

Józef Kaufman

The Czenstochover Young Men



This year, the Czenstochover Young Men celebrates its 70th anniversary. Yes, our Society in New York has already existed for seventy years. The Czenstochover Young Men has a great many noteworthy things in its history. Over the course of all these seven decades, our society has performed charitable relief work both among the members and for our *landsleit* on the other side of the ocean - so we can well take pride in the record of our activities.

Our Young Men was founded on 6th December 1888. This was in New York, on the East Side, on the corner of Delancey and Norfolk Streets. Eighteen young men, all from Częstochowa, were its founders. They would meet on the corner of Delancey and Norfolk Street and, from these meetings, was born the Society which is now celebrating its 70th anniversary.

Each one of us has a world of memories to relate, from those first years to the present day - especially those who stood by the cradle, at the birth of our society. Only a few have remained and I would like, in fact, to mention some of them with gratitude - former Presidents of the society, Fellows Al Jacobs, Jack Jacobs, Max Kaminski and Saul Wajskopf, thanks to whom I have found out a great deal about the achievements and the work of our society over the course of all these years.

Our society's first officials were Leo Drutowski – President, Isidor Wilczyński - Vice-President and Bernard Bratman - Finance Secretary.

We know that, in the first year, our Young Men had very little money. But then along came Flw Louis Szymkowicz - one of the founders of our society. Saying nothing to anyone, he went to a pawn shop, pawned his gold pocket-watch and, with the money he received, he booked a benefit [event] at the bygone Jewish Oriental Theatre. This theatrical undertaking set our society on its feet and ensured the further existence of our organisation.

We can now all be proud of our society's achievements. During all these years, we have remained loyal to the programme and to the tasks which our society's founders set themselves. We have often gone one step further. When the *Great Disaster* occurred - during the years of the Second World War - when the Nazi enemy rampaged through Poland, we did everything in our power to succour our unfortunate brothers and sisters on that side of the ocean. And once Liberation came, we aided the *Surviving Remnant* in finding a home, after all those hard years of suffering and pain. Just as before, when we supported the institutions in our bygone hometown of Częstochowa, we now help our *landsleit* in the state of Israel.