

**Dr Benjamin Orenstein**

## **Berl Ickowicz**

Born and raised in Częstochowa to a working family, he gained his social and cultural knowledge, in his earliest years, at the Socialist children's SKIF association and, afterwards, at the [Bundist] *Zukunft* youth organisation. Later, he also belonged to the [Bund's] *Morgensztern* [Morning Star] physical education society. These organisations matured him spiritually and physically, thus preparing him to become a communal activist. As a tailoring worker, he was active in the Clothing Union, where he held significant offices until the outbreak of the Second World War.

As soon as the War broke out, he suffered – as did all the Jews in Częstochowa - from the Nazi persecutions, repressions and murders. As all others, he was subjected to all the troubles, suffering and pain which every Jew experienced during the dark and bloody years of Hitler's occupation.

In the period of the "Big Ghetto", he was a forced labourer and, just as all his counterparts, he dreamed and hoped for the swift downfall of the atrocious Nazi regime. He strove to inspire himself and others to the effect that the Nazis - the powers of cruelty and barbarism - [surely] must fall and suffer a devastating defeat.

Events, meanwhile, were developing in exactly the opposite direction. Like savage killers, the Nazi death squads, under the command of the bloody murderer Degenhardt, set upon the lives of the Jews in the ghetto and annihilated the majority of Częstochowa Jewry in the death camp at Treblinka, through deportations and mass selections. During this period of mass killings, most of his family, comrades, friends and acquaintances perished.

Once the "Small Ghetto" had been established, Jewish life was as if on a raging volcano, [with] new deportations and bloody events on a daily basis, until the "Small Ghetto" was definitively liquidated in June 1943.

Following the liquidation of the "Small Ghetto", Berl Ickowicz was in the HASAG-Pelcery camp. Shortly before liberation - viz. prior to the downfall of the Nazi regime in Częstochowa - he, along with thousands of other Jews, was deported to Germany, where new troubles and pain ensued. This was firstly at the Gross-Rosen concentration camp and, later, at the sorrowfully notorious "Dora" concentration camp and others. He was, afterwards, once more dragged along with thousands of others on a death march to Bergen-Belsen, where he was finally liberated by the British army on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1945.

After liberation, Berl Ickowicz travelled back to Częstochowa, where he met his old friend Sura [Sala] Nudelman and they were wed. They did not stay long in the city, because memories of spilt blood, death and destruction were aroused at their every step.

Berl Ickowicz and his wife Sala left Częstochowa and travelled to Germany where, for two years, they lived in the Zeilsheim DP camp near Frankfurt am Main and where their daughter Gitte'le [Gloria] was born.

In Zeilsheim, Berl Ickowicz was active in the DP camp, where widespread activity was conducted. Political parties, ORT workshops, sports clubs, cultural activities, a library, a school and an entire array of economic activities<sup>1</sup> were formed.

From Zeilsheim, the Ickowicz family travelled to Paris, where their second daughter, Paulette, was born. There, too, Ickowicz was communally active, both in the [Częstochower] *Landsmannschaft* and in the committee of the newly-arrived refugees.

After living for three years in Paris, they arrived, with their two fine little daughters in Montreal and, here, they have become financially stable and are communally active on a wide scope.

Berl Ickowicz is Chairman of the Society and a member of the Book Committee and of an entire array of other committees, which plan and execute the broad activities. His wife Sala also plays a very prominent part in the activities of the Ladies Auxiliary. She excels at the annual money showers, which bring in the financial means for the relief activities.

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### Expression of Gratitude

I [hereby] express my gratitude to the Editor, Dr Benjamin Orenstein, for having written and published in this book the two biographies of 1) my father, the holy Rabbi Josef Prokosz *ztz''l* and 2) my beloved, unforgettable wife Perl RIP.

With respect and deference,  
**Szmul Prokosz**

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<sup>1</sup> [TN: "wirtschaftliche Aktivitäten", in the original Yiddish, which is identical to the German; viz. activities connected to the home-economics, or welfare, of the refugees at the DP camps, e.g. providing them with adequate food, clothing, etc.]