

The Editorial Board

The History of the Book *Czenstochover Yidn*

Without doubt, the idea that the history of Jewish Częstochowa should be immortalised in a printed book was alive long before the history of the book *Czenstochover Yidn* begins.

In printed form, however, [the idea] was [first] manifested in the one-time publication [in the Częstochowa newspaper] *Dos Naye Wort*, dated Tuesday, 18th July 1922, published by the local branch of CISZO and during the visit of the two delegates [of the Czenstochover Relief in New York], Louis Szymkowicz and Ch.L. Szwarc, to Częstochowa. In the last page of that same issue of *Dos Naye Wort*, the following announcement was printed:

אין קודצן דערשיינט א בראש - איינמאנטיג געווען
מעג די שרייבער איינזעצן - שולן, אונזערן נאמען
פון ביידיע זיימן ים ●●
אום א נאנדע רע אינאוממאניע און בילדיק.
דריטע דע אריינקלען חכם יוד טירך נאמען דע גע-
טיכטע און טענעמאנאמאנטיק "לעליקע אין נאמיקס
טום א רשעה און אלע זענען מיט גלידע ר.

Redaktor i wydawca R. FEDERMAN

[Translation: A deluxe edition is soon to be published, dedicated to the local workers' schools, titled *From Both Sides of the Ocean*, with an entire array of illustrations and pictures. Among the articles will also be the history of the Czenstochover Relief in New York with a list of all its members.

(In Polish:) Editor and publisher, R. Federman]

Thus, the idea of a book emerged as a result of the connection between the *Częstochower landsleit* on either side of the ocean, which found its most prominent expression in the construction of the building for the I.L. Peretz kindergartens and primary schools in Częstochowa.

From that time, it was another long period until the United Czenstochover Relief decided to publish a book [entitled] *Twenty-Five Years of Fraternal Aid*. But the idea was already alive in some form. During this time, attempts were also made to bring it to fruition.

While in America, A.Ch. [Alkona Chrobolovsky] printed an article in *Dos Naye Wort*, dated 12th October 1924, dedicated to the golden book *From Both Sides of the Ocean*.

On 4th March 1929, the Czenstochover Relief in New York decided to embark upon the work of publishing a book of the history of Częstochowa, entitled *Częstochower Album*. Those elected to the committee for the book were Szymkowicz, Litman, Chrobolovsky, Lewensztajn, Ruk, Win, A. Kaufman, Gerter, Silver and Rykman. This committee put itself in contact with Chicago and Częstochowa. But the Czenstochover Relief in New York was, by then, already weakened and the plan was, once again, left [only] on paper.

[Even] more so than in America, the idea to publish a historical book was [also] alive in Częstochowa itself. Engineer H. Wilczyński (who perished in Warsaw), one of the main initiators, invested a great deal of time and work towards this goal. At his own initiative, he researched the Jewish Kehilla's old documents, gathered materials and even published a whole series of articles on his research in the *Częstochower Zeitung* and other Yiddish publications. Through his initiative, a committee was formed in the Historical Commission of YIVO in Warsaw to publish a monograph regarding the history of the Jews in Częstochowa. Mojsze Asz, the son of Rabbi Nachum Asz, also collected materials from the Częstochowa [Kehilla] ledgers and published them in the *Częstochower Zeitung*.

In 1932, at the initiative of R. Federman, the "Friends of Jewish History of Częstochowa" society was founded in Częstochowa. The executive of the management committee comprised Dr Aleksander

Wolberg - Chairman, Jakub Rozenberg - Vice-Chairman, Z. Markowicz - Treasure, and Eng. H. Wilczyński - Secretary.

The society printed and sent out a communiqué to an entire array of individuals in Częstochowa and other cities in Poland and in America, which stated, among other things, that “In the projected monograph, the economic and cultural development of the Jewish population in Częstochowa will find its expression in words and pictures”.

The communiqué called for “the broadest circles of the Jewish populace in our city” to help, in order “to create, with joint efforts and forces, the history of the Częstochowa Jewish community from its foundation and to this day, for the current and future generations”.

By the request of the committee in Częstochowa and H. Wilczyński in Warsaw, from Flw Mojsze Cieszynski in Chicago, who back then was already a member of the Educational Society, the latter conducted a widespread campaign for the society’s plan and delivered a long lecture to a gathering of members regarding the history of the Jews in Częstochowa and the importance of publishing a historical book. The Educational Society in Chicago elected a committee, with Mojsze Cieszynski as chairman, which held one meeting. Later, however, a meeting of members rejected the project.

As there was no [Czenstochover] Relief organisation in New York at the time, the Częstochowa committee put itself in contact with a few individuals to help them in the work.

Seven years passed by. Before this time, Jakub Rozenberg had become president of the Częstochowa Jewish Kehilla, and at his initiative, a great conference was held on 24th June 1939 at the Kehilla’s premises, with the participation of the historian Dr Emanuel Ringelblum (perished in Warsaw in 1939-1945¹), at which a local committee was formed to work together with the existing committee in Warsaw.

The group of initiators, which called this conference, published the following announcement in the *Częstochower Zeitung* dated Friday, 23rd June 1939:

The History of the Jews in Częstochowa

The group, initiating the publication of the history of the Jews in Częstochowa, which was formed as part of the Historical Commission for Poland of the Yiddisher Wissenschaftlicher Institut², [hereby] turns to all the Częstochowers with the following appeal:

The Jewish community in Częstochowa has existed for some 250 years. The special laws which applied to Częstochowa as an ecclesiastical city did not permit a Jewish kehilla to be established here before that time. Over the course of the 250 years in which Jews have lived in Częstochowa, they have contributed extensively to the city’s development. Jewish entrepreneurs, with their initiative and capabilities, developed an entire array of branches of production, such as the metallurgic industry, toys, the haberdashery industry, etc., with which they created working opportunities for thousands of Jewish and Christian labourers.

¹ [TN: Dr Ringelbaum and his family’s hiding place in the Warsaw Ghetto was found by the Nazis on 7th March 1944, and he is thought to have been executed a few days later, probably on 10th March.]

² [TN: Yiddish name of YIVO, meaning “Yiddish Scientific Institute”; once the organisation relocated to New York City, it was given the English name “Institute for Jewish Research”.]

Częstochowa also played a large role in Jewish life. The different currents that were active in Częstochowa set up a whole series of institutions and establishments, which are an ornament for Częstochowa.

It is the obligation of today's generation to pay honour to the bygone generations. It is our obligation to render an account of what has been accomplished until now by the Częstochower Jews in the fields of economics, culture, etc. To this purpose, a group of Częstochowers has formed a committee, under the auspices of the Historical Commission for Poland of the Yiddisher Wissenschaftlicher Institut, which is tasked with organising the publication of the monograph on the Jews of Częstochowa.

The Częstochowa committee appeals to all the Częstochowers in Poland and other countries to put themselves in contact with the committee, and to provide us with all the materials in their possession (photographs, documents, periodicals, etc.), as well as to aid us materially to carry out the projected task. The address of the committee is:

***YIVO Historical Commission
Ul. Chłodna 2, Warsaw
For the Częstochowa Committee***

Or: Jewish Kehilla in Częstochowa, for the Monograph Committee

On 22nd March 1942, a special meeting of the executive board of the United Czenstochover Relief decided to call a conference of representatives of *Częstochower* organisations in New York, to approve the decision to publish a *Częstochower* almanac in connection with *Częstochower landsmannschaft's* 25-year aid activity. The book was to be called "25 Years of Fraternal Aid".

The conference took place on 23rd May 1942. If truth be told, the idea of publishing this book remained alien to a large part of the Relief's devoted activists. The main thing was to raise a large sum of money as first aid to build up *Częstochowa* [after the War ended]. These two things - both the sum of \$10,000, which they had decided to raise, and publishing the book, seemed at the time more like a fantasy than a reality.

A separate body was formed under the name "Committee of 25 Years *Częstochower* Fraternal Aid", which was constituted during its first session, on Monday, 8th July 1942, as follows:

Chairman – Jakow-Ber Silver; Vice-Chairmen – Louis Szymkowicz, Nyssen Cymerman, Harry Fajersztajn and Mrs Jetta Lenczner; Treasurer – Josef Kaufman; Secretary – R. Federman.

Editorial Board: A. Chrobolovsky, R. Federman and Aba Kaufman.

Editorial Board of the Book *Czenstochover Yidn*



Raphael Federman



Dr Rafael Mahler



Alkona Chrobolovsky



Aka Kaufman



Wolf Gliksman

Executive Members (in alphabetical order³):

Isidor Berger, Samuel Korpiell, Mrs Rose Kuperman, Zygmunt Epszajn, Mrs F. Fajersztajn, M. Fajner, Mrs R. Frajermauer, Morris Gelber, Chune Gliksman, Icek Gurski, R. Grodzenski, D. Guterman, Josef Jacobs, Mrs Rae Kaufman, Jakub⁴ Kopin (Kopinski), Jakub Levy⁵, Mrs Tz. Levy, Simon Lifszyc, Abram Litman, Andzia Munowicz, Samuel Oberman, Isidor Rickman, Chaja Waga-Rotman, Josef Rozenblat, Icze Zelkowicz, Abram Senzer, Mrs Sadie Senzer, Mrs Rae Sobol, N. Vaisberg, Max Villinger, H. Vien [Win], Emanuel Wargon, Michał Wajskop, Dawid Zitman and Herman Zygas.

The committee held an entire array of meetings, sent out circulars with a questionnaire to all the *landsleit* in order to collect materials for the book's *Biographies and Memoirs* section, and made contact with Chicago, Los Angeles, Detroit and other cities and with groups and [individuals] in other countries.

At one of the meetings of the United Czenstochover Relief in New York, a letter from the organisation of *Czestochower landsleit* in the Land of Israel was read, in which they reported that they would be participating in the work of the building fund [for Czestochowa] and the publication of the almanac.

³ [TN: Although the names are obviously written in Hebrew characters in the original, they are alphabetised according to the Latin order; we have reproduced the listing in this original order, which has led us to discover that some of these surnames bore Americanised spellings, such as *Corpuel*, *Cooperman*, *Levy* and *Vaisberg*.]

⁴ [TN: As pronounced in Polish (יצ'קין).]

⁵ [TN: As pron. in English (לייב).]

The first letter from the Land of Israel, which has the largest number of *Częstochower landsleit* after America, caused great joy and raised the spirits of the assembled.

Besides the Land of Israel, connections were also established with *Częstochower* organisations and individuals in Buenos Aires (Argentina), Melbourne (Australia) and London.

Materials and Editing of the Book *Czenstochover Yidn*

In 1942, when the actual work on the book *Czenstochover Yidn* began, the Editorial Board was disconnected from *Częstochowa* and had almost no materials in its possession, except for an incomplete set of *Dos Naye Wort* spanning several years, which Louis [Chaim-Lajb] Szwarc had brought with him to America from his [1922] visit to *Częstochowa*; complete sets of the *Częstochower Reklamen Blatt* [Cz. Advertisements Page] and the *Częstochower Wochenblatt* [Cz. Weekly] and a large number of issues of the *Częstochower Tageblatt* [Cz. Daily] which were provided by Mojsze Cieszynski (Chicago); a number of issues of the *Arbeiter Zeitung* [Workers Newspaper] that Flw Ruben Luks from Detroit had collected, and a number of copies of the *Częstochower Zeitung*, which were in the possession of the chairman of the United Czenstochover Relief, Flw Abram-Ber Senzer.

The materials and articles which were gathered and sent from the Land of Israel, which in the main were written and elaborated by Fajtel Szmulewicz, were of great assistance to the book's editorial board.

Besides him, Godl Frajtag [also] provided the editors with much material from the Land of Israel, which was utilised in the article *Częstochowers in the Land of Israel*.

It is also from the Land of Israel that we attained the first two protocols of the destruction of *Częstochowa*, which were compiled by Dr Josef Kruk according to the testimonies of two *Częstochower* refugees - Abram Izbicki and [Aron] Brandes.

However, in order to present a more detailed picture of the destruction of *Częstochowa* and to obtain more materials on the Nazi era from *Częstochowa* itself, the publication of the book was put on hold. The War had just ended then, and contact had been established with the old home - and it would have been a great loss for the completeness of the book, were it not to include the times of the Holocaust as elucidated in detail by eyewitnesses. It is precisely this material that needed to be written as an eternal memorial for our martyrs. [This] and also other supplements resulted in the book bearing the title *Czenstochover Yidn*.

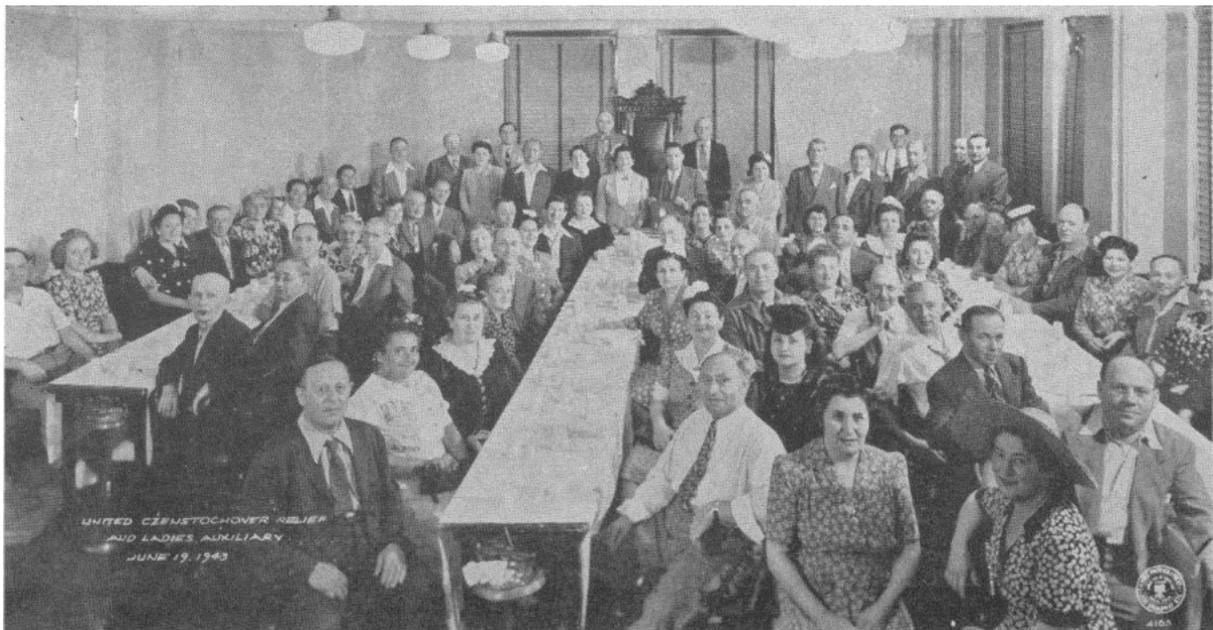
Those who participated in the Editorial Board, which planned the book's compilation and determined the contents of the articles, were A. Chrobolovsky, Raphael Federman, Aba Kaufman and Jakow-Ber Silver.

By decision of the Editorial Board, the renowned historian Dr Rafael Mahler, who personally processed and completed an entire array of articles, was invited to edit the book. The majority of the book's material was processed by A. Chrobolovsky.

Following Wolf Gliksman's arrival in New York, the Editorial Board appointed him as a member. Besides an array of preparatory work which he carried out for the book, Flw Gliksman was extremely instrumental in compiling the material pertaining to the Holocaust era - most of which he personally lived through in *Częstochowa*.

Flw Wolf Gliksman, along with Flw Raphael Federman, took over the technical work of putting together all the book's material, preparing it for printing, and a series of other tasks.

The date of the book's publication was set for 18th May 1947.



Meeting dedicated to the publication of the book's projected edition

[Continued on next page]

Administrative Committee of the Book *Czenstochover Yidn*



Abram-Jakow Senzer



Josef Kaufman



Jakow-Ber Silver



Jankiel Kopyński (Kopin)