The Word of Abusz Werber
Abusz in Poland 1908 - 1930

Born in Radom on September 17 1908

Starts working in at the age of 11 years & studies at the "Evening School Society" since 1920

Joins the Youth movement of the LPZ - 1921; becomes its leader – 1925

Delegate to the 1st Congress of Jewish culture in Warsaw – 1927

Represents the LPZ at the "Congress of Jewish Workers for Palestine" --1930
Abusz in Belgium: 1929-1940

1930 Elected to the Central Committee of the LPZ; Head of Culture Department

1932 Creation of the youth movement "Jung Bor“

1935 Publication of political articles and “Our Call”

1937 Founding Popular Club" and "School and Education“

1938 Representing the party in the Council of Jewish Organizations of Brussels
Members of the LPZ - 1938
During the occupation

Abusz = Henri Desmet
Zofia (Shifra) = Micheline

1940-42 Saint Gilles (2 addresses)
1942-44 Molenbeek (a widow's apartment)

Marriage: Brussels: July 1931
Anti-Nazi struggle during the Shoa 1940–1942 (I)

- Support to Belgian Jews detained in French camps
- Creation of "Mutual Aid"
- Creating a Jewish militia - the group "Molière" - against the Rexists
- "Unzer Wort" – clandestine newspaper - from December 1941
The monthly clandestine "Unzer Wort"

Information sources:

• The "sold" Belgian 'Le Soir'
• The occupant's Brüsseler Zeitung
• An inside informant: Zahava Bunim
Themes of the articles in Unzer Wort

- Warnings against the actions of the Nazis and AJB
- Help offered by various Jewish organizations
- Encouragement of the suffering population
- Calls to join the struggle against the enemy
- Progress of the War
- Information from the Jewish world
Images of the Jewish life
Jewish children

The agents of the Gestapo, who had seized the small, ten-year-old Bereleh, warned him for the last time:

“If you do not tell us where your parents are, we will beat you to death.”

The child then raised his bloodshot, black eyes toward them and spat out his answer in a clear-cut and determined tone:

"That, I shall never say to you."
Encouragement

We will not perish! We shall live, exactly to demand account for everything that has been inflicted upon us. We shall live, precisely to reconstruct what was destroyed and to build a healthy Jewish life again!
Anti-Nazi struggle during Holocaust

1940-1942 (II)

Opposing occupant’s measures

- Giving away radio receivers
- Reporting to work for the Germans
- Attending AJB (Judenrat) schools
- Wearing the yellow star
Anti-Nazi struggle during the Shoa

1940-1942 (III)

- Participation in establishing Jewish community organizations: school, soup kitchen, etc.

- Campaign against the “Vest-makers”

Do not help the enemy: “The Jewish workers are confronted with a bitter choice: work for the German army, or go hungry, with wife and children”
School of the Jewish community - 1942
Teachers: F. Blank; Sh. Werber; B. Maizel
Call for Action

People of the Jewish community, do not remain seated with your arms hanging by your sides, overcome and defeated by passivity, until someone comes to pick you up and take you to Malines, where, under the whip of specially trained Nazis-sadists, you will do the work of your enemy, a loathsome work, which will disgust you. Now, while you are not yet in the hands of the murderers, you can do work that will be satisfying to you and which, moreover, will impede your enemy and will serve the interests of the Jewish community, so arbitrarily mistreated.
Creation of the “Jewish Defense Committee in Belgium” - 1942

Main Objectives

- Joint resistance (also armed) against occupant’s measures
- Saving children
- Protecting adults from deportation
“Jewish Defense Committee in Belgium”

Abusz is in charge of two departments:

- Providing Jews with false papers
- Press and propaganda in all Belgium
CDJ/ AJB
A Complex Situation

No official relationship CDJ and AJB
CDJ objecting AJB & not obeying its instructions
Secretly, two CDJ members were also AJB members.

Goals of the interaction
Trying to influence its operation; to convince not to implement Nazi’s orders; to pass on information to the resistance
Flyers, posters and tracts

Leaflets and posters to Belgians
- Appeal to landlords - about the content of deported Jews' homes
- Appeal to fight the enemy together

Special occasions
- November 11, 1943 (25th anniversary - WWI armistice)
- After the liberation of Brussels

Specific topics
- AJB schools in the ghetto
- Wearing the yellow star
LPZ in anti-Nazi struggle during the Shoah - 1943-44

- Calling for Belgian-Jewish solidarity against the occupant and local traitors
- Establishing of the Ninth Brigade under the MNB umbrella
- Organizing the LPZ youth movement and involving its members in the Resistance
Jewish Resistance

**Ninth Brigade Certification**

**BELGIANS, prepare, **THE DECISIVE** BATTLE approaches!**
**BELGIANS**, the Jews fight together with us against **THE COMMON ENEMY**!
We could not - and we could never - abandon our old parents (the Jewish community), feeble and sick people, to improve our lives. It is a matter of conscience! More than that: a family duty, in short, a human duty! Particularly given that I have such brave and good children (the LPZ militants) so dedicated that there is nothing difficult for them.
To flee or resist?

Choices for party comrades who had fled to Vichy France

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>During the war</th>
<th>After the war</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ To find a way to survive there</td>
<td>Many returned to Belgium, some rejoined the party</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ To continue to flee towards North or South America</td>
<td>Few renewed contact with their Belgian comrades</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ To return, motivated by the sense of duty, in order to organize the Jewish resistance against the Nazis</td>
<td>Became leaders of the community in Belgium</td>
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❖ How would the Jewish resistance in Belgium have fared without Abusz' involvement?
**Moshe Erem:** Even though his analytical talent and his unbounded loyalty to the principles of socialist Zionism raised him up to the highest ranks in leading the party, he was unusually modest and remained a stranger to honorary titles.

**Berl Frimer:** He had an amazing talent as a public figure who exercised an admirable influence upon the people who surrounded him. This influence originated from his kindness, and his delicacy, from his noble gait and from the respect that emanated from his very being.
The Impact of Abusz Werber

- Self-taught, he had erudition of a university professor: Jewish history and literature, the foundations of socialism and 'Borochovism'
- Journalist (already before the war), editor of two clandestine newspapers
- Caught in the turmoil of war, he inspired an extraordinary group of LPZ comrades and became their leader
- His moral strength, courage and leadership competence reached their full expression during the Shoah
- He was nicknamed: "The Diplomat" - against sectarianism, as perceived during the CDJ creation; "Column of fire" of the Jewish community
Conclusion

The life of Abusz, before, during and after the Shoah, revolved around three main axes: the Yiddish culture, his sociopolitical vision and the land of Israel. Throughout his life he was active in these three areas to realize the ideals in which he believed.