The Book Committee

Documents on the History of Zionism in Częstochowa

We have been able to extract, from the depths of the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem, a number of documents whose contents bear witness to the fact that Zionism sprouted roots in our city from the beginning of its creation - still during the life of the movement’s creator, Dr. T. Herzl z”l.

We publish in our book several photographs of those documents which have historical value.

Szlojme Bromberg Writes to Dr. Herzl z”l

We publish here a print of that letter in its entirety, seeing as how it is relevant to the research of the history of Zionism in our city.

We have found it appropriate to note the quite particular way the author fixed the date of his writing (which is Tuesday of the [weekly section] Parshas Bechukosai [Leviticus 26:3–27:34], 5658-1898). At the beginning of the letter, he only wrote the year, which is 1898, and after his signature, Szlojme Bromberg wrote the words: “Częstochowa, Tuesday of the parsha and to the detail [sum; number] ‘And all thy estimations shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary [Leviticus 27:25]’ and the [Hebrew] letters marked with dots equal [in gematria] the aforementioned date.

To our great sorrow, we found no other documents about the activities of the “Mevakshei Zion” [Seekers of Zion] association or the Zionist public figure Szlojme Bromberg, whose privilege it was to correspond with Dr. Herzl.

However, we are also able to publish a second letter by the same author (in German), in which it is not stated to whom it was written. However, we assume that Mr. Bromberg attached a German translation as well to his Hebrew letter*. We also publish a print of this note, which is marked with the number 1027.

The city elders - who are still with us in Israel - remember that on ulica Ogrodowa stood a house belonging to Mr. Lajchter, where a man named M. Feigenblatt lived, but they know nothing of Bromberg himself or the Zionist association mentioned in his letter.

The Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem also has a letter that was sent by the renowned public figure Mojsze Mokraujer (who immigrated to Israel and died there) that was written on 24th June 1896 to the Zionist Congress’ office in Basel regarding the shekels sold and a list of the contributors.

From the same source (i.e. the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem), we have also received a copy of a letter by the renowned Zionist public figure Mr. Natan Gerichter z”l, which was written on 4th Tevet

* Translator’s note: This is not the same letter mentioned above which was sent to Herzl.

** Translator’s note: The Zionist shekel was a membership fee paid by adherents to the movement.
5670 [16th December 1909] (received at the Central Zionist Bureau on 21st December 1909 and listed under the number 8296). The letter is signed by him and by the secretary Mr. Jakob Kaplanski, on behalf of the Zionist council in Częstochowa. In it, they inform the Zionist General Council in Köln that the local shekel buyers, who numbered 65, joined the Zionist union in the neighbouring Będzin and chose Mr. Berisz Freger as their delegate for the ninth Zionist congress. We publish the print of this letter below.
It should be mentioned that the said Reb Berisz Freger was one of the most important *Gerer Chassidim* in Będzin and sat at the “table” of the *Gerer Rebbes* and, despite this, he had the courage (in those days!) to openly join the Zionist movement and create souls for it even from amongst the extremist Chassidic circles.

(The published documents bear testimony to what Częstochowa was for the Zionist movement from its beginning until the destruction of the city by the troops of Hitler, may his name be obliterated!).

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*Translator’s note: Ger is a Chassidic dynasty based in Góra Kalwaria, some 16 miles southeast of Warsaw.
Translator’s note: This is a very great honor and a distinct mark of deference; the “table” is when the Rebbe takes his Shabbes or holiday meal together with his public and only the most important people sit with him while everyone else stands. Before the Holocaust, Gerer Chassidim were estimated to number in excess of 100,000, making it one of the largest and most influential Chassidic groups in Poland.*
Oder: 24. Juni 1898

In der Barone der Zierat der Oesterreichischen

Stiftung der der Erdboden, Nr. 20, wo ich auch, sehr seltsam,

aufgefallen war. Im ersten Zahlenbuch, im

fünften Zehntausend-Pfund, unter

weie anlagern ging, nacheinander

fünf wiederholte die vongetriebenen

tiefe große mit der angehängten

Biete und. Etwas bemerkens wohlgemerkt. Der

Stoff des Befehlsetzes zum Geklang

zusammen 1898 zu wollen.

Die Facheranruf der im Befehls n.

Rz. 80, Zr. 20 = Fl. 77. - Fünf dermaßen

war 12 Tagen am 1. Dk. O. Ko-

wierc. - Wieder, nach der Statt ein

Bewegungsbefehl in der Amt, in der

erb beigefügt angegangen.

Gauffur, mit Grußwürde

Dr. Fliegl

Facharztburlaub

eins dreireihig
The Book Committee hereby expresses its deep gratitude to the management of the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem for having put at its disposal the documents, the prints of which are published in our book and [which] prove that already, during the life of the creator of the Zionist movement, Dr. Benjamin Ze'ev Herzl z’l in 5658-1898 - there were, in Częstochowa, Zionist public figures, active in the Zionist movement.

The Committee also expresses its satisfaction that by this it was also given the opportunity to commemorate, in the Memorial Book for the Community of Częstochowa, the names of the contemporaneous Zionist public figures Szlojme Bromberg, Mojsze Mokraujer (who emigrated to Israel and died there), Natan Gerichter and Jakob Kaplanski z’l.

**Jewish Częstochowa’s Response to the British Mandate’s Approval of the Land of Israel**

We publish below the proclamation, in Hebrew and Yiddish*, “To Our Jewish brothers in Częstochowa” regarding the collection of funds for the “Relief Fund”, that was arranged by the committees of the Zionist Organization and “HaMizrachi” union in Częstochowa (which was published on the eve of Shavuos 5680 (1920).

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*Translator’s note: Although some small differences exist in the wording between the Hebrew and Yiddish texts, the gist is the same. I have therefore brought here one amalgamated version, comprised of both.
To Our Jewish brothers in Częstochowa!

The long-awaited hour has arrived! The rejected and exiled people, who have no counterpart in world history with their tribulations and suffering, the people who have already wandered for two thousand years without a home and a resting place, will now be given back their ancient homeland, the holy Land of Israel.

Our generation is given a privilege not had for thousands of years, but the great fortune that has found us lays upon us great obligations that we must fulfill in order to realise our home in the land of Israel. By a decision of the World Zionist Organization, in order to commence the practical building work in the land of Israel, 25 million pounds sterling (close to 20 billion marks) is required. This is indeed a large sum and we must, with all force and vigour, with all our energy, approach this exalted cause [and] dedicate ourselves completely to it.

To this purpose, a temporary relief fund committee has been established in Częstochowa whose task is to collect contributions donated for the building of our land.

The members of the committee are:

Józef Szymon Koblenz
Szmul Goldsztajn
Mojze Zandsztajn
Ancel Warszawski
Chaim Majtlis
Natan Gerichter
Mojze Halter

Izrail Mendel Zilberberg
Mojze Mokrauer
Jechiel Hamburger
Hersz Wajselfisz
Abram Chenoch Finkelsztajn
Jakob Majer Grinfeld
Gerszon Freger

Mojsze Rozencwajg
Szaja Windman
Mojsze Stroz
Perec Tenenbaum
Wolf Icek
Luzor Plocker
Jakob Leslau

The week after Shavuot has been designated as a relief week. Respected persons will go around to the rest of our brothers to collect their donations for the building of our land. Also, anyone wishing to donate, may bring his contribution to “Mizrachi”, Ogrodowa 14, or to the Union of Zionists, Dojazdowa 13, any day between 6 and 8 p.m.

We are convinced that, in this important historical moment for which we have already been waiting two thousand years, every Jew will give much more than he can, for this great holy cause.

The gabayim of the [different] prayer-houses are [hereby] requested to bring to the committee the lists of contributions of money and goods made when ascending to the Torah.

The Zionist Organization Committee in Częstochowa

The “Mizrachi” Organization Committee in Częstochowa

Shavuos Eve, 5680 [1920]

From the 21 members of the organisation committee for the said action, alive today in Israel are, thanks God, Mr. Jakob Leslau, Chairman of the Book Committee and Manager of the “Hapoel Ha’Mizrachi” Bank in Tel-Aviv and Mr. Mojsze Rozencwajg.

(We have taken this proclamation from Mr. J. Leslau’s private archive in order to publish it in our book).