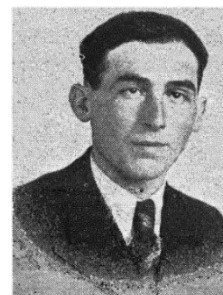
One day, before the city was liberated by the Russians, Szlamek was deported, together with all the camp's Jews, to the Buchenwald camp. He experienced the Death March and was one of the few who lived to see the Germans defeated. But the teeth of destruction left their mark on him and he returned to his city of birth, Częstochowa, a sick man. Unable to find his place there, he moved to Wrocław. The new life around him was indeed effervescent, but he remained on his own. He could not adapt to the new society and, in tragic circumstances, his *Thread of Life* was severed in 1947. Forever in our memories, he will remain gentle and pure of spirit.



Dawid Kantor z''l

Dawid was born in 1914 and was a member of the *Betar* movement. In the ghetto, he joined the ŻOB and was especially active in raising funds.

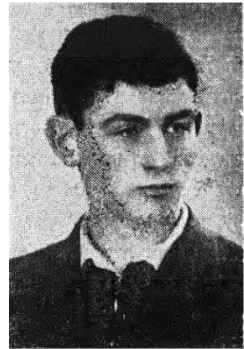
On 6th January [1945], prior to the arrival of the Russian army, he was sent from Raków to Germany, where he was murdered.



Josek Kantor z''/

Born in 1918 in Częstochowa and, from his youth – the age of 12, to be precise – he was a member of *Ha'Shomer Ha'Tzair*," and took a part in its activities with great vigour. Even in the "Big Ghetto" he was active in the movement, despite the great difficulties.

When the ŻOB was founded, he joined its ranks and carried out all the missions he was given in an exemplary manner. His responsibilities were building the tunnels and bunkers and seeing to their camouflaging. The people under his command worked devotedly day and night, stripped to the waist, and they took the soil out literally with their fingernails. He succeeded in raising funds for ŻOB using persuasion and, at the hour of need, by other means also.



When the Germans suddenly stormed the ghetto, Józef ran towards the bunker to avail himself of a weapon from [the arsenal] there, but he was unable to reach it in time and fell, ravaged by the enemy's bullet. Before the German shot him, Józef showed the contempt he had for the Nazi and spat in his face.



Szmul Kozuch z''/

Szmul was born in 1918 and was a tailor by trade. During the ghetto period, in which groups organised for defence operations, Szmul took part in the digging of tunnels in the "Small Ghetto". He was engaged in this labour until the liquidation of the ghetto, in which he died, together with many others. His father was among the first victims of the Częstochowa Jewish population. He was murdered on "Bloody Monday", at ul. Garncarska 1.



Janek Krauze z''/

Born in Częstochowa in 1919, he was the son of Zisman Krauze. After completing primary school, he learned metalwork at the Crafts School on ul. Garncarska. From his youth, he was a member of "Zionist Youth" and of the "Maccabi" sports organisation.

When ŻOB was established, Janek joined its ranks and participated in various retaliatory operations against the Germans. He stood at the head of a group of fighters who attacked [a unit of] the German gendarmerie guard, took their weapons and uniforms and then burnt all the documents.

Another operation, in which Janek took part, caused great amazement throughout Poland. One day in April 1943, a group of ten members of the "People's Army" (A.L. – *Armia Ludowa*), headed by Janek, robbed the government bank in Częstochowa. Dressed in Polish military uniforms, which they had obtained by breaking into the Hajniger launderette two weeks before the operation. The group arrived at the scene of the mission in a van. They blockaded the street on both sides of the bank with sentries, they broke in and took over two million *złoty* from the till, as well as all kinds of valuables.

The German gendarmerie - all of it - was mustered against this partisan group, but all efforts were in vain.

Again, this time on 18th March 1943, another large-scale operation was planned against a German train which was loaded with munitions. The operation was based at the "*Möbellager*," at ul. Wilsona 20/22, where resistance member Michał Birencwajg worked. However, an unexpected event caused a serious mishap - an eleven-year-old boy, named Kongrecki, emerged from his hiding-place near the location and was seen by a German policeman, who beat him murderously so that he should reveal where he was living. The boy did not withstand the torture and he revealed that he was living, with his mother, in one of the bunkers at the furniture storeroom. The S.S. men suddenly stormed the bunker and found the partisans there, who were not able to put up an opposition in time. One of them managed to escape, whilst the other six, including Janek Krauze, were taken in chains to the Gestapo. They were severely tortured in order to reveal the source of the weaponry found in the bunker, but they said nothing. On the following day, they were led to the cemetery and ordered to dig graves. They refused to carry out these orders and so were cruelly beaten and shot on the spot.

After the War, the Częstochowa Jewish Council found the burial site and, on it, erected a monument in commemoration of the heroes.



Kuba Rypsztajn z''l

He was one of the prominent members of the city's Communist Party's "Young Guard". He served as the primary contact person between the members of his group (Nadrzeczna 66) and the *kibbutz*. He was also active inside the ghetto and firmly demanded to open fire on the Germans, even during the selection of the elderly and children. Later, he went out to the Koniecpol group, where he met his death during a murderous attack, on Jewish partisans, by the fascist bands of the Polish N.S.Z.



Duwid'l Rypsztajn z''l – The Nightingale of the Ghetto

The voice of Duwid'l warmed our hearts in those cold and stormy days, when we sat in the *Valley of Tears*. He ignited, within us, a spark of hope, when all hope had run out. He continued singing in a place which the birds had relinquished and it was as if his voice wished to disperse the clouds looming over the *Valley of Death*.

In a small group, we would sit during the long nights, as the voice of "The Nightingale of the Ghetto" poured forth from within the silence, reminding us that, in the bitter reality, there was still both good and beauty. Among us were people of strong spirits, such as the very accomplished Pinek Samsonowicz and others, the corners of whose eyes became moist listening to Duwid'l's delicate voice. Such was Duwid'l's strength, that his figure will accompany us to the *End of Days*.

One cannot imagine the atmosphere of hope and uplifted spirits which people like Duwid'l and Pinek created around us, with whom we shared even our meagre berth, when we lived together for some time and with whom we bonded, heart and soul.

After our third friend, the hero Pinek Samsonowicz fell in battle, I continued our friendship with Duwid'l and our life together at HASAG, as formerly. From time to time, we heard his singing at our

communal meals – which were very special experiences for us within the restricted life in HASAG. And I cannot deny that we were drawn to his song in the same manner that the religious Jews are drawn to prayer services.

Despite the brevity of the break at work and the distance (we did not work at the same place), everyone brought his meagre rations and handed them over to Różka, who prepared delicious meals with them.

When we all sat together at the table, feeling as one family. The atmosphere was festive. Duwid'ł raised his fine voice in song and the stories continued - story followed story - while memories emerged of dear days and of friends, who once had been and were no more.

Duwid'ł was short and frail but, in our eyes, he was big and strong. His spirit fortified and encouraged others. After some time, he contracted an illness in HASAG, which worsened increasingly, until he was transferred to Cześćochowianka and died soon afterwards. We will remember him lovingly.

Ajzik Diamant



Zvi Rapaport z''l

Zvi was born in 1914 and, in his youth, joined the “Gordonia” movement. When the Cześćochowa Jews were moved into the ghetto, he dedicated himself to underground activities, especially to making fake documents. Thanks to his proficiency and experience in this field, it was possible to provide proper paper to contact people and to groups, who were sent on dangerous missions to Będzin. He continued operating until near the period of the ghetto's liquidation, in which he perished together with the multitudes of the House of Israel.



Aron Szwarc z''l

He was born in 1922 in Żarki, next to Cześćochowa. While still a boy, he joined the *Ha'Shomer Ha'Tzair* movement and was educated towards fulfilling its ideals. He had a cheerful, brave nature and was easy to get along with. These traits stood out even more intensely during the War. His concern for his friends always disturbed his rest and, when he was during the war years at the *Ha'Ma'apilim* kibbutz in Żarki, he would risk his life on a daily basis to come to his comrades' aid.

During a certain period, Jewish institutions appointed him to serve as messenger to deliver urgent news, a duty which Aron carried out with the utmost commitment. Many times, his [timely] warnings stood people in good stead, so as to extricate themselves from perilous situations.

Following the *akcja* in Żarki, Aron arrived in Cześćochowa's “Small Ghetto”, where he joined the ŻOB, in which, loyally and devotedly, he carried out the tasks he was given - acquisition [of weaponry], digging tunnels, and suchlike matters. After a short while, he was sent to the Koniecpol group and, in one of the group's operations, he fell to the bullets of the Polish N.S.Z. bands.



Aron Sztrausberg z''l

He was born in Częstochowa, in February 1914, to a family with many children. Once he had completed his primary school studies, he began working to help the family. Everyone perished - his parents, his oldest sister and her family, as well as his younger brother - and he moved into the "Small Ghetto."



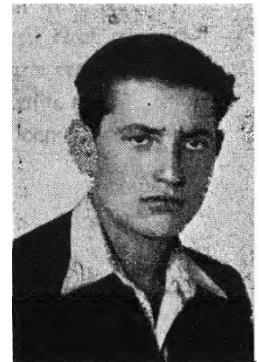
When groups of ŻOB fighters were set up, he tried in vain to go out to the woods. One day, the Germans chose a group of workers to be sent to the infamous Skarżysko[-Kamienna] camp, and Aron was among them. He worked in this camp for about two months and, in the letters which arrived from there, he expressed his hopes to be able to return.

And in fact, in April 1943, he succeeded in escaping from the camp with two worker-colleagues (the name of one of them is known - Altman). But they were caught and brought back. At the prisoners' rollcall, they were brought to the large yard and publicly executed - as a warning to the other prisoners.



Leizer Szydlowski z''l

He was born in 1921 in Mstów, next to Częstochowa, into a distinctly Chassidic home. After completing the Professional School, he continued studying the practical subjects. From an early age, he belonged to the "Betar" movement and, during the course of his activity, he showed leadership talents, which eventually brought him to the position of local "Betar" commander.



In the area where he lived, which was mostly antisemitic, Leizer-Leon was not deterred by clashes with Poles over his being Jewish. He was noted for his gladness of heart and his readiness to always extend aid to others.

When he was in the "Small Ghetto" in Częstochowa, with effort, he worked his way into the ranks of the combatants. With his vigour and powers of judgment, he stood at the head of the group of fighters in raising funds by any means. Within the ranks of the partisans in the Koniecpol forest, he displayed instructional skills and was popular with everyone. In one of the operations, he was seriously injured by Polish partisans, while his comrades were all killed. Once he had recovered from his injuries, he returned to the ranks of the famous Commander "Garbaty's" partisans and, during a siege which the Germans had placed upon the group, he fell in battle.



Izaak Sieradzki z''l

Izaak was born in 1913 in Częstochowa. He was among the first in the *Poalei Zion* party and was an active member of the ghetto's underground. Nothing is known of his activities within the lines of fighters, except that he was killed in the Żłoty Potok woods.



Szlojme (Szlamek) son of Chaim Szajn z''l

Szlojme was born in Częstochowa, on 14th February 1920, to Chaim and Perla (*née* Sztal).

My brother Szlamek was the fourth son in our family – a family of prosperous and respected merchants, who conducted a warm, religious and Jewish household. But it was only natural that, in a Zionist home, with father being a public figure who donated to Jewish institutions and funds, that the sons should grow up in an atmosphere of Zionist activism and implementation.



From the dawn of his youth, he belonged to the “Zionist Youth” movement and, in his aspiration to emigrate to the Land [of Israel], he prepared himself for physical and productive labour, which he intended to engage in in the Land of Israel. He therefore went to work as a professional labourer in a metal factory.

With the onset of the World War and the entry of the Germans into Częstochowa, he found himself together with all of us in the ghetto and, in 1942 - during the liquidation of the “Big Ghetto”, he was sent to work in the furniture warehouse, which was under management of Machel Birencwajg *hy''d*.

In the winter of 1942-43, an underground group began organising in the “Small Ghetto”, and it was only natural that Szlamek should be among them. He went out as a pioneer to the nearby forest with a small group of youths and they were the first partisans to leave from the ghetto to the woods with weapons in their hands - [weapons] which, although low in quality and quantity, were precious to them. He eventually finished up in the Skarżysko[-Kamienna] camp, where he was murdered.

His Brother



Awigdor Szyldhaus z''l

Awigdor was born in 1913 in Częstochowa and was a painter by trade. Being a dynamic and resourceful man, the Jewish Resistance tasked him with being engaged in the field of the organisation's intelligence and this activity of his was crowned with substantial successes.

Details of his exploits are unknown, except for the fact that he was killed during the liquidation of the ghetto.



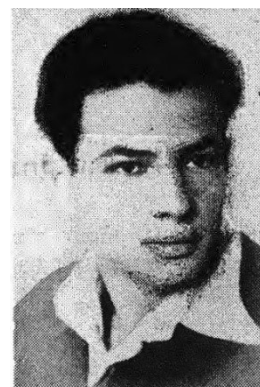
Leizer Szmulewicz (Malay) z''l

Known by his nickname “Malay,” he was born in Częstochowa in 1915 to Lewi Szmulewicz, a grain merchant. Leizer received a typical religious education, studying at Reb Jechiel Grylak's *cheder*. He later joined the *Ha'Shomer Ha'Tzair* movement and, thanks to his dedicated involvement, he secured a prominent position in the leadership of the cell and [also] in the entire movement.

At fifteen, he began learning the printing trade at the Potaszewicz printi-works and he later worked for the renowned Zionist periodical *Unser Weg*. As part of his Zionist activism, he went to the town of

Mława for training, in preparation for emigration to the Land of Israel. As the result of the heavy workload with which he was burdened, he fell ill and underwent an operation, which compelled him to return home.

Following his recovery, he continued his training at the *Ha'Shomer Ha'Tzair* agricultural school in his place of residence. In the infamous Cześćochowa pogrom, which took place as a consequence of the Pendrak-Baran dispute, Leizer was one of the organisers of the illegal "Workers' Council", whose aim it was, among other things, to extend aid to the families of the labourers working in forced labour.



In the mass deportation in September 1942, Leizer's family was also sent to the Treblinka extermination camp, whereas he and his younger brother were transferred to the HASAG camp, where he carried on with his underground activities. After three months, the people at HASAG were moved to the "Small Ghetto", where he and his brother joined the *kibbutz* on ul. Nadrzeczna, which was the centre of the Resistance's operations. Leizer was part of the organisation's technical unit, which engaged in digging underground passages leading outside the ghetto and in the production of quality explosives and hand-grenades.

On 24th July 1943, two days prior to the liquidation of the "Small Ghetto", an S.S. group headed by the hangman Degenhardt fell upon the ghetto, searching for members of the Szymulewicz family. Leizer, who was outside the ghetto at the time, and knew nothing of what was happening inside it, was asked his name at the gate and was then arrested on the spot. Headquarters at once organised an armed group, which was tasked with freeing Leizer. However, due to the final liquidation and the deciding battle, the operation was not carried out. Leizer Szymulewicz fell as a hero in his war against the Nazis.



Izrael Icze Szymonowicz⁵¹ ז"ל

Szymonowicz did not start on his path as a warrior with the Resistance in the ghetto. He joined the ŻOB, having had many years of experience on the battlefield.

In fact, Szymonowicz, had already begun fighting for his existence at the dawn of his youth. As the eldest son of a traditional Jewish family, he bore the main brunt of the education of his four younger siblings and was forced, from an early age, to work as a tailor in order to help sustain his impoverished family.

This stressful situation drove him to realise that he should join the ranks of soldiers for a better future. That being said, Szymonowicz understood that it is not enough to fight for one's physical existence, but that a struggle must also be conducted in the national-political [viz. Zionist] arena and, in this spirit of fusion, he found his way to the *Poalei Zion*-Left organisation. As he had come to realise, it is impossible to separate the interests of the classes from the National Question, and he began to occupy a place in the front row of activists of the Professional Union, in the tailors' branch.

After a hard day's work, he did not wish to rest but, instead, went to the stock exchange next to Kajsler's building in the Nowy Rynek [New Market], where he held conversations with day-labourers, who put forth their troubles and hardships to him.

⁵¹ [TN: At the ŻOB Monument in Cześćochowa, the surname is spelt "Szymanowicz."]

He organised courses for labourers at the schools. For many years, he was chairman of the *Stern* (Star) sports union [and] often took part in political debates at the *Ha'Shomer Ha'Tzair* training farm.

Nearing the onset of the Second World War, when the Nazi beast had begun to show its claws, Szymonowicz dedicated himself, with all his soul's passion, to assisting the refugees who had been settled in the border-city of Zbąszyń.

When the War broke out and the Nazis entered Częstochowa, there were many public figures who saved themselves by escaping to the east, but Szymonowicz could not part with his beloved family.

When we met in 1940, I found him emotionally broken. But this did not last long and he threw himself, with colossal momentum, into information work.

After some time, we began working together at the *Möbellager*, under the management of the unforgettable Michał Birencwajg. It was here, also, that he commenced his underground activity.

Following my escape from Treblinka and return to the "Small Ghetto" in Częstochowa (during this entire period Szymonowicz had maintained uninterrupted contact with ŻOB), he immediately put me in a "five" to carry out underground operations.

Szymonowicz did, in fact, survive the Nazi inferno, but the period of cruel oppression, the resistance and the physical suffering took its toll on him. Immediately after the liberation he fell ill and succumbed [to this illness].

His last words were that he was dying with a light heart, for he had, at least, had the privilege to see the outcome of the War and he was happy that he, too, had had a part in defeating the Nazi beast.

Aron Gelbard



Pola and Dosia Szczekacz z''l

At the end of 1941, the Szczekacz sisters arrived in Częstochowa from Sosnowiec. Pola was twenty and Dosia sixteen.

In the "Small Ghetto", they joined the Nadrzeczna "66 Group" and took an active part in all the organisation's works. Pola was engaged in fundraising and Dosia dedicated herself to the manufacture of weapons in the ghetto. In the cold and the frost, she stood at her post.

During the liquidation of the "Small Ghetto", they both left through the tunnel on ul. Garncarska in order to reach the Koniecpol forest. However, they were spotted and fell into the hands of the Germans, who killed them on the spot.



Dosia Szczekacz

