

Jewish Education in Częstochowa Between the Wars (A Survey of the Local Sources)

Zbigniew Grzędzielski

Early in the twentieth century the Jewish community of Częstochowa constituted a considerable segment of the town society. In 1912 the entire populace amounted to 74,855 people with 23,790 of them being Jewish. The main Jewish occupations were crafts, trade, and professions. On the eve of WWI, in 1914, the expansion of the town area from 9 to 33 square kilometers resulted in a sudden rise of the population. Municipal records showed 92,975 inhabitants with 28,748 (31%) of them Jewish, while the next year, with the war already going on, according to the census taken to estimate food supplies needed, there were 23,766 Jews (about 28%) to the total of 84,847.¹ With new additions in 1928 and 1930 the population of Częstochowa grew enormously. In 1921 25.7% inhabitants were Jewish; their number in the census of 1931 was 25,588 being 21.8% of the total of 117,200.² In 1939 with the general increase of population to 137,623 people, the number of Jewish inhabitants was 28,480, that was about 21%.

Being such a sizeable ethnic group, Jews from the beginning cultivated their own traditions, which made them a distinctive community despite having accommodated to the urban populace. In 1912 there were two synagogues in Częstochowa, separate schooling system, and 32 religious heders. In 1917 the number of Jewish elementary schools, both public and private, was 15 with the attendance of 833, as compared to 2,868 Christian children attending 50 schools. Due to the lack of Jewish secondary schools, young Jewish students attended general high schools.³

There were 4 kindergartens for Jewish kids under the auspices of the Jewish Charity Society (TDdZ)⁴. In 1912 the next four were set up from the municipal funds. Their shortage resulted in a network of private kindergartens.

In 1938 fourteen private kindergartens included six Jewish ones run by:

- Zofia Wajnsztok — NMP Alley 20,
- Maria Prejzerowicz — Berka Joselewicza 13,
- Lotta Faktor — NMP Alley 8,
- Bela Lipszyc — Wolności Alley 11,
- TDdZ — Przemysłowa 6,
- The I.L. Percec Strzecha Dziecieca [Children's Shelter] — Krotka

22.

The Strzecha was providing care for about 50 Jewish children age 4-7 continuously from 1917.

¹ Z. Grzędzielski, "Częstochowa u progu Polski niepodległej, stowarzyszenia i Związki", *Biuletyn Instytutu Filozoficzno-Historycznego WSP w Częstochowie*, 10/1/98, Częstochowa 1998, pp. 31-32.

² W. Palus. *Społeczeństwo Częstochowy w świetle międzywojennych spisów powszechnych. Zarys problemu*, [in:] *Społeczeństwo Częstochowy w latach 1918-1939*, Częstochowa 1997, p.17.

³ Z Grzędzielski, "Częstochowa u progu Polski..." pp. 33-34.

⁴ The TDdZ organized a pre-school nursery in 1905. After the war, in 1919 about 110 children were taken care of there, whereas within a decade their number grew even to 140, supervised by T. Wierzbicka.

Living conditions of a larger part of Jewish community did not differ from those of the general Cześćochowa society. A considerable number of children were deprived of family care and supported by the municipality. The Jewish community set up orphanages, such as the Mina Verde house established at Ostatni Grosz in 1901 with about 60 children whose age ranged from 5 to 15. The TDdZ, Cześćochowa municipality, and the board of Jewish community contributed to the nursery care being provided for the youngest, while older children could attend elementary or vocational schools, or were apprenticed to Jewish craftsmen to acquire their skills. In 1925 a growing demand for public care made the Jewish community set up an agency of the Society for Health Protection (TOZ), where a large group of babies and children under 7, or even elder, was taken care of. In sum more than 500 children were the residents of this place. Every year over 100 children spent some time at two terms of daily care summer camps organized by TOZ. At the initiative of TOZ school meal campaign was organized at three Jewish elementary schools, nos. 12, 13, and 15. At least every fourth of 1,860 Jewish school children came from an impoverished family and needed some help. The poor children, who did not go to school, were given meals at the TOZ offices.

In 1927 TOZ opened the following out-patients clinics by the Jewish hospital:

1. mother and child care center,
2. pregnant women center,
3. school hygienic center,
4. dental office.

A considerable part of Jewish young got their education in private schools, both religious and secular, under the auspices of various organizations.

For instance, the Faraynigte Folk School was opened in 1922 at 10, Strazacka Str.

It was a three-grade school:

Grade I – with 41 children, age 7–8, and 24 teaching periods a week;

Grade II – 18 children, age 8–9, with 28 teaching periods;

Grade III – 16 children, age 9–10, with 30 teaching periods.

The school was set up for the residents of the I.L.Perec Strzecha Shelter and run by three teachers. The curriculum included: Yiddish classes, Polish classes, arithmetic, nature, art, handiwork, gymnastics and sports. School children got two meals a day.⁵

There were also one- or two-grade religious schools (heders) set up privately with Hebrew as the language of instruction. Heder teachers focused on Mosaic religion, basic reading and writing skills.

According to the Ministry of Education regulation of June 4, 1935, melameds introducing secular subjects in religious schools were compelled to obtain appropriate teaching license, while the number of teaching periods should be adjusted to the age of pupils and would not exceed 56 periods a week, including the minimum of 4 periods of Polish classes.

From 1937 the approval of the School Council of Cześćochowa municipality was required to open a new heder. An application had to include:

- moral conduct certificate,
- certificate of Polish citizenship,
- credential from the rabbi,
- CV,
- school timetable,
- plan of heder lodgings.

In practice children spent an entire day at heder, from 8.am. to 6.pm. Beside secular subjects the classes were focused on Judaism, including:

- the Bible with commentaries,
- Talmud,
- Jewish (Yiddish) speech and writing.

Monthly fee was 3 to 5 zlotys per child.

At Icek Berliner's heder, Targowa 12, the following timetable was set up:

Young boys (3 to 5):

8.am. to 9.am. – morning prayer

9.am. to 9.30.am. – breakfast

9.30.am. to noon – the Bible with commentaries and Jewish history

noon to 12.30 pm. – Jewish writing classes.

Older boys had secular classes in the morning, and afterwards were taught:

- 1.p.m. to 3.p.m – the Bible with commentaries and Jewish history,
- 3.p.m. to 4.p.m. – evening prayers,
- 4.p.m. to 5.p.m. - Jewish writing classes.⁶

Heder lodgings were usually far from satisfactory. They often consisted of small rooms or even just one room and were just as often closed up due to lack of funds. Health checks of poor heder children inevitably found them dirty, anemic, and underfed. In 1927 there were 11 heders registered in Częstochowa, although their number generally varied. One of them was run for almost forty years by Lejbus Landau at 7 Senatorska Str. He managed to squeeze up to 50 children at a floor area of 50 square meters.

Adult illiteracy was counteracted by the Society for the Education of Jewish Workers established in 1916. The system involved free afternoon or evening courses for workers over 16, sometimes younger, which lasted six or twelve months. All students were provided with writing materials and handbooks at no charge. From 1918 various groups were set up according to students' age and skills.

Evening courses were highly popular, general lectures were sometimes attended by over 160 learners. The curriculum included classes in: Polish, Yiddish, German, mathematics, history, geography, nature, hygienics, and political economy. The supervisory board consisted of lecturers, student delegates, and a representative of the Society for Education. The courses were held for many years.⁷

As early as in 1917 members of the Society for Jewish Secondary and Elementary Schools launched a project of a private high school (*gimnazjum*). Having obtained a license to open such a school, Henryk Markusfeld, Sandenstein, and Mokrauer transferred it to the Society they founded. Their humanities *gimnazjum* did not have the status of a state public school. Three preparatory co-ed grades were set up. Actually these were two schools: Boys' High School and Girls' High School under the auspices of the Society for Jewish Secondary and Elementary Schools.

The first headmaster was Dr. Szymon Brysz, succeeded upon his death in February 1918 by Dr. Majer Balaban, whose strenuous efforts resulted in the first Jewish school statute being officially accepted in Poland. Balaban's great authority was heightened by his post of the preacher at the Częstochowa synagogue. After 18 months Balaban was reassigned by the Ministry of Education to Warsaw to establish the first Tachkemoni School of Rabbis in Poland. From November 1, 1920 through the entire 1922/23 school year, the school was run by Dr. Dawid Einhorn, and in 1923/24 Dr. Filip Axer. Late in 1923/24 the headmaster's post was taken by Jakub Balt, a professor of public high school in Drohobycz, on his temporary leave. The faculty included: Szymon Ball, Jakub Finkelstein, Jakub Otto, Dr. Benedykt Elias Güntzberg, Perec Telamon, Sara Haltke, Izydor Lidechower, Debora Langer, Leon Mamin, Gustawa Mrs. Montag, Dawid Neiger, Sycha Rubinstein, Reisel Mrs. Schalfer, Betty Mrs. Schächter, Abram Weinberg, Perec Willenberg, Izak Zaks.

The Girls' Humanities High School of the Society for Jewish Secondary and Elementary Schools with Polish and no status of public state school, started together with the Boys' School in 1917 under the joint management. From 1924 its headmaster was Adam Blazejewicz. The faculty included: Stefan Antonowicz, Antoni Burakiewicz, Adam Cetwiński, Wanda Mrs. Honiek, Maurycy Honiek, Zofia Mrs. Fomienko, Antoni Kupka, Bogdan Krzemiński, Franciszek Rządowski, Stanisław Tobakowski, Franciszek Zlemkiewicz.

⁵ Archiwum Państwowe w Częstochowie, Magistrat m. Częstochowy (dalej APCz. Mag.Cz.), Akta Wydziału Oświaty i Kultury. Wydział Ogólny, Opieka

Społeczna, Kolonie letnie; Z. Grzędzielski, Stan opieki nad dziećmi w Częstochowie w latach 1918 - 1939, [in:] *Almanach Częstochowy* 1990, s. 32-40.

⁶ APCz, Mag.Cz., Akta Wydziału Oświaty i Kultury, sygn. 7485.

⁷ APCz, Mag.Cz., Akta Wydziału Oświaty i Kultury, sygn. 7094.

The School Board used the services of a school doctor Maksymilian Wasercewig, and a dentist, Lucyna Blazejewicz.⁸

Those were the beginnings of secondary Jewish education. In 1919, in independent Poland, two such schools were operating in Częstochowa: Boys' High School with 300 students and Girls' with 110 students. Both schools were located at 3a Szkolna Str. (later H. Dąbrowskiego street).⁹ They remained under the auspices of the Society for Jewish Secondary and Elementary Schools, which provided funding. In 1925 Dr. Filip Axer organized a private co-ed high school for Jews at 24 Focha Str. Beside attending Jewish high schools, young Jews got their education at Polish high schools, where they amounted to 8.2 per cent of students.

In the school year 1932/1933 two of eight general education high schools in Częstochowa were Jewish:

- – The Co-Ed High School of the Society for Jewish Secondary and Elementary Schools with 233 students;
- – The Private Co-ed High School of Dr. Filip Axer for 80 students.

Young craftsmen were educated at vocational schools organized by the Jewish community, Jewish Crafts Association, Union of Jewish Artisans. The earliest Jewish vocational school, the Crafts School for Jews, was set up in 1897 and had a good repute. Its graduates were locksmiths, mechanical technicians, carpenters, and electricians.

In 1900 the Jewish community of Częstochowa purchased a 24-acres area (by the Catholic Kule cemetery) to set up a gardening farm administered by Leopold Werde and Stanislaw Groszman. In 1903 at the farm by 89 Rolnicza Str., the Jewish community organized a gardening-agricultural boarding school for young Jews. In 1933 the school was attended by 120 students (including 50 girls) recruited by the Chalas organization, Warsaw-based. The school headmaster, Mensze Salomonowicz, was appointed by the Częstochowa community.¹⁰

The reform of the entire education in Poland, passed by the Sejm on March 11, 1932, hardly affected the minorities schooling system, except for the fact that the state school administration was now obliged to supervise and control private schools in so far as the requirements of the license granted to them were not ignored and norms agreed to by the management observed, as well as granting them the state or public school status.¹¹ Consequently Jewish schools were subject to the same discipline as the Polish ones, unless they had to conform also to some additional regulations of Jewish educational centers.

The reform established three organizational levels of elementary schools. Learning was planned for seven years in each of them, but the first level schools, which realized some elements of the third level school, had third grade lasting two years, and fourth grade lasting three years. The second level schools with elements of the third level schooling had fourth grade which lasted two years. It were only the third level schools which realized full curriculum in one year grades. Children in the country graduating from the first level schools had no chance to enter secondary schools. In towns and cities the schools were of second and third level. As for secondary education, six-year general secondary schools were set up consisting of a four-year junior high school (*gimnazjum*) and a two-year senior high school (*liceum*).

Regulations concerning vocational schools were normalized according to the needs.

⁸ Spis Nauczycieli Szkół Wyższych, Średnich, Zawodowych, Seminariów Nauczycielskich oraz Zakładów Naukowych i Władz Szkolnych, Rocznik II, Warszawa-Lwów 1926, pp.292-293; *Almanach szkolnictwa żydowskiego w Polsce*, T. I Warszawa 1938, pp.547-8

⁹ Z. Grzędzielski. "Szkolnictwo żydowskie w Częstochowie w latach 1918-1939", *Biuletyn Zespołu Badań Dziejów Oświaty i Kultury Grup Etnicznych i Polonijnych*, nr 1, Częstochowa 1922, pp.91-95.

¹⁰ APcz.,Mag.Cz., Akta Oddziału Oświaty i Kultury, sygn. 7730. Pismo Kuratorium Okręgu Szkolnego Krakowskiego z 31 sierpnia 1933 do Starostwa Częstochowskiego z prośbą o przesłanie informacji nt. Żydowskiej Szkoły Rolniczej. Since the school was located in Częstochowa it was the Municipality that provided necessary information.

¹¹ M. Pęcherski, M. Świątek, *Organizacja oświaty w Polsce w latach 1917-1969, Podstawowe Akta Prawne*, Warszawa 1972, p.43.

The reorganization of secondary education begun by the reform of 1932 resulted in senior high schools being set up by former general high schools starting in autumn 1937, such as:

- the humanities oriented senior high school by Dr. Filip Axer's high (now junior high) school;
- the science oriented senior high school by the co-ed high (now junior high) school of the Society for Jewish Secondary and Elementary Schools.¹²

Kindergartens for children of Mosaic religion run by organizations and individuals as of June 30, 1939:¹³

Kindergarten of the Jewish Charity Society

Address: Przemyslowa 6
 Attendance: about 100 children
 Teachers:
 Roza Golbard — headmistress
 Regina Warzecha
 Sala Radoszczycka

The I.L.Perec Children's Shelter Kindergarten

Address: Krotka 22
 Attendance: 102, including 38 boys
 Teachers:
 Suza Günzberg — headmistress
 Zelda Jocheles
 Jadwiga Gutterman

The Zofia Wajnsztok Kindergarten

Address: NMP Alley 20
 Attendance — 48, including 26 boys
 Teachers:
 Laja Zelkowicz — headmistress
 Brandla Ickowicz

The Kindergarten of Mrs. Prejzerowicz-Glewicka

Address: Berka Joselewicza 13
 Attendance — 20, including 7 boys
 Teacher:
 Maria Prejzerowicz-Glewicka

The Kindergarten of Bala Lipszyc

Address: Aleja Wolności 11
 Attendance — 25, including 11 boys
 Teacher:
 Bala Lipszyc

The Kindergarten of Lotta Faktor

Address: NMP Alley 8
 Attendance — 12, including 6 boys
 Teacher:
 Lotta Faktor

¹² „Goniec Częstochowski” 29.04.1937.

¹³ Before June 30, 1939 there were 38 kindergartens in Częstochowa:
— the state kindergarten by the State Seminar for Kindergarten Teachers;
— 23 municipal kindergartens;
— 14 private kindergartens, including 6 for Jewish children.

Schools for Jewish children in Częstochowa — as of June 30, 1939.

On the eve of WWII the network of Jewish schools in Częstochowa was as follows:

| School type | No. of schools | No. of classes | Attendance |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|------------|
| Public | 3 | 40 | 2,232 |
| Private | 6 | 31 | 605 |
| Private secondary | 2 | 17 | 420 |
| Vocational | 3 | 11 | 472 |
| TOTAL | 14 | 99 | 3,729 |

Source: Inventory sheets of schools in the present author's collection.

Note: some teachers were employed in more schools than one.

The Eliza Orzeszkowa Public Elementary Schools no.12

Address: Przemysłowa 10&14.

Established: 1867
 Number of classes: 14
 Attendance: 730

Faculty:

Antoni Plebanczyk — headmaster
 Chana Ajzykiewicz Salomea Ajzykiewicz
 Abram Fiszel Marianna Fiszel
 Bina Lejzerowicz Jakub Menachem
 Mojzesz Szczekacz Frajda Torbeczko
 Tonia Zamel Tola Zytniewska

The Maria Konopnicka Public Elementary School no.13

G. Narutowicza 19/23

Established: 1913

Number of classes: 14

Attendance: 808

Faculty:

Nacha Szacher — headmistress
 Estera Awner Helena Elkana
 Ruchla Fryszman Sara Gutmacher
 Salome Lewian Horowicz
 Jozef Messer Elimolech Monka
 Maria Rechnic Lusława Praszkie
 Gustawa Szejgin Jola Toronczyk
 Estera Wajnsztok Regina Żylbernac

Public Elementary School no. 15

G. Narutowicza 19/23

Established: 1919

Number of classes: 12

Attendance: 694

Faculty:

Henryk Kapuscinski—headmaster

Ruchla Fryszman Sara Lewin

Lusława Praszkie Maria Rechnic

Julia Toronczyk Estera Wajnsztok

Maria Zomberg Regina Żylbernac

According to the January 5, 1927 regulation of the Ministry of Education concerning obligatory religion classes for the young people under 18, in Częstochowa, with more public elementary schools available, the young of Mosaic religion were directed to the designated schools (nos. 12, 13, 15).

The three schools were renting their premises, hardly suitable for the purpose. Rooms were small, stairways narrow, lavatories outside, no courtyard for sports classes. Classes were overcrowded, an average was 55 children. Other public schools were not much better off. Only a few were suited for teaching purposes.

**Elementary School of the Society for Jewish Secondary and
Elementary Schools**

Address: Jasnogorska 8/10

Established: 1934

Number of classes: 6

Attendance: 205

Faculty:

Wolf Margulies — headmaster Teofila Brandlewicz

Malka Bernsztein Jozef Hirszberg

Aniuta Hüttner Gustaw Johanés

Dr. Mojzesz Mehring Estera Mehring

Icek Rozenwajn Dwojra Sowa

Dr. Gerszon Szaffer Miss Weinberg

Izrael Weintraub Dzisel Mrs. Uryson

The Nauka (Khoyrev) Private Boys' School¹⁴

Address: Berka Joselewicza 15

Number of classes: 5

Attendance: 125

Faculty:

Chaja Szpryngier — headmistress

Lila Fiszman Freda Lilienkranc

Ewa Szejgin Fela Weisfeiner

The Private Elementary Boys' School of Tauba Wajnberg

NMP Alley 8

Established: 1924

Number of classes: 5

Attendance: 50

Faculty:

Tauba Wajnberg — headmistress
Bernard Wajnberg

The Private Hebrew Elementary School of Chill Grylak

| | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------|
| Address: | Berka | Joselewicza | 9 |
| Established: | | | 1900 |
| Number | of | classes: | 4 |
| Attendance: | | | 70 |
| Faculty: | | | |
| | Aron Lukseberg — headmaster | | |
| | Mendel Weksztajn | | |
| | Lejzor Konsers | | |

¹⁴ Khoyrev was a school organization set up by the Agudat Israel Central Organization of the Orthodox Jews in Poland and focused almost entirely on Jewish religious tradition, while distrustful of any general education or modern teaching innovations, or even school hygienics. See: *Almanach szkolnictwa żydowskiego w Polsce*. T. I.

The Zofia Wajnsztok Private 7-Grade Co-Ed Elementary School

| | | | |
|--------------|----------------------------------|----------|------|
| Address: | NMP | Alley | 20 |
| Established: | | | 1916 |
| Number | of | classes: | 7 |
| Attendance: | | | 122 |
| Faculty: | Lejb-Leon Wajnsztok — headmaster | | |
| | Chaja Diament | | |
| | Nacha Frydman | | |
| | Aron Lukseberg | | |
| | Mariem Lukseberg | | |
| | Brandla Rozenfeld | | |

The Berek Joselewicz Private Elementary School by Dr. Filip Axer's High School

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|----|-----------|------|
| Address: | | Focha | 24 |
| Established: | | | 1932 |
| Number | of | classes: | 4 |
| Attendance: 33 | | | |
| Number | of | teachers: | 6 |
| No further data on the faculty | | | |

The Private 6-Grade School of Zofia Wigurska–Folfasinska

(Polish-Jewish)

Address: Staszica 10

Established: 1928

In 1939 the attendance was 200, including 80 Jewish students of both sexes.

Junior high-schools (middle school or *gimnazjum*)

Private Gimnazjum and Liceum of the Society for Jewish Secondary and Elementary Schools

Address: Jasnogorska 8/10

Established: 1917

Number of classes: 9

Number of classrooms: 9

Attendance: 300 (135 boys, 165 girls)

Faculty:

Dr. Wolf Anisweld - headmaster

Zyskind Brandlewicz Teofila Brandlewicz

Maksymilian Grynberg Dr. Benedykt Güntzberg

Dr. Julia Güntzberg Abraham Getter

Jozef Girschberg Dr. Joachim Hirszberg

Aniuta Hüttner Berek Janowski

Izydor Lauer Dr. Mojzesz Mehring

Estera Mechring Leopold Pfeferberg

Dwojra Sowa Ludwik Steifelsen

Dr. Gerszon Szaffer Dr. Freda Vogel

The Private Junior High School of Dr. Filip Axer¹⁵

Address: Focha 24

Established: Sept.1, 1925

Number of classes: 8

Number of classrooms: 10

Attendance: 120

Faculty:

Dr. Filip Axer

Data as of June 30, 1939 not available

| ¹⁵ Faculty | as of | Sept. 1, 1925 | (further data | unavailable): |
|-----------------------------|-------|---------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Dr. Filip Axer – headmaster | | Teofila Mitz Bronis | | l Weitzberg Bronis |
| Klara Axer Zyskind | | law Szumacher | | lawa Zelcm |
| Brandlewicz | | Mina Vogler | | an |
| Mieczyslaw Doering | | Zdzisl aw | | |
| Stefan Konarski | | Wrobel Samue | | |

Crafts School for Jews by the Jewish Community

Address: Garncarska 6/8

Established: 1897

Number of classes: 6

Number of classrooms: 3

Attendance: 120 boys

Faculty:

Stanislaw Przysuskier — headmaster

Bronislaw Blumentfelt Franciszek Fabrykant

Freilich Dr. Guttman

Jozef Messer Abram Rozenwajn

Mesjasz Soltysiak Jozef Sukonnik

Bronislaw Szumacher Abram Wilhelm

Private Additional Vocational School for Female Apprentices of the Union of Jewish Artisans (with public status)

Address: Przemyslowa 10

Established: October 15, 1930

Number of classes: 3

Number of classrooms: 3

Attendance: 142

Faculty:

Lilia Awner Esfir — headmistress

Chana Ajzykiewicz Wanda Ebert

Janina Folta Sara Gutmacher

Irena Hüttner Rywka Kajzer

Dr. Racha Szaffer Mojzesz Szczekacz

Private Additional School for Male Apprentices of the Jewish Crafts Association

Address: Garncarska 6/8

Established: 1922

Number of classes: 6

Number of classrooms: 3

Attendance: 210 boys

Faculty:

Stanislaw Przysuskier Bronislaw Blumentfelt

Franciszek Fabrykant Jozef Messer

Mojzesz Szczekacz Teresa Zytnicka

Private Evening Yearly Business Courses

Address: NMP Alley 20

Number of classes: 1

Number of classrooms: 1

Attendance: 35 (8 boys, 27 girls)

Faculty:

Roza German-Szumacher Zyskind Brandlewicz

Boleslaw Hiller Stanislaw Szumacher

Roma Walkawa

Secondary schools teachers were members of the Union of Jewish Communal Secondary School Teachers, established in 1925 and Lodz-based. The goals of the

Union included improving teachers civic and pedagogical qualifications, protection of their industrial rights, affecting the development of Jewish communal schooling, bringing the public up to date with the developments in science.

The Union used to run reading rooms, held series of open lectures for workers, pedagogical lectures for parents, teachers' debates.

Częstochowa teachers were represented in the Central Board of the Union by:

- Prof. I. Lidechower, Dr. B. Günzberg, and Dr. G. Szafter (members),
- Szymon Ball, member of the arbitration board
- N. Janowski, member of the audit commission.

Even the earliest military actions of WWII did a lot of damage to schools' teaching aids and equipment, which took years to assemble.

When the front moved over, the German military administration of the territory known later as the Generalgouvernement (GG), appealed to the Polish public to resume everyday activities, such as office and production work, under the control of the German authorities.

In response to the appeals, temporary Polish educational administration headed by K. Szelagowski, acting Minister of Education, in cooperation with the Teachers' Union, encouraged teachers to start classes at school buildings not destroyed nor commandeered by German military. Otherwise substitute accommodation was recommended.

Late in September 1939 most of Częstochowa elementary, secondary, and vocational schools resumed their activity.

Drafted teachers began to come back from the army, and there were replacements for the absent ones among the deportees from Pomerania, Wielkopolska, and Silesia.

Schools were obliged to report to the Culture and Education Department personal files of their faculty, monthly curriculum, assignments of duties, timetables.

Jewish schools could not, however, get license do resume their working. Moreover, Polish headmasters were instructed to check their students origins three generations back and expel all Jewish children.¹⁶

Along these lines 3,329 students, from 7 to 20, were deprived of schooling.

As soon as the occupation began the Jewish community tried in vain to reopen schools. Three public and six private elementary Jewish schools, two high schools, and three vocational schools never again welcomed any children, while their faculties perished in the German death camps.¹⁷

At the conference of Częstochowa school headmasters the German Schulrat, Dr. Kuhberg, commanded Polish teachers to get rid of palms, if they had any at home, under threat of being considered Jewish and wearing an armband with the Star of David. Kuhberg promised Jewish schools would be reopen and would accommodate all the palms from Polish households.¹⁸ His hypocrisy went as far as to caution against harassing and persecuting Jews, as if just boycotting them was tolerated. Police sanctions were allegedly imposed for the breach of these regulations. Kuhberg's promise to open Jewish schools proved deceptive.

Some residual education was provided for Jewish children in the ghetto, as evidenced by handbooks with notes on margins discovered after its liquidation. Unfortunately no further details are available concerning this education. Polish secondary schools were also closed by the German administration as soon as on November 8, 1939. Polish children were allowed just elementary and primary vocational schools, under strict supervision of German authorities.

Nazi terror at its most perverse did not spare any Jews, including teachers. Some of the first to fall its victim was Ignacy Schreiber, the distinguished scholar and German philologist, a teacher at the R. Traugutt High School in Częstochowa, the author of studies on education. He felt Polish but his origin made him Jewish under the Nazi law. He committed suicide by taking poison on September 3, 1939, when the Wehrmacht entered Częstochowa, and died at a military hospital set up in the building of the elementary school on Narutowicza Street.

——¹⁶ Księgi protokołów Publicznych Szkół Powszechnych nr 8, 21 w Częstochowie.

¹⁷ Z. Grądzelski, *Szkolnictwo i ruch nauczycielski w Częstochowskim w latach 1939-1945*. Typescript of his doctoral thesis; Z. Grądzelski. J. Pietrzykowski, *Polentumsträger*. Katowice 1988.

¹⁸ *Kurier Częstochowski* of Aug.29, 1941. The paper announced that on Monday, Sept.1, at 8.am. 20 schools for Catholic children and three for Jewish ones would be opened ...".

Jewish teachers were killed in various circumstances. Some in the streets of Częstochowa and at the Jewish cemetery, shot by the German uniformed men, some in the gas chambers of Treblinka. Here are several individual cases.

At night on September 21, 1942, with the onset of the solemn Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur, Germans launched the deportation of the Częstochowa ghetto. The action lasted to October 7, 1942. Over 30,000 Jews were deported to Treblinka in six massive railway transports. The deportees included Dr. Filip Axer, Dr. Mojżesz Mehring, Dr. Gerszon Szaffer Adolf Goldszajder, Zyskind Brandlewicz, Menachem Jakub, Dr. Güntzberg Benedykt. Dr. Filip Axer, a talented pianist and musician, was the headmaster of the Jewish Private High School in Częstochowa, Mojżesz Mehring was a Hebrew philologist, Gerszon Szaffer – a historian, Adolf Goldszajder, a musician, who conducted a symphonic orchestra in the ghetto and gave clandestine recitals at the House for the Elderly on Przemysłowa Street. Brandlewicz was an eminent chemist and physicist, Dr. Jakub Güntzberg – an activist of the Union of Jewish Communal Secondary School Teachers..

Extremely dramatic were the circumstances of the deaths of Dr. Wolf Anisfeld and Jan Burstin. Dr. Wolf Anisfeld, a physicist and mathematician, the headmaster of the Jewish High School of the Society for Jewish Secondary and elementary Schools, was in the group of 6,000 Jews, who were not deported, but left in Częstochowa to continue their slave work at the HASAG company military plants.

Having liquidated the ghetto, the Germans set up a forced Jewish labor camp there: Jüdisches Zwangsarbeitslager. Jews had numbers tattooed and were daily driven to work at the HASAG plants.

Early in 1943 rumors were spread that Jews, who had relatives abroad, would be allowed to leave to Palestine in exchange for some German prisoners-of-war held by the Allies. To make the rumor more credible the Germans started to register would-be emigrants. Jewish policemen advised them to take their most precious belongings.

The date of the departure was March 20, 1943, on the Jewish Purim festival.

That day several hundred people gathered on Warszawski Market, mainly engineers, physicians, lawyers, with their families. They carried the leftovers of their fortunes in gold or jewellery. The group included Dr. Wolf Anisfeld. His treasure was a valuable manuscript of his life's scholarly work. Jews were marched down Warszawska Street in fours towards the railway station. The Schupo officers were waiting for them hidden in gateways. Terrified Jews were surrounded, instantaneously loaded onto trucks and carried to the Jewish cemetery, where they were all shot. That was how Dr. Wolf Anisfeld died.

Jan Burstin, a Semitic-looking German philologist, defied the danger and did a lot of underground teaching. He was hiding with Polish families. Despite having grown beard and moustache he could not mask his features well enough and was recognized by German policemen in the street and murdered.¹⁹

The remaining Jewish teachers from Częstochowa shared the fate of their brethren, as illustrated by the following list.

¹⁹ Z. Grządzielski, J. Pietrzykowski. *Polentumsträger (dzieje nauczycieli na ziemi częstochowskiej 1939-1945)*, Katowice 1988, s. 185-187.

The List (incomplete) of Jewish Teachers in Częstochowa, Victims of the Holocaust

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|----------|
| Ajzykiewicz | Chana | Kajzer | Rywka |
| Ajzykiewicz | Salomea | Konsers | Lejzer |
| Anisfeld Wolf | | Lauer Izydor | |
| Awner | Estera | Lejzerowicz | Bina |
| Axer Filip, | Dr. | Lewi Sara | |
| Bernsztein | Małka | Lewian | Salomea |
| Biderman | Blima | Lilienkranc Freda | |
| Blumenfelt Bronislawa | | Linnarbez | A. |
| Brandlewicz | Teofila | Lipszyc Bala (kindegarten teacher) | |
| Burstin Jan | | Luksenberg | Aron |
| Diament | Chaja | Luksenberg Marien | |
| Ebert Wanda | | Margulies | Wolf |
| Elkana | Helena | Mehring Estera | |
| Faktor Lotta (kindegarten teacher) | | Mehring Mojżesz, Dr. | |
| Fizzel Abram | | Menachem | Jakub |
| Fizzel | Marianna | Mońka Elimolech | |
| Fizzman Lila | | Pfeferberg Leopold | |
| Folta | Janina | Praszkie | Lusława |
| Freilich | | Prejzerowicz-Glewicka | Maria |
| Frydman | Nacha | (kindegarten teacher) | |
| Fryszman | Rachela | Przysuskier Stanisław | |
| Gelbard Roza (kindegarten teacher) | (kindegarten teacher) | Radoszczycka | Sala |
| Getter | Abraham | (kindegarten teacher) | teacher) |
| Girschberg | Jozef | Rechnic Maria | |
| Giuzberg Suza (kindegarten teacher) | (kindegarten teacher) | Rozenfeld | Brandla |
| | | Rozenwajn Icek | |
| | | Schroeiber Ignacy | |
| | | Sołtysiak | Mesjasz |
| | | Sowa | Dwojra |
| | | Sukonnik Jozef | |
| | | Steinfelsen Ludwik | |
| | | Szacher Nacha-Natalia | |
| | | Szaffer Gerszon, Dr. | |
| | | Szaffer Racha, Dr. | |
| | | Szczekacz | Mojżesz |
| | | Szpryngier Chaja | |
| | | Szejgin | Ewa |
| | | Szejgin | Gustawa |
| | | Szumacher Roza | |
| | | Szumacher Stanisław | |
| | | Torbeczko Frajda | |
| | | Torończyk Julia | |
| | | Uryson | Dzisel |
| | | Wajnsztok | Estera |
| | | Walkawa | Roma |
| | | Wajnberg | Tauba |
| | | Wajnsztok | Leon |

| | | | |
|---------------|--------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Weintraub | | Izrael | Zamel Tonia |
| Weksztajn | | Mendel | Zelkowicz Laja (kindegarten |
| Weinberg | | Bernard | teacher) |
| Warzecha | Regina | (kindegarten | Zobelman Jadwiga |
| teacher) | | | Zylbernac Regina |
| Weisfeiner | | Fela | Zytnicka Tola ²⁰ |
| Wilhelm Abram | | | |
| Vogel | Freda, | Dr. | |

²⁰ Szkolnictwo miasta Częstochowy w roku 1939/1940. Arkusze zbiorcze szkół. The collection in the present author's possession. Z. Grzędziński, "Był taki czas", *Biuletyn Instytutu Filozoficzno-Historycznego WSP w Częstochowie*, 27/8/2001, pp.132-135.

The only teacher who survived the Holocaust and came home to Częstochowa was Icek Messner. He used to teach at the Private Additional School for Male Apprentices of the Jewish Crafts Association at 6/8 Garncarska Str. Late in 1946 he applied to the Częstochowa Branch of the Teachers' Union (ZNP) for a membership. His application was turned down on the grounds that he was not employed as a teacher at the time. The proceedings of the Board of the ZNP Branch include a January 31, 1947 entry: "will be admitted as a member upon resuming work". No data on his life after that are available.²¹

²¹ Księga protokołów Zarządu Oddziału Grodzkiego ZNP w Częstochowie, p.55

Appendices

I.

In elementary and secondary schools for Jews no classes were ever held on Saturdays, nor during winter, summer, and Easter breaks, national holidays, and the following festivals: the eve of and Jewish New Year (Rosh ha-Shana, 3 days), the eve and Yom Kippur (2 days), two first and three last days of Sukkoth (5 days), first day of Chanukah (1 day), Purim (1 day), two first and two last days of Pesach, unless coinciding with Easter break (4 days), Lag Beomer (1 day), Shavuot (2 days).

Jewish students attending general schools may be excused from classes on the following Jewish holidays: Jewish New Year (2 days), Yom Kippur (1 day), two first and two last days of Sukkoth (4 days), two first and two last days of Pesach (4 days), unless coinciding with Easter break, Shavuot (2 days)¹⁶.

²² Źródło: Kalendarz nauczycielski na rok szkolny 1936-37, s. 21.

II

Mosaic Holidays in the 1936/37 school year:

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| New Year | — September 17, 18, 1936 |
| Gedaliah's Fast | — September 20, 1936 |
| Yom Kippur | — September 26, 1936 |
| Sukkoth | — October 1, 2, 1936 |
| Hoshana Raba (Palm Festival) | — October 6, 1936 |
| Shemini Atseret | — October 7, 8, 1936 |
| Asora-Betewes Fast | — December 24, 1936 |
| Ester's Fast | — February 24, 1937 |
| Purim | — February 25, 1937 |
| Schuchan Purim | — February 26, 1937 |
| Pesach | — March 27, 28, 1937 |
| Final Days of Pesach | — April 2, 3, 1937 |
| Lag Beomer | — April 29, 1937 |
| Shavuot | — May 16, 17, 1937 |
| 17 Tamuz Fast | — June 27, 1937 |
| 9 Aba Fast | — July 18, 1937 ¹⁹ . |

²³ Źródło: Kalendarz nauczycielski na rok szkolny 1936-37. p. 19.

Note: all holidays were movable, except for July 18.

III

A November 18, 1932 letter of the Ministry of Religion and Education to Aron Lewin, a member of the Parliamentary Club of Jewish Orthodox Deputies, Chairman of the Poland's Rabbis' Union in Warsaw, Graniczna 9, concerning qualifications of melameds teaching in religious schools.

“... to inform that melameds teaching exclusively religious subjects, that is the Bible and Talmud, whether in religious schools or at special courses, will not be required to prove their qualifications in the sense of article 1 item 1&2 of the March 6, 1928 regulation of the President of the Polish Republic concerning professional qualifications of

elementary school teachers (Dz. U.R.P. nr 28 poz. 258).

Still, the said melameds are obliged to present their credentials of respectability and Polish citizenship, according to the article 6 item 1 of the law on elementary schools and education centers passed on March 11, 1932 (Dz. U.R.P. nr 33 poz. 343).

I point out, however, that children attending schools with none but strictly religious subjects cannot be treated as fulfilling the requirements of the compulsory education as of art. 9 of the law on school system of March 11, 1932.

Melameds aspiring to teach secular subjects along with the religion should confirm their qualifications in this respect as stipulated in art. 1 item 1 & 2, or art. 4 of the above mentioned regulation.

At the same time, I cannot approve the practice of excusing girls attending special Beit Jakov religious courses from obligatory religion classes.

The above recommendations were passed to the Board of Education.

Kazimierz Pieracki
(Undersecretary of State)²⁴

²⁴ *Żydowskie Szkolnictwo Religijne w ramach ustawodawstwa polskiego*, Warszawa 1937, pp. 28-29.