

**CIESZYŃSKI** Mosze (1889-1967) journalist, bookseller and publisher. He was born on 8th October 1889 in Częstochowa, the son of Jakub, a fish trader, and Estera Fajgla née Gnendelman. The Cieszyński family lived at ul. Garncarska 58. Despite their poverty, his parents did not neglect the education of their children - three boys and one girl.

Cieszyński attended a *cheder* (not a *Talmud Torah* for the poor), as well as a municipal school, where he studied Russian, Polish and German. He began working circa 1904. His *Mizrachi* father would take him to Zionist meetings. However, Cieszyński was more impressed by the Dreyfus case and the pogroms in Russia, than by the ideals expressed at those meetings. In 1904, he joined the *Poalei Zion* party and took part in all its activities. (He remained faithful to this party until the end of his life, including during his stay in the United States.)

Under the pseudonym "Mosze C.", he wrote as a correspondent for Warsaw newspapers "Der Weg" and "Unzer Lebn". In 1910, he became a correspondent for the Warsaw "Moment", edited by Cwi Pryłucki. From 1912, he was the most important contributor to the Jewish press in Częstochowa, starting with the "Czenstochower Reklamenblatt", "Wochtblat" and "Tageblatt".

In the years of the revolution, 1905-1907, he conducted educational activities within party circles. He then participated in the cultural work of the Jewish Literary Society and supported all its undertakings. In 1913, as a Częstochowa delegate, he took part in the world conference of *Poalei Zion* held in Kraków. The Russian military police closely monitored his activities, especially those on the subject of workers' lives. In 1914, together with other committee members of the Bakery Workers' Union, he was arrested for appearing at a union meeting and spent a couple of months in prison.

In 1914, shortly before the outbreak of the War, Cieszyński left for the United States. In New York, he found a field for his social activities. He was one of the founders of the *Tshenstokhover* Branch – the Jewish national workers' union. In 1915, in New York, his "Turme derinerungen" ("Prison Memoirs") was published. At that time, he was a travelling seller of Jewish books and magazines. He distributed books of classic Yiddish literature and of young poets.

In 1922, he settled in Chicago where he opened a bookshop, which became a centre for Jewish readers, writers and intelligentsia from all directions. Cieszyński also published articles on political, social and literary topics for quite a number of newspapers and magazines in Chicago, New York, Philadelphia,

Toronto, Buenos Aires and in other places. In 1931, he became a publisher of Jewish books. His publishing house soon held a prominent place on the world map of Yiddish literature. (Due to a lack of interest in it in America, publishing production was limited.) Between 1931 and 1942, he published more than fifty books by European and American writers. He sent his books to all European Jewish centres, many of them free-of-charge. During his stay in Chicago, Cieszyński was one of the founders of the American branch of the *Yiddisher Visnshaftlecher Institut* (YIVO). Earlier, at the cost of limiting his own needs, he had sent, to the YIVO in Wilno, much material and financial support for Jewish writers.

Together with his first wife, he obtained rare books and editions for their own Jewish library. They also bought them through agents in Europe. Over time, they accumulated a huge collection of books in their home, which became famous in Chicago. They made it available to Jewish authors. With particular care, he collected the daily and weekly newspapers from Częstochowa and added them to his collection. The entire range of material used in the book "*Czenstochower Yidn*" (1947) came from his collection.

Cieszyński married twice. At the beginning of his stay in Chicago, he married Bina (-1936). She came from Krzemieniec. At home, she had been raised on Russian culture. In 1914, she came to the USA and it was there that she learned fluent Yiddish. She participated in the work of the nationalist Jewish circles. She was sympathetic to *Poalei Zion* Left. She was one of the founders of the *Makabier-szule* in Chicago. His second wife (from 1942) was Bluma Wajzer née Komarna. She came from a Hasidic family, but was also to Jewish culture and also spoke several European languages.

*Czenstochower Yidn*, pp. LXXIX–LXXXII; Pawlina-Meducka, *Kultura Żydów*, pp. 103, 104.

**Wiesław Paszkowski**