

[Contacts with Other Częstochowa Organisations]

The State of Israel

The Society of Montreal is in contact with the Organisation of Jews of Częstochowa and the Vicinity in Israel in Tel-Aviv, as well as with a very significant number of *Częstochower landsleit* throughout the entire country, to whom direct material aid is sent.

These connections are diverse, with various plans and projects.

Although the Society of Montreal is financially incapable of carrying through large projects, it nevertheless does everything possible, by sending financial means, clothing and medicines to sick, disabled and elderly *landsleit*.

The hundreds of thank-you letters which are in the Society's archive prove how necessary this relief activity for the aforementioned categories of *landsleit* [actually] is.

Despite the fact that a whole series of books on the life, struggle and destruction of Częstochowa Jewry have hitherto been published, the Częstochowa Organisation in Israel nonetheless maintains that it is entitled to publish a book. The Society of Montreal has accepted this with great recognition, congratulating the organisation and wishing it success in the important work which they have undertaken and has sent a donation for the Book Fund.

We can be sure that the organisation in Israel appreciates the activities of the Czenstochover Landsmanschaft of Montreal, and this emerges from the numerous letters that are in the archive.

Every letter from the organisation is a historical document in its own right. Each letter is, in miniature form, a reflection of the Organisation's activities and the situation of the *landsleit*. Furthermore, the letters are penned in very high literary form, with dignity, tact and a friendly attitude, as befits a historical document from a spiritual centre, from a centre which purports to be, desires to be and is entitled to be the symbol of the once glorious, eighth largest Jewish community in Poland - the destroyed Holy Community of Częstochowa.

Connections With New York

The Society of Montreal is in social contact with the Czenstochover Relief Committee. These connections were already present at the beginning, when the Aid Society was founded in Montreal. This was expressed in various forms. Raphael Federman from New York was the guest speaker at the first Memorial Service in Montreal, and Dr Benjamin Orenstein was the guest speaker at the sixteenth memorial service in New York. The Montreal *landsleit* took an

active part in the New York publications, "*Czenstochover Yidn*" (published in 1947) and "*Czenstochov*" (in 1958).

At the same time, the exchange of different information is very important. On 4th and 5th February 1961, a conference was held of *Częstochower* aid organisations, societies, *Landsmannschaften* and relief institutions of the United States and Canada. The conference took place in New York and was called at the initiative of the United [Czenstochover] Relief Committee of New York. There were Canadian delegations from Montreal and Toronto. The delegate from Montreal, Dr Benjamin Orenstein – who concurrently lectured on the trials of the German Nazi murderers, who killed off *Częstochowa* Jewry and presented the sequence of a whole series of trials in the German courts - was unanimously elected Chairman of the Conference.

The fact that an entire array of *landsleit* from Montreal moved to New York and, among them, the families of Kuba Goldberg and Berek Fefer, who are very active in the Executive there, has strengthened the bonds between the Czenstochover Landsmanshaft of Montreal and the Relief Committee of New York.

Chicago

The Czenstochover Society of Chicago is in contact with the Czenstochover Landsmanshaft of Montreal through correspondence and also visits. On 13th May 1960, the prominent *landsleit* Mr and Mrs Wozowski and Ajzyk Kress with Mrs Kress were guests in Montreal. A special meeting of the Executive was called for the occasion. Reports were delivered on the general activities both in Montreal and in Chicago. This visit was very effective in providing reciprocal information regarding various issues which have a bearing on the *Częstochower* activities. A conference in Chicago of all the *Częstochower* organisations in the United States and Canada was also planned.

Chenstochover and Vicinity Aid Society of Toronto

The *Landsmannschaft* of Montreal is in continuous contact with the Aid Society of Toronto. The Executive in Montreal is always informed regarding the activities in Toronto. Where very important and paramount decisions are concerned, official letters are dispatched and even copies of the minutes of Executive meetings. For example, when the Executive in Toronto decided to build a medical centre in Israel, it sent a copy of the official minutes concerning that matter, dated Toronto, 5th February 1959. Toronto sends Montreal official invitations to the annual memorial services and also all the other functions, as well as all the printed materials connected to these events. The Executive in Montreal employs the same system in relation to the Executive in Toronto.

Very often, members of the Montreal Executive travel to Toronto *landsleit* for their festive occasions. Such visits are utilised organisationally - the Toronto Executive calls special meetings and activity reports and plans for further activities are heard. The same occurs when Toronto Executive Members come to Montreal.

In 1957, the General Secretary of the Montreal Society, Dr Benjamin Orenstein, was invited as guest speaker to the fifteenth anniversary of the destruction of Częstochowa Jewry. This visit, too, was used for organisational purposes. In the morning a meeting of the Executive was held, in the afternoon the service, and in the evening a reception, in which the active *Częstochower landsleit* participated.

The Executives in Montreal and Toronto are fully autonomous. Their activities have the same goals and tasks, and this binds both organisations in harmonious, mutual understanding.

[Messages]

Being in contact with the *Częstochower Landsmannschaften* and aid societies throughout the globe, it is also the practice of the Czenstochover Landsmanshaft of Montreal to send out messages for the memorial services.

Reading out messages from sister organisations at memorial services has a very favourable effect and strengthens the connections of the *Landsmannschaften*.

As New York is the largest centre of *Częstochower landsleit* in the world, we present below one message which was sent to the memorial service of the United Czenstochover Relief Committee in New York.

Message for the Fifteenth Anniversary of the Destruction and Resistance of the Częstochowa Jewry

To the Czenstochover Relief Committee and Ladies Auxiliary in New York:

Esteemed landsleit!

Together with you, we are steeped in profound grief and agony for the misfortune and destruction of the eighth largest Jewish community in Poland - Częstochowa Jewry.

On the altar of the struggle for national and social liberty, Częstochowa Jewry offered fifty thousand sacrifices, who were gloriously inscribed in the history of the Jewish resistance and fight against bestial Nazism.

The Jewish resistance in Częstochowa was expressed in different forms. The first organisational form was the unique and remarkable institution named "Arbeiter-Rat" [Workers Council], which existed from 12th May 1940 to the bloody events of the deportation of Częstochowa Jewry, which began on 22nd September 1942.

The second form was the Jewish Combat Organisation [ŻOB] in the "Small Ghetto", which conducted a whole series of important armed operations against Nazism. During the days of the uprising, on 25th, 26th and 27th June 1943, the majority of the rebels died a heroic death in the fight for liberty, with weapons in their hands, like commanders and officers on the battlefield.

The third organisational form of armed struggle was the final uprising in the Treblinka death camp, in which Częstochower landsleit played a very respectable role.

Along with the feelings of sorrow, we must also be overcome with feelings of pride, that Częstochowa Jewry hallowed its destruction in national sanctity - in armed combat.

A memorial service means to transport oneself in one's thoughts and ideas to those grisly days of Nazi barbarism and unravel all the problems from which our landsleit suffered, fought and gave their young lives on the altar of the fight for liberty, against the world of evil and barbarism which Nazism represented.

Dr Benjamin Orenstein

**General Secretary
of the Czenstochover
Landsmanshaft of Montreal, Canada**