A Little Page of History of the Częstochowa Jewish Community in the 19th century

Jewish Livelihoods at That Time
The life of the Częstochowa Jewish community, at that time, transpired without any specific obstacles. The tsarist government, as usual, issued decrees and created diverse difficulties. But our brethren, the children of Israel, always found ways to weaken those decrees and to ensure their economic existence. Amongst them, there were also some Jews who opened businesses for the sale of petroleum although, to do so, required a special permit. They found lobbyists for the cause both in Piotrłów and spreading up to Warsaw, where the central government agencies were located. But they did what was required and they received the necessary permits.

Prizyv [Ru. Призыв; Draft] Troubles
Especially great, at the time, were the troubles encountered by young Jewish men who did not present themselves for the “prizyv” (above all between 1896 and 1898). Jews had no excessive yearning to serve “Phonya” [nickname for a Russian; from the name Aphonasy, which was very popular in the 19th century] and become torn from their families for some years.

The Russian government fined the families, of those required to enlist and who did not present themselves, 300 rubles. This was a large enough sum at the time, such that many of them were not able to pay at all.

A List of Jews Fined
Among those wanted and fined (in 1898) we find the name: Altman, Bornsztajn, Amsterdamer, Hauptman, Korpel, Solnicki, Goldberg, Najman, Częstochowski, Lewkowicz, Besser, Frenkel, Grynsztajn, Likiernik, Pasternak, Furman, Zimnowoda, Kalinus, Kolin, Buchman, Ratner (the first from Grabówka and the second from Dżbów), Braun, Rykman, Bochenek, Mursztajn, Milsztajn, Frajman, Rozencwajg, Najman (from Bukowno) and others.

Whether the aforementioned eventually presented themselves to the prizyv or whether they paid the fine imposed upon them, we cannot know from these documents. But one thing is known - that many of them presented “poverty certificates” and did not pay the fine.

One, a certain Sztykgold, protested in writing and argued - What does this mean? Why should I pay for my brother? Should I have to guard him and answer for his not presenting himself to the prizyv?

Life continued as it had been.

The First Founders of the synagogue
In 1787, five Jews named Markus, Genig, Grandsztajn, Kohn and Berman requested permission to build a synagogue in Rajcher’s house for 300 worshippers from 65 families. They justified their petition stating that, on the High Holidays, there was a lack of places in their other houses of prayer. There is no mention, in the available documents, of when and if their request was agreed to.
A List of Community Members in 1836

In the archives, which are left from the olden times, we have found the following list of Częstochowa worshippers from 1836.

We think this list should be published in our “Memorial Book”! It is very much possible that, among the surviving remnant of Częstochowa Jews, there are grandchildren and great-grandchildren of these worshippers.

It is a list of the men who, in 1836, had places (pews) in the synagogue and we present it without any changes:

Szronberger [perhaps Strumberger] Gecel (Czeladnik), Michter Lipman, Gecel, Polęczynger Lewek, Turomicz Jakob, Kaminski Abraham (from Rędziński), Mruwka Izaak, Gek Wolf (from Rubanka), Broniatowski Mendel, Krakower Bajrech, Groman Hersz, Miętkiewicz Abraham, Martonicz Oskar (Iser), Śpiewak Chune, Szwagier, Szlosberger, Berman (Weber), Winer, Wolf, Sefer Szymon (from Rędziński), Czyszewski Lewek, Obtoń Mojsze, Wajszblum Henech, Ajzen Leizer, Biegun Lewek, Hamburger Joachim, Czomstyn Lewek etc.

This was formulated in 1842 by the dozores Breszel, Cyna Winer [and] Zajdman (it is also signed by the secretary Bursztynski).

The auction to sell the pews was shared by J. Zilbersztejn, A. M. Liberman, Józef Altman, Józef-Leib Jungerman, Rifst, Tunder [and] S. Kolchoy. The minimum bid for the auction was 250 rubles. They received 310 rubles and 25 kopeks.

One Jechiel Goldberg sued because he had been moved to a different pew.

Besides being signed besides by the Częstochowa city-president, H. Czapkin, the document is signed by: