

EPSTEIN (EPSZTAJN) Estera, after 1952 PRZEWORSKI-PRATT Anna Estera (1903-1985), lawyer. She was born on 15th December 1903 in Częstochowa, the daughter of Icek Mendel, social activist, one of the main founders of the Jewish Gimnazjum in Częstochowa, and Frajndla Hinda née Zilbersztajn. She was the sister of → Nuchym Natek (1908-1945).

Epstein matriculated, in 1920, at the J. Słowacki State Girls Gimnazjum in Częstochowa. She then graduated in law at the University of Warsaw. During her studies, she belonged to the Częstochowa branch, serving as Secretary, of the Committee to Aid Jewish Students “Auxilium Academicum Judaicum”. She wanted to become a judge. She even completed her court internship. However, due to her origin and gender, she decided to change her plans. On 5th July 1933, she applied to be a trainee advocate and was accepted. After completing her internship, she worked as a legal advisor to the *Związek Drobnych Kupców* [Small Traders Union], which was co-founded by her father. She lectured in commercial law in courses organised by the Union and run by → Dr. Filip Axer. At the end of 1937, she opened a legal practice in Częstochowa, at ul. Waszyngtona 22, in January 1938, moving to I Aleja 23 and, in February 1939, to ul. Wilsona 6/8.

In the first days of September 1939, immediately after the outbreak of war, with her parents and two brothers, she left for Łódź and later for Warsaw, where she stayed until 13th October 1939. Finally, she returned to Częstochowa, where she remained throughout the occupation. She managed the Częstochowa *Judenrat's* Department of Trade and Craft. After the War. She claimed that she had helped poor Jews by issuing them with false certificates. She also claimed that she was opposed to the President of the *Judenrat*, → Lejb Kopiński, who did not care about the ghetto's ordinary inhabitants, but only for wealthy and influential Jews.

Following the liquidation of the ghetto in the autumn of 1942, she was in the forced labour camp for Jews (the “Small Ghetto”). She was a secretary in the Jewish *Arbeitseinsatz* – the management of the workers' groups. After the liquidation of the “Small Ghetto” on 26 June 1942, she was sent as a labourer to the HASAG Pelcery factory camp in Częstochowa. On 15th January 1945, she was transported to Germany, first to the Gross-Rosen camp and, on 23rd January 1945, to Ravensbrück, where she was held until the beginning of March 1945. She was then transferred to a sub-camp of Dachau in Burgau in Bavaria. In the death marches, she went from camp to camp until 27th April 1945, when the German administration announced the end of the war to the prisoners.

After her release, she worked as a lawyer in the UNRRA office. In 1946, she appeared as a witness in one of the Nuremberg trials of war criminals. She was Secretary-General of the Central Board of the Częstochowa Jews *Landsmannschaft* in the American Occupation Zone in Germany. She was a defence lawyer in the Central Honorary Court of the Liberated Jews Union in the American Occupation Zone in Germany. She appeared as an advocate in trials against Jewish collaborators. Among those she defended were Dawid Gertler (commander of the Jewish *Sonderkommando* in the Łódź ghetto) and Henryk Gliksman (Jewish foreman in the ghetto and manager of the HASAG Raków camp). His trial took place in June and August 1949. In 1949, in Leipzig, she was called as an expert witness in the trial of twenty-two former *meisters* of the HASAG camp in Częstochowa.

In that same year, she left for the USA. She lived in New York and finally settled in Los Angeles. She died on 14th September 1985 in Los Angeles.

After marrying Andrzej Przeworski in New York in 1952, she became known as Anna Przeworski Pratt, only occasionally using the name “Esther” instead of Anna.

Orenstein, *Churban Czenstochow*, pp. 312, 367, 368; *Czenstochower Landsmanszaft in Montreal*, p. 96; Kociołek, Zaleska, *Gimnazjum i Liceum im. J. Słowackiego*, p. 121. “Częstochower Cajtung” 1929, No. 44, p. 5, 1937, No. 50, p. 1, 1938, No. 4, p. 1, 1939, No. 8, p. 5; “Palestra” 1933, p. 438. - Archiwum ŻIH, Judenrat Statistical Yearbook for 1940, v. I, p. 78. - lamoth.info – website and archive of the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust.

Wiesław Paszkowski