

A. Chrobolovsky

## Czenstochover Relief Activists in New York

The organisations of *Częstochower landsmannschaften* in general, and the aid organisations in particular, did a world of work over the course of their existence. The work is described in the reports of the different organisations. Here, we wish to present a picture of the activity of a few individuals, which may serve as a model.

[...]<sup>1</sup> on, at all the meetings of the Relief and Ladies Auxiliary, whether he was president or not – was the oldest, most trustworthy and most devoted among the Relief activists, Flw Louis Szymkowicz.

He was the first president of the Young Men's and, later, was one of the pillars of the Czenstochover Relief in New York. In 1922, together with Louis Szwarc, as a delegate, he travelled to Częstochowa.

Being in Częstochowa and seeing everything with his own eyes, and not only the dark side - the need and suffering of Jewish life - but also the bright [side] - the passion and will to fight of the youth and the joy of the children in their own, free, bright kindergarten. He was strongly influenced by the new, young Częstochowa. Upon his return to America, with renewed strength, he set about the relief work for his brethren and their children in Częstochowa, and has not stopped doing this work to this very day.

Alongside him, we must mention his co-workers and helpers from the old generation of Relief activists, whom neither age, the times nor their living conditions have deterred them from the Relief's work and from participating and helping at every function and at every gathering, from the first years thirty years ago, to this day. These are:

**Icek Zelkowitz**, who has remained so connected with the aid work, and as enrooted in Częstochowa as a tree with the strongest roots, which no winds and storms are able to tear out.

And **Sam Korpiel**, who has always been, always is and, as we hope, will yet be for a long, long time, the agent who represents and welcomes the *Częstochower landsleit* at their gatherings, who personally makes and serves the prepared food and who draws satisfaction and joy from every gathering and every meeting.

One, who for long years, has carried on his strong shoulders, at first, the Aid Society and, later, the Czenstochover Relief in New York is Flw **Louis [Chaim-Lajb] Szwarc**. Along with Flw Szymkowicz, he was one of the delegates to Częstochowa. With iron tenacity and an unbreakable will, he saw through the grandiose plan of erecting the I.L. Peretz Building. The colloquial poems of his youthful years in Częstochowa, more mature poetry printed in the Yiddish press in America, and his piece *Częstochowa Becomes a City* [above, pp.32-46], written for the book *Czenstochow*<sup>2</sup> and also printed in the YIVO Pages, bear testimony to the living spring of a poet and writer surging within him.

One, who embodies the valour, heroism and limitless energy and willpower of the new generation of Jewish workers, is **Kopl Gerichter**. He was the first one who, following the First World War, connected the aid work in America to Częstochowa. He was the fighting spirit in the Relief, the long-standing

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<sup>1</sup> [TN: The first line of this paragraph reads "It is not yet possible to evaluate the", and it is an obvious misprint, as these very words appear in the previous article in Dr Glikzman's speech, and here they do not fit the context.]

<sup>2</sup> [TN: It is unclear whether this is a ref. to this same book, *Czenstochover Yidn*, or to an earlier project.]

Minutes Secretary, Financial Secretary, one of the most active figures in the *Częstochower* branch of the Arbeiter-Ring and, later, in the Jewish People's [Fraternal] Order, in addition to his involvement in the Painters Union<sup>3</sup> and other activities. A severe illness cut him off from communal life years ago, but his work will never be forgotten.

One of the most loyal Relief activists, from the first days of the Aid Society to this very day, is **Icyk Rykman**. He is described as a child in the chapter *Częstochowa Becomes a City*. Like many children of the ghetto, *Częstochowa* certainly did not give him any great fortune - yet he repaid *Częstochowa* with an immeasurable amount of work and loyalty.

One, who has been always loyal and always ardent in his work since the first years and until now, is **Chune Gliksman**. His life companion, Fradel "The Black" [née Bratt], also does not fall behind him.

**Dawid Zytman** occupies a unique and respected position in the aid work, just as he does at the Young Men's, where he was elected president several times. In his appearances, he is always original, idiosyncratic, factual and earnest. He has always been, and still is, one of the pillars of the aid work for *Częstochowa*.

A loyal Relief activist, who occupies an important position in the aid work, is **Szulim Oberman**. His presence and [public] appearance at a Relief meeting always lends matter-of-factness to the work.

One who, I think, has never missed a single gathering of the *Częstochower landsmannschaft*, is dear Flw **Isrulke Broder** - who should actually have been named Zygas, because two brothers, the great-grandfathers of the Zygas families, were referred to in *Częstochowa* by two different names, Zygas and Broder. As a Relief activist, Isrulke Broder may serve as a model, for people much younger than him, who came to America many years later.

One, who has devoted much work and energy to the Relief's work, is **Jechaskiel Win**. For several years, he was Secretary of the *Czenstochover Relief* in New York and an official in the *Częstochower Branch* of the Jewish National Workers Alliance.

The one, who has devoted more years of work for *Częstochowa* than any other individual, is **Aba Kaufman**, the scholar in old Judaism and faithful adherent of the new movements. He is practically the Relief's permanent secretary. Without him - without his work and the information about the *landsleit* that he possesses - it is impossible to imagine that even one function or one meeting would have taken place. As a member of the editorial board of the book *Czenstochover Yidn*, he has contributed a great deal by gathering historical material and, generally, helping in great measure to bringing the great idea of immortalising *Częstochowa*, in a book, to its fruition.

The last – the most beloved – is the old-young **Jakow-Ber Silver**. His personality, which is the best testament to the great living force of the Jewish common masses, his energy and faithfulness to his brethren, to whom he has dedicated his entire life, have earned him [the right] that his name should be written in the history of our family in golden letters. For several years, he served as president of the *Czenstochover Relief* in New York, chairman of the executive [board] of the United *Czenstochover Relief* and chairman of the committee for the publication of this book, *Czenstochover Yidn*. As such, he has greatly contributed to the Editorial Board's work and has led the work onwards. That is his nature in anything in which he participates - to lead and push forward.



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<sup>3</sup> [TN: In English in the original (פינגטערס יידיש).]

Alongside the activists listed above, an entire array of new members arrived, when the United Czenstochover Relief was founded, and then distinguished themselves in the aid work.

Flw **Abram-Jakow Senzer** has occupied the position of President since 1928. Under his leadership, the decisions, to raise the amount of \$10,000 and to publish the book *Czenstochover Yidn*, were made and carried through. With his iron [viz. implacable] energy and levelheadedness, he led the Relief through the most terrible times of the Second World War, when we were completely cut off from Czeŝtochowa and when the horrendous tidings of Czeŝtochowa's destruction arrived. During all that time, he held the Czeŝtochowa Jewish community in America together, in order to be prepared for when the call for aid should come from the other side of the ocean. It was no easy feat to accomplish all this, especially for a working man. This demanded great perseverance, tact and inborn sagacity - with which Abram Senzer was endowed in very large measure.

**Josef Kaufman**, who holds the office of Financial Secretary, has huge merits in the *Czeŝtochower* aid work in New York. A son of the Czeŝtochowa [Torah] scholar, Reb Berisz *Dayan* [Rabbinical Judge], in America, he serves his congregation of Czeŝtochowa Jews from the old and new home with pragmatic advice and deeds. He has given the Relief years of arduous work. He would carry out the work at night, after a hard day's work at his printing shop<sup>4</sup>. More than once, he had to bring [work at] the shop to a halt and go to a Relief meeting. But nothing is too difficult for him, if it relates to fulfilling the *mitzvah* [good deed/precept] of fraternal aid.

Jack Kopin, or **Jankel Kopinski** in the old home - a fine member of Poalei Zion, the Literary Society and *Lira*, of whom all were fond - is the Treasurer. At the Relief's functions, he is the busiest Relief activist, collecting the money for the *Czeŝtochower* fund.

Together with them, Vice-President, Flw **Harry Fajersztajn**, has dedicated years of work for the United Czenstochover Relief. He holds the foremost position in the work, not only with his office, but even more so with his broad-hearted contributions at every meeting.

The younger generation in America was represented in the aid work for Czeŝtochowa by **Maks Kamiński**, as Minutes Secretary. He has already served as President of the Young Men's also.

**A. Chrobolovsky**<sup>5</sup>, in the Czenstochover Relief in New York, the Ladies Auxiliary and the United Czenstochover Relief, has carried out the missions that the leaders, teachers and, mostly, the children and their parents have given to him. He has spoken, pleaded and demanded on their behalf. Now, in the horrendous times of Czeŝtochowa's destruction, the only hope and consolation left for all the activists of the *Czeŝtochower* fraternal aid, is that Jewish children should still live there, that their Yiddish speech and song should still resound, and that their lives should be better and more beautiful than those of the ones who perished in such a horrific manner.

One of the youngest Relief activists in America is **Raphael Federman**. He arrived in America at the beginning of the Second World War, and co-worked [sic brought along<sup>6</sup>] with him the cry for aid and the scream of pain and despair of our brothers, who were already writhing in the murderous jaws of Germany's death machine. He invested a massive [amount of] energy in the Relief's work as head of the Information Bureau, in preparing material for the bulletins of the United Czenstochover Relief and Ladies Auxiliary, and in preparing the countrywide conference and every conference that has been held in the recent years. As secretary of the book's publication and member of the Editorial Board, he has united the *Czeŝtochower landsmannschaften* in America, the Land of Israel and other countries,

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<sup>4</sup> [TN: Both here and in several places where this word appears subsequently, it most probably means "workshop."]

<sup>5</sup> [TN: The author of this article.]

<sup>6</sup> [TN: The words "co-worked" and "brought along" are very similar in Yiddish ("mitgearbet" and "mitgebracht"), and the former makes no sense in this context.]

and has contributed, in very large measure, to the realisation of the idea of the *Czenstochover Yidn* memorial book.



The youngest among the Relief activists, **Wolf Gliksman**, experienced all the horrors of Nazi rule, lived through the annihilation of Jewish Częstochowa and was saved from the limekilns of Oświęcim and Dachau, along with the Surviving Remnant. Following his arrival in New York, he at once became active in the United Czenstochover Relief, where he took over the work as Secretary and, to a great extent, the burden of the Broad, the widespread activity which the Relief demanded. He took over the leadership of the Information Bureau and the United Czenstochover Relief's press department. As a member of the Editorial Board, Wolf Gliksman devoted much energy and effort to help complete the book *Czenstochover Yidn*.

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Dozens of other individuals, who were active in the Relief as officials during different periods and in the Relief's executive boards, also deserve to be mentioned with appreciation. [Those] among them [who] distinguished themselves [were] Izzie Berger, Maurice Gelber, Joe Jacobs, Maks Jacobs, Emanuel Wargon, Nathan Wajsberg, Jack Levy, Abram Fridman, Dawid Fridman, Majer Fajner, Frajermauer, Maks Koźmiński, Maks Kepp and Joe Rozenblat.

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### **Those Who Have Been Taken from Us (Our Deceased Activists)**

It is our sacred duty to first of all mention those who have been taken from us – [those] whom death has separated from us all for the time being. May these lines serve as an expression of the great love and reverence that the entire *Czestochower* family feels towards their memory.

**Harry [Hersz] Fajersztajn:** died in 1936<sup>7</sup> [sic 31/10/1938]. He gave all his free days and hours, after working hard in his shop, to the *Czestochower* Branch 261 of the Arbeiter-Ring, the Czenstochover Aid Society and the Czenstochover Relief in New York. He was the Relief's Treasurer to the last days of his life.

**Maks Korpiel:** died in 1936 [?]. He was the representative of the Young Men's and the Czenstochover Relief in New York and an active contributor to the work of the Ladies Auxiliary. He was one of the most beloved figures amongst *Czestochower landsleit*. He was a warm-hearted, good man, with a great willingness to make sacrifices, maintain faith and a connection to his brethren. The amounts which the Ladies Auxiliary sent for the kindergartens and other institutions arrived in Częstochowa in his name - and this name will remain blessed for eternity!

**William Sobol:** died in 1936 [?]. He devoted much work and loyalty to the Young Men's and the aid work, both in the Czenstochover Relief and in the Ladies Auxiliary. He did not tire and did not stop to the last days of his life, neither in the work at the shop, nor [in that] for his brothers here and in Częstochowa. In the Czenstochover Relief in New York, just as in any lively organisation, there were differences of opinion - but Sobol, with his sincere, upright words, always calmed the moods, straightened [things] out and brought [people] together as brothers. "After all, we are all working

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<sup>7</sup> [TN: All the individuals listed here appear as having "died in 1936." This is an obvious misprint, as the exact dates of the deaths of some of them are given in other parts of this same book (none in 1936); in these cases, we have presented the real date in brackets.]

towards the same goal - to help our brothers”, he would say. His words always had an effect and did not anger anyone, because they came from a good Jewish heart and a sensitive soul...

**Rae Sobol:** his wife: died in 1936 [sic 02/08/1943]. Her beloved countenance, with the kind-hearted smile which lit up all the *Częstochower* gatherings like a warm, bright fire, has thus remained living and shining in the hearts of all who knew her and - will remain forever so.

**Zacharia Lewensztajn:** died in 1936 [sic 05/01/1940]. At home [in *Częstochowa*], he was a worker in Wajnberg’s factory and, as one of the leaders of the Freedom Movement in 1905, he was loved and respected by the Jewish workers. He also suffered greatly in America, and left this world very prematurely [at 50]. He was active in the Young Men’s as Financial Secretary and, in the United *Czenstochover* Relief, as Minutes Secretary. Just as at home, here, too, his mind was sharp, clear and intelligent - and people listened to him. His death was a very great shock to all the *Częstochower landsleit*. His memory will live on for a long time.

**Nyssen [Nathan] Cymerman;** died in 1936 [sic 17/01/1945]. [On the night of his death], he sat, like always, with his dignified figure in the foremost position at a meeting of the Relief. He stood up, shook hands with the members sitting alongside him and departed - departed forever. He died on his way home. He, too, worked to his last day in the shop and was one of the Young Men’s younger presidents (of those from 1905<sup>8</sup>), [as well as] of the *Działoszynerg*, and the first president of the newly-established United *Czenstochover* Relief. He had a great deal of the common sense and dignity of a leader. His words were weighed and measured and, therefore, always achieved their goal. The *Częstochower landsmannschaft* honours his memory every year with a meeting – something he well deserves.

**Rose [Ruchel] Richter;** died in 1936 [sic 17/12/44]. She was an involved activist in the Arbeiter-Ring Branch 261 and Vice-Chair of the Ladies Auxiliary.

**Majer Rembak;** died in 1936 [sic 113/12/1943]. He also left this world suddenly at a young age. He was a prominent member and activist of the *Częstochower* Arbeiter-Ring Branch 261, and often appeared at the *Częstochower* meetings on behalf of his branch. His last appearance at a banquet of the Relief was a symbolic one. The danger of fascist attacks in New York had passed and, on the “train<sup>9</sup>” that he took to the banquet, the “dim-out” (dimmed lighting) had ended for the first time and the lights were fully lit. He saw, in this, the dawning of light for the world. The soul of this dear man and comrade will, like that light, never cease to shine.

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<sup>8</sup> [TN: Viz. those who came with the second wave of emigration in 1905, as opposed to the founders who arrived with the first one in the 1880s; see regarding the three main streams of emigration above in the article “General Overview of the Fraternal Aid.”]

<sup>9</sup> [TN: Presumably the NYC Subway.]