

Abram Gotlib (Israel)

***Częstochower Landsleit* in the State of Israel**



A *Częstochower Landsmannschaft* has always been active in the Land of Israel. This year, the *Landsmannschaft* was reorganised and it has registered with the authorities as the "*Irgun Yotzei Częstochowa Be'Israel*."^{*1} During the course of its entire existence, the *Irgun* has conducted relief activity amongst *Częstochowers* here in Israel. The work was modest. From time to time, meetings were called in order to generate the necessary funds to make it possible to give aid to *landsleit* through small loans or simple support. During the World War, the local *Częstochower Landsmannschaft*, with the assistance of the Red Cross, sent many parcels to Russia, which consisted of food, clothes and dry-goods articles.

Following the Second World War, once Poland had been liberated, hundreds of pounds' worth of clothes was sent from here to *Częstochowa*.

However, the entire work was only performed in the moment - meaning that, when it became necessary to conduct some relief operation, the Council carried it out. For stable work, a fund was needed - to create a charitable loans trust with a specific sum of money as a base. This was in the first years after the war with the Arabs. The situation in the country was terrible. All the basic necessities were distributed by the government and this in a very limited manner - and also not regularly. In that period - in the years 1950-1952 - food products sent to us by our friends, the *Czenstochower* and *Vicinity Fraternal Aid* in Australia, arrived as an unexpected aid.

The Council, then, comprised Dr E. Horowicz, A. Gotlib, Sz. Efraim, Z. Lewkowicz, N. Kurland, A. Dorfgang, Ch. Tzvi (Herszlikowicz), Mrs F. Grinberg, A. Zuzowski and M. Yaskil. Upon discussing the manner in which the products were to be distributed, the Council, after conferring with members from Haifa and Jerusalem, decided on this opportunity to levy a membership fee on those members coming to receive the food products. Members then paid several months' [worth] of fees of 10-20 *piastres*^{*2} monthly. And as the money came in regularly, the results were soon noticeable.

In 1950, our fellow member Jakow Gotlib was in America. He contacted a numerous social activists from the local *Częstochower landsmannschaften* and informed them of the difficult situation in the State of Israel and requested that the *Częstochower landsmannschaften* send aid to our organisation. His efforts only influenced the *Częstochower Landsmannschaft* in Detroit and, from there, aid began to arrive. The Council also held two successful evenings, which had - apart from the joy of the members for having met - a certain material success also.

The incoming proceeds provided the **cornerstone** to begin the activity of the Charitable Loans Fund and we began distributing small interest-free loans. The relief moneys from Detroit and from our own undertakings strengthened the Charitable Loans Fund. This is distinctly demonstrated from the report on the period ending 31st December 1952, that was delivered at the General Meeting in Tel-Aviv. When the Council was elected, it took into the coffers a sum of I£7.098 - seven [Israeli]

^{*1} [TN: Lit., "*Organisation of Natives of Częstochowa in Israel*"; known in English as "*Organisation of Częstochowa Jews in Israel*."]

^{*2} [TN: 10 mil coins (1 mil = 1000th of a Palestine pound) were commonly called "*piastres*."]

pounds^{*3} and ninety-eight *piastres*. By the end of 1952, the report shows a sum of £975.00 of loans granted and £187.00 in support. Prior to the date of the report, £303.50 had [already] flowed in from repaid loans. Haifa, during the same period, granted loans and support in the sum of £810.00.

When the food products arrived from Australia, it was necessary to distribute them throughout the whole country. Members from Tel-Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem came together and agreed upon certain percentages in the distribution of the products and also the other aid, such as money [and] clothes arriving from *Częstochower landsmannschaften*. An inter-city secretariat was then formed, comprising the following members: from Tel-Aviv - Mbrs Abram Gotlib and Zvi Lewkowicz; from Haifa - Mbr Juda Dancyger z''l and from Jerusalem - Mbr Szraga [Fajwel] Zuzowski. Abram Gotlib was chosen as General Secretary. He continues carrying out these duties to this day. The Secretariat is in contact with local Councils regarding all matters connected with aid for our *Częstochower* brothers.

The Secretariat has attempted to put itself in written contact with an array of *Częstochower landsmannschaften* and has told them of the important relief work which the local organisations here carry out for our *Częstochower* brothers. We have also written to a numerous active figures in the *landsmannschaften*. To all our appeals, [only] the *landsmannschaften* of Chicago have responded - and this is thanks to the collaboration of Flw Mojsze Ceszynski. We received a one-off donation from the [Czenstochover and Vicinity] Educational Society [of Chicago] and smaller sums several times from the Czenstochover Ladies Aid Society and from the Independent [Czenstochover] Society. The only *landsmannschaft* that continues sending its support from time to time, to this day, is the Czenstochover Regional Union in Detroit. The positive attitude of the Detroit *Landsmannschaft* is possibly a result of the visits here in Israel by the Zborow^{*} and Richter families, who met with us here and became convinced of the expediency of the aid being sent.

Besides the activities of the Charitable Loans Funds, of great importance is the assistance the Organisation has given the members in finding work [and] in becoming integrated into institutions, and the efforts to procure, for the members, medicinal preparations which are unavailable here in the country.

Every year, a Memorial Evening is held commemorating the fallen martyrs of the *Częstochowa* community. The Organisation also takes advantage of various opportunities to arrange meetings of members.

[Particularly] impressive was the gathering for the 70th birthday of our beloved, esteemed by all, Dr Józef Kruk.

In November 1956, the Gitler family, from Mexico, spent time here as tourists. We held a meeting with them, at which we acquainted them with our work and explained the important constructive aid of our Charitable Loans Fund. The Gitler family took our explanations very seriously and also promised to send their private support. They kept their promise - in February 1957, aid arrived from the brothers Nuchim and Mojsze Gitler.

Flw Dr L. Kurland from Paris was also here as a tourist in March 1957. In our meeting with him, we reported, to each other, on the work of the *landsmannschaften* here (in Israel) and in Paris. It was precisely during the days when the first new immigrants from Poland were starting to arrive. Dr Kurland was very interested in what we were thinking to do for the newcomers and promised that Paris would not stand from afar during such an important operation. The *Częstochowers* in Paris

^{*3} [TN: The Israeli pound replaced the Palestine pound from 9th June 1952. Both currencies were pegged to the Pound sterling in those days.]

^{*} [TN: In other instances, this surname appears as Zbara; we have not been able to find either one in the official records.]

would contribute aid for our *Częstochower* brothers in the State of Israel with everything within their possibilities. Over the course of time, we had already received, from the Jews from *Częstochowa* and the Vicinity in Paris, certain medicines which we had requested of them and also a certain sum of money.

Lately, we have also received, through Mbr Szlingbaum of Rishon LeZion, a small sum which was sent to him from Los Angeles to give over to us.

As already mentioned, the *Częstochower* friends from Australia were the first who, without any bidding, sent their help. But since then, and due to unfathomable reasons, all contact has been severed. We have written many times [and] once we received a reply but, since then, we have received no more letters. Over time, several *landsleit* from Australia have been here as tourists. Among others was Dr Wajsberg z"l. Except for Dr Wajsberg, we did not succeed in meeting with any of these tourists. In our meeting with Dr Wajsberg, we expressed our puzzlement for not receiving any letters from Australia. He gave us an address where to write. We wrote, but received no reply.

In July 1957, Flw Lew and his wife spent time here. In a meeting held with the Lew family, we described all the problems of our work and necessities and requested that the *Częstochowers* in Australia should renew their relief work for our organisations. Flw Lew, who incidentally is an active member of the *Częstochower* Committee in Melbourne, asked us to send a written application to the *Częstochower* Committee in Melbourne, which he would support. We sent such request to the address given us and we hope that it will have positive results.

Since February 1956, regular contact with the *Czenstochover* Relief in New York has been established. A lively correspondence is held with Flw R. Federman. In our letters, we tell of our activity in Israel and we receive information, from Flw Federman, regarding the aid the Relief apportions to *Częstochowers* in the State of Israel who turn to them - mainly to those who have arrived lately with the great surge of immigration from Poland.

Over the course of our correspondence, the idea arose to create, in Israel, a monumental work commemorating the *Częstochowa* martyrs who were killed by the Nazi murderers. In the meantime, however, the great stream of *Aliyah* from Poland arrived, with great need for aid, and the plan to immortalise the martyrs has had, for the time being, to be temporarily laid aside. We are now focusing our entire activity on the urgent, monumental relief work. To this purpose, the Organisations of *Częstochowa* Jews in Israel have set themselves the goal that the Charitable Loans Funds should aid the members with loans for constructive purposes and also grant support in emergencies. Quietly and modestly, with the limited means we have at our disposal, we endeavour to realise this goal, as shown by the reports the Organisation delivers at General Meetings. We have already mentioned above the positive report which was presented for the period ending in 1952.

The reports for the two following years display no lesser results: Tel-Aviv granted 34 loans in the sum of I£3,885, [and] support in the sum of I£548. Haifa granted 33 loans, together with support, for a total of I£3,108. Jerusalem granted 9 loans in the sum of I£232 [and] 6 supports in the sum of I£80. In total, loans and supports over the course of two years, [totalling] I£7,853.

In the last months, since the intensified *Aliyah* has been arriving from Poland and until 15th August 1957, the Organisations in Tel-Aviv and Haifa have given out loans and support in the sum of about I£4,000. All the moneys of the Charitable Loans Funds are kept in the bank and all the transactions are carried out through the bank.

The quoted sums and the number of members, who have utilised of our Charitable Loans Funds, demonstrate not only that they are put to effective use, but also the vital need of the members. It has been possible to carry out this important work thanks to the tireless, devoted activity of a limited number of members, for whom the will to succour our *Częstochower* comrades is near to their hearts and who use their influence in order to achieve this goal.



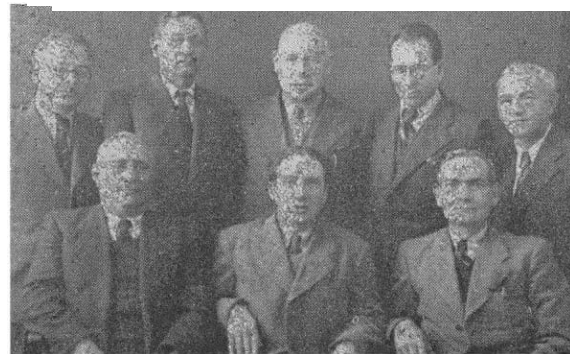
Częstochowers in Israel



Organisation of Częstochowa Jews in Israel, Tel-Aviv



*Częstochowers in Israel, with guests from the US;
First row, standing (R-L): D. Lewkowicz, Mrs F. Grinberg,
Nathan Richter, Mrs G. Richter from Detroit,
Mrs R. Dancyger, A. Gotlib, Dr E. Horowicz,
Mrs Najkrug, M. Yaskil, D. Yaskil.
Second row: Mrs Dorfgang, Kaplan, N. Kurland,
Mrs G. Tarif [?], J. Gotlib, Ch. Tzvi (Herszlikowicz),
Sz. Blum, Sz. Efraim, and A. Dorfgang.*



*National Committee of Częstochowers in Israel.
Standing (R-L): Dr J. Horowicz, J. Gotlib, Z. Szpaltyn,
P. Szmulewicz, P. Zubski.
Seated (R-L): W. Landman, Dr J. Kruk, J. Dancyger.*