

## MY CHILDHOOD IN "SKIF"

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Much more needs to be written about the varied activities of the Jewish Socialist Children's Association in Kutno than the following lines. It was obviously a blessed and creative work for the benefit of Jewish children.

By the time I joined "*Skif*", it handled about 50 children, most of them from workhouses. The work went in three directions:

1. writing and reading Yiddish. This was considered the



Trip of the "*Zukunft*" in Gąbin (1931)

most important activity of "*Skif*". It was led by M. Ch. Tiger z"l and N. Moszkowicz (now in Israel). The children were also taught to sing Yiddish songs. The teacher of the Medem school in Kutno, Chanatshe Piszczawer, did this with great love and knowledge.

2. a special highlight was the organization's dramatic circle, led by Medem schoolteacher Ryvka Mandelman and Eva Kirszbaum, a Bundist councilor in the Kutno city council (who died in Warsaw in 1945, during the

exhumation and burial of her husband Herman Kirszbaum, the fighter and underground worker).

3. no small effort was put into sports and skiing. The poor children laughed so hard to spend time in the fresh air, in the woods, the fields and the water. The brothers Yosef and Kopel Kirszbaum (both deceased) worked in this area.

It was considered very important to send the



"*Skif*" (Youth organization of Bund)

children to a summer camp during the hot months of the school holidays. Such an undertaking cost a lot of money. Young and old spent a whole year collecting money and carrying out the activities for the benefit of the colony. We knew that the larger the amount we raised, the poorer Jewish children would benefit from the colony.

The last summer colony of "*Skif*" was conducted in partnership with other neighboring towns, not far away from Włocławek, on the banks of the Vistula. The Jewish

children of Kutno, Gostynin, Lipno, and Krośniewice, in the summer of 1939, enjoyed the beauty of nature, spent in a peaceful and warmer atmosphere, but everything was suddenly shattered. Later in July, representatives of the Polish administrative authorities arrived and closed the colony. The war was already raging in the air, but the children did not care much about it. Little did they know,

just like the elders, that this was the last summer colony and that they would share the tragic fate of the murdered third of our nation.

May my memories be a memorial to all the children and adults who have found their spiritual world in "*Ski*"...