

## 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 24<sup>th</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> Tevet

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\* 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 [16<sup>th</sup> December 1909] (received at the Central Zionist Bureau on 21<sup>st</sup> 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.



1898

אל כבוד הנכבד מוהר צמח ואומתן וכו' .  
 דר . תיאודור הערצלי . ד' ירוק קרע .  
 "האינסטרוקציאנען" קבלת מאת הרב . והנני לוח  
 בלם כל החברה "מבקלי ציון" אשר נחשדה זה לא  
 כביר בטלענסטחוב העירה אל פי אויפן ותנאי  
 הוצר הכאלי - תודה וברכה לאדוני . אך באלה  
 חפצים אנחנו אללוח מאתנו הנבחר (דעאליגאט)  
 והצת קצר לאסוף הלעליס . אכן מבקל בלם החברה  
 אללוח לע "לטרי הלעליס" (לעל ביכער) אינען יהיינען  
 צת לאסוף את כסע תרומתם ואללוחם לעקום העיוצר  
 ומאוד נתפלא אל אשר קלען האינסטרוקציאנען לבד...  
 כה העדבר בעצ החברה ומצפה אללוח  
 למה כראמערק .

טלענסטחוב . יום ג' אסדר ואפרט -  
 זכא ערזק זיהי זלעל הנודע  
 J. Bronberg Częstochowa  
 Dan Lelchowski M. Feigenthal

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 Rebbe*\* 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!).

Danke für die Zusage der Inschrift,  
sichem. Im Namen des hiesigen Vereines  
„Jab, epti“, der im Sinne Ihres Programmes  
gegründet wurde — Danke ich hierfür.

Da die Zeit kurz ist und wir einen  
Delegierten zum Congress senden wollen,  
bitten wir um Zusage von Scheckel-  
bücheln, damit wir Scheckel sammeln  
können.

1024. Bromberg  
Częstochowa

\* 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 Shabbos 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.



Ozločeno d. 24 Juni 1898

An das Bureau des Zionistischen Congresses  
in Basel

Obenstehende ist meine Antwort  
n. 14. etc. nebst dem, daß folgendes,  
entfallend die Pechelzahlkarte die  
folgenden Zionistischen Vereine, unter-  
wegs nachkommen ging, wasfall ich  
dann wiederfall die entsprechende Li-  
te zufinden mit der gegebenen  
Bitte um. Instruktionen bez. der  
Wahl der Delegierten zum Congress  
zusammen lassen zu wollen.

Die Pechelzahlen in Betrag n.  
No. 60, 70 = Fl. 22.- sind bereits  
vor 10 Tagen an J. Dr. O. Ko-  
thsch - Wien, von dem ich eine  
Eingangsbestätigung erhalte n. 16.  
etc. beiste, abgegangen. -

Gefachend mit Jüngst  
J. Chaylan

Pechelzahlkarte  
einschreiben

NATAN GERICHTER

MANDEL ZBOŻA



Częstochowa, d. 26.12.1909

אוצר הספרים הציוני בק"א

השקטנים הפולנים, לעם פריז, הנהגה וזל, הנהגה הציונית בצור הסגורה, נשיא  
/בחי אצור אר האנדרס הנהגה זור קרוס פריז.  
מסמך שטור נהאחר בעתה וזל נשאר זולא חנני.  
זמר השקטנים נשאר אולחן זולא זל.

זל פ האוצר הציוני, ז'נרסאח/ה  
הנשיא  
מנחם פרידלנדר

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 1858-1898 - 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 Mokrauer (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 Shavuot 5680 (1920).

\* 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**  
**Mojsze Zandsztajn**  
**Anczel Warszawski**  
**Chaim Majtlis**  
**Natan Gerichter**  
**Mojsze Halter**

**Izrail Mendel Zilberberg**  
**Mojsze Mokraujer**  
**Jechiel Hamburger**  
**Hersz Wajselfisz**  
**Abram Chenocho 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  
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).