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In 1905, during the general strike, in the days of the revolution, Josef was in the ranks of the revolutionaries, who called the strike at the Peltzer & Sons factory. In front of the factory gates, along with his comrades Lajzer, Chaim, Dawid and others, Josef stood with loaded revolvers in his pockets. The police and military arrived, and gunfire ensued. Soldiers, policemen and many revolutionaries fell, including the later legendary hero Józek, of whom the Warta workforce afterwards sang, "*Józek był odważny z partii bojowej*¹" At Józek's grave, Josef bade him farewell, singing the beloved revolutionary song, "*Szalejcie, tyrani*" (*Go Mad, Tyrants*).

Later, when the "Constitution" [October Manifesto] was proclaimed, for a while, the SDKPiL Party went out in the open. The offices of the SDKPiL were on ul. Teatralna. But this freedom was too short and, therefore, very little remained in Josef's memory of the activity in those days. Josef only remembers that, for a short while, the activity was livelier.

During this period, Josef was nearly arrested once. He was saved thanks to Comrade Fajersztajn. At the time, the two of them were walking from the Polish bourse division to ul. Warszawska. It was at an hour when the workers leave the factories. Josef had, with him, "literature" to hand out. Suddenly, a patrol of policemen and soldiers bore down upon Josef and his friend and stopped them. Josef, being the one carrying the "literature", ran away, and his comrade, Fajersztajn, who had nothing on him, remained standing there. Due to Josef's escape, they naturally arrested him. After a few days in jail, Fajersztajn was freed. He told them that he did not know Josef at all, and that they had been walking next to each other just by coincidence.

Nevertheless, Josef was still destined to feel the taste of imprisonment - which is impossible to avoid in illegal work. It was at the time of the Second Duma elections and Josef was campaigning for their own SDKPiL candidate, Emanuel Klajnman. Emanuel was Josef's friend, even though he was much older than Josef. Emanuel Klajnman had great influence on Josef, and it was in connection with this intensive campaigning that Josef and his friend Zelig Rotbard were arrested. For several days, they sat in *Prystav* Denisov's police station, after which they were released by that same *prystav*. Later, Josef and Zelig found out that the *Prystav* was in the movement. That same *prystav* actually later died as a prisoner in the Piotrków prison.

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In the Labour movement in Warta, among the Jewish party activists, the sons and daughters of the assimilated Jewish intelligentsia also strongly distinguished themselves. Among them were Jechiel Lerner's fine daughters, as well as Dadek Szajnweksler, Mamloks, Senior and Birenbaum, the city cantor's son. Josef would also meet with the comrades who came to Warta - those whom the Central Committee in Warsaw would specially send down as

¹ [TN: Although grammatically incorrect, this verse conveys that Józek was a particularly brave fighter of the party.]

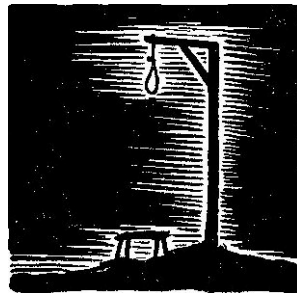
emissaries, to appear at the illegal “*masówki*” [mass rallies] or at Warta’s factories. Josef knew all of them well - Comrades Adam, Konrad, Baszka and others.

Everyone marvelled at Comrade Baszka who, for a long time, was the head activist of the SDKPiL Party in Warta. Her light chestnut-coloured hair was combed straight. She always wore a long, black dress. This was because she was in mourning for her brother Izaak, who had been hanged, by verdict of a Warsaw court, for belonging to the SDKPiL Party. Her appearances made the Polish workers very fond of her. She spoke only Polish. She only understood Yiddish, but it was difficult for her to speak it.

The priests in the churches had many troubles because of her. They preached to their faithful to the effect that the “*Żydówka*”² was demoralising Polish workers and that, once, she had even allowed herself to “defile” a [Christian] cemetery, by speaking at the funeral of a worker, who had been shot during a demonstration.

The Polish labourers ground their teeth, when they found out about the priests’ venomous speeches. Comrade Baszka would also appear at the meetings in all the large factories, such as Raków, Szpagaczarnia and others. She had a very difficult life in the city of Warta. She did not spend the day where she had spent the night. For a certain period, Josef was the one who accompanied her. She often stayed with the Lerner, at Lajbisz Kopinski’s factory, in Zawodzie, and in other houses.

It was only sometime later that Josef discovered that her surname was Szpiro and that she was Sholem Asch’s sister-in-law³.



² [TN: Pol., “Jewess”, used derogatively.]

³ [TN: She was the sister of Sholem Asch’s wife, Mathilda née Szpiro.]