

H. Grauman

## The Częstochower Patronage in Los Angeles

In 1933, when the turbid waves of the approaching fascist terror in Europe emboldened the dark forces in Poland to carry out pogroms, the feeling of responsibility towards our brothers and sisters in Poland, who were proudly fighting for their equal rights, was awoken within us – the *Częstochowers* in Los Angeles.

At the beginning of 1933, we, a group of young *Częstochower landsleit* (Max and Tessie Pepper, Shirley and Jack Szybel, Laja and Chaim-Lajb Szwarc and Comrades Israel [surname] and May and Harry Grauman) founded the first patronage on the Pacific coast. We received our impetus and encouragement from our sister organisation in New York. Over more than a year, we operated as the “Częstochower Aid Organisation for Political Arrestees in Częstochowa and the Vicinity (Patronage)” but, considering that there were not many *Częstochower landsleit* at the time in Los Angeles, we later decided to become a territorial patronage to include *landsleit* from different cities and *shtetls* in Poland. We therefore changed the name of our committee to “Los Angeles Aid Committee For Political Arrestees in Poland (Patronage)”.

The Central Committee of the Polish Patronages in New York bestowed upon us the great honour of putting two Polish prisons, [Bydgoszcz-]Fordon and Rawicz, into our care. This is where mostly female political prisoners were held. We carried out our humanitarian relief work for the fighters and martyrs of Polish fascism proudly and with honour.

In 1938, our patronage helped establish the Nowy Dwór<sup>1</sup> and Wilna Patronage in Los Angeles and, together, we have undertaken a series of great functions and some protest meetings against the wild murder of Jews in Poland.

Our organisation continued the important relief work until August 1939, when the Nazi beasts attacked Poland.

The writer of these lines is proud to have been member and secretary of the *Częstochower* Patronage, and, afterwards, also secretary of the General Patronage.

Let us hope that for the so severely tried Polish Jewry, along with all humanity, a new era of happiness is beginning.

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<sup>1</sup> [TN: Most likely ref. to Nowy Dwór in the Lida district (modern-day Belarus), as it is in the general Vilnius area; there are a great many localities bearing this name throughout Eastern Europe.]

