

LEWITT (LEWIT) Jakub Jankiel (1888-), industrialist, social activist and Jewish self-government activist. He was born in Miechów, the son of Jochem Chaim Juda (-1930 Otwock) and Mariema Hudessa née Blum. From 1906, Lewitt lived in Częstochowa, at I Aleja 6, where he owned the tenement building.

Within a few years, he became one of the most outstanding figures in the financial life of Częstochowa. Initially, he was one of the main Częstochowa representatives of the "Stradom" Częstochowa Textile Works and, after some time, he was also one of its most important shareholders.

In 1918, he founded "Bawełna" ["Cotton"] Częstochowa Mechanical Weaving. From 1929, it became the "Lewlen" Linen Factory, at ul. Przechodnia 9/13. Prior to World War II, the factory employed over 300 workers. Despite the opposition of the Polish workers, Lewitt also employed Jews as workers, foremen, specialists and bookkeepers. They numbered as high as 70. He was also one of the founders of the Industrial-Commercial Bank.

He was active in the life of the Częstochowa Jewish community. He took part in many activities aimed at supporting the poor. He was a member of the Jewish Community Council and deputy chairman of the local Mizrahi Zionist-Orthodox Organisation. He donated and collected donations from others for the *Keren Hayesod* and *Keren Kayemet* funds for Palestine. In 1936, he sat on the Jewish Gimnazjum Construction Committee. One of the rooms was named after him and his wife. With a very large donation, he strongly supported the Talmudic University *Yeshivas Chachmei* in Lublin. In 1932, together with his son Dawid, he travelled to Palestine to investigate the possibilities of investing there. He travelled there again, in 1934, and organised the export of his industrial products to Palestine. He was already planning to relocate his family and to transfer his property, which is why, in 1938, his son David left to settle there permanently.

In 1939, Lewitt left for Palestine with his son Izaak, where they celebrated his barmitzvah. With his son David, he set up spinning and wool weaving mills near Petach Tikva. Izaak stayed there to continue his education. Jakub Lewitt returned to Częstochowa in order to liquidate his businesses and that was where he was when the war broke out. On 1st October 1939, he was appointed to the Council of Elders (*Judenrat*). For a large sum of money, he managed to obtain a Turkish visa. He left for Turkey and, from there, went to Palestine. In December 1939, he arrived in the Land of Israel.

In 1906, in Częstochowa, he married Taubą née Lubling, the daughter of Abram Mordka and Mariema née Pankowska. They had two sons.

Czech, *Kalendarium przemysłu*, p. 158. – *Czenstochower Yidn*, p. LIII (photo); Brener, *Widersztand*, pp. 12, 15; *Sefer Czenstochow*, vol. II, cols. 405–406; Kromołowski, *Wspomnienia*, p. 259. – “Częstochower Cajtung” 1928, No. 39, p. 1 (re: son Efraim), 1929, No. 2, p. 1, 1930, No. 25, pp. 1, 5, 1934, No. 26, p. 6; “Nasz Głos Powszechny” 1936, No. 3, p. 4. – *Spis abonentów sieci telefonicznych 1939*, p. 50. – Informacje Ewy Harley z Forest Hills (USA). – Materials from the ODDC collections.

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