

Fiszel Blumenkranc

A Few Words About the Drama Circle

(of the Jewish Touring Society in Częstochowa)



Drama Circle of the TAZ Association in Częstochowa (in 1939)

Below, we present a summary of a review which the talented Fiszel Blumenkranc, former secretary of the Jewish *Kehilla*, wrote about a performance of the Drama Circle:

Częstochowa youth did not wish to remain subordinated to our large cities in Poland and, therefore, proved its might in all areas - including discovering their own actors, with actual talent and also the audacity to show themselves in front of the broad Jewish public, in their theatrical performances.

We are able to say something about how this Drama Circle performed Liwshyc's comedy in four acts, entitled "*Hershele Ostropoler*" [Little

Hersch of Ostropol] - the famous jester, whose "*chochmes*" [witticisms] and "*feats*" are told to this day and have literally left pearls in Jewish folklore.

The young Częstochowa lads and girls took quite a heavy bit of work upon themselves and there was nothing to envy the stage-manager Sz. Frank, who had to rehearse the roles of these amateur actors, as well as taking on the lead role of Reb Hershele Ostropoler and suddenly become, no longer a serious man, but transform himself into a "Chassidic jester" and amuse his *Rebbe* - long live! - who delights in his Chassidic *chochmes*.

Urbach, who played the *Rebbe's* role, aided the success greatly, turning himself into a natural-born *Rebbe*.

Weaker were Lapedes (as "*Chanina*") and Rozenchwajg (as "*Simche*"). Both of them portrayed "strict *Chassidim*".

On the other hand, the second Rozenchwajg, in the role of Reb Oyzer, was wonderful, and delighted the audience with his artistic acting.

Okrent as Reb Chanina's son-in-law, Winter as a "*Misnaged*" [enemy of Chassidism], and Zilberszac as Reb Hershele's *mechuten**, had smaller parts in the play.

Women also participated in the performance - Mrs Rozenner as the "*Rebbetzin*" [*Rebbe's* wife] and Mses. Sztajnhauer and Zilberszac, disguised as *Chassidim*.

The decorations were very modest, which also showed that the union's *grosz* was precious to our youth!

* [Translator's note: A *mechuten* is the father-in-law of one's child.]

(If we present in our Memorial Book a detailed account of this specific performance, it is because we wish to immortalise the name of the dear youth, who exerted themselves to make the Częstochowa Jews happy and who, so sadly and tragically, ended their young lives).