

# Preface

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Częstochowa was a city of cultural and religious diversity. The vast majority (over 65%) were Roman Catholics. The position of the Evangelical community, which included entrepreneurs and craftsmen from Germany, was strong. A significant group were Russians and Orthodox believers. From the beginning of the 19th century, more and more Jews settled in Częstochowa. At the beginning of World War I, most Russians left the city - soldiers from local regiments, officials, teachers and their families. The German settlers were gradually assimilated. This was also the case with a part of the Jewish community. However, most of them retained their religious, linguistic and moral identity. The beginnings of the Jewish religious community date back to 1808, when the authorities of the Kalisz Department allowed these communities in Stara Częstochowa. From the end of the 19th century, the Jewish population constituted a significant group of the city's inhabitants - 26% in 1891, 31% in 1913, 24.5% in 1928. Generations of Częstochowa Jews left an indelible mark on the material and spiritual shape of the city, and the most outstanding of them contributed significantly to the development of many areas of life - economic, educational, cultural and others. The majority of the Jewish community were ordinary inhabitants of the Old Town district - craftsmen, shopkeepers, workers, small manufacturers and porters.

The world of Częstochowa Jews has gone. It was brutally annihilated during the long Nazi night - murdered in Treblinka, on the streets of the Częstochowa ghetto and in many other places. After 1945, those who survived the Holocaust remained in the city. During the German occupation, they had been imprisoned in the city's HASAG camps or had been in hiding outside the ghetto on the "Aryan side". During the years 1945-1949, most of them left Poland, going in various directions, mainly to the state of Israel which had been established in 1948. A symbol of this is Sigmund Rolat, an industrialist, organiser of the Reunions of Częstochowa Jews, a friend of his hometown (in 2012, he received the honorary citizenship of Częstochowa).

In the city, there are traces of the activity of thousands of people - school buildings, tenement houses, a hospital, the new *mikvah* building and, finally, a cemetery, which is one of the largest surviving Jewish cemeteries in Poland. Today (in 2009), a monument has been erected on the site where the Germans carried out deportations to the death camp in Treblinka. Commemorative plaques have also been placed on the buildings and on premises of institutions (including on the site of the former HASAG Pelcery camp and the Częstochowa Philharmonic, which was erected on the ruins of the New Synagogue), symbolic tombstones have been erected - monuments in the Jewish cemetery. In 2016, a permanent exhibition, *The Jews of Częstochowa*, was opened at ulica Katedralna 8. It is now one of the exhibitions presented by the Częstochowa Museum.

This dictionary contains nearly 600 biographies of people, who were associated with Częstochowa in the nineteenth, twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The term "inhabitants of Częstochowa" refers to people who were born here and who permanently resided here. But it also refers to those who were connected with the city for a very short period, even for several years. The determining factor was their professional and creative activity or their communal service. Some of those featured in this publication were born here, but left at a young age, and their activity distinguished them in other places - within the country and abroad.

Included are the profiles of people who were significant in the history of the city and the country. Within the pages of this book are the names of people who were active in economic, political, local government, social and religious life, as well as in science, education, health care, the law, sport, culture and art.

This book is the result of many years of research by many people - archival, bibliographic and press inquiries, as well as efforts to obtain information from families. In the work, necrologies were widely used in the form of providing brief information about the death, as well as broader memories describing the activities of a given person. A great deal of information was obtained from grave headstone inscriptions. An enormous amount of material was used from Wiesław Paszkowski's book *Cmentarz żydowski w Częstochowie. Przewodnik* (Częstochowa 2012).

From the end of the 1990s, the writer of these words created a biographical file of Częstochowa Jews. In 2006, following the establishment of the Ośrodka Dokumentacji Dziejów Częstochowy (ODDC) at the Częstochowa Museum, this

file found a home there. As a result of numerous inquiries, it was constantly expanded (currently it has over two thousand biographies).

A separate file was created by Wiesław Paszkowski for the purposes of his research into the Częstochowa Jewish community. The material collected in it (already in digital format) is also found in the ODDC.

Most of the profiles contained in this Dictionary are presented for the first time. Their authors have also endeavoured to supplement or correct existing profiles in biographical studies. To facilitate the ease of use of the resources in this Dictionary, we have introduced the designator → referring to the biographies of other people (relatives, business partners, friends). At the end of each entry, there is a bibliography which refers the reader to further literature on the subject.<sup>1</sup>

*The Jews of Częstochowa – a Biographical Dictionary* is another biographical publication that was created at the ODDC, mainly through the efforts of its employees.<sup>2</sup>

*Juliusz Sętowski*

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<sup>1</sup> It is arranged in the following order: 1. Encyclopedias, dictionaries, lexicons; 2. General studies; 3. Diaries, memoirs; 4. Daily press and magazines; 5. Periodical publications; 6. Archives; 7. Information; 8. Materials in the collections of the Centre for the Documentation of the History of Częstochowa (ODDC).

<sup>2</sup> Previous publications: J. Sętowski, *Cmentarz ewangelicko-augsburski w Częstochowie. Przewodnik biograficzny*, Częstochowa 2006; W. Paszkowski, *Cmentarz żydowski w Częstochowie. Przewodnik*, vo. I, Częstochowa 2012; *Cmentarz św. Rocha w Częstochowie. Przewodnik biograficzny*, ed. J. Sętowski, Częstochowa 2012; *Sienkiewiczacy. Nauczyciele i wychowankowie IV LO im. Henryka Sienkiewicza w Częstochowie 1862–2012. Słownik biograficzny*, by A. Cieślak and J. Sętowski, Częstochowa 2012; *Adwokaci regionu częstochowskiego. Słownik biograficzny*, ed. A. Kasperkiewicz and J. Sętowski, Częstochowa 2014.