

# Benej Chorėw

Categories: Institutions

Benei Khoyrev. A religious educational association to some extent continuing the tradition of the prewar Łódź society, advocating practicing spiritual dignity, expanding one's faith and morals, and the like. Benei Khoyrev in the ghetto was founded by Shloyme Dan Siwosz<sup>1</sup> (recently become pious). The association opened a religious locale, where the so-called "Hirschians", followers of Dr. Samson Raphael Hirsch<sup>2</sup>, gathered. Immediately after the ghetto was established, members of the Benei Khoyrev encouraged religious workers to observe the Sabbath. They also mediated at offices and other institutions when Sabbath observers were harassed. The second task members of the association set themselves was to teach orphaned children how to recite Kaddish<sup>3</sup>. They would find orphans, lead them to prayer minyonim<sup>4</sup> and make sure that children said Kaddish for their parents. After the religious schools in the ghetto were officially closed, members of the association went from house to house and taught children there. They organized classes where instructors taught Hebrew and Jewish history and gave lectures on religious subjects.

The association's office at 22 Łagiewnicka St. was closed, but Benei Khoyrev did not stop its activities. Each Friday, the so-called mesibes<sup>5</sup> or parties were organized in the apartments of different members, tishn<sup>6</sup> or Hasidic meals were held, and the children's choir performed traditional zmires<sup>7</sup> table hymns. Members of the school board would speak. On March 28, 1944, on the fifth anniversary of Benei Khoyrev, an official ceremony was held, attended by all the active members of the association.

Jerachmil Bryman

## Footnotes

1. Hersz (b. 1889) and Chaja (b. 1889) Siwosz were deported to the

Łódź ghetto from Kalisz. They lived at 22/6 Łagiewnicka St.

2. Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808–1888) – born in Hamburg, he served as a rabbi in Oldenburg, Emden, in Moravia and in Frankfurt am Main. Famous leader of the “secessionist Orthodox” in the Jewish community of Frankfurt, with support from the Rothschild family. His religious philosophy was called Neo-Orthodoxy, combining superficial acculturation to modern society with strict observance of Jewish religious law. He expressed his views in a brochure published in Germany in 1854 titled Die Religion im Bunde mit dem Fortschritt (Religion united with progress).
3. Kaddish (Yid. kadesh) – prayer recited publicly by mourners, especially orphans.
4. Minyan (Yid. minyen) – quorum of ten men for formal communal prayer, term also refers to ad hoc prayer gatherings in temporary locales.
5. Mesibe (Heb. mesiba) – feast, party, here: Shabbat dinner.
6. Tish (Yid. literally table) – expression derived from the Hasidic tradition, meaning a meal, accompanied by speeches, lectures and talks.
7. Zmires (Heb. zmirot) – feast songs sung on the Sabbath.

## Resources

Encyclopedia, p. 30.

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