

WALDFOGEL (WALDVOGEL) Szymon (1887-1920) pseudonym "Fajgele", tailor, Zionist, local government and social activist. He was born in the village of Krzywanice, in the Radomszczański District. He was the son of a farmer.

He spent his childhood in the countryside. When he was five-years-old, his father paid a *melamed*, with whom he studied in the nearby town of Sulmierzyce. In that same town, he soon began training with a local tailor. Thanks to his abilities and work ethic, he became an excellent travelling salesman.

It was during this period that he became interested in current social and political issues. In 1901, he worked in Noworadomsk (Radomsko). There, he joined the Zionist library. The books, which he read there, had a great influence on his later political activity.

In 1903, he came to Częstochowa, where he gained employment. Despite his interest in workers' issues, he did not associate himself with either the Bund or the Zionist-Socialist Workers' Party, which were operating in the area at that time.

When, in the summer of 1904, one of the first *Poalei Zion* organisations was established in Częstochowa, Waldfogel became the leader of the first three members. (→ Mosze Cieszyński also belonged to this group.) He was responsible for propaganda activities. They managed to organise three party groupings, each of ten people. He led the group which organised tearooms and cheap kitchens. (A large tearoom was established, by *Poalei Zion*, in the "Tivoli" garden.)

Following the collapse of the 1905-1907 revolution, being persecuted by the Russian police, he was forced to go abroad. He stayed in Germany, after which he left for Paris, where he remained for several years, working as a tailor. He joined the board of the German-speaking section of the tailors' syndicate in Paris. During his period in exile, he was in close contact with *Poalei Zion* groups overseas.

In 1913, he returned to Częstochowa. Using his experience with Western European parties, he rebuilt the *Poalei Zion* organisation in Częstochowa. Above all, he was involved in the establishment of workers' trade unions. He also worked for the party in other cities.

Following the outbreak of war in 1914, in August and September, he organised workers' self-help institutions in Częstochowa – a tearoom, cheap kitchens, the *Arbeter Hejm* (*Workers' Home*) and an orphanage. He was also co-organiser of a drama club, courses for adult workers and also trade unions.

In 1916, he was co-founder of the “Strzecha Robotnicza” Association¹. In 1917, representing the *Poalei Zion* party, he stood for election (District VI, worker) in the district elections to the City Council. He was unsuccessful. In December 1918, he was a delegate of the Częstochowa organisation to the first party congress. In 1918, in Zagłębie Dąbrowskie, he organised the first regional conference of *Poalei Zion*. In 1919, representing that party, he entered the Częstochowa City Council.

In Częstochowa, he lived at ul. Kościuszki 13. He soon after moved to work in Sosnowiec, where he was also active in party work, travelling around the Zagłębie Dąbrowskie region.

Contracting typhus, he died on 11th February 1920 in Sosnowiec.

Czenstochower Jidn, pp. 144, 145, 146, 149, XXXV; Mielczarek, *Organizacje robotnicze partii żydowskich*, p. 50; Mizgalski, *Tożsamość polityczna*, p. 164; Sobalski, *Związki zawodowe, stowarzyszenia*, p. 137; Urbanowicz, *Rzemiosło*, p. 263. – “Goniec Częstochowski” 1917, No. 20, p. 4. – APCz, Mag Cz 5026, k. 8.

Wiesław Paszkowski

¹ [TN: “Strzecha Robotnicza” Association intended “to improve and beautify the lives of the workers, to carry out activities among them, which were aimed at raising the awareness of their tasks and goals through the organization of libraries, reading rooms, lectures and discussion evenings, courses, choirs, orchestras and drama section. received permission for registration from the provincial office. The authorities refused to register it or its branches due to the young age of its founders and their “Bolshevik” or “Communist opinions”.]