

SZWARC Chaim Lajb (1883–), painter, union leader, charity activist. He was born on 15th August 1883 in Rozprzyna, the son of Awigdor, a cobblestone paver, and Brajndla née Zygas.

He spent his childhood in Częstochowa. From 1894, he worked in the factories of Mordechaj Dreksler and Godeł Wajnberg. In 1896, he began work with house painter Aron Goldberg. After a year of work, he managed to paint an apartment. He also worked in Będzin, where he came into conflict with a foreman over pay and fled across the border to Kraków. He was arrested by police and was forced to Częstochowa. He left for Vienna, where he encountered the ideals of socialism and freedom. He soon returned to Częstochowa, making contact with → Henocho Lapidus and Aba Kaufman.

Szwarc wrote poetry and was interested in Jewish theatre. He continued working as a painter. In 1904, he married and settled in Żarki, but soon returned to Częstochowa. He was an active trade unionist. In 1904, he was an organiser and leader of a painters' strike. In that same year, when the Russian-Japanese War broke out, he left for Katowice.

In 1905, he came to London. There, he met, from Częstochowa – Stodoła-Rotbard, Jakub Ber Silwer, Dawid Gotlib and others. He began working for Gostyński (the Częstochowa brother of Wolf Gostyński). In 1906, he was co-founder of the Jewish Socialist Club.

In that same year, he left for Canada, for a short time, working in Toronto. In 1907, he moved to New York. There, he worked as a bread-maker and took part in a strike to admit this group into the Bakers' Union. (The strike ended in victory.)

In 1908, together with Częstochowianin A. Kaufman, he co-founded the Arbeter Ring Branch 261 (Workers' Union Branch 261). In 1914, he was one of the creators of the *Czenstochower Hilfs-Farejn* (Częstochowa Aid Union) – in 1916, he served as its chairman. With L. Szymkowicz, he came to Częstochowa, in 1922, as a delegate to investigate the situation of the I.L.Perec Childrens' Orphanage.

In 1925, he settled in Chicago. There, he was co-founder of the local *Czenstochower Hilfs-Farejn* and also worked with the New York Relief Committee.

In 1931, he moved to Los Angeles. There, he conducted literary activities amongst workers and was also active in creating a drama section. In 1933, together with Joan Sztibl, Dawid and Jochewed Izrael, Harry Grauman, Peper and Lina Szwarc, he established a committee to help political prisoners in Częstochowa. (They were later joined by Dr Zajnwil Klein).

He was co-founder of the food industry workers' trade union. He was arrested by the police for organising a strike, but was soon released.

He took part in the establishing of the *Czenstochower Hilfs-Farejn* in Los Angeles. In 1938, he became one of the directors of the central committee of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

In 1939, he lived in Portland and, in 1941, he moved to Chicago and, from there in 1945, to Seattle. He now began supported the Jewish residents in Częstochowa.

In 1904, in Żarki near Częstochowa, he married Udla née Poznańska (26th September 1881 Żarki-), the daughter of Moszek and Blima née Reszko.

Czenstochower Yidn, pp. CII–CIII, photo.

Wiesław Paszkowski