

KOHN (Kon) Edward Ejzyk (1848–1927), doctor, city councillor, city juror, social and charity activist. He was born on 27th June 1848 in Wieluń, the son of Józef and Natalia née Popeler, nephew of → Wolf Wilhelm Kohn.

He graduated from *gimnazjum* in Wieluń and, in 1868, he began medical studies at the Szkole Głównej Warszawskiej (in 1869, it was transformed into the Russian University of Warsaw). He gained his medical degree on 27th April 1872. He soon opened a private medical practice in Nasielsk, near Pułtusk.

In 1886 (and, according to Mieczysław Biegański, in 1888), he moved to Częstochowa, where he began working as a factory doctor at the Peltzer & Son spinning mill and, later, in the printing house of W. Kohn and A. Oderfeld. He was one of the associates of Dr Władysław Biegański at the Hospital of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He also ran a private medical practice. Prior to 1914, he was the doctor of the Volunteer Fire Department.

Dr Stanisław Nowak characterised Kohn as a doctor in this manner, “He was the consummate and good practitioner. Being a factory doctor in several, large factories, and also having a private practice, he travelled around all day long. He treated the rich and the poor. As a doctor, he showed great selflessness and never caused any scene with patients regarding remuneration – as happened many times with other doctors. So many doctors bitterly reproached him that he was reducing the scale of doctors’ earnings. He was a very thoughtful and caring physician. Sometimes, uninvited, he visited the sick many times, if he thought that the patient’s condition required constant, medical supervision”.

As a factory doctor, from his autopsies, he knew the harsh hygienic and health conditions under which employees worked and lived. Wishing to draw attention to this problem, in 1892, he published an article entitled *Opis sanitarny przędzalni wełny czesankowej „Peltzer et Fils” w Częstochowie [A Description of the Sanitary Conditions at the “Peltzer & Son” Worsted Wool Spinning Mill]*. In this publication, he negatively assessed the condition of the factory flats, drew attention to their small number and described the workers’ miserable living conditions outside of the factory property.

He repeatedly raised the issue of medical care in factories. In one instance, in 1903, at one of the meetings of the Częstochowa Medical Association (TLCz), which was devoted to this issue, he discussed the design of a booklet, which he had developed, for the recording of the health of a worker. It would include the noting of all subsequent illnesses and methods of treatment.

In 1906, he published the article *O pomocy lekarskiej w fabrykach* [*On Medical Aid in Factories*]. In the “Czasopisma Lekarskiego” [“Journal of Medicine”], he also published articles, including a posthumous memoir by Dr Salezy Bursztyński. In 1912-1914, he belonged to the City of Częstochowa Sanitary Commission. His area of responsibility included ul. Teatralna (Wolności) from ul. Nowa (Sobieska) to the Peltzer factory, including the factory itself. It also included the streets Stradomska (1 Maja), Mickiewicza and św. Władysława.

From 1895, he participated in the self-education of Częstochowa doctors. In 1901, he was one of the co-founders, and later a board member, of TLCz. In 1901–1911, he served as its librarian and, later, as treasurer. The library was opened at the TLCz was given a dozen or so yearbooks of medical journals. In 1901–1913, at TLCz meetings, he took part in discussions, delivered several lectures and, often, presented the most interesting cases of illness. In 1909, at one of these meetings, he raised the issue of establishing health insurance funds. In 1923, the TLCz recognised Kohn’s fifty years of medical work and, in 1926, awarded him Honorary Membership of the TLC.

Kohn briefly engaged in politics. In April 1906, prior to the elections to the 1st State Duma, he joined a progressive electoral grouping, which included Polish intellectuals with leftist views and representatives of the Jewish intelligentsia and bourgeoisie. Prior to the next elections to the 2nd State Duma, (held in February 1907), Kohn withdrew from political activities.

From June 1906, Kohn took part in the work of the Provisional School Committee, which led to the establishment of the No. 1 Polish Philological Gymnazjum in Częstochowa. In September of that same year, he was elected to that school’s finance committee, as the stakeholders’ representative.

He was involved in the creation and operation of credit institutions in Częstochowa. He was member of the nine-person Council of the Częstochowa Mutual Loan Society. In 1907, he was an organiser and, later, a board member of the 2nd Savings and Loan Society (for Jews). For many years, he was a director of the Częstochowa Municipal Loan Society.

He was also a long-time member of the “Dobroczynność” Charitable Society for Jews (TDdŻ) and, in 1922-1927, served as its president. He managed the Society’s section for poor obstetricians and the Girls’ Shelter on ul. Fabryczna (Mielczarska). He also supported TDdŻ financially. In 1907, Kohn, promoting the idea of building a hospital for Jews, became chairman of the TDdŻ Hospital

Building Committee. From 1913, he worked as a medical consultant to the TDdŻ Hospital built in Zawodzie in Częstochowa – he was a member of the Hospital's board. In 1927, he led to the opening of the Tuberculosis Outpatient Clinic at the hospital.

In 1914-1918, he was active on the Committee to Aid Children and the "Emergency Aid" Committee. In 1914 and 1915, he was one of the sixteen Częstochowa doctors who, as part of "Emergency Aid", treated the poor free of charge. In 1915, he participated in a City Council commission, tasked with preparing rules for the participation of local industry in covering the expenses of the "Emergency Aid" charitable institution. In that same year, he became a member of the Central Committee of "Emergency Aid". From 1919, he was a member of the Central Welfare Council, which distributed American food to Częstochowa institutions caring for children.

Due to his experience in the field of local government and the respect he enjoyed amongst the people of Częstochowa, he was repeatedly elected to the Częstochowa City Council. In 1909-1913, he was a member of the truncated, four-person City Council.

Following the outbreak of World War I, on 1st August 1914, he was appointed to the Civic Committee (one of sixty-five city citizens). On 5th August 1914, along with Committee members, he was included into the composition of the Częstochowa City Council. From the beginning of July 1915, after the existing City Council was dissolved and the German authorities appointed a new one (on the basis of nomination), he again became a member.

Also, in the constituency elections to the City Council held in 1917, he again became a Councillor. However, he resigned after being approved as a juror of the Częstochowa Town Hall. From 1917 to 1919, he served as a municipal juror. In 1919, standing for the Jewish Electoral Committee, he again became a member of the City Council. He was the leader of a moderate, Jewish group. He worked on committees regarding health, housing, taxation and regarding the poor. Delegated by the Council, from August 1919, he participated in the work of Committee to Aid Górny Śląsk [Upper Silesia].

Being extremely active communally, he belonged to many associations, not just Jewish ones:

- The Charitable Society for Christians, prior to 1914, he sat on its board,
- The Society to Aid the Poor of the Mosaic Faith,

- The Society for the Spreading of Knowledge,
- The Horticultural Farm for Jews, and
- In 1917, he became a member of the Welfare Council of the H. Sienkiewicz Boys' Gimnazjum.

He died on 11th April 1927 in Częstochowa and was buried in the Jewish cemetery. His funeral took place on 13th April 1927 and was attended by Senator Romuald Jarmułowicz, District Starost Kazimierz Kühn, Mayor of Częstochowa Józef Marczewski, Rabbi Nachum Asz, members of the City Council, the Jewish Community Council, many organisations (among them charitable), unions, sporting clubs, representatives of the Fire Brigade, State Police, as well as people from the health professions – doctors, dentists, *felczery*, pharmacists and nurses. The ceremony was filmed and was screened as part of the program of the “Odeon” cinema.

He married Augusta Prentka (1854-1931), the daughter of Majer and Mina, a social activist, a member of the TDdŻ Girls' Shelter section. They had five sons and one daughter:

- Leona (24th May 1879 Nasielsk),
- Bolesław (1881-1929),
- → Wacław Maurycy
- → Stefan and
- → Norberta
- Jadwiga, married to → Eugeniusz Zak (Żak), painter artist.

M. Biegańska, *Władysław Biegański. Życie i praca*, Warszawa 1930, p. 132. – Michalski, *Częstochowa i jej lekarze*, pp. 508–509; – Sobalski, *Materiały*, pp. 174, 180, 184. – Szwed, *Radni m. Częstochowy*, p. 37; – Nowak, *Z moich wspomnień*, Part II, pp. 15, 16, 101, 103, 133; Part III, pp. 17, 41, 44. – “Dziennik Częstochowski” 1906, No. 46, p. 2, No. 161, p. 2; “Gazeta Częstochowska” 1909, No. 136, p. 4; “Goniec Częstochowski” 1907, No. 105, p. 2, No. 148, p. 2, No. 349, p. 2, 1909, No. 21, p. 2, 1912, No. 302, p. 2, 1914, No. 345, p. 2, 1915, No. 156, p. 2, 1917, No. 140, p. 3, 1918, No. 256, p. 2, 1919, No. 7, p. 3, No. 183, p. 3, 1927, No. 89, p. 3; “Kurier Codzienny” 1926, No. 69, p. 3, 1927, No. 7, p. 3; “Kurier Częstochowski” 1919, No. 54, p. 3; “Nad Wartą” 1989, No. 7, p. 8, No. 10, p. 8; “Polska Gazeta Lekarska” 1927, No. 22, p. 431 (posthumous memories). – “Handlowiec”. *Kalendarz 1913*, pp. 184, 187, 201, 204, 1914, 289, 292, 304; *Rocznik częstochowski. Kalendarz 1903*. – “Ziemia Częstochowska” 1976, vol. XI, p. 245. – Księgi protokołów posiedzeń Towarzystwa Lekarskiego Częstochowskiego 1901–1918 (archiwum TLCz). – APCz, City of Częstochowy records 27/8, vol. II, k. 1842; Mag.Part 4998, k. 502, 611, 5010, p. 7, 8, 10; USC Częstochowa, death record No. 85/1927.

Juliusz Sętowski