

**Mojsze Frank**

## **The Foundation and Activities of the Chenstochover and Vicinity Aid Society of Toronto**

The Chenstochover and Vicinity Aid Society of Toronto was organised at the beginning of 1943.

The first elected officials were:

- Chairman - Mojsze Tarnowski z"l
- Minute Secretary - Sz. Kaminowski [sic Kamieńkowski]
- Finance Secretary - Sz. Lichter
- Treasurer - D. Birenholc
- Executive members - C. Orzech, [the] Goldbergs, Birenholc, M. Pinkus, Woznica, Landau, [the] Dalmans, Elster and others.

A Ladies Auxiliary was also founded at the time.

This was the period during which the majority of the Jewish population in Częstochowa, along with the whole of Polish Jewry, were annihilated by the Nazi murderers.

The Society's purpose was to raise funds to aid those saved from the Nazi inferno and to hold memorial services for those who fell in the sanctification of the Name [of God] and the People [of Israel].

The Society energetically embarked upon carrying out the tasks it had set itself. It raised significant amounts of money, clothing and medication through various functions and also held *yizkor* services.

Immediately following the collapse of the Nazi powers, the Society put itself in contact with committees and individual *Częstochower landsleit* in the DP camps in Germany, in Sweden and in [the Land of] Israel, sending them money, clothing, medicines and food parcels. The Society also helped the *landsleit* who arrived to settle in Toronto and also held memorial services in an honourable manner.

At the end of 1948, a general meeting was held of the old-established and the newly-arrived *landsleit*. The Chairman of the Aid Society, Mojsze Tarnowski z"l, delivered a detailed report of activities for the years 1943-1948 and expressed gratitude for the trust and recognition that he and his Executive had been shown. He then expressed the wish that the newly-arrived *landsleit* should take over the leadership and carry on with the Society's stated tasks, in which he assured his assistance at any time.

Unanimously elected at this meeting were:

- Chairman - Zysser Lapidés
- Vice-Chairman - Josel Goldberg z"l and

- Minute Secretary - Eli Sztajnic, a function which was later taken over by Jankel Nightingale)
- Executive members - Sz. Lichter, Sz. Kamieński, D. Birenholz, M. Pinkus, M. Dalman, M. Frank, L. Erlich, G. Bialik, L. Borkowski, M. Glikman, Landau, Świątarski and others.

During the years 1949-1952, the majority of the *Częstochower landsleit* in the DP camps in Germany emigrated to Israel. In those years, it was not so easy to settle down and, therefore, they sent letters requesting aid. The Executive members in Toronto knew each one of the applicants, because they had been with them in both the times of the Nazi massacres and concentration camps and in the DP camps in Germany. The Executive members, after a hard day of work in the workshops, instead of going home, would run around to the *landsleit* in their homes and collect dollar after dollar, [with which they] purchased food and medication and then packed them into twenty-pound parcels to be shipped.

The parcels were packed in the, then, narrow and small homes of *landsleit* Jankel Nightingale, Lajbel Erlich, Sz. Kamieński and others. Each time, some twenty *landsleit* and their wives gathered and each did his/her part of the work. Some prepared the items, clothes, food and medicines for each separate package, while others made sure that each parcel weighed twenty pounds, as required by the regulations of the postal service. Some packed the parcels and others wrote the addresses and [completed] the necessary forms. Once the work was finished, everyone was pervaded by a great satisfaction, for each imagined how much joy such a package would bring to a needy family. The parcels were mailed to personal addresses, mostly to Israel, Częstochowa itself, Germany and Sweden, to sanatoriums and to other ailing and elderly people. The Society also sent the sum of three hundred dollars to the Loans Fund in Tel-Aviv, Israel.

The entire time, the Society has conducted relief activity in accordance with the circumstances of the hour.

There are also cases when *landsleit*, living in Toronto itself, are in need of financial aid. For instance, there was the tragic case of the *landsmann* Aron Zaks z"l, who was only a few months in Toronto and died unexpectedly. The Society purchased a plot [for him] in the *Częstochower* cemetery and erected a headstone. All the *landsleit* and their families participated and paid their last respects to the deceased.

It also happened that a female member died. In this case, too, the Society bought a plot, paid the last respects by the participation of all the *landsleit* and their families in the funeral procession, and the Society also financially supported the deceased woman's orphans.

Every year, the Society, with great reverential awe, holds a *yizkor* service in commemoration of the martyrs and heroes, who fell in sanctification of the Name [of God] and the People [of Israel] in Częstochowa. These *yizkor* ceremonies are always held in a sacred enclosure, with the participation of a rabbi and a cantor. Next to six<sup>1</sup> burning candles, with heads bowed, all *landsleit* say the traditional *Kaddish* in unison.

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<sup>1</sup> [TN: One candle for each million Jewish Holocaust victims.]

In order to immortalise the martyrs and heroes of Częstochowa and the vicinity, the Society decided to erect a medical centre in the State of Israel and donated a sum of five thousand dollars to the Histadrut. The opening ceremony of the medical centre, which is located in Ramat Gan, Israel, was held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1960. Three hundred *Częstochower landsleit* from Israel took part in the ceremony, as well as our two delegates from Toronto, Mr and Mrs Lichter. In the speeches that were delivered at the opening ceremonies, great recognition was expressed towards the Chenstochover and Vicinity Aid Society of Toronto and all its members.

The Chenstochover and Vicinity Aid Society of Toronto participates in all the festive occasions of its *landsleit*. A family-like atmosphere has been created, and every celebration of a *landsmann* is concurrently a festive occasion of all the *landsleit*.

All these activities are the result of the dedicated efforts, endeavours and industriousness of the Officebearers, the Ladies Auxiliary and all the other bodies and committees of the Society, as well as the full cooperation of all the *landsleit* - obviously.



**From R-L (seated): D. Birenholc, Sz. Lichter, M. Frank (Minutes Secretary), J. Świętarski (President), Louis Buchwalter (Vice-President), J.D. Orzech, M. Pinkus.**

**First row (standing) R-L: A. Cohen, H. Forberg, H. Federman, G. Bialik, Sz. Waga, Sz. Gelkopf (Treasurer), M. Chłopak.**

**Second row (standing) R-L: A. Wajnsztok (Finance Secretary), F. Orbach, H. Nightingale, D. Forberg, H. Zaks, A. Czarny.**

The Officebearers and Executive for 1963:

**Officebearers:**

Jankel Nightingale – Past-President; Jakub Świątarski – President; Louis Buchwalter – Vice-President; Mojsze Frank – Minutes Secretary; Abram Wajnsztok – Finance Secretary; Szmul Gelkopf – Treasurer.

**Executive:**

J. Jakubowicz, Sz. Lichter, M. Pinkus, Sz. Kamieńkowski, D. Birenholc, H. Zaks, C. Orzech, A. Cohen, Z. Lapidés, G. Bialik, M. Chłopak, F. Orbach, L. Mark, M. Działoszyński, H. Federman, D. Forberg, H. Forberg, L. Borkowski, M. Altman, Sz. Waga, A. Czarny, B. Wajsberg, M. Rostowski, S. Socha and Z. Gelberg.

