

The Book Committee

Częstochowa Farewells Its Pioneers

(A Snapshot from November 1924)

More than forty years have passed since that great day on which Jewish and Zionist Częstochowa farewelled its first four pioneers to the Land of Israel. Yet these events are still alive in the memories of those that have had the privilege to remain alive until today.

These fortunate pioneers were the most active and the principal members of "*Tzeirei Mizrachi*" - Abram Berlinski, Jakob Leslau, Sz.Z. Shragai and Dov Goldberg (Achiyahu).

The Central Council of "*Mizrachi*" in Poland sent a delegate to the ceremonial farewell-banquet in honour of these members. He was the editor of the weekly "*Ha'Mizrachi*", Sz.Ch. Landau (the later ideologist of the "*Torah Ve'Avoda*" [Torah and Work] movement and one of the most active builders of the nationalist-religious settlements in the Land of Israel).

The banquet was opened, in name of "*Tzeirei Mizrachi*", by A. Danziger, who stressed the importance that, as the first pioneers of the movement, [those] travelling to the Land of Israel [were] the finest and best members of the Częstochowa organisation "*Tzeirei Mizrachi*" and [he] expressed his hope that the remaining members would intensify their activity, in order to fill the void left after the departure of the best members.

Following the festive, ceremonial meal, which was served in honour of these important members, warm farewell speeches were given by Reb Mojsze Halter – in name of "*Mizrachi*", Sz.D. Kaminski - "*Tzeirei Mizrachi*", Izaak Kac - "*Ha'Chalutz Ha'Mizrachi*", J. Barkai – the Agricultural Group, Gitte Woznica – the Female Pioneers Group, Reb Lewi Jungster - "*Ha'Mizrachi*" and the Zionist Union in Sosnowiec, Mr Herman - "*Ha'Mizrachi*" and the Zionist Union in Włoszczowa, Natan Gerichter - the Zionist Union in Częstochowa, Józef Goldsztajn – "*Hitachdut*", Abram Gerszonowicz – "*Tarbut*", Mr Borensztajn - "*Ha'Mizrachi*" in Zawiercie, Mr Altman - "*Tzeirei Mizrachi*" in Będzin, Mr Epsztajn – "*Herzliya*", Mr Bratt – "*Keren Kayemeth Le'Israel*", Mr Grinbaum – the district Zionist Council and Mr Windman - the Zionist Union in Zawiercie.

Szmul Goldsztajn, the *Prezes* of the Jewish *Kehilla*, as the last speaker, summed up the great benefits that these four pioneers had [brought] to the strengthening of Zionist-*Mizrachi* ideology amongst Częstochowa Jews and blessed them that, in the Land of Israel also, they should be successful in building the land in the spirit of the Torah and tradition.

The guest-delegate from the Central Council and member of the Executive Committee, Reb Sz.Ch. Landau, in a brilliant speech, described the tasks of "*Ha'Mizrachi*" and "*Ha'Poel Ha'Mizrachi*", currently, when the foundations were being laid for great national building which [would] lead to the realisation of building a national Jewish home in the Land of Israel.

The speaker also elaborated upon the great significance it had that "*Tzeirei Mizrachi*" had sent their very best members as the first.

He furthermore stressed that the ranks of "*Tzeirei Mizrachi*" must not become weakened, but must be fortified through active and very intensive work on the part of the members remaining in exile. His appeal to the members present caused great enthusiasm and everyone applauded him warmly.

As a consequence, they immediately began singing songs of Zion and Jerusalem, accompanied by fervent dancing, which continued almost until morning.

Before ending the banquet, the departing pioneers delivered very warm, farewell speeches, of which the short address by Jakob Leslau made a particular impression. He concluded with the words:

To the blessings of “[May] your departure [be] to peace”, we have but one answer: “[May] your coming [be] to peace” and may [God] grant that we see you all soon in the Land of Israel – in our holy and built land!*

The following morning, hundreds of friends and relatives came to the train to farewell our four pioneers. When the train arrived, we discovered that, on it, were another eighty pioneers. This caused great excitement. The assembled crowd had a quick little dance and then saw off the train, singing “Hatikvah”.



A group of pioneers by the tomb of Dr T. Herzl on the way to the Land of Israel in 5684 [1923-24] (among them D. Goldberg (Achiyahu), J. Leslau and Sz.Z. Shragai)

* [Translator's note: Both these blessings are quotes from the "Shulem Aleichem" liturgical song which is sung before Kiddush on Friday night.]