

M.Ch.

On Three of the City's Oldest Families

The first Jewish families to settle in Częstochowa were only allowed to build their houses on the western bank of the Warta River, where the Jewish ghetto was located, far from the Christian town of Częstochówka, which was high up on the hill. Over the course of time, Jews were permitted to expand their boundaries westwards (the river blocked the eastern side). They first built first the Stary Rynek (Old Market Square) and then the Nowy Rynek (New Market Square), in which the Jews were able to establish important financial centres and commercial areas. It is said that, on the grounds of the Nowy Rynek, there was once a Christian cemetery and that the place had remained uninhabited after it had been relocated. Perhaps the Jews were allowed to build houses there in order to revive the location. The Szczupak family was among the first to build their houses there.

A.

The Szczupak Family

This family was rooted into our city for generations upon generations. Its origins were in nearby Wieluń. They participated in the construction of the Old Synagogue and their members appear in the list of the first donors who purchased permanent pews there, which were passed on by right of inheritance.

The Szczupak House was among the first to be built in this new area. It is thought that it was built in before the Nowy Rynek church, for we may assume that they would not have permitted a Jew to build a tall house - of two-and-a-half stories - directly in front of it. On the inside, the house was built as a fortress and, in the yard which was tiled, a well was dug. The fittings inside were those of a wealthy burgher. It should be mentioned that a sink and tap for *netilas yadaim*¹, which could be hidden inside the wall, were installed in the dining-room. This was a rare technological feature in those days.

Reb Kalman Szczupak

Reb Kalman Szczupak, who lived in the 19th century, was one of the old *Kotzker Chassidim*, and was later [a follower] of Ger. He gained a favourable reputation in the entire vicinity. People would gather at his house on holidays, to fulfil the precept of "*And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast*" [Deuteronomy 16:14]. On the Seventh Day of Pesach², when the hearts of his guests were merry with wine, they would pour water on the floor to "cross the sea". Reb Kalman reached a very old age, dying in Częstochowa in 1908³. He had an only son and several daughters. His wife Bajla (*née* Grylak) also came from an eminent and acclaimed family with a fine pedigree.

The Szczupak family was also famous for its business. Reb Kalman Szczupak held the franchise for the sale of tobacco in Częstochowa and the surrounding area. At the end of the 19th century, he significantly expanded the scope of his business, together with his son Reb Mendel.

¹ [TN: Ritual hand-washing before a meal with bread.]

² [TN: On this holiday, the Splitting of the Red Sea is commemorated.]

³ [TN: In the JRI Poland Database records, the date of his death appears as 1905, and the surname of his wife Bajla appears as Markowicz.]

Reb Mendel Szczupak continued in his father's footsteps. He was also a *Gerer chassid*. He ran a liquor and beer business from his house on ulica Warszawska. His wife Cylka [*née* Hercygier] was from Będzin.

They had three sons and three daughter - Samson ("*Szamsia*") ran a tobacconist shop at the Pruszycki house in the Nowy Rynek, Zelig was the owner of a cutlery factory (knives, spoons and forks), whose son Józef made *Aliyah* after the Holocaust and died in Jerusalem and his third son Mojsze inherited his father's business when he died.

The three daughters were married - **Udla** to Reb Juda Perle, **Sala** to Mr Sz. Ferleger and **Pola**⁴ to Mr Dawid Szlezinger.

Reb Kalman married [his children] to respected, wealthy families with fine pedigrees. He married his daughter **Chaja Sura** to **Reb Mojsze Chaim Szterling**, the son of the *Gerer Rebbe* the *Chidushei Ha'Rim's* sister. Reb Mojsze Chaim Szterling was a distinct Torah scholar with wide understanding, who was also a communal activist and a sociable man. Tragically, his wife died in her prime and he returned to Warsaw and did not live long.

His children were **Reb [Hersz] Enoch Henech Szterling**, who married the daughter of Reb Szmul Koniecpolski, the owner of a large estate near Częstochowa. Reb Enoch was a wholesale grocer. He died in his prime, leaving a son and a daughter. (The son perished with his family in the Holocaust). The daughter, **Sara**, married the journalist Szmul Frank. She survived and lives now in Israel. (**Izrael**⁵ served in the Russian army and was murdered by one of the officers).

[Pinkus] Zelig left Częstochowa in his youth and settled in France, where he married. The couple had a son and a daughter, Mojsze Chaim and Chaja Sura (both were annihilated together with their families in the Holocaust years).

And these were the daughters - **Fajga Laja**, who was orphaned in infancy and was brought up in her grandfather Reb Kalman's house and married Reb [Dawid] Berisz Tiberg, the son of Reb Nuta⁶Tiberg, who was one of the old Vurke [Warka] *Chassidim* and an in-law of the Aleksander *Rebbes*, and who leased Prince Lubomirski's large estate and was very opulent. Reb Berisz was a young man of Torah study, an Aleksander *chassid* [who] did much for the poor. He ran a timber business. He emigrated to Palestine in 1935 with all his family. They lived in Rehovot. Reb Berisz Tiberg and his wife Fajga Laja are buried there.

Pola⁷ married Reb Abram Szpaltyn from Pławno. She died in her prime, leaving two sons, Mordche and Mojsze Chaim (they perished together with her husband in the Holocaust).

Gitla married Mr Zorgenlos. They lived in Germany before the First World War and later in Belgium (she died there with her husband and son Mojsze Chaim during the Holocaust).

Reb Kalman Szczupak's second son-in-law, the husband of his daughter **Cypra**, was **Reb Chaskel Fiszel**, who came from a wealthy family in Sosnowiec and Będzin. Of Reb [Chaskel] Fiszel, one could say that he had "*Torah and greatness in one place*" [Talmud Bavli, *Gittin*, 59a]. He was a true *Gerer chassid*, a Torah scholar, with elevated traits of character and a house open to the city's poor. He was the owner of the "Dziubas-Fiszel" soap factory. He donated a synagogue, which was named in

⁴ [TN: Pessa, in the records.]

⁵ [TN: He was Mojsze Chaim Szterling's son, and so were the individuals mentioned subsequently.]

⁶ [TN: Natan Izaak, in the records.]

⁷ [TN: Pessa, in the records.]

his honour - "Reb Chaskel's *Shtiebel*". He acquired a good name in the city and its vicinity for his good deeds. His only son **Reb Józef**, who was a Torah scholar and a *chassid*, married Fajgla [Mindla], the daughter of Reb [Moszek] Jakub Lewin of Łódź, one of the wealthiest *Gerer Chassidim*.

[Reb Chaskel Fiszel's] sons-in-law: His daughter [**Hendla**] **Fajgla's** husband was Reb Anczel Warszawski. He was a known public figure and one of the city's worthies, one of the founders of "*Ha'Mizrachi*" in Częstochowa and its representative on the *Kehilla* Council. He was one of the progressive *Gerer Chassidim*. He was a member of various financial institutions and philanthropic institutions and an opulent businessman, a former partner in the "Warszawski-Fajerman" firm.

Reb Chaskel Fiszel's second son-in-law, his daughter **Rywka's** husband, was Reb Ze'ev [Uszer] Wolf Piotrkowski, a son of the wealthy Chassidic Piotrkowski family from Łódź. He was a distinct Torah scholar and a *Gerer chassid*, active in the Chassidic circles and "*Agudas Yisroel*" in Częstochowa. Families with many children were descended from this couple (they all perished in the Holocaust).

Reb Kalman Szczupak's youngest son-in-law, his daughter **Rudla's** husband, was Reb [Abram] Hersz Swiatly. He was a *Gerer chassid* and a wealthy businessman. Their son Izrael Leib was the only Jewish expert on porcelain kilns in town. His two other sons, Pinkus and Aleksander (Olek), and his daughters settled in France. One of his daughters was married there to Mr Krebs - they made *Aliyah* before the Holocaust and she died in Jerusalem. (His second daughter, Szprynca, perished in the Holocaust together with her family).

B.

The Szwarcbaum Family



Reb Rywen Szwarcbaum

The Szwarcbaum family was also one of the oldest and most respected ones. It was extensive and very well-known in our city. One of the family's progenitors, **Reb Rywen Szwarcbaum**, one of the old Radomsko *Chassidim*, lived and was active in the second half of the 19th century. He opened a grocery business in the Stary Ryneł (Old Market). As was the custom in those days, his wife managed the business, so that he could study Torah. The shop was named after his wife Małka, whom they called "Rywen's Małka". She was of the Szyff family, which was also an old, important and respected family in Częstochowa. Reb Rywen, despite being immersed most of the time in Torah study, was a sociable man and many came to his door seeking his counsel.

Reb Rywen passed away in 1907, and his wife, "Rywen's Małka", in 1920. They left sons and daughters (all in Częstochowa), who were respected and important in the city.

Their children were **Reb [Abram] Mordka Szwarcbaum**, a man of noble features and a Radomsko *chassid*. All the townspeople called him "Uncle Mordche" and his wife "Auntie Kajla". She was the daughter of Reb Szaja Szyff. They owned a tobacconist shop. Their affectionate nicknames were given them due to their great concern for the local poor, whom they supported generously, sensibly and wisely.

Their son **Isachar** emigrated in his youth to Canada, where he volunteered during the First World War to the Jewish Legion in Palestine. Their second son, **Uszer**, made *Aliyah* in his youth and was among the first Częstochowa pioneers in the Land of Israel. In the days of the British Mandate, he served for many years as a policeman and also continued in this occupation once the State of Israel

was established. He is now a resident of Kiryat Chaim. Their third son, **Józef**, was active in the Zionist Organisation in Częstochowa and in the local Land of Israel Bureau.

Reb Józef Boruch [son of Reb Rywen] Szwarcbaum was a Torah expert and a Radomsko *chassid*. He developed a small industry for the manufacture of toys and was connected with many merchants throughout the country. He died in his prime in Warsaw during the First World War in 1918, separated from his family, because he was unable to return to Częstochowa due to the War. His daughter Ruchla emigrated to Palestine in 1925 as one of our city's first pioneers. She married M.Ch. Tiberg and they live in Tel Aviv. They were able to bring her mother Alta (*née* Werner) over as well, and she is buried in Rehovot. (Her two sons Jakub and Herszlik, Ruchla's brothers, perished in the Holocaust).

Reb Izaak [son of Reb Rywen] Szwarcbaum was a *chassid*, a man of Torah study and a prayer-leader, one of the *shtiebel's* worthies. His trade was as a textiles wholesale merchant on ulica Ogrodowa. (He perished in the Holocaust, together with his wife Ruchla [*née* Glecer] and their family). One son, Chaskel, survived and is now in the U.S.

Reb Michal [son of Reb Rywen] Szwarcbaum was the pride of the family. As a distinguished Torah scholar, he was the dean and manager of the "*Keser Torah*" *Yeshivah* in Częstochowa. He was offered a rabbinical position, but declined. His wife's name was Hena (*née* Rozyna). They had a leather goods shop in the Stary Rynek. The Zionist ideal took root in their home and their children were fluent in Hebrew. (This family, too, perished in the Holocaust).

(**Reb Jankiel** [son of Reb Rywen] Szwarcbaum was a *chassid* and a man of Torah study, and popular with everyone. He perished in the Holocaust together with his wife Rywka [*née* Wajnrach] and their family, except for their son Rywen, who was saved and came to Israel after the Holocaust and lives with his family in Bnei-Brak).

And these are [Reb Rywen and Małka's] daughters:

Taube Laja married Reb Dawid Borensztajn, a respected man who was treated with deference. Their son Szaja emigrated to Palestine in 1925, but was forced to return due to various reasons. He was a member of the dramatic troupe in Częstochowa. (They all perished in the Holocaust with their family). Their son Jakób Zvi [Hersz], who survived, came to Israel after the Holocaust and lives in Be'er-Sheva.

Marjem married Reb Don Kornberg from Koniecpol. A scholar and a *chassid*, he was engaged in commerce. He died young. (His wife and children perished in the Holocaust).

Kendla married Reb Mojsze Szaulewicz from Zawiercie. [He came from] an illustrious family, relatives of the *Amshinover Rebbe*. [He was] an Aleksander *chassid*. They owned a grocery store on the Stary Rynek. (He left this world in a manner befitting one of the *tzaddikim*. On the High Holidays of 5703 (1942), the day after Yom Kippur, when the terrible *Aktion* commenced, he said the "*Vidui*" [Confession] prayer, while the family worried about the hardships entailed in taking him out of the ghetto together with all those being banished. The day preceding the horrendous Eve of Sukkos (the days of the second *Aktion*), he told his family that he felt his end was nigh. With complete lucidity, he bade them farewell. Afterwards, he recited "*Sh'ma Yisroel*" and his soul expired in purity. He was buried on ulica Kawia, in the shroud he had prepared for himself in advance. Their sons Rywen and Rachmiel were saved from the claws of the Nazis. They came to Israel and live with their families in Holon. The rest of the family set out together with all the townspeople on the path that led to their destruction).

C. The Zilberszac Family

[This was] one of the most respected and established families. From the second half of the 19th century, the name of **Reb Szmul Aryeh God Zilberszac z''l**, who was called Reb Godel (Sr.), is still remembered. Born in 1850, he was a young man of Torah study, who respected the rabbis and was well-liked and popular within the Chassidic circles of his generation, both in the surrounding area and further afield. He was crowned with the crown of a good name⁸.

In addition to the estate he owned near Częstochowa, he also opened a wholesale timber and crate manufacturing business which supplied the city's factories. He died very young, before his thirtieth year, leaving six children. The oldest was eleven and the youngest, Godel, was born, after his father's death, in 1880. They were brought up by his young wife Matla (*née* Roziewicz) who provided them with a diversified education and continued running the timber business. She gained fame as one of the women of valour of her era in Częstochowa. She was renowned for her kindness and her good deeds for the city's poor. Even after her children had all married, she would muster her daughters to bake *challes* [*Shabbes* bread] and prepare *Shabbes* meals for the needy and for the eminent ones among them in particular. She performed all these deeds secretly and discreetly, so as not to shame them.

Once she had married all her children off, arranging for them appropriate matches worthy of her family, she remarried (prior to the First World War) to Reb Nuta [Natan Izaak] Tiberg, [and] closed her business and ceased the majority of her activities, which were exclusively good deeds. She passed away in 1919, with a good name, and is buried in Częstochowa.

Their children were:



Reb Izrael Szulim Zilberszac

Reb Izrael Szulim Zilberszac - he received a traditional Chassidic education as a boy. As a young man, his mother sent him far away to study Torah with famous scholars. He was counted among the city's distinguished scholars and *Chassidim*. He was also endowed with fine features and was noble of spirit and generous of heart. At the beginning of the 20th century, he opened a sawmill and became one of our city's wealthier merchants.

He was highly regarded within the city's Chassidic circles. He was a follower of the first *Rebbe* of Pilica and the *Rebbe* stayed at his house on his visits to Częstochowa. (When the *Rebbe* fled Wieruszów during the First World War and moved to Częstochowa, he found him a luxurious apartment in the city centre. It was from this apartment that the *Rebbe* held his Chassidic court until his death on 10th Kislev 5681 [21st November 1920]. His son, the *Rebbe* Reb Chanoch Henech God *ztz''l hy''d*, continued leading the group from this

same location.)

Reb Izrael Szulim Zilberszac was also a passionate lover of Zion. In 5684 [1924], he visited Palestine together with the *Gerer Rebbe* and took part in the foundation of Bnei-Brak. He visited again in 5693

⁸ [TN: See Avot, Ch.4, Mishnah 13: "Rabbi Shimon said: There are three crowns: the crown of Torah, the crown of priesthood, and the crown of royalty, but the crown of a good name supersedes them all."]

[1933] and immigrated there, with his wife Brandla (*née* Zilbersztejn) and a few family members, in 5695 [1935], with the intention of settling permanently. Sometime afterwards, his property was burnt in a fire in Częstochowa and he travelled there to liquidate his business. (Very tragically, he was unable to return in time. He perished in the Holocaust together with his family - four sons and four daughters, together with their households.) His wife died in Tel-Aviv in 5696 [1936]. She is buried in the Nahalat Yitzhak Cemetery.

His son Mojsze [Aron] emigrated to Palestine in 1920. He was among the first Częstochowa pioneers and among the founders of "*Magen David Adom*"⁹ in Tel-Aviv, who awarded him a certificate of distinction. He raised a family and opened a machine-operated carpentry, which he runs to this day.

Reb Izrael Szulim's daughter Natka¹⁰ Minski is also in Israel. She lives with her family in Holon. (Their son [Szmul] Godel, the only one of his many children¹¹ [in Poland] who survived the Holocaust, attempted emigrating to Israel, but died on his way there.)

Godel Zilberszac (Jr.), Reb [Izrael] Szulim's younger brother, Godel Jr., owned a sawmill on ulica Koszarowa. He too was a lover of Zion and visited there in 5685 [1925] with his son. He returned [to Poland] and aspired to emigrate and settle in Palestine, but was unable to do so. He was a kind-hearted and popular man. (He perished in the Holocaust together with his wife Marjem¹² (*née* Borzykowski) and his entire household.)

Reb Godel Sr.'s daughters were:

Dwojra [Rachela] was the wife of Reb Chaim¹³ Altman. Reb Chaim was the head clerk at the storage facility of the wholesale grocer Altman in Częstochowa and also volunteered as accountant for a charity fund. Their daughter Hela married Tówja, the son of Reb Dawid Icyk Edelist. They married into other important families as well. Their daughters Karola and Macha live in Israel. The former is married to Mr Erlich, a clerk at "Mivtachim" [a pension fund], and the latter to Mr Manelowicz, one of the directors of the "Elite" [chocolate and coffee] factory. One other son survived, Mojsze, and he lives in Canada. (The rest perished in the Holocaust.)

Marjem was the wife of Reb Zyndel Szlezyngier, who was an architect - a very rare profession for a Jew at the time. He was an enlightened, religious man and, in this spirit, he raised his children. His wife Marjem was a WIZO [Women's International Zionist Organisation] activist and helped the needy. She died in 5695 [1935]. (Her husband perished in the Holocaust.) Their son Godel emigrated to Israel and lives in Holon. Their granddaughter (their daughter's daughter), Marjem Rubin, who was saved, is also [in Israel]. (The rest of their children and relatives perished in the Holocaust.)

Sara was the wife of Reb Dawid Hersz Zilberszac, a member of the same family. He too was a *chassid* and a man of deeds. He owned a sawmill on ulica Krótka. His wife Sara was a public activist and helped the needy. She especially supported the home of the *Rebbe* Reb Awigdor'l Szapira. (Their son Szulim was martyred - the Germans killed him in the market square, when he rebelled against their actions.) Their only son to survive, Szlojme, came to Israel and lives in Jerusalem.

Rywka was the wife of Reb [Moszek] Mordka Klajner. He was an Aleksander *chassid*, a man of Torah study and prayer-leader at the *shtiebel* on ulica Targowa. They had an agency for petroleum and salt.

⁹ [TN: "*Red Shield of David*"; Israel's national emergency medical, disaster, ambulance and blood bank service.]

¹⁰ [TN: *Netla* in the records.]

¹¹ [TN: *There are 14 children of Izrael Szulim and Brandla* in the records.]

¹² [TN: *Masza* in the records.]

¹³ [TN: *Joachim* in the records.]

[Rywka], too, followed in her mother's footsteps and aided others. Their two sons and two daughters live in Canada.



(There were innumerable large and deeply rooted families such as these in Częstochowa. They were, but are no more. Woe!)