

Josef Kaufman

The Czenstochauer Young Men's

The Czenstochauer Young Men's Society was founded in 1888 by eighteen young men, all from Częstochowa.

Having been not long in America and small in number - at the time there were [only] a few dozen *landsleit* in the entire country - they would get together every evening, after a hard day's work, at the corner of Delancey and Norfolk St., and that is where the first *Częstochower* society in America was born.

[Those] of the first founders, [who are] still with us, are the following most active of members: Joseph Hofnung, who was the recording secretary for many years, and Louis Szymkowicz, who was the president both thirty years ago [c.1916] and on the 50th anniversary [1938].

And, here, let us also mention the rest of the pioneers-founders, who are now sadly no longer among the living, but who will always be remembered with reverence. These are:

Berl Bratman
Maks Korpiel
Sam Goldberg
L. Gotajner
M. Rosenthal
W. Sobol
Szulim Cohen
Lajzer Wilinger.

In the first years, the members imposed a tax of ten cents a week upon themselves, but without any benefits.

In 1889, the Organisation held its first theatre benefit at the, then great, Oriental Theatre. These theatrical performances were held over the course of several years. The proceeds from these functions were used to support members in the event of an illness.

Maintaining the Society was not achieved so easily. In those years, the Jewish immigrant element was very different from that in the later years. The Jewish immigrants back then had not gone through any schooling in communal work at home. Here, they were quite unfamiliar with the country and its language - but the first pioneers' strong will and tenacity overcame everything.

The Czenstochauer Young Men's became a model, not only for the organisations of Częstochowa and the vicinity that arose later, but also for other cities. To this day, the Young Men's is one of the country's oldest [existing] Jewish societies.

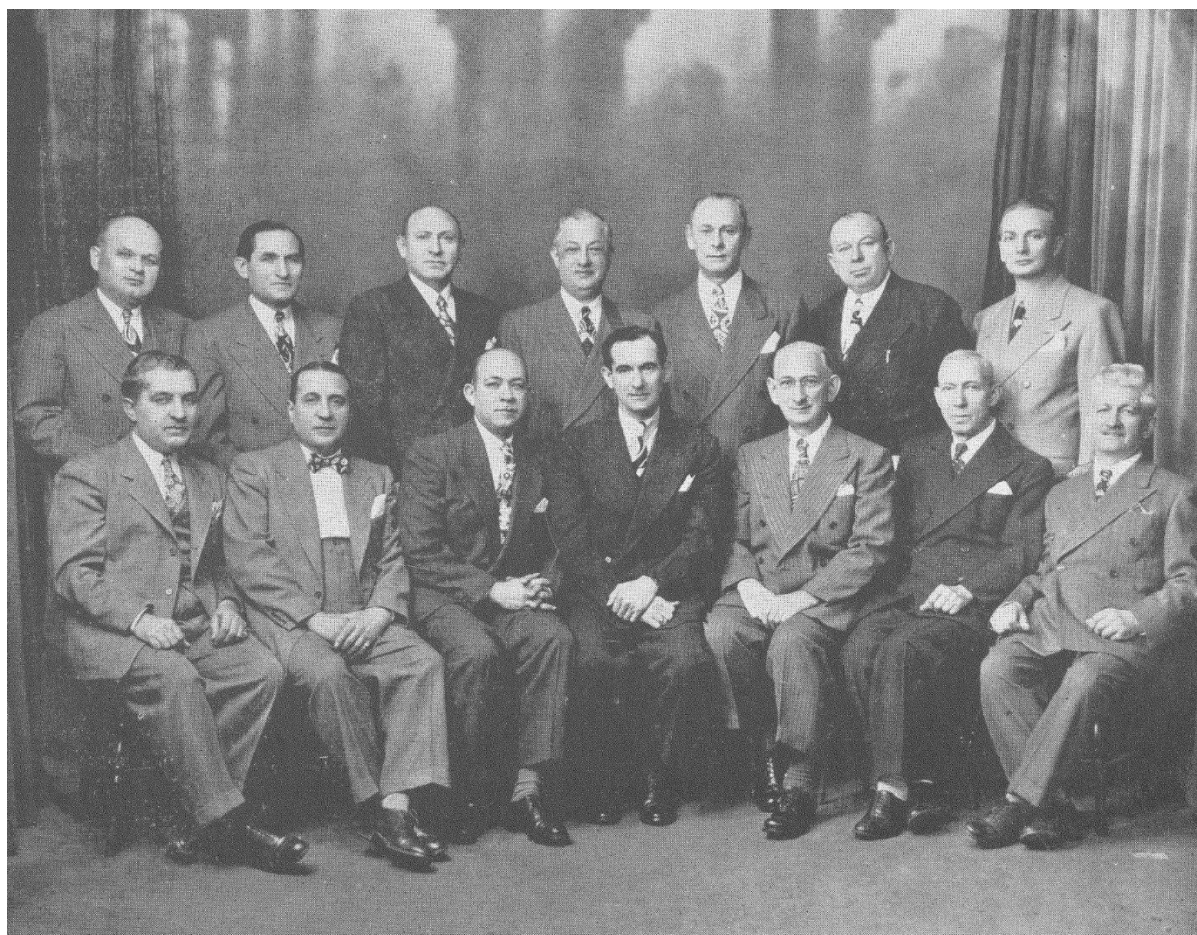
Its first constitution was adopted in 1891. During the first fifteen years, the Society paid its members sickness benefits of five dollars a week. This benefit was later raised to eight dollars a week. *Shiva*¹ benefits were also implemented.

¹ [TN: Heb. lit. "Seven"; the week-long period of mourning observed in Judaism, during which the mourners are forbidden to work.]

A few names of the oldest members, who have belonged to the Society for more than forty years and are active in its leadership to this very day, need to be mentioned. They are Jack Zajdman, Samuel Korpiel, Icze Zelkowicz, A. Rykman and Grojnm Szymkowicz.

In 1900, the Society purchased its first burial plot at the Mount Zion Cemetery. In 1920 - its second plot at Mount Judah. In 1929 - its third plot at "Beth David" (*Bais Duwid*²). These three cemetery plots cost over \$30,000.

In 1903, the first loan fund was established, which lent up to \$25 without interest.



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Seated (R-L): Mike Wajskop, Trustee Sam Korpiel, Vice-President Joe Jacobs, President Al Jacobs, Financial Secretary Maks Kamiński, Treasurer Abe Pinkus and Minutes Secretary Joe Nowak;

Standing (R-L): Past-President Karl Buchner, Past-President Robert Wajnsztajn, Past-President Maks Jacob, Membership Chairman Sam Zeligman, Loan Fund Chairman Maurice Gelber, Cemetery Chairman Joe Kaufman and Past-President Dave Zytman

In 1907, an aid fund to support members in case of necessity was established.

From the first years of their existence and to this day, the Czenstochauer Young Men's supported all the national organisations. They were among the first who decided to support the Union of Polish

² [TN: In the original, the first appears in English (בעטה דייוויד) and the second in Hebrew (בית דוד), which we have rendered in the Polish Ashkenazi pronunciation.]

Jews³. Over many years, the Young Men's gave the Union of Polish Jews one dollar a year for every member.

During the First World War, many members of the Young Men's served in the American army. In the Second World War, there were seventy members of the Society in the American army, and thirty-four children of members.



During the First World War, when the Czenstochover Relief in New York was founded, the Young Men's - [both] as an organisation and each of its individual members separately - supported the Relief in a very large measure. With the greatest brotherly love and devotion, they took upon themselves all the heavy burdens of the aid work for the home of old.

In 1919, the organisation supported the Relief with \$300. From then on, every year, the Young Men's supported the Relief's undertakings with large sums of money. In 1922, the sum was \$500.

The Young Men's took an important and large part in the construction of the I.L. Peretz Building in Cześćochowa. The Society's members imposed a tax of five dollars each upon themselves, specifically for this cause.

On the memorial plaque embedded in the wall of the I.L. Peretz Building bearing the names of those who helped build it, the names of the following members of the Young Men's appear:

Buchner, William
Zajdman, Jack
Zelkowicz, Icze
Teper, Izzie
Mentkow, Aba
Sobel [aka Sobol], W.
Korpiel, Maks⁴
Rykman, Izzie
Szymkowicz, Louis.

The Ladies Auxiliary, which occupies the finest place in the history of Cześćochower fraternal aid, was originally founded by the Young Men's. In 1922, when the Czenstochover Relief decided to erect the I.L. Peretz Building in Cześćochowa and an immeasurable amount of work was required for this, the Ladies Auxiliary joined forces with the Relief in order to assist it in the monumental undertaking. However, the leaders and co-workers of the Ladies Auxiliary remained the activists and leaders of the Young Men's.

One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh⁵

Just as [the case is] with an entire nation, so too an organisation shows its viability not only by ageing in years, but more so by the fact that it becomes rejuvenated. This has happened in the Czenstochauer Young Men's over the last 15-20 years. A new, young generation of children, born here and also a

³ [TN: Most likely ref. to the "Federation of Polish Jews in America."]

⁴ [TN: In cases where the name is spelt מאקס we have rendered it as "Maks," and when spelt מעיקס, as "Max," although the name of the same individual is sometimes spelt in both manners even by the same author.]

⁵ [TN: In Heb. in the original, quoted from Ecclesiastes 1:4.]

younger element which later came over from Częstochowa, grew up and partially took over the leadership.

Thus we see, for instance, that for the organisation's 30th anniversary, which was celebrated on 7th December 1918 at the Royal Lyceum, the officials were:

Past-Presidents: L. Szymkowicz, H. Wilczyński, M. Rosenthal, G. Szymkowicz, B. Bratman, L. Wilinger, S. Goldberg, B. Gotajner, J. Zajdman, W. Sobol, M. Korpiel and I. Zelkowicz
Officials in 1919: President - S. Goldberg; Vice-President - W. Sobol; Minutes Secretary - J. Hofnung; Financial Secretary - R. Cohen; Treasurer - I. Zelkowicz; First Trustee - L. Wilinger and Marshal - J. Zelkowicz.

However, at the 40th anniversary, celebrated on 9th December 1928 at the Park Palace, several young members can be found amongst the official, such as Jack Jacobs - Past-President; Dawid Zytman - Second Trustee, as well as Nyssen Cymerman z''l, M. Wajskop, A. Nirenberg, D. Wajskop and Maurice Wajskop - in the anniversary's Arrangements⁶ Committee.

At the 45th anniversary, held on 24th December 1933 at the Central Plaza, Dawid Zytman is already in the list of past-presidents, S. Rabinowicz, who was born here - President; Zacharia Lewensztajn - Financial Secretary; Wolf Buchner - Trustee, and Maks Jacobs - Aid Fund Chairman.

Other past-presidents from among the new activists were Nyssen Cymerman z''l, Robert Wajnsztajn and Max Jacobs. An entire array of younger members was involved in the committees.

At the celebration of the 50th anniversary, which was held on 25th December 1938 at the Manhattan Centre, with an attendance of 460 people, – the honour of officiating as the Society's President and Minutes secretary were given over to the two founders and oldest members of the Society: Louis Szymkowicz (President) and J. Hofnung (Rec. Sec.). Other officials that year were Josef Kaufman - Vice-President; Zacharia Lewensztajn - Financial Secretary; M. Wajskop - Treasurer; W. Sobol - Trustee; Sam Korpiel - Trustee; Sam Goldberg - Cemetery Chairman; Jack Jacobs - Chairman of Entertainment; Max Glikson z''l - Chairman of the Aid Fund; Robert Wajnsztajn - Chairman of the Loan Fund; Nyssen Cymerman z''l - Chairman of Old Age Fund and Dave Szajer – Sergeant of Arms.

An entire array of members from the younger generation were part of the Arrangements Committee for the 50th anniversary. Among those, who already then held respected positions in the Society's leadership, were Maks Zeligman, Maks Kamiński, J. Nowak, Abe Pinkus and Al Jacobs.

In the last eight years, since the 50th anniversary, the leadership has completely passed over to the younger element. Lately, the leaders of the Society have been Maks Jacobs - President for two years; Maks Zeligman - President for two years and Maks Kamiński - President for three years.

The officials in 1945 were Karl Buchner - President; M. Wajskop - Vice-President; J. Nowak - Minutes Secretary; J. Jacobs - Financial Secretary; D. Zytman - Treasurer; J. Zajdman - Trustee; S. Korpiel - Trustee; R. Wajnsztajn - Chairman of the Aid Committee; J. Kaufman - Cemetery Chairman; M. Gelber - Chairman of the Loan Fund; Maks Kamiński - Chairman of Entertainment; Abe Pinkus - Chairman of the Old Age Fund and J. Jacobs - Membership [Chairman].

[The] newly-elected officials for 1946 [were] Al Jacobs - President; M. Blic - Vice-President; Maks Kamiński - Secretary, and A. Pinkus - Treasurer. The other officials remained the same as in 1945.

⁶ [TN: In English in the original, as are other titles of officials in this article.]

Czenstochauer Young Men's and United Czenstochover Relief

It has already been mentioned, elsewhere, that the United Czenstochover Relief was founded through the initiative of the Young Men's. Three of the United Czenstochover Relief's first officials - Nyssen Cymerman (President), Louis Szymkowicz (Treasurer) and Josef Kaufman (Secretary) - were concurrently the leaders of the Young Men's. Just as the Czenstochover Relief in New York had received from the Young Men's the greatest and most vigorous support both morally and materially - meaning with large sums of money - so too did the United Czenstochover Relief.

How great the Young Men's support to the United Czenstochover Relief was, may be attested to by the fact that, at the mass meeting on 27th May 1945 at the Manhattan Centre, Flw Josef Kaufman, on behalf of the Young Men's, contributed the sum of \$1,500 to the Relief's fundraiser. This sum was raised by a specially-established committee, which collected \$1,000 from the members, while \$500 were donated by the organisation from its own treasury.

This committee comprised the following co-workers:

Joe Kaufman - Chairman
Max Kamiński – Secretary
Karl Buchner
Maurice Gelber
Al Jacobs
Jack Jacobs
Max Jacobs
Robert Wajnsztajn
Michael Wajskopf
Dawid Zytman
Jack Zajdman
Abe Pinkus
Joe Nowak
Sam Korpiel.
