

A.Ch. Sziper

The Hebraist and researcher of Hebrew literature, A.Ch. Sziper, belongs amongst Częstochowa's intellectuals. Small of stature and with a furrowed brow, he was always deep in thought and impressed one as being a man of science.

Sziper did not lock himself away with his knowledge, but rather appeared before various circles, delivering lectures, at every opportunity. He belonged to the General Zionists, but notwithstanding that, he gave his lectures before all the Zionist factions, including *Mizrachi*. His lectures were rich in content and afforded the listeners great satisfaction, enriching their knowledge.

He was a living encyclopaedia, not only of Hebrew literature, but of that of the world as well. When he went about lost in thought, people knew that he was contemplating a philosophical theory, a poem by Bialik - or the *Zohar*¹, for that matter.

Sziper was one of the first contributors to the Hebrew newspaper *Ba'Derech* [On the Way], which was published in Warsaw, and was a co-editor of the Częstochowa Zionist weekly *Unser Weg* [Our Way].

He was an inveterate smoker, always with a cigarette in his mouth. On *Shabbosim* and the holidays², when he could not smoke openly, he would position himself on the bridge between the First Aleja and Second Aleja, waiting for a locomotive to pass by so he could inhale the smoke.

When the Nazi War broke out, A.Ch. Sziper had started writing the *Częstochower Almanac*. People told him that he should conceal the manuscript in a bunker, but he was unwilling to part with his work.

During the period of the tragic "resettlements" in Częstochowa, he was sent away, along with his manuscript, to Treblinka where he and his almanac were destroyed.

¹ [TN: "Sefer Ha'Zohar, (Hebrew: 'Book of Splendour'), 13th-century book, mostly in Aramaic, that is the classic text of esoteric Jewish mysticism, or Kabbala." (Encyclopaedia Britannica).]

² [TN: Most halachic authorities concur that, barring Yom Kippur, smoking is permitted on the holidays – just like cooking is – as long as one lights up from a pre-existing flame, as kindling a fire on the holiday is forbidden.]