



The larger part of Josef's *landsleit*, who were the survivors of Hitler's hell themselves, lived in different cities throughout America and Canada. [And] now, there were also Jews from Warta in the State of Israel. They came to the realisation that they needed to meet somewhere from time to time, to deliver reports of their work and fundraising and, concurrently, pay respects to the martyrs of Warta, who were annihilated by the Nazi murderers.

Josef was informed that preparations were being made for such a gathering. At this meeting, honour and recognition would also be given to those who had earned it with their devotion and collecting aid for the survivors.

The *landsleit* notified Josef that the first gathering would be held in his honour, for the 65th anniversary¹ of Josef's communal activity for the common good - both for his years of work in their bygone hometown of Warta, and for the years here in America also. The secretary, writing the letter, begged Josef not to avoid attending this festive gathering, at which it had also been decided to publish a booklet in his honour with articles by *landsleit* and guest writers, who knew about Josef's many years of activity and the work which he had done for the *landsleit* around the globe. This booklet would be dedicated to Josef and his anniversary.

As modest as Josef was, he could not refuse the request of his *landsleit* and friends - particularly as this would help cement the *landsleit* further, and bring them together to act for those in need of aid. Something would also emerge as a result of his anniversary - the work on the book *Warta Jews* would be completed². [As] much still needed to be told in honour of the prematurely severed Jewish life in his hometown, Josef accepted the secretary's proposal. He was aware that there was still enough material to publish, plus the booklet the *landsleit* were planning to print - documents and articles of great historical value. This would be a worthy memorial - a monument to his hometown, which would remain for [all] generations.

The meeting was a great success and, within a short time, the booklet dedicated to Josef was also published. Already at the gathering, the majority of the speakers dwelt on Josef's cultural merits, his energy and devotion to the common good, and the fact that he frequently forgot even his own personal interests.

In particular, they mentioned Josef's work for the book *Warta*, his travelling throughout the country, his public appearances in various cities in America and Canada and, at the end, the great relief [work] which he, along with the *landsleit*, performed for the Surviving Remnant –

¹ [TN: According to the book "Czenstochov" (1958), this gathering (which was certainly not the first organised by the Czenstochower *landsmannschaft* organisations) was held in honour of Federman's 65th birthday and his 50 years of communal activity, which is also made clear here, at the end of the chapter.]

² [TN: Apparently ref. to the publication of "Czenstochov" (1958), which is the sequel to the 1947 book "Czenstochover Yidn". The 1958 work seems to be mentioned further down the page as "Warta". The fact that it and Federman's 65th birthday, which was celebrated in 1957, are mentioned here, obviously indicates that this part was added after the bulk of the manuscript was finished in 1955.]

for the few remaining victims of the Nazi murderers, the surviving Jews of his hometown Warta and the *shtetls* surrounding it.

There was a festive atmosphere in the large hall, where there were hundreds of *landsleit* with their wives and children - even if there were also moments of deep sorrow. This happened when the speakers mentioned the destruction of their hometown and the hundreds of hallowed and pure [martyrs].

To all the laudation and singing of his praises, Josef responded with a brief speech, thanking for the honours he had been given:

“I’m not sure”, he said, “that I truly deserve your giving me so many honours and giving such beautiful speeches about me. While you were speaking, I asked myself - like [I.L.] Peretz’s Bontshe the Silent³ - whether you were actually referring to me.

“Yes”, Josef concluded, “my dear *landsleit*, were it not for the horrific disaster which struck our people sixteen years ago⁴, perhaps you would be honouring someone else, not myself. But that is what Fate willed - that I was saved in time, arrived here and did the work dictated to me by my heart.

“Well, I accept the fine speeches about me with love. All of you deserve a huge thanks for the aid which you, dear *landsleit*, have given and continue to give. You can be particularly proud that you, Jews from Warta, have shown a way to immortalise the spiritual legacy of our forefathers, that other cities in Poland also be redeemed! Nowadays, books are being published, which commemorate these bygone Jewish towns that are no longer here. But they will live on in these memorial books. And it was we, the Jews of Warta, who have given the example of how to do this!”

The crowd applauded Josef’s speech at length. In a festive mood and happy that he had lived to experience that evening, Josef went home with Gołda.

The booklet featured all of Josef’s achievements over the course of his fifty years of cultural and communal activity. It included articles by Yiddish writers who came from Poland, who despite not being from the same town as Josef, were aware of his work for the CISZO⁵ schools in Warta and Warsaw and, before that, of his professional work in organising the trade unions in the two cities.

These memoirs, written by his close friends, gave expression to Josef’s willingness to make sacrifices and his loyalty to the Jewish labourer in Poland and here [in America], as well as his work in editing the book *Warta Jews*.

³ [TN: Protagonist of a short story by the same name. See English translation here: <https://www.yinr.org/wp-content/uploads/Bontsha-the-Silent.pdf>.]

⁴ [TN: As Federman’s 65th birthday was celebrated in 1957, the “sixteen years” are obviously counted from 1942, in which the great majority of the Częstochowa Jews were sent to Treblinka.]

⁵ [TN: Abbreviation of the Polish “Centralna Żydowska Organizacja Szkolna” (Central Yiddish School Organisation).]