

Goldstein, a trusted and experienced militant, was appointed to head this militia. Born in 1889, in Siedlce, eastern Poland, he cut his teeth in the bloody struggles against Tsarist rule. At 16 years of age he was wounded by a policeman's sabre while being arrested at an illegal forest gathering of revolutionaries. Before the Russian Revolution of 1917 and Poland's War of Independence in 1919, he had already endured several periods of imprisonment and exile for trade union and political activities.

As a union organiser he built workers' confidence and militancy and encouraged them to join the Bund too, so they could link their economic struggles with a socialist political strategy. Goldstein had longstanding links with non-Jewish PPS militants and self-defence workers. When antisemitic groups were trying to divide Polish workers on ethnic/religious lines, a joint response by Jewish and non-Jewish workers had enormous strategic as well as practical value. He describes occasions when PPS fighters melted into crowds being whipped up into an antisemitic frenzy. The antisemites would suddenly find themselves attacked, not only by the Bundist militia, but simultaneously from people ostensibly standing within their ranks.

But the book is far from a glorification of male-dominated physical battles. Its short chapters – a series of vignettes – show Bernard Goldstein's many sides and reveal him as a very enlightened person and ahead of his time in taking strong and courageous stands for women's rights and children's rights in both personal and political contexts. Some of the stories he tells of his work supporting troubled individuals are truly inspiring, others heartbreaking.

In threatening circumstances the Bund and PPS strengthened their unity in action, recorded political victories, and looked with hope to the future, a hope embodied for Goldstein by the

Bund's rapidly growing youth movement, *Tsukunft* (Future), and its organisation for 10-15 year-olds, *SKIF* (Socialist Children's Union). Towards the end of the book, Goldstein describes taking a visiting Bund supporter from America, Mikhl Merlin, to a SKIF summer camp in July 1939.

"SKIF-ists with little red flags and in ... blue shirts and blouses with red kerchiefs" lined the forest road as they approached the camp where they were greeted by the camp leader, Shifris, a teacher from Grodno.

*Shifris mustered the SKIF-ists to attention around the camp flag. The SKIF hymn was sung and short speeches began... He [Merlin] looked all around ... at the canvas tents, at the tables and benches cobbled together from plain, unfinished boards, at the 'kitchen' made of stones, at the 'amphitheatre' around the campfire, at the tall mast of the red flag that waved among the green branches of the tall pine trees...*

*In the two columns of ... young SKIF-ists, arrayed around the flag stood: Yurek Blones, Janek Bilak, Tobshe Davidovitch ... who could then have imagined that here stood before us the future heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising!*

*From there we drove over to the Tsukunft camp, located ... beside the shore of the Vistula... At dusk we drove home. None of us imagined that we had just seen for the last time the flower of our Jewish youth in Poland in its full loveliness and radiance.*

David Rosenberg

