

H. Grauman

## The Czenstochover [and Vicinity<sup>1</sup>] Aid Society in Los Angeles

The Czenstochover Society in Los Angeles was organised with the assistance of the President of the United Czenstochover Relief in New York, Flw Abram Senzer, who spent a few months here and afterwards, with the cooperation of Flw Raphael Federman, during his journey across the larger cities of the United States.

The following individuals joined the temporary committee, which was founded in December 1944: Jetta Grey (Grylak), H. Epsztajn and Harry Grauman<sup>2</sup>. The Committee immediately began its activity, and its work was crowned with great success.

On *Shabbes*<sup>3</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1944, the first gathering was held at the Park Manor Hall. The call to all the *Czestochower landsleit* met with the desired success. Everyone gathered with a warm, fraternal readiness to help carry out the task which we had set as our goal.

Flw Raphael Federman speaks to the assembled about the state of the Jews in Poland before and after the War. He dwells particularly on the situation of the Jews in Czestochowa, which moves the audience to tears.

Following a brief discussion, Flws Epsztajn, Grauman and Federman were elected as a temporary committee, tasked with arranging a large gathering of all the *Czestochowers* in Los Angeles and the vicinity.

The Czenstochover Aid Society's founding meeting was held on Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> December 1944, at Clifton's Restaurant in Los Angeles.

Flw H. Epsztajn, chairman of the meeting, presents to the assembled *landsleit* and guests the visitor and friend Raphael Federman, who depicts the destruction of Jewish life in Poland, and indicates the enormous tasks, facing Jews in general and the *landsleit* in particular, regarding their Czestochowa brethren - because the hour of Liberation and the throwing off of the Nazi yoke is nearing.

The renowned journalist and lecturer Gina Medem also greeted those assembled.

The following management committee was elected at the foundation meeting:

Chairman - Max Pepper;

Secretary - Harry Grauman;

Finance Secretary - Izzie Berger.

Those elected to the Executive [Board] were: Max Pepper, Izzie Berger, Harry Grauman, Philip Grosberg, Aron Grosberg, Mendel Grosberg, Josl Berliner, Dawid Miller (Malarski) and Szajndla Suchter.

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<sup>1</sup> [TN: The words "and Vicinity" appear in an article by the same author in "Czenstochow" (1958); we have as yet been unable to ascertain this organisation's official name in English – or indeed in Yiddish, as several versions appear even within this very article, as follows.]

<sup>2</sup> [TN: The author of this article.]

<sup>3</sup> [TN: As this date fell on a Friday, the meeting would have been held in the evening – at the beginning of the Sabbath. Alternately – and more likely, due to the chronology of the events mentioned subsequently – 22<sup>nd</sup> is a misprint, and the date correct date is Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec.]

How energetically and intensively the Czenstochover Relief in Los Angeles worked is shown by the undertakings and sums of the proceeds of six months' activity.

Mrs Rose Klajn, at her own initiative, arranged a gathering which brought in a sum of \$60. Mrs Mervin<sup>4</sup> Gelber held a luncheon at which \$195 was raised.

The Czenstochover Relief in Los Angeles continues taking every opportunity to intensify the activity of the *Częstochowers* in Los Angeles. One such opportunity presents itself when Częstochowa is liberated by the victorious Russian armies. In Częstochowa, seven thousand Jews are saved from certain death thanks to the Red Army's rapid march.

On 18<sup>th</sup> February 1945, an evening was held at the home of Mr and Mrs Philip and Ester Grosberg, at which \$187 is raised. The President of the Czenstochover Relief in Los Angeles had quite a unique merit - [it was he] who launched the fundraising campaign. At this opportunity, Mrs Rose Klajn added to present the \$60 which she had collected at the lunch in her house. The evening was added to by the actress Cykla Kapulasz [?] with popular readings and recitations suited to the occasion.

On 29<sup>th</sup> April 1945, a gathering of all the *Częstochower landsleit* is held at the home of the Berger family. At this meeting, a plan of constructive aid for the Częstochowa Jews, saved from the Nazi hell, is formulated and a sum of \$120 is raised.

On this occasion, President Max Pepper introduced his son Shelton, who had returned from Italy, where he had fought as an American soldier against Nazi Germany.



*The Czenstochover Aid Society in Los Angeles, Ca.*

**Seated (R-L): Dawid Malarski (Miller), Icek Berger, Icek-Hersz Grauman, Majer Piepsz (Pepper) and Josl Berliner**  
**Standing (R-L): Herszl Epszajn, Adolph Landau, Chaja Berger, Szaja-Jakow Menkof, Gitla Menkof, Philip Grosberg, Ester Grosberg, Mendel Grosberg, Taube Piepsz (Pepper) and Aron Grosberg**

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<sup>4</sup> [TN: According to the biographic section at the end of this book (p. XXII), the wife of Mervin Gelber was Fannie née Akerfeld.]

The assembled heartily congratulated him and \$183 was raised for the Czenstochover Relief at the initiative of H. Grauman, in order to honour the young hero. The first to respond was Flw Josl Berliner.

This last meeting enabled us, along with the moneys from the previous gatherings, to send \$500 for food parcels through the Czenstochover Relief in New York.

Hardly a month goes by and, here, another opportunity presents itself to aid our *Częstochower landsleit*— Flw Josl Berliner celebrates his son Maron's *Bar-Mitzvah* in a very impressive manner. *Landsleit* from Częstochowa and Radomsko get together and we sing old folksongs that are reminiscent of our home of old. Flw Epsztajn - from Radomsko himself - calls everyone to further relief work. Flws Dawidson and Grauman greet the public. Two hundred dollars are raised, which are divided between the *Częstochower* and *Radomsker landsleit*.

The depth of awareness of urgent aid penetrates the minds of all the *Częstochower landsleit*. On Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> August 1945, the Szybel families, of Van Nuys near Los Angeles, held a picnic. On that occasion, \$320 was raised, which was divided between the Jews of Częstochowa and Nowo Radomsko.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1945, the Berliner [family] held a victory party in their house to celebrate the end of the Second World War. \$134 was raised and divided equally between the Radomsker and Czenstochover Reliefs.

The Relief had also purchased \$50 of War Bonds, from which it gained an income of \$100.

On Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> November, the *Częstochower* aid societies<sup>5</sup> called a mass meeting at the Park View Manor, at which Chairman Max Pepper indicated the great tasks that are now standing before American Jewry in aiding to build up Jewish life in Poland.

Flw Grauman delivers a report on the activity thus far, and reads out a letter which has arrived in Los Angeles from the Częstochowa [Jewish] Regional Committee. Three hundred dollars are raised, to which Flws Berliner and Berkowicz add \$100.

However, this is not all that the Czenstochover Relief in Los Angeles has done. From the plans for the near future, we may comprehend that the Czenstochover Relief has set itself the task of continuing to energetically aid our *landsleit*.

The Relief has reorganised with the following individuals:

President - Max Pepper

Secretary - Harry Grauman;

Finance Secretary - Dawid Borzykowski

Treasurer - Josl Berliner

Executive [Board] – Icek Berger, Ester Grosberg, Fiszl[-Jakow, aka Philip] Grosberg,

Mendel Grosberg, Aron Grosberg and Dawid Malarski.

Report from the Treasury: since 17<sup>th</sup> Dec. - \$1,858.65 raised; expenditure - \$1,240.11; remaining in treasury – \$618.54.

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<sup>5</sup> [TN: The plural form would imply that there was more than one *Częstochower* organisation in Los Angeles, but none besides the main one is mentioned.]