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**THE MEMBERSHIP OF JEWISH REFUGEES
FROM POLAND IN POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS
IN WARTIME SHANGHAI (1941–1942):
ANALYSIS OF POLISH
DIPLOMATIC DOCUMENTATION**

**The Membership of the Jewish Refugees from Poland
in Political Organisations in Wartime Shanghai (1941–1942):
The Analysis of Polish Diplomatic Documentation.**

When in the early 1940s a vast number of war refugees – mainly Jews, reached (via Japan) Shanghai, they got stuck in the city due to the eruption of the Pacific War. While being mostly Polish citizens, they depended on the diplomatic care of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Tokyo, led by the Ambassador Tadeusz Romer and after its closure – the Polish Consulate in Shanghai, where the ambassador was moved. The diplomats became engaged in the organisation of refugee groups, livelihoods and visas necessary for their evacuation. The aim of this article is to characterise the political and social groups of Polish citizens, who benefited from the Polish consulate's help and were therefore registered in the diplomatic records.

Keywords: Tadeusz Romer, Shanghai, refugees, Jews, World War II, Bund, Zion, Betar, Agudah.

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of 1940s, a vast number of war refugees – mainly Jews – went to Shanghai.¹ Most weren't able to continue their journey, i.e. to Palestine, due to the eruption of hostilities, caused by the Japanese engagement in the war with the United States (US) and the Allies. Moreover, being mostly Polish citizens, at the beginning they depended on the diplomatic care provided by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Tokyo, led by Ambassador Tadeusz Romer. When the embassy was closed in October 1941, the diplomatic staff moved to Shanghai, where together with Polish chargé d'affaires Stanisław de Rosset, Ambassador Romer started to organise the refugees, providing them with livelihoods, visas which were necessary for evacuation, and other activities, which enabled them to lead a kind of 'normal' life in an abnormal situation.²

This article's aim is to characterise the political and social groups of Polish citizens, who benefited from the Polish consulate's help and therefore were registered in the diplomatic records. This documentation gives us the chance to characterise the members of each social and political group that stayed in Shanghai at the beginning of the 1940s. The consulate records provide a window into the social structure, occupations and ages of the refugees. While much has been written about the situation of Jews in Shanghai,³ as well as some political and social groups, this article gives a wide, comparative perspective of the structure of Polish Jews – war refugees – who came to Shanghai on the basis of different quotas provided for the representatives of political groups, such as Bund, Agudas Yisroeli, Betar or Zionists. Some researchers have also tried to provide an analysis of the social strata based on the official diplomatic papers.⁴ Nonetheless, their

¹ More about the flight from Kaunas/Vilnius to the Far East may be found in: Olga Barbasiewicz, *Polish Ambassador to Japan Tadeusz Romer and Jewish war refugees in the Far East*. Instytut Polski w Wilnie (Polish Institute in Vilnius), Wilno (Vilnius) 2019.

² See more: Olga Barbasiewicz, Agnieszka Pawnik, 'The issue of the transfer of financial resources for Polish Jews – war refugees in Shanghai. The activity of the Polish government-in-exile' in *Totalitarian and 20th Century Studies*, Instytut Pileckiego, Vol. 3/2019, pp. 368–381.

³ Irene Eber, *Voices from Shanghai*. Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago 2008; Irene Eber, *Wartime Shanghai and the Jewish Refugees From Central Europe*. De Gruyter, Berlin/Boston 2016; David Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis & Jews: The Jewish Refugees in Shanghai, 1938–1945*, Yeshiva University Press, New York 1976.

⁴ Andrew Jakubowicz, 'Transnationalism in the Analysis of Global Refugee Movements: The Case of the Second World War Polish Jews in Shanghai' in *Australian Humanities Review* no. 62, November 2017.

research proves to be insufficient and based on very general data without specific reference to the existing statistical sources. This leads to a very simplified view of the nuances of the rich political life in wartime Shanghai. Therefore, the analysis provided in this paper will be based on the Polish language diplomatic records. Nevertheless, numerous obstacles were encountered when conducting the analysis. This research is based on the *Statistics of war refugees from Poland staying in Shanghai as of 1 June 1942* [Statystyki uchodźców wojennych z Polski przebywających w Szanghaju wg stanu na dzień 1 czerwca 1942 r.].⁵ The analysis of the dates and places of birth was possible because of the Polish consulate records, which covered a longer period of time (1934–1941), but do not include the 1942 data. In the hope of providing the most thorough study of the topic, the number of the political representatives that the authors chose to focus on in this paper is lower than that presented in later documents, as it was drawn from the list from 1942, and then subtracted from the available sources in the consular book. Moreover, the statistics from 1942 focused only on the heads of families, with other family members known only from the general numbers, included in the overall statistics of the number of members of the political organisations. Subsequently, the only names of females provided in the statistics are those of the unmarried women.

The differences between the spelling of the names in both documents were solved by referring to the other data provided in each paper (i.e. occupations). The authors are also aware of the deficiency of the consular records from their previous research.⁶ It is emphasised that it was the members of the political and religious organisations who had priority for obtaining Japanese transit visas.⁷ Thus, examining the documents taken into consideration in this research is also helpful in finding (defining) the group who received the original visas from the Japanese Consul in Kaunas, Chiune Sugihara.

The political and social groups analysed in this paper include Agudas Yisroeli, Betar, Bund, the Polish Society of War Veterans and Zionists, which was divided into two factions – general and the Marxist

⁵ Statistics of war refugees from Poland staying in Shanghai as of 1 June 1942 [Statystyki uchodźców wojennych z Polski przebywających w Szanghaju wg stanu na dzień 1 czerwca 1942 r.] HOOVER /800/42/0/-/611/

⁶ For example, the name of the editor of the Tidings [Wiadomości] is missing in the consulate records, and only his wife's name is given there.

⁷ Report on the circumstances of the preparation of the evacuation lists in Shanghai for the Polish Foreign Office, 9th December 1943, HOOVER 800/42/0/-/612

Po'ale Tsiyon. The transcriptions of the names of the organisations were made based on the YIVO Encyclopaedia of Jews in Eastern Europe managed by the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.⁸ The research on these specific groups in the first part of this paper mainly covered quantitative analysis of the numbers, sexes, occupations and average ages (as of 1941) of the refugees. The vast scope of the occupations of the Shanghai migrants presented in the 1942 data is included in both the detailed and generalised lists in this paper. The generalisation was made according to how the Polish Foreign Office divided the jobs, in the very same document, into three categories: A, B and C. The first category, A, consisted solely of rabbis, rabbinical students, chazzan and shechita. Category B was for lawyers and trainee attorneys, journalists and writers, engineers, doctors, health professionals, white-collar workers, artists and students. The final category, C, covered merchants, craftsmen, industrialists and farmers.⁹

When compiling the lists of political organisation numbers in Shanghai, the authors found some exceptions in the data that need to be specified. Firstly, four people were enrolled in more than one political group; Józef Rozenberg, (Bund, Agudas Yisroeli), Boruch Ulrych (Betar, Agudas Yisroeli), Icek Lederman (Polish Society of War Veterans [Koło Kombatantów], Zionists), and Todrej Halpern (Polish Society of War Veterans, Zionists). Since the data treated them as valid members of each faction, the authors did the same when preparing the final lists. Secondly, two people included in the 1942 data were not properly presented in the consular book. This is why we do not have information regarding the place and date of birth of Aron Feldman (Polish Society of War Veterans) or Markus Dawid (Po'ale Tsiyon) and they are not included in the detailed analysis.

Taking into account the abovementioned limitations of the study, this article searched for answers to the following questions: What were the characteristics of the political and social groups – Polish war refugees – in Shanghai at the beginning of the 1940s? What were the

⁸ YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, <https://yivoencyclopedia.org/default.aspx>, accessed: 04.08.2020.

⁹ The refugees frequently gained their skills while training in Shanghai, provided by ORT (The Society for Handicraft and Agricultural Work among the Jews of Russia (Obshchestvo Remeslennago i Zemledelecheskago Truda Sredi Evreev v Rossii), and encouraged by Ambassador Tadeusz Romer and other members of the diplomatic mission. People could be trained in Shanghai to acquire other professions which made it significantly easier to be evacuated from the city based on the work permit quotas. This statement can be proved by the analysis of ' Tidings': *Pożyteczna inicjatywa*, 'Wiadomości. Pismo uchodźców wojennych z Polski w Szanghaju', 8 grudnia 1941, s. 4.

social and occupational backgrounds of the refugees? From which Polish cities did they come? What was the Polish embassy's attitude and role in providing help for the members of these groups? To answer these research questions, the authors carried out qualitative and quantitative analysis of the existing data. Firstly, contextual analysis of the diplomatic papers available in the Archives of Modern Records in Poland. Secondly, quantitative analysis of the data provided in the diplomatic records of the members of each political and social group will be provided. It is worth emphasising that the rabbinic groups were not active in political life in Shanghai. The only exception was Agudas Yisroeli and this will be covered in the analysis. Furthermore, the broader context of the activities of these groups in Shanghai should be recalled. Therefore, analysis of the periodicals published in Polish in wartime Shanghai will be conducted to show the activity of the abovementioned groups in the refugees' environment. This analysis of Polish language sources is a step towards further research on the specific political and social groups in which Jewish refugees were involved during their stay in the East Asia.

This article presents another piece of the puzzle about the fate of Jewish refugees who went to Japan because of the widely-known influence of diplomats such as Jan Zwartendijk and Chiune Sugihara. The researchers hope to bridge the gap in the current research on the topic by using the documents as the starting point for the analysis. Previously, other specialists who worked on this subject often based their research on the literature, not the main archive sources themselves.¹⁰ This unique information allows more thorough research. A very general picture of Polish Jews exists in the research, presented in the literature as a part of the mass of refugees. There are researchers who point out the special status of the Polish community, which was different to the so called 'stateless' situation. A representative of this group is Andrew Jakubowicz, who depicts Polish Jews in his work 'Stopped in flight: Shanghai and the Polish Jewish refugees of 1941'.¹¹ He cites the Shanghai Municipal Council's archives as new data that compliments the previous articles and books and uses several documents from Hoover's Archives. However, his article is largely based on the classic literature. The authors are trying

¹⁰ Among other publications, those by Irene Eber or David Kranzler are mentioned in previous footnotes.

¹¹ Andrew Jakubowicz (2018) 'Stopped in flight: Shanghai and the Polish Jewish refugees of 1941', *Holocaust Studies*, 24:3, 287-304, DOI: 10.1080/17504902.2017.1387845

to offer more information on the topics that were previously omitted or not known in great detail, such as the motivations and differences that varied between the Polish refugees and residents. For example, Andrew Jakubowicz points out the biggest social groups in Shanghai, such as the rabbis and rabbinical students, trade people and workers, artisans and artists. His article tries to offer more insight into the political and demographic scope of the community, while describing the issues that arose between the 745 refugees and 230 residents. He also cites a quote from Eastjewcom's Eliezer Szczupakiewicz from March 1941, in which he brings up the 'bureaucratic mess of competing and conflicting organisations with multivarious sets of goals and attitudes to the diversity of the Polish Jews (secular, Leftist, religious, Zionist, etc.)'.¹² In March 1941, less than 100 refugees were self-sufficient.¹³ The political committee, established by Romer after his arrival, allowed organisations such as the self-help cash registry to flourish, as can be seen from the later sources.¹⁴ Jakubowicz does not analyse the role of the Polish Foreign Office in that issue, simply calling it 'community based'. The refugee society organised by Tadeusz Romer had its institutions and representatives, which helped to organise and represent the Polish refugees' interests.

Therefore, we strongly believe that this article provides a detailed analysis of the Polish Jews in Shanghai, which guarantees the next step in the research on the role of the Polish government and of diplomacy in providing help to Polish citizens during their refuge, as well as new aspects in the analysis of the lives of the refugees themselves.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL GROUPS IN WARTIME SHANGHAI

The history of the Japanese community in Shanghai starts before World War II. In 1936, Shanghai was among one of the largest and most populated cities in the world, with a vast number of foreigners – Russians, who fled there during the aftermath of the revolution of 1917, British, German and American merchants and businessmen. The extraterritoriality of the concession of Shanghai was a safe destination

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 293.

¹³ Report 'Polish refugees in Shanghai' by Tadeusz Romer, 18th March 1941, Canadian Research Knowledge Network, C-10451.

¹⁴ Report on the circumstances of the preparation of the evacuation lists in Shanghai for the Polish Foreign Office, 9th December 1943, HOOVER 800/42/0/-/612.

for many Jewish refugees.¹⁵ This was ended by late 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. In 1943, when the relocation order was issued, the so-called stateless refugees were moved to the Honkew District. One square mile of the Shanghai suburbs housed 25,000 people. Around 3,000 craftworkers (sewers, shoemakers, hairdressers and so on) lost their ability to earn money.¹⁶ The district was overcrowded and prone to disease, hunger and poverty. Almost 15,000 inhabitants of Shanghai were stateless,¹⁷ with no outside support.

In December 1941, there were 975 Polish refugees registered in Shanghai. Most had arrived via the USSR and Japan. They were mostly Jews who had escaped from Nazi-occupied Europe. The crucial thing that differentiated them from the stateless Jews who resided in Shanghai¹⁸ was that they were under the protection of the Polish Foreign Office, first in Japan, and then in Shanghai. Thanks to the tremendous work of the diplomat Tadeusz Romer,¹⁹ Polish Jews, who came to Japan thanks to the visas issued by Sugihara and Polish intelligence and the underground,²⁰ were protected before and after the Polish embassy in Japan was closed. It should also not be forgotten that the distribution of the visas by the Japanese consul would not have been possible without the activity of Jan Zwartendijk, the Dutch businessman and consul in Lithuania, who provided information and a note on the travel documents of refugees for no-visa entry to the Dutch colony of Curacao.

¹⁵ See: Barbasiewicz: 'Migracje żydowskich uchodźców z Europy do Azji w czasie II wojny światowej. Getto w Szanghaju' in: *Wokół problematyki migracyjnej. Kultura przyjęcia*, Rządowa Rada Ludnościowa, Międzyinstytutowy Zakład Badań nad Migracją, Warszawa 2013, pp. 359–374; Ernest Heppner: *Shanghai Refuge. A Memoir of the World War II Jewish Ghetto*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London 1995; Pałasz-Rutkowska, *Historia stosunków polsko – japońskich 1904–1945*, Trio, Warszawa 2009; Ernest Henriot, Wen-Hsin Yeh (ed.), *In the Shadow of the Rising Sun. Shanghai under Japanese Occupation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2004; Anaïs Martane: 'Shanghai Jews', in: *Jewish Quarterly*, 52:4, pp. 21–25, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0449010X.2005.10705262>

¹⁶ Report on the circumstances of the preparation of the evacuation lists in Shanghai for the Polish Foreign Office, 9th December 1943, HOOVER 800/42/0/-/612

¹⁷ *Ibidem*. 'Polish Refugees in Shanghai', report by Tadeusz Romer for the Polish Foreign Office, 18th March 1942, AAN, Canadian Research Knowledge Network, C-10451

¹⁸ Before war they possessed mainly German or Austrian citizenship.

¹⁹ Polish envoy in Japan from 1937 to 1941, special delegate in Shanghai from 1941 to 1942, Polish envoy in the USSR and Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1943 to 1944.

²⁰ Vilnius in Lithuania was known to be a destination for many Jews. Jewish organisations that enabled the continuation of social circles were active there even after the beginning of World War II. During the winter of 1939, evacuation through so-called Western Belarus took place. Jewish settlers in Ejszyszki provided help for the thousands of people who fled fearing denunciation because of their political backgrounds. After the incorporation of Lithuania in July 1940, many of the Jewish organisations were closed or discontinued. See: Joseph R. Fiszman, 'The Quest for Status: Polish Jewish Refugees in Shanghai, 1941–1949' in: *The Polish Review*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (1998), s. 442.

After closing the Polish Embassy in Tokyo in October 1941, Ambassador Romer relocated with his staff to Shanghai where he helped to establish a bureaucratic and legal framework of support for the refugees. The relocation note included all refugees who were staying in Shanghai, even though Polish citizens were clearly divided from the stateless by the system of outside help and their rights to evacuation were sanctioned by the Polish Foreign Office.²¹ The Polish community protested against the relocation, as they did not want to be treated as stateless.²²

Polish refugees represented a vast plethora of occupations and social backgrounds and can be divided into two major groups – rabbis and rabbinical students (42%) and others, which from now on will be referred to as the secular group (58%).²³ In Asia during World War II, no new rabbis were schooled, and the community relied heavily on those who were educated in Poland. The rabbis had a special status that is reflected in the reports created by the Polish Foreign Office in both Shanghai and London.²⁴ Thanks to its position, the rabbinical group was supported by members of the local community associated with various circles. Until 1941, funds were acquired mostly from the US, and when this became impossible, the Polish Foreign Office strengthened its cooperation with the International Red Cross. The 1942 statistics are used by the authors to present the occupational backgrounds of the political factions.

Taking into consideration the division of the jobs provided in the introduction to this paper, the rabbis occupy first place in group A, before doctors and engineers. This alone was a sign of their privilege. This fact is reflected in the correspondence of Prime Minister Władysław Sikorski, who, on 31st October 1942, sent a telegram to the Union Rabbis of USA and Canada in New York, in which he stated that he was ‘firmly resolved to give the Polish government’s help to all Polish

²¹ ‘On the issue of the financial support for the Polish refugees in the Far East’, report by Tadeusz Romer for the Polish Foreign Office, 31st July 1942, Canadian Research Knowledge Network, C-10451.

²² Report on the circumstances of the preparation of the evacuation lists in Shanghai for the Polish Foreign Office, 9th December 1943, HOOVER /800/42/0/-/612. The message of the Secretary-General for the Polish Foreign Office on the relocation of Polish refugees in Shanghai, 2nd July 1943, HOOVER /800/42/0/-/545/.

²³ Besides these occupations, they were also trained in others, while special courses provided by the Polish governmental organisations such as Orta ‘On the issue of the financial support for the Polish refugees in the Far East’, report by Tadeusz Romer for the Polish Foreign Office, 31st July 1942, Canadian Research Knowledge Network, C-10451

²⁴ Report on the circumstances of the preparation of the evacuation lists in Shanghai for the Polish Foreign Office, 9th December 1943, HOOVER /800/42/0/-/612/A.

citizens of Jewish origins' and promised to 'promote the evacuation of Polish rabbinical refugees from Shanghai'.²⁵

Because of its traditional indifference to political organisations, not much of the rabbinical group is represented in the statistics of political activity – only two rabbis, one shechita and 12 rabbinical students were so engaged, 10% of all members.

The other division that could be applied to the Polish community in Shanghai is connected with the timeline of the arrivals. Two hundred and thirty people, who were referred to in the reports as residents, settled in Shanghai before Pearl Harbor (1934–1941), as reflected in the consular records that were used to map out the places and dates of birth of the political activists. The rest, 745 people, came via the USSR and Japan (or Japanese controlled territories) in 1941 as a direct result of World War II and the Holocaust. The residents did not wish to travel any further or use their visas, if they had any. They stayed in Shanghai, regardless of their situation. They had businesses, local communities and fixed lifestyles before the arrival of the war refugees. The latter faction mostly wanted to change their place of living after the war, but were stuck in Shanghai due to the eruption of the Pacific War. Some of them possessed visas, i.e. to Palestine, but were unable to use them, while some were trying to acquire the means to relocate.²⁶ This fundamental divide resulted in these two groups having different goals and opinions, and this is reflected in the way they associated; in 1941, the residents established the so-called Resident Association, and the refugees, the Polish Aid Society. These factions competed for resources and outside help via the Polish Foreign Office. With the relocation note in 1943, the situation of the residents grew more desperate, as their sources of income became scarce. This eventually led to the idea of either creating another organisation that would be superior to both factions or dissolving the Resident Association completely.²⁷

The issue of visas that ensured the possibility of travelling further was one of the causes of disagreements and resentment between the groups. There could have been 20% fewer refugees, but 180 people refused to use their visas, not just because of the travelling

²⁵ Telegram of Prime Minister W Sikorski to the Union Rabbis of USA and Canada in New York, 31st October 1942, HOOVER /800/42/0/-/528/.

²⁶ Report on the issue of Polish Refugees in Shanghai for Minister Romer, 28th May 1942, AAN, Canadian Research Knowledge Network, C-10451.

²⁷ Report on the circumstances of the preparation of the evacuation lists in Shanghai for the Polish Foreign Office, 9th December 1943, HOOVER 800/42/0/-/612.

expenses.²⁸ The people who stayed in Shanghai, despite having the chance to be relocated, were mostly members of the Zion and Jewish religious circles. The rabbinical faction did not want to be split, as this was considered to be harmful and dangerous. There was also a small circle of rabbis who were preparing themselves to stay in Shanghai even after the war. In the rabbinical groups, matters of evacuation were treated differently than in the secular one. Rabbis and their students, not managed in the same way as the secular group and divided on destinations for further travel, were asked by Tadeusz Romer to make their own decision about the evacuation order.²⁹

Zion members were not homogenous either. Political activists who had acquired visas were reluctant to use them, as their mission was to disseminate their agenda outside the Palestine. On the other hand, Bund members didn't have visas and they emphasised their wish to get to the US because of the related political movements there.³⁰

The political and social groups that are the subject of this paper are shown in Figure 1.

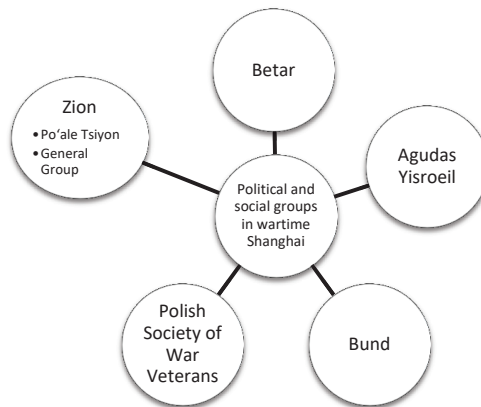


Figure 1. Political and social groups in Shanghai, 1941³¹

²⁸ Report on the circumstances of the preparation of the evacuation lists in Shanghai for the Polish Foreign Office, 9th December 1943, HOOVER 800/42/0/-/612/

²⁹ Report on the circumstances of the preparation of the evacuation lists in Shanghai for the Polish Foreign Office, 9th December 1943, HOOVER – /800/42/0/-/612; Report on the issue of Polish Refugees in Shanghai for Minister Romer, 28th May 1942, AAN, Canadian Research Knowledge Network, C-10451

³⁰ Report on the circumstances of the preparation of the evacuation lists in Shanghai for the Polish Foreign Office, 9th December 1943, HOOVER – 800/42/0/-/612; Report on the issue of Polish Refugees in Shanghai for Minister Romer, 28th May 1942, AAN, Canadian Research Knowledge Network, C-10451,

³¹ As typified by the Polish Consulate in Shanghai. Report on the circumstances of the preparation of the evacuation lists in Shanghai for the Polish Foreign Office, 9th December 1943, HOOVER 800/42/0/-/612; Report on the issue of Polish Refugees in Shanghai for Minister Romer, 28th May 1942, AAN, Canadian Research Knowledge Network, C-10451,

METHODOLOGY OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE STATISTICAL DATA OF THE REFUGEES

As previously mentioned, the authors based their research on the *Statistics of war refugees from Poland staying in Shanghai as of 1 June 1942* by comparing it with Polish consulate records that were written from 1934 to 1941 and covered the basic data of ages and places of origins. This is why the information provided here will only be for those refugees who were listed both in the records and in the 1942 statistics. Consequently, the number of the political representatives that will undergo more thorough analysis will be lower than that stated in later documents. It should be noted that the place of birth was not necessarily the same as the place or the region of departure. Providing analysis of this kind of data gives a general idea of the routes of the refugees, and in this sense creates a more specific image of their stories, rather than a general and vague one.

To simplify, there are four general groups of data: the numbers of political representatives alone (1st group) and with the members of their families (2nd group) for the years 1941 (3rd group) and 1942 (4th group). The numbers and the difference between the consular records and the 1942 Statistics data can be presented in the following way:

Table 1

The difference between the data of 1941 and 1942 concerning the numbers of Polish refugees who were members of political groups in wartime Shanghai and their families

	Number of members of the political groups in Shanghai	Number of members of the political groups in Shanghai with the members of their families
1941	140	198
1942	196	261

In 1941, the year that the authors chose to focus on, the overall statistics of the members of the political groups are presented as follows:

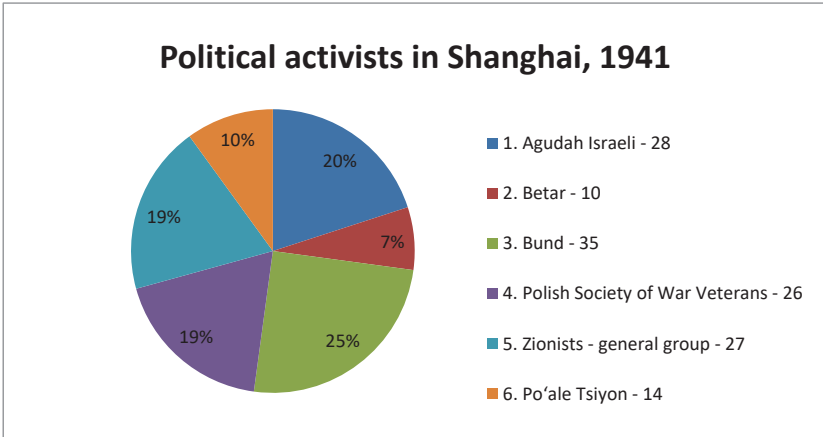


Figure 2. Political activists in Shanghai, 1941 – numbers and percentages

In 1941, Agudas Yisroeli had 28 members, Betar – 10, Bund – 35, Polish Society of War Veterans – 26, general Zion group – 27, Po'ale Tsiyon – 14. The overall number of political activists consists of 140 people and 58 members of their families. As mentioned before, the list is based on the head of the families and does not include women, unless they were unmarried. This is why the great majority of people listed in the political organisations were men – 96% (135 people). Only 4% of all members were female (five people). Here we can see, that the biggest political group was Bund, and the smallest, Betar.

These numbers change if we include the 58 members of the families of each political faction, as can be seen in the following diagram:

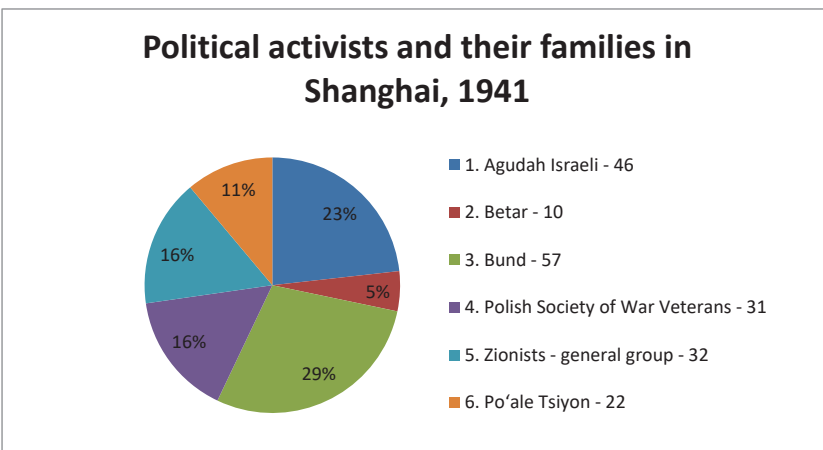


Figure 3. Political activists and their families in Shanghai, 1941 – numbers and percentages

If we add the number of representatives and their family members, in 1941, Agudas Yisroeli listed 46 people, Bund – 57, the Polish Society of War Veterans – 31, Zionists – 32 and Po'ale Tsiyon – 22. Betar was the only organisation that did not document any numbers of family members. Bund and Agudas Yisroeli listed the highest numbers of people at that time.

In 1942, the numbers looked quite different – 196 people were enrolled with 65 members of their families:

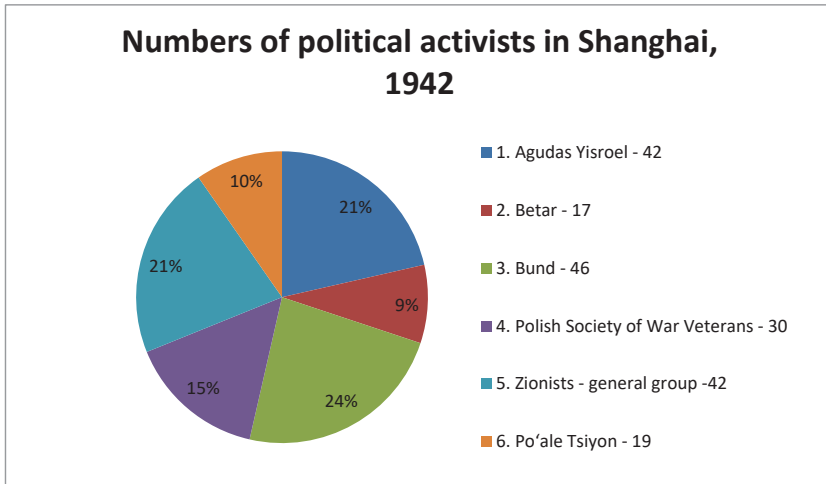


Figure 4. Political activists in Shanghai, 1942 – numbers and percentages

In 1942, Agudas Yisroeli had 42 members, Betar – 17, Bund – 46, the Polish Society of War Veterans – 30, general Zionists – 42, Po'ale Tsiyon – 19. We can see the shift towards the Agudas Yisroeli and Zionist organisations, as many new members were listed. This could be a sign of internal changes in the political climate of the social scene in wartime Shanghai.

If we include the 65 family members, Agudas Yisroeli had 66 representatives, Betar – 19, Bund – 65, the Polish Society of War Veterans – 35, Zionists – 50, and Po'ale Tsiyon – 26.

By comparing the data from the 1942 with the consular records, the authors acquired the ages of almost all of the activists listed in both documents, with the exception of Markus Dawid (Po'ale Tsiyon) and Aron Feldman (Polish Society of War Veterans). The oldest person involved in any political activity in Shanghai was born in 1878, so in 1941 he was 63 years old. The youngest, born in 1925, was 16. The average age was 33.7. The detailed data on the ages of all activists is presented below.

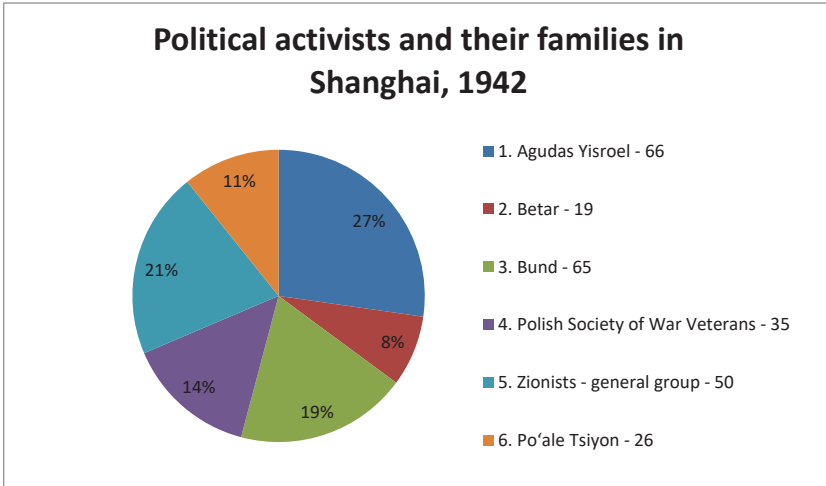


Figure 5. Political activists and their families in Shanghai, 1942 – numbers and percentages

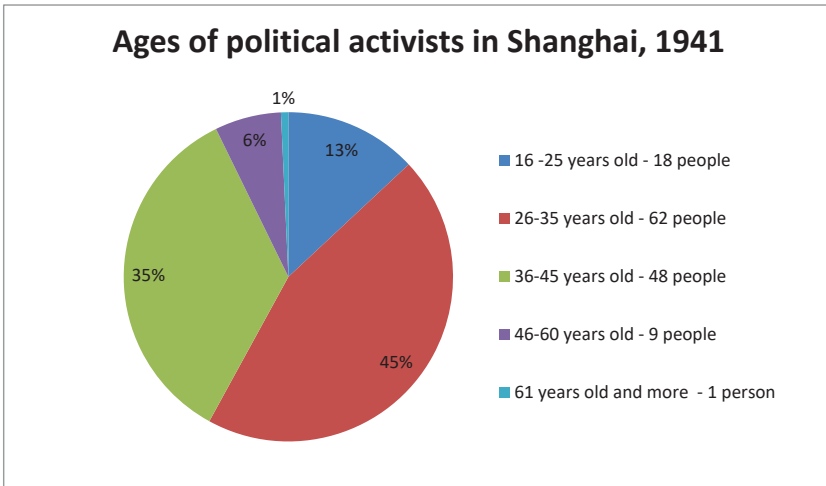


Figure 6. Ages of political activists in Shanghai, 1941 – numbers and percentages

The largest number of political activists were aged 26–35 years old. The next group were 36–45-year-old refugees. Only one person was in her 60s or older. The ages of the members of each political faction will be presented in the later in this article.

In Shanghai in 1941, Tadeusz Romer established a committee that included seven people chosen by the political organisations and the rest of the community. It consisted of three orthodox, one Zion

member, one member of Bund and two non-affiliated and was an important extension of the Polish Foreign Office.³² Aside from Polrelief, there was also the council that included representatives from all the political, social and professional circles. The only group that didn't have representatives were the rabbinical students, who had their own delegation to represent them. The first meeting of the Polrelief's advisory council took place on Polish Independence Day (11 November 1941). With the help of these organisations, Romer was able to direct the collaborative effort and see to the establishment of the civil court, self-help fund, three kitchens for the orthodox, one for the members of Bund and one for the others, as well as craftwork schools and centres.³³ During the first arrangements, material help for the refugees was organised primarily by the Committee for Assistance of Jewish Refugees from Eastern Europe, commonly called Eastjewcom, which was created in March 1941 by Layzer Szczupakiewicz and Zorach Wahrhaftig to raise additional funds to help newly arrived refugees.³⁴ The main task of the newly established committee was to provide help with arranging visas and emigration procedures.³⁵

AGUDAS YISROELI

Agudas Yisroeli was established in contemporary Katowice, Poland in 1912 (at that time the city was a part of the German Empire). In Shanghai it represented one of the biggest political groups who arrived with other refugees. The organisation was an ultra-orthodox one, opposing the Zionist movement. They opposed the movement for several reasons. First of all, they felt that cooperation with the World Zionist Congress was impossible, and secondly, they had a Moetzat Gedolei HaTorah – a council of Torah Sages – with supreme party authority.³⁶ As Ezra Kopelowitz states, Agudat was formed 'in reaction to the rise of anti-tradition movements, including secular groups such as the Jewish socialist Bund and the various Zionist movements

³² Report on the circumstances of the preparation of the evacuation lists in Shanghai for the Polish Foreign Office, 9th December 1943, HOOVER 800/42/0/-/612/

³³ Report on the circumstances of the preparation of the evacuation lists in Shanghai for the Polish Foreign Office, 9th December 1943, HOOVER – 800/42/0/-/612

³⁴ Irene Eber, *Wartime Shanghai and the Jewish Refugees from Central Europe*. De Gruyter, Berlin/Boston 2016, p. 159.

³⁵ *Komisja Doradcza Uchodźców*, 'Wiadomości. Pismo uchodźców wojennych z Polski w Szanghaju', 8 grudnia 1941, p. 4.

³⁶ Stephen Oren, 'Continuity and Change in Israel's Religious Parties', *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Winter, 1973), p. 39.

which aimed to institutionalise a specifically secular conception of Jewish ethnicity and the religious, but radically anti-traditional, Reform Movement'.³⁷ Within this group, the Hassidic and Mitnagdic streams of neo-traditional European Jewry were united.³⁸

In the listing of 1941 there were 27 (96%) men and one woman (4%) included in the Agudas Yisroeli faction. The oldest person who was involved was born in 1894, and in 1941 was 47 years old. The youngest – born in 1919 – was 22. The average age of participants in this group was 31.25 years old. The detailed information can be presented as follows:

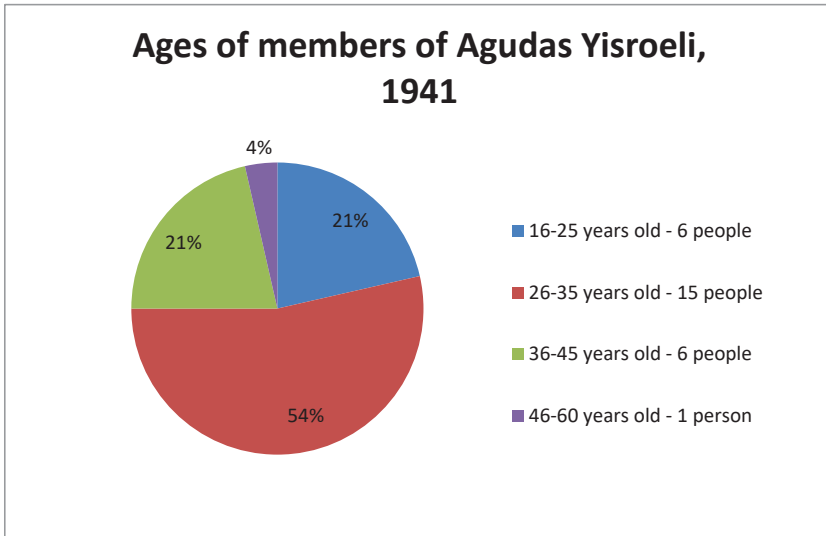


Figure 7. Ages of the members of Agudas Yisroeli, 1941

As we can see from Figure 7, the most numerous group was the one that consisted of adults aged 26–35 years old. Excluding one person, everyone listed in Agudas Yisroeli at that time was under 46 years old.

The occupations and numbers are as follows:

No other political faction in Shanghai listed so many people affiliated with religious studies and practices as Agudas Yisroeli. Less than half of the members (46%) had secular backgrounds. Rabbinical students (12) and merchants (5) were the biggest groups at the time.

³⁷ Ezra Kopelowitz, 'Religious Politics and Israel's Ethnic Democracy' in: *Israel Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Fall 2001), p. 172.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

That is also the faction, whose representatives were listed in all three categories in the 1942 statistics: A – rabbis and rabbinical students; B – lawyers, doctors, office workers and such; and C – farmers, craftsmen and so on.

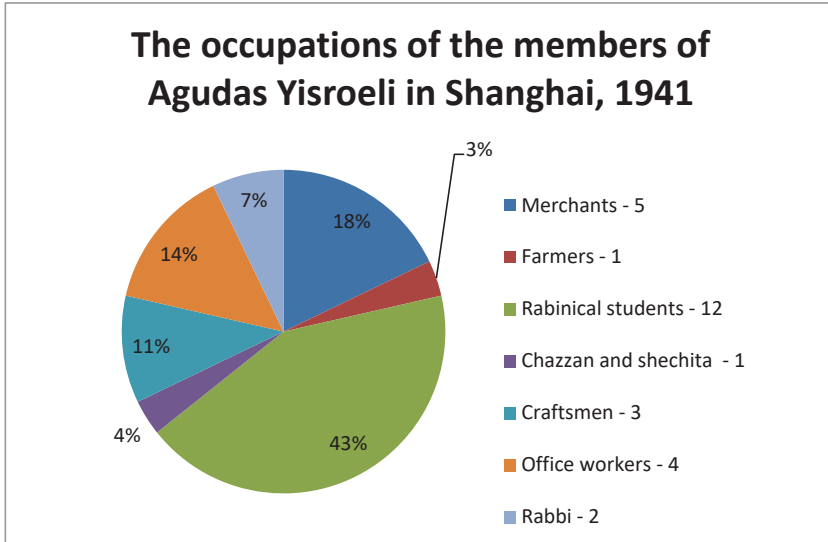


Figure 8. The occupations of the political activists in Agudas Yisroeli in Shanghai, 1941 – numbers and percentages

The largest number of people with the same place of origin were those born in the city of Warsaw and in Ostrołęka. This covers a variety of places of origins, including the Śląskie and Stanisławowskie voivodships (now in Ukraine), which were uncommon among the representatives of the other factions.

Some of the exceptions made by the authors include places that were not recognised during the research, such as Groblijako and Terepiec (possibly Teremiec – Chełmskie voivodship), that were the places of origin of a rabbi called Saul Dawid Margulies, listed in the consular records under the number 1501 and a weaver called Dawod Szpektorow, number 1189. A doctor, Jonas Dawid Gliksman, listed in the consular records under the number 1509 had his place of birth documented as ‘Wiedniu’, which is the inflected Polish name for the city of Vienna in Austria. No other cities or places mentioned in the consular records appear to be inflected or changed.

Table 2
Voivodships and places of birth of the members of Agudas Yisroeli
in Shanghai, 1941

Voivodships and places of birth of the members of Agudas Yisroeli in Shanghai, 1941	
Voivodship (capital)	Town or village (number of people if more than one)
City of Warsaw (Warsaw)	Warszawa (3)
Białostockie (Białystok)	Goworowo
	Ostrołęka (3)
	Ostrów Mazowiecka
	Różan
Krakowskie (Kraków)	Kraków (2)
Lubelskie (Lublin)	Siedlce
	Zamość
Łódzkie (Łódź)	Łódź
	Wielopole
	Zduńska Wola
Nowogródzkie (Nowogródek)	Mir
	Słonim
Poleskie (Brześć nad Bugiem)	Brześć
	Kamieniec Litewski
	Kobryn
Stanisławowskie ^a (Stanisławów)	Rubel
Śląskie (Katowice)	Wolczyn
Warszawskie (Warszawa)	Rupin
Wołyńskie (Łuck)	Kilkijów

^a Currently in Ukraine.

BETAR

A Revisionist Zionist youth movement founded in 1923 in Latvia, Betar was the smallest faction in the political scene of Polish refugees in Shanghai, listing only men. The oldest member was born in 1904 and was 37, and the youngest – born in 1918 – 18 years old. The average age was 28.7, the lowest of all groups.

Members of Betar were mainly aged from 26 to 35 years, with no members over 46.

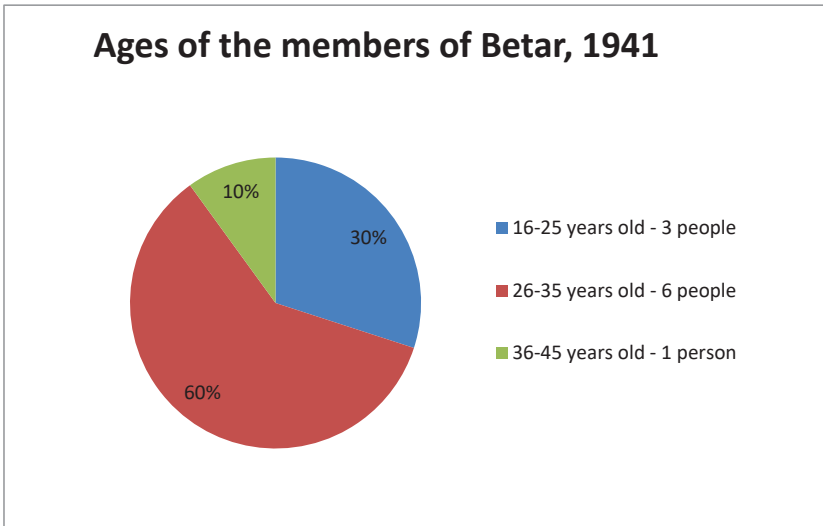


Figure 9. Ages of the members of Betar, 1941

Merchants and trade workers were the most numerous in this organisation, as they made up six of the ten members. There were also four craftsmen listed. As reflected in Figures 10 and 11 below, members of Betar were listed in both categories B and C, with clearly more in the latter.

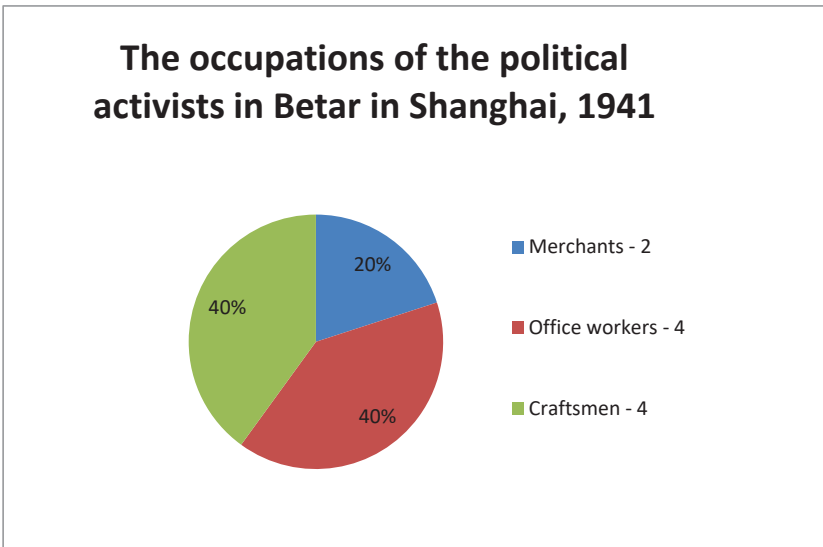


Figure 10. The list of the occupations of the political activists in Betar in Shanghai, 1941

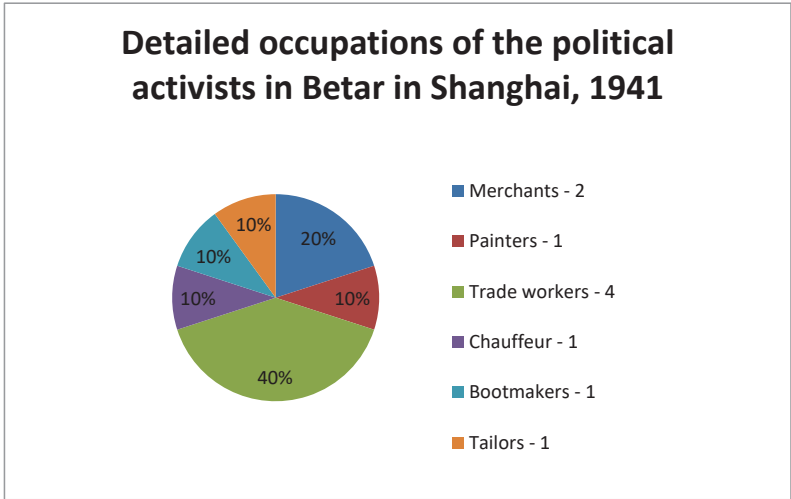


Figure 11. Detailed occupations of the political activists in Betar in Shanghai, 1941

The most numerous group of representatives of Betar who shared the same birthplace is, as in case of Agudas Yisroeli, the City of Warsaw. The rest came from roughly the same regions of the eastern part of Poland. If we include those from Warsaw, six of the ten members were born in the capitals of their voivodships.

Table 3
Voivodships and places of birth of the political activists of Betar in Shanghai, 1941

Voivodships and places of birth of the political activists of Betar in Shanghai, 1941	
Voivodship (capital)	Town or village (number of people if more than one)
City of Warsaw (Warsaw)	Warszawa (5)
Białostockie (Białystok)	Kamieniec
	Suwałki
	Różan
Łódzkie (Łódź)	Kalisz
Poleskie (Brześć nad Bugiem)	Brześć

BUND

Bund – Der Algemeyner Yidisher Arbeter Bund in Lite, Poyln, un Rusland (The General Union of Jewish Workers in Lithuania, Poland, and Russia) – was established in Vilnius (Wilno) in 1897. It

was a union uniting Jews of the working classes. In the periods of 1898–1902 and 1906–1912, Bund was an autonomic organisation within the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP), and an independent party in Poland from 1918, which in 1920 united with the Jewish Social Democratic Party.³⁹ In the interwar period in Poland, it was an opposition party that called for the national and cultural autonomy of Polish Jews.⁴⁰

Members of Bund were against the idea of establishing the State of Israel (i.e. Anti-Zionist) and believed that their place of birth was their fatherland. As previously mentioned, in the case of the Shanghai community, some had visas (i.e. to Palestine), but refused to use them due to their convictions.⁴¹

The members of Bund in Shanghai⁴² list three women, making up 9% of the group and 32 men (91%), so have the biggest number of women who travelled as single women or independent and were included in the statistics. All were educated or fled during their studies, as they are listed as a bacterial lab technician, a teacher and a student.

Moreover, Bund members showed the widest variety of occupations and jobs, as presented below in both the detailed and generalised lists. The occupations of the members of Bund fall into categories B and C, with almost half listed as craftsmen, one third as office workers and almost one in ten as students.

The list of members of Bund in wartime Shanghai from 12th September 1941, states that there were 57 people, along with 11 women, the wives and daughters of the activists. One woman is mentioned without a husband or family. Interestingly, the youngest person on the list was aged nine. On the copy of the file, her name is encircled.⁴³

³⁹ Eleonora Kirwiel, 'Życie polityczne mniejszości żydowskiej na Kresach Północno-Wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w okresie międzywojennym. Zarys problematyki', in: *Wschód Europy*, vol 3, 1/2017, p. 126.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹ Report on the issue of the Polish Refugees in Shanghai for the Minister Romer, 28th May 1942, AAN, Canadian Research Knowledge Network, C-10451; Further information in: Gertrud Pikhan, Piotr Wróbel, 'The Bund at 100. 1897–1997', in: Jack Jacobs (ed), *Jewish Politics in Eastern Europe*, Basingstoke 2001.

⁴² More information about Bund in Shanghai: Martyna Rusiniak-Karwat, *The Road to Freedom. Jewish Socialists in Shanghai*, 'Hemispheres' 2017, no. 32, pp. 91–98.

⁴³ 'List of the members of the Bund in the Far East on 12th September 1941, in the order set by the group', 12th September 1941, HOOVER, /800/42/0/-/528/

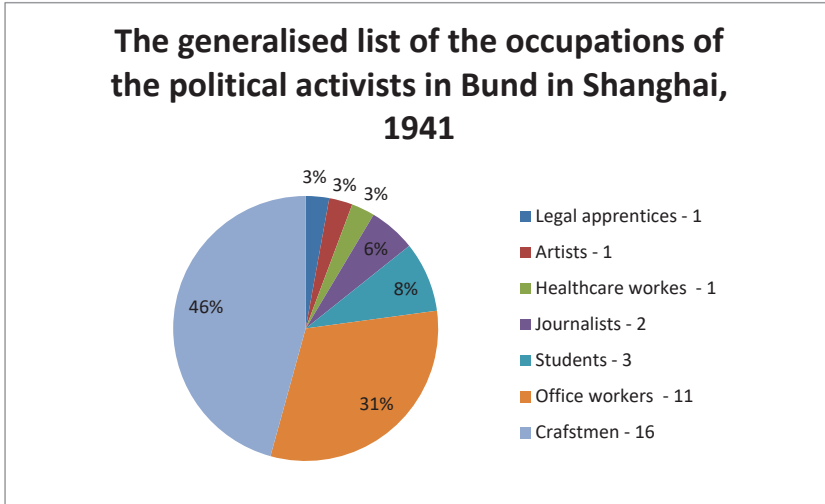


Figure 12. The generalised list of the occupations of the political activists in Bund in Shanghai, 1941

The members in this organisation had the widest spectrum of ages. The oldest person involved was 63 years old and was born in 1878, and the youngest was 9, so this faction listed both the oldest and the youngest people of all political representatives in Shanghai at the time. The average age of members of Bund was 34.4 years old.

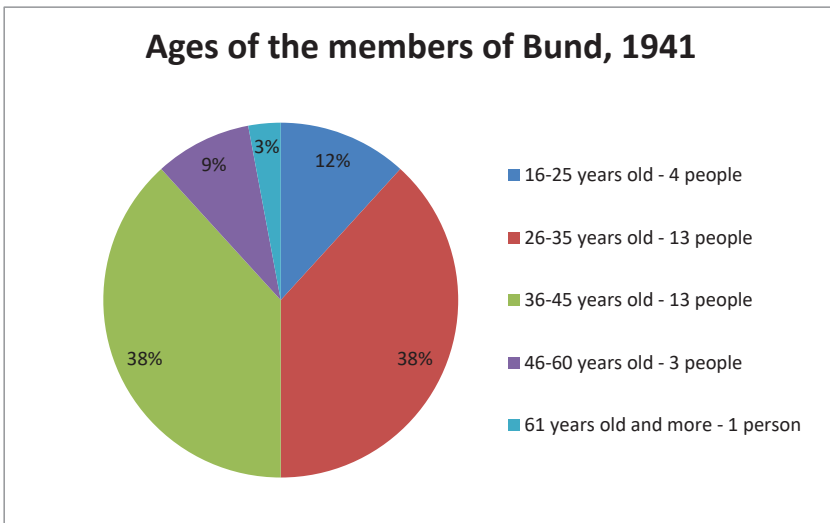


Figure 13. Ages of the members of Bund, 1941

The detailed list uncovers the rich backgrounds of enrolled members, who represented many different crafts and abilities, as well as students, teachers and journalists. The authors are currently researching which of these skills were being gained in Shanghai.



Figure 14. Details of the occupations of the political activists in Bund in Shanghai, 1941

Once again, the most common place of origin was the City of Warsaw. The authors excluded Garwoli (possibly Garwolin, a place known for its Jewish settlers) and Lipno, due to the commonality of the name (possibly Lipno, which before 1938 was incorporated into the Warszawskie voivodship and after that into the Pomorskie voivodship, based on the vicinity to other places of birth of the refugees). Two people who were born there were Berek Ambaras, number 1338, and Sima Binem Kruk, number 1313.

Table 4
Voivodships and places of birth of the political activists in Bund
in Shanghai, 1941

Voivodship (capital)	Town or village (number of people if more than one)
City of Warsaw (Warsaw)	Warszawa (12)
Kieleckie (Kielce)	Jędrzejów
	Opoczno
Lubelskie (Lublin)	Biała Podlaska (3)
	Izbica
	Lublin
	Zelechów
Lwowskie (Lwów)	Kuliczków
	Lubaczów
Łódzkie (Łódź)	Łódź
Nowogródzkie (Nowogródek)	Słonim (2)
Poleskie (Brześć nad Bugiem)	Brześć
Tarnopolskie (Tarnopol)	Kamieniec Podolski
Warszawskie (Warszawa)	Mława
	Nasielsk
	Przasnysz
	Sochaczew
Wileńskie (Wilno)	Wilno
Wołyńskie (Łuck)	Wołyń

POLISH SOCIETY OF WAR VETERANS

This social group is hard to define from its origins and needs further, deeper research. We can assume that the war veterans had a direct or indirect connection with the military forces, and the group was established only for the purposes of the evacuation quotas. The following data excludes Aron Feldman, who, as explained before, was not properly documented in the consular records.

This group was analysed in this paper to provide a complete picture of the Polish diplomatic statistics of the social and political groups in Shanghai. The authors are aware of the need for further deep research concerning this specific organisation. The Polish Society of War Veterans consisted solely of men with an average age of 38 years. The details of the ages of people in this faction is presented below:

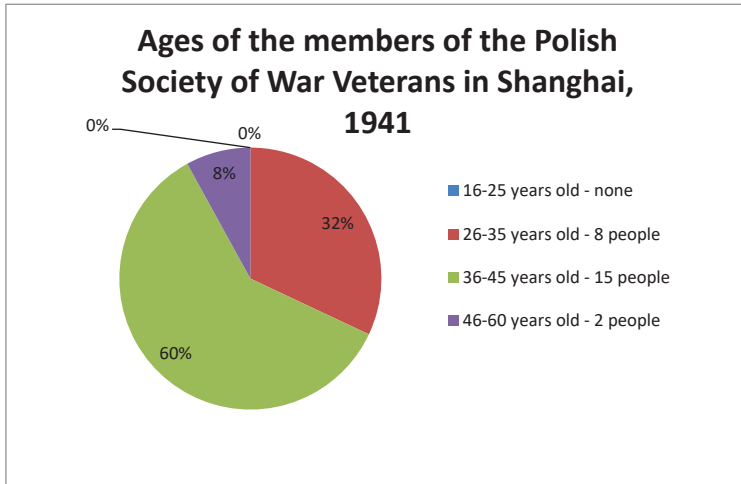


Figure 15. Ages of the members of the Polish Society of War Veterans in Shanghai, 1941

The oldest person was born in 1889 and was 52 years old, the youngest was born in 1915 and was only 18 years old. This faction’s members’ average age, 38 years old, is the highest of all the listed organisations. Fifteen of the 26 people listed were aged between 36 and 45 years old.

The generalised list shows us that roughly one-third of the listed members were craftsmen, more than a quarter were merchants, and a fifth were office workers. Even the simplified version clearly illustrates the rich backgrounds of the members of the group that connected lawyers, famers and industrialists alike. See Figure 16.

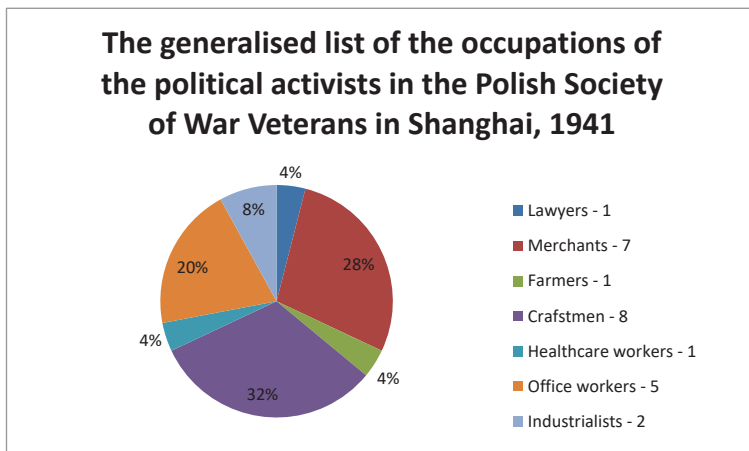


Figure 16. The generalised list of the occupations of the political activists in the Polish Society of War Veterans in Shanghai, 1941

The detailed list of the occupations gives us even more insight into the backgrounds of the politically involved refugees. The biggest group consisted of trade workers. The rest of the members of the Polish Society of War Veterans in Shanghai represented a variety of different occupations: from farmers, industrialists and craftsmen to dental technicians, electricians, weavers and so on.



Figure 17. Details of the occupations of the political activists in the Polish Society of War Veterans in Shanghai, 1941

Table 5

Voivodships and places of birth of the political activists of the Polish Society of War Veterans in Shanghai, 1941

Voivodships and places of birth of the political activists of the Polish Society of War Veterans in Shanghai, 1941	
Voivodship (capital)	Town or village (number of people if more than one)
City of Warsaw (Warsaw)	Warsaw (13)
Białostockie	Wysokie
	Siemiatycze
Lubelskie (Lublin)	Kraśniczyn
Łódzkie (Łódź)	Łódź
	Szadek
Poleskie (Brześć nad Bugiem)	Brześć
Warszawskie (Warsaw)	Mława
	Włocławek (2)

Thirteen members of the Polish Society of War Veterans listed the City of Warsaw as their place of birth. Other than that, two people came from the capital cities of Łódzkie and Poleskie voivodships. The only examples of shared places of birth are towns such as Włocławek and Warsaw.

ZIONISTS

In the 19th century, modern Zionism emerged in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as in the territories of the Poland, which gained its independence in 1918. Their main aim was to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. It was a multidimensional movement, aimed not only at social but also national change.⁴⁴ The members of Zion⁴⁵ in Shanghai were all men, with an average age of 34.8.

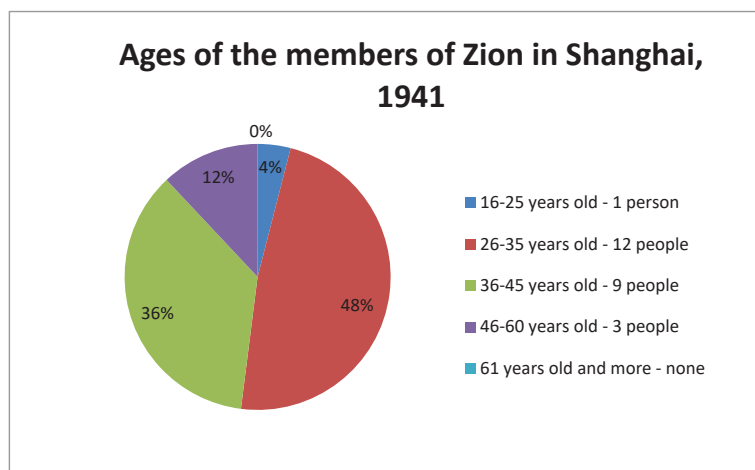


Figure 18. Ages of the members of Zion in Shanghai, 1941

The oldest person listed was born in 1889 and was 52 years old, and the youngest was 23, born in 1918. Most people were aged 26–35 years old or between 36 and 45 years.

Among the members of the Zionists there were two doctors, more than in the other factions, and four people who dealt with the law – one lawyer and three trainee lawyers. One member in ten was an industrialist, a merchant, office worker or a trainee attorney.

⁴⁴ Marcin Kula, *O Syjonizmie*, „Dzieje Najnowsze”, Rocznik XIX, 1987 (2), s. 91.

⁴⁵ The authors are aware that in the reports, selection among these groups occurred. Nonetheless, in the statistics this selection didn't appear. Therefore, in this article this issue is analysed in a general way, due to the need for further research.



Figure 19. Details of the occupations of the political activists in the general Zion group in Shanghai, 1941

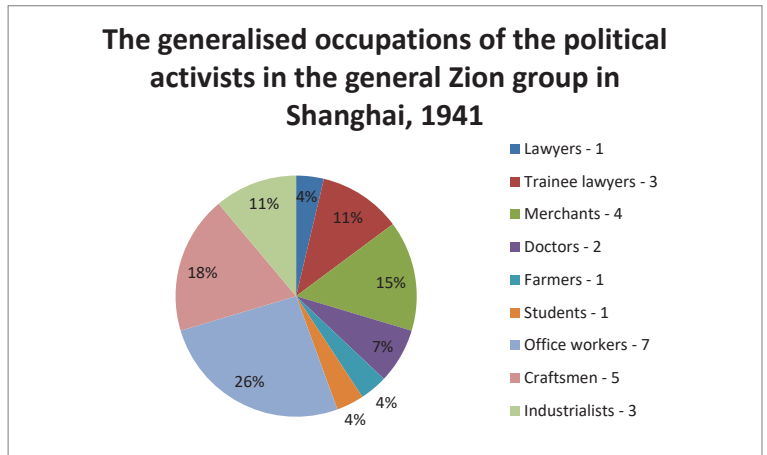


Figure 20. The generalised occupations of the political activists in the general Zion group in Shanghai, 1941

The generalised list of the occupations of the Zionists mainly consist of ones in category B, with the most prominent example being office workers who accounting for more than a quarter, and category C – the craftsmen.

Seven people who came to Shanghai were originally from the City of Warsaw. Other than that, eight people were born in the capitals of their voivodships, which makes 15 members in total. Zionists came from relatively varied places of origin, which were not so common in the rest of the research, such as from the Śląskie voivodship.

The authors excluded Czurków (possibly Czurki, Wileńskie voivodship), where a merchant called Dawid Karafka, number 1521, was born.

Table 6
Voivodships and places of birth of the political activists of the Zionists
in Shanghai, 1941

Voivodships and places of birth of the political activists of the Zionists in Shanghai, 1941	
Voivodship (capital)	Town or village (number of people if more than one)
City of Warsaw (Warsaw)	Warsaw (7)
Białostockie (Białystok)	Białystok
Krakowskie (Kraków)	Kraków (3)
	Oświęcim
Lubelskie (Lublin)	Kraśniczyn
	Lublin
	Szadek
Lwowskie (Lwów)	Brzeżany
Nowogródzkie (Nowogródek)	Nowogródek
Poleskie (Brześć nad Bugiem)	Brześć (2)
	Maszy Wielkie
Śląskie (Katowice)	Sosnowiec
	Trzebinia
Warszawskie (Warsaw)	Włocławek
	Żuromin
Wołyńskie	Krzeszowo

PO'ALE TSIYON

Po'ale Tsiyon was established in Europe after the rejection of Zionism in 1901 by Bund. It was a Marxist-Zionist Jewish workers movement. In Shanghai's statistics, little is known about the organisation and it is one of the smallest groups found in the archives. The following data excludes Dawid Markus, as his data was not fully represented in the consular records.

After 1918 but prior to 1939, there were two organisations established, Right and Left Po'ale Tsiyon. The divide between them came during the aftermath of the Russian Revolution. The Fifth Congress of the World Union in Vienna in July 1920 had seen a split, when some delegates (Left) applied for the Comintern (Communist International) and postulated the establishment of a Soviet Palestine, while others

(Right) abstained.⁴⁶ Despite major differences in the agenda, both Right and Left Po'ale Tsiyon were known in Shanghai under the same name.

The only woman on the list of the Po'ale Tsiyon group was a beautician, the remaining 93% were all men. The oldest person was born in 1902 and was 39 years old, while the youngest was 24, born in 1917. The average age of the members was 31.8 years old.

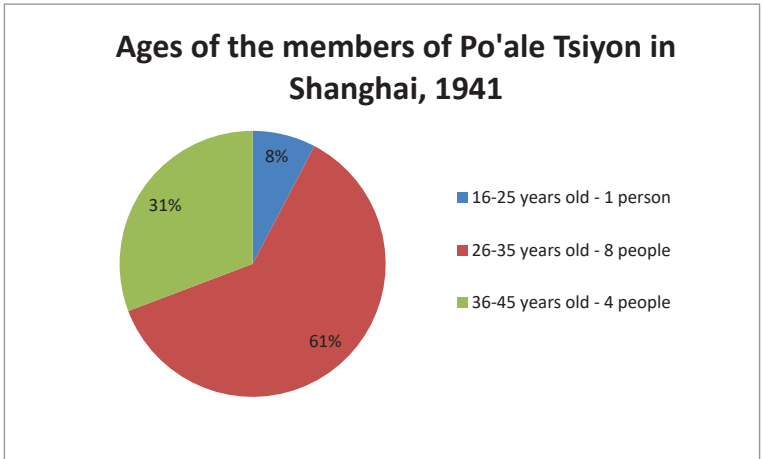


Figure 21. Ages of the members of Po'ale Tsiyon in Shanghai, 1941

Just as before, biggest group was those aged 26–35 years.

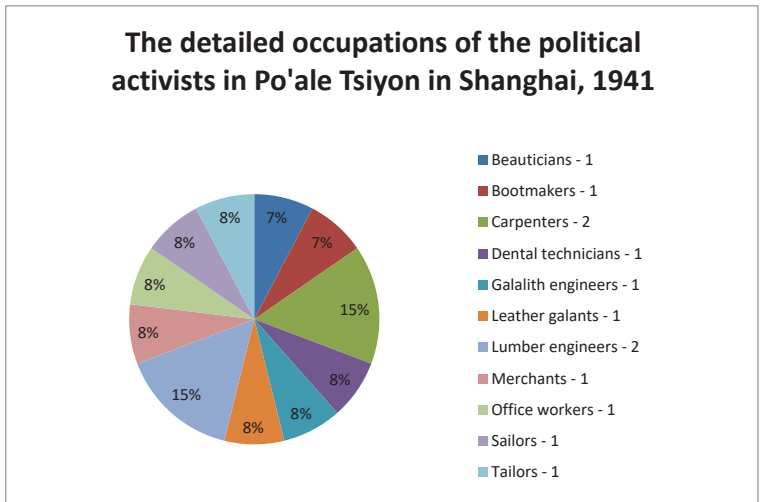


Figure 22. The detailed occupations of the political activists in Po'ale Tsiyon in Shanghai, 1941

⁴⁶ YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Poale_Tsiyon, Accessed: 04.08.2020.

Once again, the rich backgrounds of the refugees and the various skills are shown in this figure. Almost everyone was listed under a different occupation, with the exception of carpenters and lumber engineers. The majority of the members were craftsmen, in category C. More than a fifth were office workers.

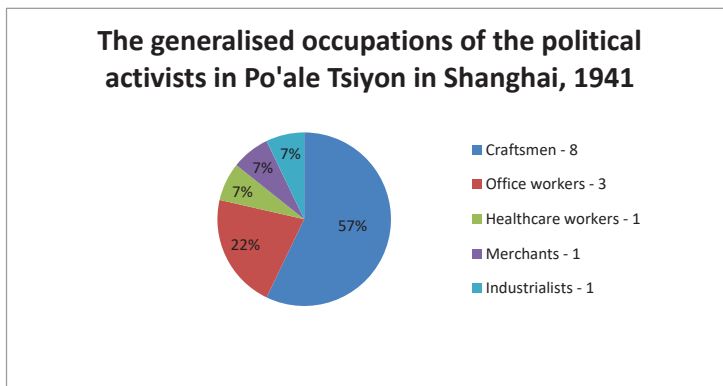


Figure 23. The generalised occupations of the political activists in Po'ale Tsiyon in Shanghai, 1941

Not many of the members of Po'ale Tsiyon shared a place of origin, with the exception of the two people born in Częstochowa, Kieleckie voivodship. Three people came from the capitals of their voivodships, the rest from smaller villages and/or cities.

The two exceptions include Kole and Kule, where Abram Fuks, listed in the records under number 1044 and Efraim Podchlebni, number 1025, were born. Possible locations could be in the Wileńskie, Białostockie or Nowogórdzkie voivodships.

Table 7

Voivodships and places of birth of the political activists of Po'ale Tsiyon in Shanghai, 1941

Voivodships and places of birth of the political activists of Po'ale Tsiyon in Shanghai, 1941	
Voivodship (capital)	Town or village (number of people if more than one)
Kieleckie (Kielce)	Częstochowa (2)
Krakowskie (Kraków)	Kraków
	Frydman
Białostockie (Białystok)	Brzeziny
Łódzkie (Łódź)	Łódź
Nowogórdzkie (Nowogródek)	Dawigródek
	Janów
Warszawskie	Nowe Miasto near Płońsk
Wileńskie (Wilno)	Wilno

CONCLUSIONS

In this article, six political organisations were presented in the context of flight from Nazi-occupied Poland to the Far East, with the final stop in Shanghai. The strict division into groups first of all reflects the groups that were supported by Jewish organisations from the beginning in Kaunas with the possibility of obtaining transit visas to Japan. Secondly, they were created for the purposes of the evacuation quotas.

Agudas Yisroeli was the group consisting of the biggest number of people affiliated with religious studies and practices among the political factions in Shanghai. Betar represented the youngest generation of refugees, with an average age of 28.7 and the oldest member aged 37. In both cases, most people were born in Warsaw, so they probably also fled from that city. While there were religious members in Betar, merchants and trade workers were the most numerous.

Bund saw the biggest number of independent women. Almost half of all Bund members listed in Romer's notes were craftsmen, one third were the office workers and almost 10% students. They were mostly from Warsaw.

The hardest to analyse was the War Veterans' list. We can assume that it was established only for the evacuation quotas. It was the group of the oldest refugees and represented the most varied range of occupations.

Zionists were divided into two groups: the general one and the Po'ale Tsiyon. Among the general one, there was, for example, Abraham Świsłocki, the chief editor of 'Wiadomości', cited in this paper. He wasn't an active member of the Zionist movement and his connection to Zionists was strictly associated with visa acquirement and quota issues. This case shows, as mentioned above, that the evacuation quotas were a reason for creating the analysed list. In the generalised list, the biggest number of refugees were office workers, more than a quarter, and craftsmen. Among Po'ale Tsiyon members, they were mainly craftsmen.

This analysis provided the detailed picture of the statistical information regarding the Polish Jews war refugees in Shanghai, who were organised in political and social groups while stuck in East Asia. This should support further analysis of certain groups and provides a specific picture of the origins of these people.