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Łomża Scientific Society

Memory of memories.

Jewish inhabitants of Ostrów Mazowiecka and not only in America

Research undertaken by people involved in the implementation of projects on Łomża emigration prove that among the immigrants from Łomża there were representatives of each of the ethno-religious communities that in the 19th and at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries inhabited the area of the former Łomża Land. There were also many Polish Jews among them.

Among them were immigrants – people faithful to their ideas and their faith, and those who were just looking for a better life for their loved ones and for themselves. They also often brought entire families to the U.S. with whom they built their lives. A large group of emigrants who were attracted by the American continent were the Jewish inhabitants of the Łomża region, as can be found in the book of Ostrów Mazowiecka – The Book of Memory of the Jewish Community in Ostrów Mazowiecka.

Motives for emigration

In the few studies on early emigration, various reasons are given on its almost mass character, especially since the second half of the nineteenth century. Over time, this phenomenon has become more and more intensified and affected all nations. During the development of industry, the rural population moved en masse to the cities, competing with the Jewish population, which meant that thousands of inhabitants, mainly Jews, were forced to leave the cities and emigrate to other countries. People traveled to earn and save a few hundred dollars and then came back. They even returned to do their military service, because no one wanted to be cut off from their place of birth. In later years, when anti-Semitism was on the rise, emigration to America was permanent – from then on, no one planned to return to Russia. It is mentioned in the Ostrów Mazowiecka memorial book, that when in 1918 the occupier leaves Poland, Ostrów is also taken over by the Polish anti-Semitic regime, which begins an economic boycott of the Jewish community and puts obstacles in the way of small trade and craftsmen. Jewry in Poland and Ostrów is facing an economic collapse. The difficult economic situation forces young people to think about the future. The solution for them is mass emigration. They are fleeing to Israel, America, Argentina, Uruguay and other countries. The older generation is staying, fighting for their existence and struggling with the anti-Semitism that is rampant across the country.

Emigrants

Like all the first immigrants, they had to go through all the good and bad experiences in the new country. Those who had not been able to acclimatize and get used to hard work in the workshops, or who did not like life there, returned [to their former homelands]. Among the inhabitants of Ostrów there were also those who were disappointed. Craftsmen from Ostrów, who could not find a way to make a living from work and trade in Ostrów, came to America willing to stay. Slowly, they began to bring their families and relatives to America, especially to New York, where Jewish settlements were growing. They worked in clothing factories, hat factories and carpentry shops. They were engaged in door-to-door trade. They brought their wives and children or fiancées, and they also reached out to their friends in the city. They showed how to take the first steps in a large and rich country with people of different nationalities and with a rapid pace of growth and expansion.

Hitler's reign erased all traces of the presence of the Jewish community in Ostrów that had lived there for hundreds of years. After this sad end, we see an influx of Ostrovians to various places on the globe. The largest number of them are in North America, primarily in New York. They are concentrated around the Ostrów synagogue, the Arbeter Ring branches and the Ostrowian-Zarębian Association. Their number reaches almost a thousand. We can be proud that the inhabitants of Ostrów have achieved significant economic positions, but they have not forgotten about their hometown.

Moshe and Estera Rotenberg

Estera came from Ostrołęka to Ostrów in 1915. They got married in 1920 and soon after Moshe left for America. Their lives were hard. They worked a lot to provide their sons with a good education.

They didn't forget about their old mother, **Chaja Lichtensztejn**. After World War II, on the initiative of Moshe Rotenberg, the Ostrowski Committee was founded to help his countrymen. Moshe devoted a lot of work and energy to supporting the inhabitants of Ostrów who were suffering in the camps. It was necessary to help Jews emigrate from the camps to Israel. A Women's Empowerment Committee was also formed, and Esther devoted herself body and soul to her work. She informed, summoned and woke up the lethargic and apathetic countrymen.

Reb Chaim Yosef Frydman and his wife Ester

One of Reb Eliyah Fajwel Petrushka's sons-in-law was an enlightened Jew who had learned Torah. He could also write nicely, both stylistically and calligraphically. Despite of his will and character, he took up teaching, teaching children to write and calculate. At the end of World War I, he moved with his

family to America and stayed there until the end of the 1930s. As a hidden lover of Zion in more recent times, he made aliyah to the Land of Israel and settled in Bene Berak, where he lived and died at the age of 82. His wife Esther also died in the Land of Israel at the advanced age of 93 in 1956. She was a pious woman, with a good heart, helping the poor. Honor to her memory.

APEL

Abram Chil Apel bachelor worker, born in the Czyżew settlement of the Dmochy Glinka commune in 1901, residing in Ostrów, son of Jusiek Wolf and the living Dwejra née Watery, and **Bluma Nowes** spinster, born in Ostrów in 1910, citizen of the United States of America, living with her parents in New York, temporarily residing in Ostrów, daughter of Josel Mendel and Gołda née Rubacki.

DAJCZ:

Icek Dajcz, bachelor, born in 1876 in the settlement of Goworowo, son of Szlama and Fejga Jenta née Dżiczów, spouses Dajcz, permanent burgher of the Goworowo commune, residing in the United States of America in Chicago at Morgen Street No. 14/19 since 1926, currently residing in Ostrów, **Dwejra** Goldman, maid, born in 1880 in Brok on the Bug River, daughter of Hersz and Chaja née Czyżyk Goldman, she lived in Ostrów with children fathered before the deed was drawn up: Abram born in 1911 in Goworów, Gdal born in 1914 in Goworów and Chaim Ber born in 1924 in Ostrów.

Goldsztejn

Motel Goldsztejn bachelor, born in 1901 in the village of Tuchlinie, son of Rubin and Ita née Jagoda, currently in the United States of America, and **Gitla Modrykamień** maid, born in Ostrów in 1902, daughter of Wolf and Sura Rywka née Chałajów.

Lejzor Januszewicz was a bachelor, son of Szaps Icek and Gitla née Bronsztejn, born in the village of Trzcinka Brańszczyk municipality in 1892, now located in the United States of America, also **Marjem Fejga Rotenberg**, maid, daughter of Juszek Dawid and Etki Lea née Niemir, born in the settlement of Czyżew in 1888, settled in Ostrów and married in 1919.

Juszk Mendel Modrykamień bachelor, born in Zambrowie in 1891, son of Mejer Jankel and Nechumy née Goldsztejn in Siedlce, who declared that he was a citizen of the United States of America, Frejda **Marchewka**, maid, born in Ostrów in 1890, daughter of Judka Hersz and Sura née Sygierów.

Zelman Zelek Modrykamień bachelor worker, born in Ostrów in 1913, in the city of Brooklyn, N.Y., 84th Street, No. 2301, U.S. Citizen inhabited, son of Majer Josek and Chana Gitla née Marchewka, also

Mindel Tumer Ryba, maid, born in Ostrów in 1906 and settled here, daughter of Szmul and Taubas from Skalki.

Szyja Moszek Wasereng, bachelor, born in Ostrów in 1902 and residing here, son of S. Zumaja and Nejma née Goldberg, spouses **Wasereng**, also **Marja Holland**, maid, born in the city of Brok on the Bug River in 1902, citizen and permanent resident of the United States of America, residing in Ostrów, daughter of Icek Fajwel and Nochi Ruchla née Lichtensztejn, spouses Holland.

Jechezkiel Frejlich

Born in Ostrów Mazowiecka on August 11, 1905, he died tragically in New York on October 23, 1955. He arrived in America in February 1924. He graduated from a seminar for teachers Jewish. He was a teacher at the Arbeter Ring and the Sholem Aleichem School, and studied at the Syracuse University, received a bachelor's degree in social sciences from City College and a degree in Master of Arts from New York University. He was a Spanish teacher. He published short stories on Jewish subjects in English in English magazines, wrote literary criticisms for "Cukunft" and "Unzer weg". In 1948 he published a book of short stories entitled *Widerklängen* [Sounds]. In 1951, he published a book of short stories called *Dojres* [Generations] at the *Unzer Wort* publishing house in Argentina. In recent years, Jechezkiel Frejlich, a prose writer and literary critic, has published two books of prose.

Chaim Glinka

a graduate of the Łomża yeshiva, an activist of the Renaissance movement. During World War I, he organized aid for the needy and refugees. He emigrated from Ostrów to Israel, his son was the youngest officer in the Israeli army.

Gordin Yehuda Leib

rabbi in Łomża, previously in Augustów and Ostrów, lover of Zion. During World War I, he was appointed head of the local citizen police. Author of books on Jewish law and customs. As an envoy of the Łomża yeshiva, he went to America, where he took up the position of chief rabbi in Chicago. He died in 1925.

One of **Reb Eliyah Fajwel Petrushka's** sons-in-law was an enlightened Jew who had learned Torah. He could also write nicely, both stylistically and calligraphically. Not having, as in the old days, what to do, and having to earn money for his family, he took up teaching against his will and character. He taught children to write and calculate. At the end of World War I, he moved with his family to America and

stayed there until the end of the 1930s. As A hidden Lover of Zion from earlier times made aliyah to the Land of Israel and settled in Bene Berak, where he lived until 1947 and died at the age of 82.

Symcha Graniewicz

Born in Ostrów Mazowiecka in 1905, he died in tragic circumstances in Tel Aviv in 1936. He came from a middle-class family. In the 1920s he went to Uruguay, and in 1928 to Argentina. He was a Jewish teacher in Borokhov's schools in Buenos Aires and Córdoba. He spent a short time in the Land of Israel. In 1932 he came to São Paulo, Brazil and collaborated with the local Jewish press. Then he returned to the Land of Israel. Graniewicz published short stories and sketches about Argentine Jewish life in DiPrese and other magazines in Buenos Aires. In 1929, the Buenos Aires Publishing Society published his stories and sketches in book form *in rojtliche farnachtn* [On Red Evenings]. Some of his sketches were included in an anthology of Yiddish literature in Argentina, volume 1 of 1944. Symcha decided to leave Poland, since he could not immigrate to Israel, he went to South America, where he had friends. Upon arriving in Uruguay, he found it difficult to adapt to the way most of his friends made a living. Eventually, he moved to Argentina. In Buenos Aires, he achieved a respectable position as a teacher of Hebrew and a writer associated with the newspaper "Neie Presse". He had always dreamed of going to Israel, and in 1933 he fulfilled his dream and made aliyah. At that time, there was an economic crisis and Graniewicz was out of work or working two to three days a week. His girlfriend demanded his return. Despite his love for Israel, he returned and settled in the Diaspora. But he was restless, within two years he had made his second aliyah. It was a great physical and emotional effort; he couldn't stand it.

Son of Reb Isachar Melamed

He left for America before World War I. In 1917, when the Jewish Legion was being formed by the British army to fight for the liberation of the Land of Israel (Palestine) from Turkish rule and the Balfour Declaration on the creation of a Jewish state was announced, he volunteered and served in the Jewish Legion. After the war, he remained in the Land of Israel to settle down. To this end, together with his comrades from the Legion, he founded the colony of Tel Adashim in the Jezreel Valley, but due to great financial problems related to the development of the colony (the Jewish Agency could not allocate an adequate budget), and most importantly – a small amount of water on site – the plan failed and Berish was forced to return to America in 1923. He lived there until 1947, when he died at the age of 70.

Benjamin Kagan

He was the son of a rabbi of Zabłudów, married the sister of Szlomo Tuwia Siniak in Zambrów and settled in Zambrów. He was a delightful young man, a scholar and an expert in secular education. He was an ardent Zionist, and illegal Zionist meetings were held at his home. He fought against the fanaticism of the rabbi and the Hasidim. He traded in salt. In 1924 he emigrated to America, to Brooklyn, to his children Chana, Jankiel-Dawid and Michael. His family was killed. His granddaughter, Pnina Hildebrand, daughter of Estera Abkiewicz, who left Warsaw in 1939 and after a long wandering, came to Israel. She was in Ben Shemen and then moved to Kibbutz Kiryat Jearim on the outskirts of Jerusalem.

<http://wirtualnie.lomza.pl/wirtualnie/2023/11/05/pamiec-wspomnien-zydowscy-mieszkancy-ostrowi-mazowieckiej-i-nie-tylko-w-ameryce-oprac-m-k-frackiewicz/>