

## Preface

It has been our privilege to complete printing the book in commemoration of the martyrs - our city's beloved ones. The preparations for its printing have been accompanied for some years by doubts and speculations. We were concerned lest we be unable to bring it to completion, given the numerous difficulties we encountered both in the collection of funds and in finding the material necessary for its writing.

Many things happened since the thought [first] occurred to commemorate our Częstochowa with a Memorial Book until we arrived at the printing press. With great enthusiasm, a handful of our townsfolk approached this sacred work and toiled persistently day and night till reaching this point. Firstly, they approached the Częstochowa Immigrants Organization in Israel. Each of the sides - the proposers and the organisation - thought that the other had monetary treasures and literary material to suffice for the printing of the commemorative book. But, after having discovered that neither had money nor material, the discouragement grew. Nevertheless, the proposers did not despair and by their request, the organization chose some of its members to take part in a committee that was to act in matters concerning the book.

These men assembled at the house of Mr. Avraham Gottlieb for the first meeting, attended by the members: Leslau, Tiberg, Gottlieb, Plai, Birnholtz, Dr. Horowitz and Yaskil. At this meeting it was clarified that all things should be started from the beginning, that is to say: a) to gather the exact addresses of people from Częstochowa; b) to announce a collection of funds for the book; c) to find a group of intellectual persons to write about the city and to search for appropriate material in different institutions; d) to incorporate other active persons from the townspeople to help organise the work.

In the course of the discussions, it became clear that, in order to carry out the said decisions, money is needed and not a cent is to be found. It was decided, therefore, that each of those present would donate 50 Israeli pounds, as a first donation [an average wage at the time was around 570 pounds]. A few other Częstochowa-born living in Tel-Aviv were invited. It was also decided to find a person from Częstochowa who would dedicate his time, for wages, to visit the homes of people from Częstochowa, whose addresses were known and to receive from them other addresses and, once the committee had a substantial amount of addresses, they were to reach out to them concerning the book. A man was found who took the task upon himself - partly for wages and partly voluntarily - and, in a few months, he gathered around 550 addresses. Then the announcement was issued to immigrants from Częstochowa - to found a public committee for the publication of the book.

The first committee - with 7 members - worked intensively. In addition to daily engagements and meetings, it assembled during the first year of its activity for weekly sessions at the home of Mr. A. Gottlieb and worked very hard to promote the matter. After the committee realised that the project was too large for this handful of people, it widened its framework. Other active persons were added who were divided into sub-committees and each of those operated in its own field. Also, those from our city living in Jerusalem and Haifa were included and a conjoint intercity assembly was held as well, headed by Sh. Z. Shragai, in the "Association of Polish Immigrants" building, at which the courses of action were defined. Also, a performance was organized before our public, on the Memorial Day for the martyrs of Częstochowa and through this, the matter of the book's publication was brought to the attention of the majority of the Częstochowa public in a concentrated personal contact as well.

After the workload increased, it was decided to invite, temporarily, an employed man to manage the secretariat and assemble the committee's activities and correspondences with overseas, in order to accelerate the activities and come nearer the much-desired goal. There was another reason for bringing in an employee - the problem of a location for the meetings. The committee was enlarged, its activities grew and it was impossible to assemble regularly at the private homes of its members. The lack of an appropriate space hindered, obviously, the activities and therefore, upon hiring the man, the possibility of holding the meetings in his apartment was spoken of with him. Unfortunately, we were not able to afford the expenses involved in maintaining an employee and therefore, we were forced, after a few months, to fire this worker. Mr. Avraham Gottlieb volunteered for the secretariat and dedicated himself to it with great vigor until the book came out. Since then, we have organized our meetings at the office of our *landsmann* Mr. Yaakov Lewit and, in the last two years, we have held them at the offices of the "Hapoel HaMizrachi Bank", in which the chairman of the project to publish the book, Mr. Yaakov Leslau - who is completely dedicated to this project - gave us the possibility to do so. Once the problem of a proper place for the committee's meetings was solved, normal work was made possible, which helped the progress of our issue.

Over the course of time, several of the Tel-Aviv committee's members participated in organizing the work and in assemblies in Jerusalem and Haifa, - where we also had very active members - who participated in the meetings of the committee in Tel-Aviv and worked with great vigor for the project and also achieved considerable results. Also, performances were organized by the "Committee for the Project" on Memorial Days and the "Atzarot" [convocations] of the immigrants from Czestochowa.

On the second Memorial Day, after the activities started, we printed a prospectus about the book which was sent to all our *landsleit* all over Israel and we also handed it out on the "Memorial Day". In all cases, we endeavored that at all assemblies of the immigrants from Czestochowa, the "Project of the Book in Memory of the Martyrs" be mentioned.

The activities carried out to check the material received for the book should be mentioned as well.

A sub-committee of twelve people, which gathered weekly during an entire year (and sometimes twice a week), went over all the articles and notes in order to evaluate whether the material received was suitable for the book and if it should be published.

Several small committees were established to read the material together and, from time to time, they gathered for a meeting at [the house of] one of the committee's members to decide definitely those matters on which there was a difference of opinions.

We see ourselves pleasantly obliged to take special note of the dedicated work done by three members and they are Eziel Ben-Moshe, Avraham Gottlieb and Moshe Chaim Tiberg, who took upon themselves in the last years - and they were the most difficult - the great task of concentrating and implementing the committee's activities and they devoted to this, relentlessly, immeasurably enormous effort. Thanks to their work, we were able to complete the mission.

There is no "price" that can "pay" all those who participated in the great work done by all members of the committee, with constant effort and despite all the mishaps and obstacles that they encountered, and therefore, there is no proper way to express gratitude, but, the publication of the book in itself is their best reward.

We must also thank our *landsleit* Mr. Lev Kuznir for the pictures and help on the artistic part, Mr. Mordechai Witenberg for designing the "book cover" and Mr. Yitzhak Granek, who devoted his time and helped us with his professional knowledge in matters concerning the printing of the book.

Also, we express faithful gratitude to the housewives in whose apartments we worked for years on this holy task. They, too, participated in our work and always welcomed us happily and with refreshments.

And above all - to all sons of Czestochowa, in Israel, with whose strength (and partially - also with the aid of the Czestochowa people in the Diaspora) and assistance we were able to publish the book.

All this has been done in honour and in memory of the martyrs - our dear brothers, may God avenge their blood, who were burned at the stake and annihilated by the accursed German Nazis and their collaborators from different lands. May they remain in eternal shame!

**The Book Committee**