

Częstochowers in the Land of Israel¹



Today, there are some two thousand *Częstochowers* in the Land of Israel. The first group of pioneers arrived in 1919. They participated in all branches of work, and went through all the difficulties that the building of the Land of Israel demanded.

In 1925, the stream of emigration from Poland to the Land of Israel intensified, and there were also many *Częstochowers* who travelled to the Land of Israel along with what is called “the Grabski *Aliyah*”². The *Częstochower* immigrants, who always stuck together and helped each other in every possible manner, convened for the first time at the house of Lajb Osher (originally Unglik³), and afterwards at Mojsze Halter’s café. It was at these meetings that the *Częstochower Verein* [Society] was born, and its first chairman was Rabbi [Majer-Henech] Jszajewicz (the Rabbi of Wola⁴).

Among the first to build their own home here was Aba Librowicz, a Zionist activist from *Częstochowa*. Only *Częstochowers* worked in its construction. The Histadrut [Ha’Ovdim Ha’Klalit⁵] organised a group of five *Częstochower* workers, headed by Godl Frajtag, one of the active *Polei Zion* members in *Częstochowa*, and called it “*Kvutzat Frajtag*” [Frajtag’s Group]. The other members of the group were Pik, Oderberg, Kamiński and Bencelowicz. The additional workers were also *Częstochowers*.

Included amongst the *Częstochower* immigrants, at the time, was the building contractor in *Częstochowa*, Helmund Buchenheim - a German. He, too, was given work in the “*Kvutza*”. In 1939, when the Nazis occupied Poland, that same Helmund Buchenheim became commissar over all the factories in *Częstochowa*.

In 1927, a crisis began in the country. Construction work came to a halt, and many immigrants - especially the wealthier element - began returning to Poland. The *Częstochower Verein* organised mutual aid for its members at the time. A new committee was formed, chaired by Gomuliński. The Committee turned to *Częstochowa* [and] to the *Częstochowers* in America for aid. A relief committee was established in *Częstochowa* and aid arrived twice. Workers’ groups and cooperatives of various trades were founded - a group of carpenters headed by Mojsze Zilberszac; a group of overshoe-makers, who repaired galoshes; a group of general labourers, and so on. The situation gradually improved. From amongst the workers, officials and small contractors emerged. Craftsmen’s cooperatives turned into larger workshops. More well-to-do contractors became large-scale industrialists. A celluloid factory was also established here, with the participation of Sztencel, Jakow Fefer, Handelsman, Gotlib and others.

Of the enterprises that have had a certain significance for the industry of the Land of Israel, it is worth mentioning [the following ones]: Karp’s factory, which produces agricultural equipment and which worked for the War effort during wartime (400 workers are employed in this factory, many of whom are *Częstochowers*), and the haberdashery factory of Jakow Gotlib - a locksmith and mechanic by

¹ [TN: As this book was printed before the establishment of the State of Israel, the country is invariably referred to in it as “*Eretz Yisrael*”, viz. “*The Land of Israel*.”]

² [TN: Viz. the emigration of Polish Jews to Palestine that was instigated by the Polish PM Władysław Dominik Grabski’s draconian anti-Jewish policies and laws.]

³ [TN: The original surname “*Unglik*,” means “*Misfortune*” in Yiddish, whereas the new “*Osher*” means “*Joy*” in Hebrew.]

⁴ [TN: As mentioned in *Sefer Częstochowa*, Vol. I, col. 647, Rabbi Jszajewicz was born in Wola, a suburb of Warsaw, and relocated to *Częstochowa* when he married Sura Asz, the sister of Rabbi Nachum Asz, the Chief Rabbi of *Częstochowa*.]

⁵ [TN: “(General Workers) Organisation”; Jewish trade union centre active since 1920 in Palestine.]

trade, who graduated from the Częstochowa Crafts School. He, too, employs many *Częstochowers*, and personally dedicates a great deal of time to the *Częstochower Landsmannschaft*. His wife Chawa, née Richter, helps him in the communal activity.

Recently, the weaving and *trykotaż* [knitwear] industry, in which *Częstochowers* are represented in great numbers, has developed in the Land of Israel.

Besides the small workshops that work alone or with just a few helpers, there are also a couple of large enterprises, such as the factory of Cwi Szpaltyn, who came here during the War, [and is] a good organiser and also active in other fields, as well as [those of] Lewit, Mendel Gilbert and others.

Among the craftsmen's enterprises, [those that] have gained a reputation [are] the workshops of Zylberszac (carpentry), Szybel and Henech Kalka from Radomsko - a brother of Symcha Kalka from Częstochowa. Landsman, a graduate of the Crafts School in Częstochowa, is well-known in Jerusalem for his mechanical locksmithing shop. He is the Chairman of the *Częstochower Society* in Jerusalem and a member of the *Va'ad Ha'Artzi* [National Committee]. The Sosowski brothers, also activists of the *Częstochower Society*, work in Jerusalem in the timber branch. In Haifa, there is the mechanical locksmithing shop of Majer Fajnrajch, formerly an active member of the SS [Party] and a graduate of the Częstochowa Crafts School. Blum and Amsterdam, craftsmen from Częstochowa, are also in Haifa. Jehoszua Kalka is among the building contractors. The Kalka brothers also employ numerous *Częstochowers* in various branches of their trade. Arieli, originally Kaluszyński, occupies a respected position in the printing branch.

Symcha Rajch, an active member of *Poalei Zion* in Częstochowa, is renowned in the manufacture of stone and marble, which is developing here on a wide scale.

Mas, Cohen⁶, Gewercman, Hocherman and others play roles in commerce. Godl Fajertag also founded the first "*Karat*" tea factory. Prior to the Second World War, his tea factory shipped tea to America and other countries. His firm bears the name *Karat* №72 or *Karat* №93.

More than in anything else, *Częstochowers* have distinguished themselves in agriculture and gardening - and this is thanks to the Częstochowa Horticultural Farm, which produced many experts of whom Częstochowa can be truly proud. The only gardener in Tel-Aviv is Buchman, a disciple of the Horticultural Farm. There are also many *Częstochowers*, who studied at the Horticultural Farm, in the *moshavot* [rural settlements] and *kibbutzim* [communes], as *kibbutz* members or *chalutzim* [pioneers]. The *Częstochowers*, engaged in the planting of orange orchards, are Wolfowicz, Szacher, Lipski, Kongrecki, Zaksenhaus, Pik, Goldsztajn, Gewercman and others. Szoszana Częstochowska is renowned for her practical and theoretical knowledge in the field of tropical plants.

Many *Częstochowers*, who were unable to become accustomed to agriculture, learned other professions here and are independently employed, or are working in small enterprises. A few fought their way into the universities in Jerusalem and Haifa, resumed their studies under the most difficult of conditions and received diplomas. In this manner, Engineers Lipiński - a son of Dr Lipiński - and Willinger graduated in Haifa. Both served as engineers in the ranks of the Allied Forces.

Thus, you find *Częstochowers* everywhere - in leading institutions, in agriculture, in the construction of the finest houses in Tel-Aviv, in the canalisation works, etc. When a house is decorated with marble, you can find Symcha Rajch there, whom everybody knows. In glazing houses, Fajtel Szmulewicz; in

⁶ [TN: Unlike most of the other individuals with this surname who appear in the yizkor books, whose surname is usually spelt "Kohn" (קוהן), this one is written in its Hebrew form (קאהן), and should thus be rendered Cohen/Kohen.]

finishing joiners' work, such as doors and windows, Szybel. It would be possible to fill many pages with the names of the *Częstochowers* who built, and are building, the settlement of the Land of Israel.

Three rabbis in Tel-Aviv were *Częstochowers*: Rabbi Szajewicz⁷ z"l (he died in 1941), Rabbi Sztencel and Rabbi Tamar. A *Częstochower*, Klajnman (Pesla the miller-woman's grandson), was Chief of Police for a couple of years. Icek⁸ (a grandson of Krymofowski) was also a sergeant in that same police [force]. Other policemen from *Częstochowa* were Adler, Frydman, Uszer Szwarcbbaum (the son of Jechiel Szwarcbbaum, First Aleja), Zylbersztajn and others.

In 1936, Wolhendler, a *Częstochower*, fell in a heroic battle against attacking Arabs. To this day, two *Częstochowers* stand at the top of the *Poalei Mizrachi*⁹ in the Land of Israel - Shragai (originally Fajwlowicz) and Leslau Rojzen¹⁰. Shragai is also on the Executive [Board] of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem. Szajewicz is a representative of the Agency in Teheran, Persia. Nowadays, he is called Dr Moshe Yishai (the son of the Rabbi of Wola).

Bronisław Huberman, who was born in *Częstochowa*, has brought great honour to *Częstochower* Jewry as the founder of the symphonic orchestra with a magnificent building in Tel-Aviv. It is the most beautiful thing that has been created in these times in the entire Near East.

At the outbreak of the War, numerous *Częstochowers*, among thousands of others, volunteered for Palestinian military service, such as Potaszewicz, Kartuz, Jakubowicz and Bryll. Icek Zelkowicz, born in *Częstochowa* in 1898, joined the French Foreign Legion. When France fell, he returned to the Land of Israel, and belonged to De Gaulle's faction [?].

When the Australians arrived in the Land of Israel, Sztajnic - the youngest son of Sztajnic, the leather merchant in the New Market - came with them. Among the South Africans to arrive was Berkowicz (Lajzer Berkowicz is his uncle). With the Polish military from Soviet Russia came numerous *Częstochower* military men, among them a few officers, such as Dr Kohn, Dr Fajzman, Bochenek and others.

Godl Frajtag, Jakow Jaskel, Fajtel Szmulewicz, Szczekacz and others took an active part in the country's defence organisation that was founded during wartime, under the name "*Mishmar Ezrachi*" [Civil Guard].

In the *Hitachdut Oley Polin* (Association of Polish Jews in the Land of Israel), the *Częstochower "irgun"* (branch) was the first and the strongest one (now, there are already forty subdivisions). At the head of the general organisation stands Dr Hurwicz, a son of the *Częstochowa* chain manufacturer. Szmulewicz is the Vice-Chairman. Others who occupy a respected position in the leadership of the Organisation's Council are Szpaltyn, Juda Wajdenfeld, Szmul Efraim, Fajwlowicz, Jakow Gotlib, Mrs Rozencwajg, Dawid Gruszka, Trajman, Karp, Arieli, Lewit and Henech Nirenberg.

Dawidowicz is on Tel-Aviv's *Iriya* (City Council). In the *Histadrut* - Szmul Efraim. Fajtel Szmulewicz plays a role in the craftsmen's organisations. He also participates in the Hebrew and Yiddish press (*Naye Welt* [New World]) with articles on craftsmen.

⁷ [TN: Also spelt "Jszajewicz."]

⁸ [TN: Although usually a given name, this is also a *Częstochowa* surname; it is sometimes spelt "Icyk," as on the following page.]

⁹ [TN: "Eastern Workers," aka "Ha'Poel Ha'Mizrachi"; religious Zionist workers party.]

¹⁰ [TN: As tempting as it is to transliterate this name as "Leslau Rojzen," as there is no proof of his existence, it is more likely that these are two surnames – Leslau-Rojzen. The *Częstochower* Jakow **Leslau** was indeed a prominent figure in Ha'Poel Ha'Mizrachi, but the surname "Rojzen" remains unexplained, unless his family originally had two surnames.]

The *Częstochowers* Godl Frajtag, Dr Hurwicz, Mrs Hurwicz, Mrs Rajngold and Cwi Szpaltyn occupy active and leading positions in the *Peisach* campaigns (*Kimcha D’Pischa*¹¹).

In 1939, the Association of Polish Jews established a division under the name “Va’ad Ha’Meuchad” [The United Council], which is tasked with aiding Jews from Poland, who have been saved from Hitler’s villains, [by escaping] to those countries where aid can be received, and especially those saving themselves [by travelling] to the Land of Israel. The Va’ad Ha’Meuchad is headed by Dr Hurwicz. Fajtel Szmulewicz leads the *Częstochower* division. Other *Częstochowers*, who assist in this operation, are Szmul Efraim, Wajdenfeld, Cohen, Szpaltyn, Frajtag, Jakow Jaskel, Dawid Gruszka and Lewit. With their aid, it has been possible to gather the addresses of *Częstochowers* in the Soviet Union. Thus far, some eighty-five such addresses have been collected. The *Częstochower* “*Irgun*” has sent out a large number of parcels with food products and clothing. Large sums have been donated to this cause by Karp, Frajtag, Jaskel, Abram Gotlib, Jakow Gotlib, Aron Mas, and the Cohen brothers and their father, Chaim.

The “*Częstochower Tug*” [Yid., Cz. Day] was a great activity in aid of the *Częstochowa* victims of Nazism. At that evening, a sum of seventy-five pounds was raised and, in addition, sending 200 parcels to those without any relatives in the Land of Israel.

In Jerusalem, this “*Yom Czenstochow*” [Heb., Cz. Day] was held with the participation of Dr Hirschberg, Dr Josef Kruk and Abram Izbicki. There, too, a large sum was raised for this cause.

Every year on 1st September, the anniversary of the outbreak of the War, the Va’ad Ha’Meuchad holds a flower day [viz. fundraising campaign] named “*Yom Yahadut Polin*” (A Day for Polish Jewry). Women play the main role in this undertaking, and they actually hold the record in fundraising matters. The names of the *Częstochower* women who participate every year in the flower day are Mmes. Grynberg, Szejgin, Gotlib, Frajllich, Frajtag, Lewkowicz, Gruszka, Efraim, Icyk, Moszkowicz, Blechsztajn, Herszlikowicz, Wajcenblat, Leslau, Rajngold, Rajch, Szczekacz, Hocherman, Markson, Lewit, Bornsztajn, Rozencwajg, Rywka Fajnrajch, Zajdman, Kalka, Ajzenberg, Prajs, Jankiel, Bornsztajn, Chana-Zvi-Chaim¹², Propinator, Podomski and others.

When Dr Josef Kruk arrived in the Land of Israel, the *Częstochowers* in Tel-Aviv held a gathering for him and he was elected Honorary Chairman of the *Częstochower* “*Irgun*” (subdivision). Representatives of other branches of the Hitachdut Yahadut Polin were also present at this gathering. Jerusalem and Haifa were represented by Wolf Landsman and Wzowski [sic Zuzowski¹³]. Dr Kruk described his experiences from his last days in Poland and shared memories of the years of his youth in *Częstochowa*. The evening made a profound impression on everyone. Afterwards, several other evenings were held with the participation of Dr Josef Kruk.

¹¹ [TN: “Flour for Passover” in Talmudic Aramaic; relief fund with which to provide the needy with their holiday necessities.]

¹² [TN: Almost certainly ref. to the wife of Chaim Zvi (originally Herszlikowicz) of Tel-Aviv.]

¹³ [TN: The Hebrew characters for “Wz” (וּז) and “Zuz” (זוּז) look almost identical, thus the misprint.]