

Abram Gotlib

The Association of Częstochowa Jews in Israel

Emigration to the Land of Israel had, from the beginning and onwards, entailed idealism and a readiness for sacrifice.

The very first immigrants were, therefore, great idealists, who desired to assist, with their young strength, to develop the land so that, over time, it would be able to also take in a mass-*Aliyah*.

The first Częstochowa *Poalei-Zionist* to travel to the Land of Israel was the printer Józef Kaluszynski z''l (later Arieli).

In the years 1911-1921, larger groups had already travelled, among whom were the Finkler brothers, Handelsman, Gerszon Ickowicz, Heber and others.

The First World War interrupted the *Aliyah* but, in 1919, a new group of Częstochowa pioneers arrived, who gleefully took upon themselves all the pains of immigration.

In the 1920's, bourgeois elements also began to come to the Land of Israel. Among them were entire Częstochowa families, such as [that of] Aba Kiwkowicz, Pinkus Wajszenblad, Chaim Herszlikowicz [and] Majorczyk.

Częstochowa Relief Association

The *Częstochowers* lived in different cities, *kibbutzim* and settlements, but the majority settled in Tel-Aviv. The compatriots would meet often and, at one such meeting in 1925, the idea emerged of establishing a "mutual relief association". Among the founders at that time were Juda Oszer, Gomulinski [and] Godl Frajtag. Rabbi Jszajewicz z''l was chosen as the Association's first chairman.

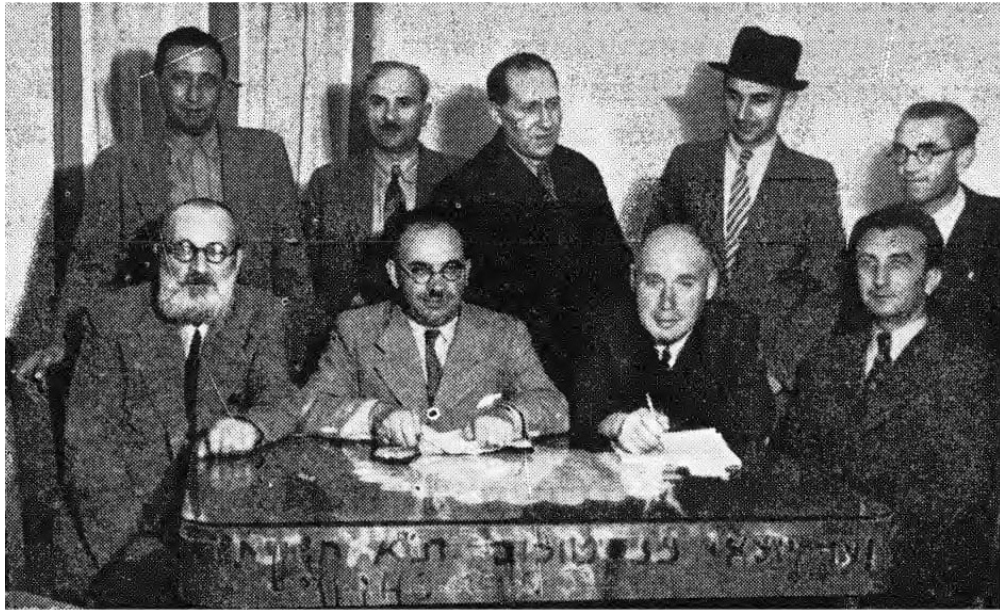
The *Częstochowers* made efforts to stick together and, as far as possible, to help one another.

In the *Histadrut*, also, a group from Częstochowa was organised, under the leadership of Godl Frajtag (an assiduous *Poalei Zion* activist in Częstochowa) and it was called "The Frajtag Group".

The Częstochowa Association was also very much involved with the Union of Polish Immigrants [in Israel] and, for many years, our Chairman Dr E. Horowicz was also Chairman of the Union.

Up to the outbreak of the Second World War, the Częstochowa Association carried out its modest work which, even in the prevailing conditions at the time, had major significance.

Following the onset of the War, when the first teary news arrived from Poland, the Union of Polish Immigrants created a special committee under the name "The United Council" in which the following *Częstochowers* were active: Dr E. Horowicz, Fajtel Szmulewicz z''l, Sz. Efraim, Juda Nir (Wajdenfeld) z''l, Cohen [Kohn], Z. Szpalryn, Godl Frajtag, J. Yaskil, A. Gotlib, D. Gruszka and Jakób Lewit.



***The Association of Częstochowa Jews in Israel in Tel-Aviv, 1945.
Standing: Dr Horowicz, Lewit, Gotlib, Żeżmer, Szmulewicz z"l.
Sitting: Yaskil, Szpaltyn, Frajtag.***

The Jewish Agency sent our *landsman* Moshe Yishai to Tehran, Persia, to put himself in contact with the Soviet government. He obtained permission for aid to be sent to the Polish Jews in Russia.

Our members managed to find the addresses of eighty-five *Częstochowers* in the Soviet Union and the Association sent them packages of food and clothing. The members Karp, G. Frajtag, J. Yaskil, Abram Gotlib, Aron Mass, the Cohen brothers and their father Chaim, [all] donated higher sums [than the Association had stipulated] to this cause.

In March 1946, the Association held a mass-meeting of *Częstochowa landsleit* in Tel-Aviv. Speeches were given by Dr Hirszberg, formerly rabbi of the "German Synagogue", and by Dr Józef Kruk. They called for support of the fundraiser that was being conducted to aid the surviving *Częstochowa* brethren. Last to speak was a volunteer from the Jewish Brigade, Ezriel Jakubowicz (today E. ben-Moshe), who had visited *Częstochowa* in December 1945.

Aid from Australia

At the start of the 1950's, material aid also came, for our *landsleit* in Israel, from the *Częstochowers* in Australia. In order to distribute the packages, with various foodstuffs, that had been received, the countrywide committee appointed an inter-city secretariat comprising the following members: Abram Gotlib and Zvi Lewkowicz (Lavi) from Tel-Aviv, Juda Dancyger (z"l) from Haifa and Fajwel Zuzowski from Jerusalem. As General Secretary, Abram Gotlib was selected, the duties of which he carries out to this day.

The support received, as well as the local collections, made it possible to widen the scope of the Charity Fund's activity. With our modest means and possibilities, we granted our members loans for constructive purposes.

The Association organises the annual meetings of mourning, in commemoration of the *Częstochowa* martyrs. We have also put up a memorial slab at the Chamber of the Holocaust on Mount Zion, in Jerusalem. Each year, in the week after *Sukkos*, when the Great Deportation of the *Częstochowa* Jews took place, memorial gatherings are held in Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa.



Among the first Częstochowans in the land of Israel: Dr Horowicz, Gerichter, Wajszenblad, Gomulinski, Rajchman, Horonczyk, Faktor, Mrs Wajszenblad, Mrs Gomulinski [and] Mrs Rajchman.

In February 1960, with the aid of the Częstochowa *landsleit* in Toronto, Canada, a polyclinic for *Histadrut's* HMO was built, in which a plaque was erected in commemoration of the Częstochowa martyrs. Our compatriots, Mr Richter and his wife, came from Toronto for the inauguration of the polyclinic.

Nowadays, the work of The Association of Częstochowa Jews in Tel-Aviv is carried out by members Dr Józef Kruk - Honorary Chairman, Dr Elyahu Horowicz – Chairman, Abram Gotlib – Secretary, Szmul Efraim – Treasurer, Frania Grinberg, Chaim Zvi (Herszlikowicz), Mojsze Yaski, and Noach Kurland.