

Lajbel*¹ (Louis) Szymkowicz z"l



Lajbel Szymkowicz

The son of Ajzyk and Chana [née Windman], he was born in Częstochowa in 1866 [sic 1864]. His parents were middle-class folk. His father was a tailor. In 1883, the father left Częstochowa and travelled to America. Lajbel Szymkowicz was born in Częstochowa and received an elementary education in a Russian primary school. His teachers were Szapocznik and Majerson. Once he had completed this school, he learned the goldsmith's trade, in which he worked until he received his call-up [papers]. Uncle Hajman having sent passages on a ship, Lajbel, together with his mother Chana, brother Grojnem, and sisters Ruchel and Bencia [Bina?] left Częstochowa, and arrived in America in the summer of 1886.

Lajbel Szymkowicz belonged to the *Częstochower Shul* [Synagogue] on Clinton Street, New York, to which his father also belonged.

Lajbel was forced to leave his father's house due to the fact that Lajbel had to work on *Shabbes*. He worked in jewellery. At 25, he married Chaja Gotajner, born in Częstochowa, who died on 26th February 1920, leaving behind four orphans (two sons and two daughters).

Later, Louis Szymkowicz went into the Yiddish theatre business, heading the vaudeville theatre at the cinema hall on Sutter Avenue in Brownsville [Brooklyn] and, in 1898, the Yiddish theatre on Delancey Street, New York. In 1918-19, he produced benefits in Brooklyn, at the Lira Theatre on Seigel Street. His theatre featured performances by the renowned actors Jacob Adler, Kessler, Schoengold, Bida from Częstochowa, Mr and Mrs Goldberg, Mr and Mrs Jacobs and others. To the last day of his life, he was involved in Yiddish theatre.

Lajbel Szymkowicz was one of the founders of the Czenstochover Young Men's [Society], a member of the *Częstochower Shul* [and] a founder of the [United] Czenstochover Relief Committee and of the Ladies Auxiliary. He was chosen as a delegate to Częstochowa following the First World War, to work out the plan of building the I.L. Peretz House for the day-care centres and the Jewish primary school. He was a member of the *Czenstochover Yidn* Book Committee and ex-Chairman of the Relief Committee. His political convictions were socialist and he was also member of the Labour Party.

Lajbel Szymkowicz died on 4th May 1955, in New York.

Honoured be his memory!

*¹ [TN: Appears in the official records as Lewek Szymkowicz, born on 20th Aug 1864.]

