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Industry in Częstochowa – Its Creation and Development

When we come to review the share which industry had in the development and growth of our city until the days of the Holocaust, and to determine Częstochowa's place in Poland's financial life, we must mention the "dispute" which took place amongst the country's finance people regarding the city or the region, which merited being considered in second place after Łódź in its level of industrial development in Congress Poland.

There were some, among the dispute participants, who argued that this highly regarded status should be designated to the Dąbrowa Górnicza region and its vicinity but, on the other hand, others said that this region's wealth was mainly due to the coal mines and natural resources with which its soil had been blessed, unlike Częstochowa, whose growth, development and all its financial power came only thanks to the active people in it. They were those who had succeeded, literally, in creating "something from nothing" and had also conquered the large Russian market in order to propagate their products within its borders and to even take the produce of Częstochowa into other distant countries!

If, additionally, we also point out that the majority of the industry in our city and its vicinity was created, developed and expanded mainly at initiative of Jews - unlike the Dąbrowa Górnicza region, whose mines were almost all in the hands of foreign capital. We may then make the claim, without any hesitation, that our city Częstochowa merited and, indeed, held the position of being in second place within Congress Poland with its industrial development.



Unfortunately, not many publications have survived by which it would be possible to provide accurate details on all branches of industry, on their size and the monetary value of their products, as well as on the number of people who were employed in them as workers-and producers. Therefore, it is also impossible to conduct a comprehensive review of all that we had in industrial Częstochowa.

We shall therefore begin our review by presenting the summary of an article by one of Częstochowa's great figures, Professor Waclaw Tokarz, a native of our city who, in his day, held a very important position in Polish life as an historian. He left his chair at the Jagiellońian University in Kraków, in order to take part in the First World War as a front-line combatant, in Pilsudski's legions, fighting for the liberation and independence of Poland.

Already back in 1896, Professor Tokarz published a very interesting article in the Polish newspaper *Głos* [The Voice], regarding the proportions of the contemporary industry in Częstochowa.

This article was also printed in a compilation of the professor's writings, which was published in 1959 by the government publishing house in Warsaw. In that article, he discusses industry's first steps of in our city.

At the beginning of his article, the author notes the comfortable conditions which promoted the development of industry in our city, in the last twenty years of the 19th century, and they were:

- a) The rapid development of Sosnowiec and of the Dąbrowa region in general, which caused the price of land to rise in this region, unlike Częstochowa, in whose surrounding area it was still possible to purchase land cheaply.
- b) At the same time, there was also a significant difference in the prices of coal between Łódź and Częstochowa and this reduction in cost, which favoured our city, had a significant influence on the setting of prices for industrial production.
- c) The prices of building materials such as stone, lime and timber for construction, were also cheaper for us and this was also the case with bricks, which were produced near the city in large quantities.
- d) Poverty, which prevailed in those days in all the surrounding villages, also caused a mass influx of their youth to Częstochowa in search of non-professional labour. On the other hand, there were already many professionals and weaving-experts in our city. They had come from Germany and spun and wove on their domestic looms.
- e) The proximity of Częstochowa to the German "Herby" train station also lowered the cost of transport for building materials and for other materials needed for industrial purposes.

We should also mention that the Jews, who at first only bought and distributed goods produced, also began to build factories and, over the course of time, became an important and deciding factor in the development of industry.

This also may be examined in the following list that Prof. Tokarz published in that article:

Ser. #	Type of Business and Name of Owner	Year Est.	No. of Male Workers	No. of Female workers	Annual Revenue (roubles)	Details on further development
1	Flour-mill, water & steam-powered. Owners: Ginsburg & Kohn	1863	36	80	240,000	At first, the mill was only water-powered.
2	Printing press, lithography and coloured-paper factory. Owners: Kohn & Oderfeld	1867	70	80	78,000	At first, only the lithography-workshop was established, and later, the press as well. In 1881, the factory also began producing coloured paper. All this was small-scale, until the factory grew, and, in 1896, it already had ten fast lithography machines, eight regular printing machines and five machines for the production of various coloured papers.
3	Paper factory. Owners: Ginsburg and Kohn	Bef. 1870	122	103	300,000	At first, the factory planned to also manufacture paper made from straw. After 1870, the factory gradually expanded, until reaching its current state.
4	Textile-dyeing factory. Owners: Brass (not Jewish)	Bef. 1880	150	21	420,000	
5	Manufacture of iron goods. Owners: Wajnberg & Tempel	Bef. 1880	77	13		Began as a small workshop without a steam-powered machine.
6	Sawmill. Owner: Goldsztajn	Bef. 1880	51		45,000	
7	Beer brewery. Owner: Schwede (not Jewish)	Bef. 1880	50	4	51,000	
8	Match factory. Owners: Hellich & Hoch (not Jewish)	Abt. 1881	45	100	180,000	
9	Button factory. Owner: Grosman	1882	187	147	270,000	At first, this was a small and unimportant factory. Grew and developed from 1891 onwards.
10	Needle and umbrella-rib factory. Owners: Henig & Werde	Aft. 1882	102	82	128,000	

Ser. #	Type of Business and Name of Owner	Year Est.	No. of Male Workers	No. of Female workers	Annual Revenue (roubles)	Details on further development
11	Coloured-paper, lithography, cardboard, wallpaper and paints factory. Owners: Markusfeld Bros.	1880	129	142	365,000	At first, this was a coloured-paper factory with three rooms and which employed only about 20 workers. In 1890, the lithography-workshop was established, and in 1891 – the cardboard and wallpaper factory.
12	Rope and jute sack factory. Owners: Ginsberg & Assoc.	1884	500	900	420,000	At first, only a string factory was established, with just 25 workers. Their number grew in a short time and reached 150-200. Its notable expansion was in 1890, when 20 looms for the production of jute cloth and sacks were brought in, and a further 100 workers were added. In 1892, the factory was rebuilt, another 60 looms were brought in, and the number of employees reached 521. In 1894, the factory already had the number of workers mentioned in this table – and this, after 60 other looms, another 450hp. steam-powered machine and new buildings were added. It is planned to expand the factory in the coming year and bring it to employing 2100 workers.
13	Combed wool spinning-mill. Owner: Peltzer (not Jewish)	1885	900	456	190,000	In 1892, 1000 male and female workers worked in it.
14	Combed wool spinning-mill. Owners: Matte & Assoc. (not Jewish)	1890	405	275	1,265,000	It was only set in motion in 1891, due to lack of buyers for its produce. Now it employs more workers than are listed on the table (about 1000 male and female workers).
15	Iron foundry. Owner: Besser-Bem	1894	47		45,000	In the course of time, the factory's name was changed to " <i>Metalurgia</i> ", and its owners were: Goldsztajn, Kisin, Rozenberg and Szwarc.
16	Factory for celluloid products. Owner: Stanisław Wajnberg	Aft. 1890	30	14	300,000	This factory developed a large export-market all throughout Russia and employed almost exclusively Jewish workers.
17	Mechanical plant. Owner: Rabinowicz	?	12			
18	Brick factory. Owner: Kielich (not Jewish)	1894	60			
19	The " <i>Wulkan</i> " foundry. Owners: Landau & Freger. GM: Eng. Ratner	1895	43	10	400,000	
20	Chemical plant. Owner: Dr Henryk Zaks	Abt. 1890	53		78,000	
21	Wallpaper factory. Owner: Görke (not Jewish)	1895	26			
22	Mechanical plant. Owners: Kanczewscy Bros. (not Jewish)		15		16,000	
23	Brick factory and the steam plant. Owner: Bogustawski (not Jewish)	Bef. 1880	80			

Further along in his article, the professor noted the preparations that were being made (already then!) to establish large factories for the processing of leather, glue etc. and he also stressed that his table did not include factories and workshops which were not under the supervision of the government's industrial inspector, such as factories for albums, ribbons, toys, bricks, furniture, brushes etc., whose number became larger from year to year and which were mostly established by Jews. Amongst those, some did not have large financial means and were able to open and expand only thanks to their initiative and business acumen.

The author marked 1890 as an auspicious year in the development of industry in Częstochowa and its vicinity, through which it truly merited being called an industrial city.

The industrial development especially began to expand after a bridge for trains had been built between "Herby" and the right-hand bank of the Odra River. Various brick-factories, foundries and other mechanical plants were then built.

The number of the city's residents also grew from 20,000 in 1880 to 29,603 permanent residents (and 6,788 temporary ones) in 1892, and 45,000 in 1894. Two years later, in 1896, Częstochowa already had 50,000 permanent residents!

This rapid development also brought about the foundation of various import-export commercial agencies. Two central banks were also opened, as well as numerous private technical offices.

All this caused the prices of land near the factories to increase by more than 200%. Prices of houses also rose similarly, of course.

Young men and women from all the neighbouring villages swarmed to Częstochowa to set themselves up on the financial prosperity that it enjoyed in those years.



An important contribution to our review is from the deceased Sz. Śpiewak (whose article "The Jews in Częstochowa" also appears in our book, in Yiddish).

According to Śpiewak's research, industry in Częstochowa first began with Jews who worked in it, back at the start of the 19th century, making souvenirs in the form of medallions, on which the image of "The Holy Mother" was engraved etc. These were quickly snatched up by the pilgrims to the sacred Catholic sites, who frequently visited Częstochowa. However, by demand of the priests, the authorities forbade Jews to produce and deal in religious, souvenir articles. So the Jews began to manufacture and distribute different toys, which had no ornamentation of a religious character.

The pioneer of this industry (in metal) was Yeshayohu (Szaja), who was trained in Germany and who, in 1843, requested and was granted permission to settle in Częstochowa. He was the first to establish the toy factory and his products reached the vast expanses of Russia, competing there with the famous Nurnberg products.

Year by year, the toy industry expanded and thus the path to manufacturing various accessories for industry and construction was opened. The demand for experts in engraving wood and metal also then increased. Such experts were not yet to be found in Częstochowa and the manufacturers were forced to search for them and invite them in from Germany.

Messrs. Ickowicz and Horowicz, owners of the chain-factory, were the first to bring in experts from Germany and employ them in their factories. This step brought great benefit to industry in Częstochowa, in general, because the craftsmen whom they employed soon learned the trade and they began producing diverse engravings in wood and metal. However, none of these craftsmen were Jews, because the small number of Jews who worked in the factories was denied all access to mechanical departments.

The first to blaze the trail to progress in this field and build engraving workshops were the brothers Abram and Mojsze Weksler - trainees at the crafts school in Częstochowa (the latter also emigrated to Israel and died there in March 1965).

The two brothers provided toy factories with moulds. After a few years, another such operation was opened by the Ofner brothers, which expanded year by year.

After the First World War, such a workshop was also established by Abram Gotlib and his associate, Jonatan Rozenzon. This factory provided wooden and metal moulds to different factories.

These three factories also had many disciples - experts in their trade, who were incorporated into the local factories and earned their livelihoods honourably there.

Some of them were able to emigrate to Israel, to put down roots there and also to help build and operate important industrial complexes there.

Before these factories were established, such work was done by metalworkers, who made the moulds by simple manual work.

Among these, the large metalworking workshop which was established and managed by Mr Balsam is worthy of mention.

The Jews of Częstochowa showed their great prowess in the establishment and development of industry in all its branches and, in addition to the factories mentioned in the list from Prof W. Tokarz's article presented above, a textile-factory was founded in 1883 by Mr Kronenberg and, in 1884, a factory for the production of jute and linen, named "*Stradom*", was set up by owners Oderfeld, Openhajn and Goldsztajn. At first, it employed only 150 male and female workers. In 1902, the factory became a share company and Dr Józef Berlinerblau headed its management. Prior to the First World War, it employed about 2,000 workers. Before the Second World War, in 1939, that number reached around 3,600. However, that number contained not a single Jewish worker, even though its owners were Jewish.

In its field of production, the "*Stradom*" factory was considered as one of the largest in Poland.

As early as 1885, Mr Horowicz and his associates established a factory for construction appliances and furniture and, in 1888, Dr Seweryn Landau established a large factory for celluloid products. One of Szaja Moszkowicz's sons established a cufflinks factory, which was also the first in the whole of Russia.

In 1896, the "*Warta*" textiles factory was established by its owners Grosman, Markusfeld and Kohn. It was one of the largest factories in Poland for jute products. Up until the First World War, it employed 1,500 workers. However, following the loss of the sales market in Russia, its activity was diminished and the number of its workers decreased to 1,200.

In 1897, Izydor Gajsler established a large glass factory in Wyczerpy (next to Częstochowa) and employed 750 workers.

In 1912, Izydor Zygmant and Mordche and Roman Markowicz established a large textiles and wallpaper factory in Gnaszyn (7 kms from Częstochowa). It employed 1,150 workers, among them, 45 Jews. This factory supplied the Polish army with all its necessities and its products were also sent abroad, including to the Far East.

In 1919, Jakób Lewit established the "*Lewelen*" factory and employed 300 workers, among them 55 Jews. (Mr Lewit is in Israel and is the owner of the wool-spinning plant "*Yaakov Lewit & Sons*" in Petah-Tikva).

In 1922, Messrs. Kongrecki and Kohn established a pram factory called "*Kankan*", which grew to become one of the largest factories in Poland. It employed 200 workers, among them 80 Jews.

Over the course of time, six more pram factories were established in Częstochowa, three of which were established by Jews. Their products excelled in quality and were exported abroad.

In 1929, Szachna Borensztajn (now in Israel) established the "*Koyulen*" [?] factory, which mainly produced cloth for tailoring. At first, 60 workers, among them 34 Jews, were employed in this factory, but the fierce competition that prevailed at the time slowly, affected its activity.

The industrialist Altman was the first to compete with German and Swedish products in the field of skates and succeeded in conquering the Polish market for his goods.

In 1930, there were already seven skates-factories in Częstochowa, five of which belonged to Jews.

Roofing felt factories were also established in Częstochowa, owned by Bem, Berliner, Tenenbaum & Rozenchwajg, and Rajcher.

Among the largest and most important factories, the liquid carbonic acid and dry-ice factory "*Henryków*" is noteworthy. It was established by Zvi Szpaltyn (who lives in Israel). Another is the mangle factory which Jechiel Landau and his brothers established. Sometime later, an additional factory was built and both of them, together with a third factory in Warsaw, organised joint sales, which greatly aided the development of the all three.

In Częstochowa there were also sleeve-button and cufflinks (*spinki*) factories. The first was established as early as 1890 by the son of the industrial pioneer, Szaja.

Bicycle-parts factories were also established and the largest of them was "*Metras*", owned by M. Rozenstajn and associates. It employed 76 workers - all Jewish.

Among the toothbrush factories, "*Kosmos*" is noteworthy. It was owned by B. Ajzner, Markowicz, Kaufman and the Szajkiewicz brothers. Its products excelled in quality and were favourably known throughout the country and even abroad.

There were also leather-processing factories (tanneries) in the city and the largest of these was owned by Józef Kaufman. It began in one of the city's alleyways. It later expanded and moved to a large building in Kule, a suburb of Częstochowa.

Besides the large celluloid factories mentioned, Częstochowa round 200 workshops for the production of celluloid haberdashery - all were established by Jews.

In his research on industry in Częstochowa, Mr Śpiewak relied on the official 1923 report, according to which he set the number of Jews in industry, during those years, as follows:

Of the city's industrial plants (large and small), Jews owned 20 metal goods, 4 textile, 7 celluloid, 4 cloth fasteners, 5 toys, 3 wood-processing, 3 mirrors, 2 roofing felt, 1, paper, 1 wallpaper, 1 bricks, 1 sawmill and 2 glue factories.

We must note here that, during the course of years and until 1939, many additional and diverse manufacturing factories and even ten or twenty times as many as are mentioned in the above report.

At the end of our review, we publish (in [Heb.] alphabetical order by profession) a list of our city's factories and workshops and the names of their owners. This has been composed from that which was preserved in the memories of the city's elders and activists – Messrs Abram Gotlib, Dawid Koniecpoler and Zvi Szpaltyn and the “*Book Committee*” extends its thanks to them for their instrumental work.

A List of Factories and Workshops, and Their Owners up to the Holocaust

1. Albums: Tendler.
2. Rag-dolls: Mendel Gotlib, Szyja Srebrnik & Leibisz Sztajnfeld.
3. Dolls and toys: Bratt Bros., Hendel Hocherman, Hocherman, Hamburger & Sztyller, Wajsberg & Danziger, Zeligzon, Seweryn Landau, Ferleger, Fridman, Kaufman, Rozenberg, Ruzewicz, Ringelblum, Izaak Szaja, Szmulewicz.
4. Tannery: Józef Kaufman.
5. Screws for wood and metal: Ickowicz & Guterman, Izaak Altman.
6. Bicycle parts: Imich, Ofman, Altman, Berkowicz, “*Braland*” (Landau Bros.), Deres, Wajman “*Metras*” (M. Rozensztajn & partner and Dawid Kongrecki).
7. Cufflinks: Altman, Bromberg, Maurycy Rozensztajn, Motel Rozensztajn, H. Szaja, Jutusz [?] Szaja and Izaak Szaja.
8. Groats mills: Michał Besserglik, Zborowski, Zytnicki & Fizman.
9. Flour mills: Bresler, Godl Zilberszac, Epszajtyn, Leibel Kantor, Kurland Bros. & Rubinsztajn.
10. Textiles: “*Gnaszyńska Manufaktura*” (textiles and wallpaper), owners: Zygmant & Markowicz, “*Warta*” (jute), owners: Grosman, Markusfeld & Kohn, “*Lewelen*” (wool-spinning), owner: Jakób Lewit, “*Stradom*” (jute and linen), owners: Oderfeld, Openhajm & Goldsztajn, “*Koyulen*” (cloth for tailoring), owner: Sz. Borensztajn.
11. Hats: “*Kapeluszarnia*” factory, owners: Markusfeld family, B. Lewkowicz.
12. Tools and measures: “*Meter*” Ltd., owners: Szpaltyn Bros., Faktor Bros.
13. Skullcap factory: “*Trancjla*” [?] owners: Wajnman & Wajnberg, and Landau's “*J.Sz.B.*”.
14. Buttons: “*Roboniti*” [?], Grosman Bros., Nechemie Epszajtyn.
15. Bricks and roof tiles: Bernard Helman & Sons, Zandberg, Jochimowicz & Rozenchwajg.
16. Brushes: Guterman, Handelsman, Mojsze Rozenchwajg, Szylit & Szlezinger.
17. Toothbrushes: “*Kosmos*”, owners: Ajzner, Markowicz & Szajkewicz, Kaufman.
18. Moulds: Abram Gotlib & Jonatan Rozenzon, Działośzyński, Weksler Bros. & Moszkowicz.
19. Needles and umbrellas: Henig & Werde, Wajnman.
20. Skates and wringers: Altman “*Braland*”, owners: Landau Bros.
21. Saw mills: Zygmant, Rozenchwajg & Rajchman, Dawid Zvi Zilberszac, Szulim Zilberszac, Jakób Zilbersztajn & Ferster, Mitelman, Faktor Bros.

22. Locks and chains: Ickowicz, Horowicz, Engel & Rajchman.
23. Frames: Brzoza, B. Lewkowicz & Mendel Lewkowicz.
24. Harmonicas of all kinds: Bryll, Hocherman, Hamburger & Szyller, Wajnman, Koniarski, Kaufman, Szaja & Szpaltyn.
25. Chemical plants: glue, the owners: Markusfeld & Rotsztajn. "Paulina" glass, owners: Gajsler, Zeryker & Pozniak. Acids: Dr Henryk Zaks. Paper: Fajga Bros. Soap: Dziobas & Fiszel, Broniatowski & Sons. Liquid carbonic acid and dry-ice: "Henryków" Ltd., owner: Zvi Szpaltyn. Paints: Dr Wolberg & Son.
26. Mirrors: Imich & Grylak, Bezbrodsko, Bryll & Hocherman, Waga & Stopnicki, Sercarsz, Epelbaum.
27. Soft drinks: - beer brewery – Leibisz Frydrych, and other drinks: Essig, Fiszhalter & Sons, Cukerman, Rotbart.
28. Eyeglasses: Herman Szaja.
29. Lime kilns: Dobrzynski, Szmul Zeliwer, Lypszyc.
30. Metal (foundries): "Wulkan", owners: Landau & Freger and GM, Eng. Ratner; "Metalurgia", owners: Goldsztajn, Kisin, Rozenberg & Szwarc; "Enroy" [?], owner: Rotsztajn.
31. Paper and roofing felt: "Beatus" (paper sacks) printing press and lithography, owner: Oderfeld & Kohn. Paper and wallpaper factory, owners: Markusfeld Bros. Paper factory, owner: Dr Leopold Kohn.
32. Roofing felt factory, owners: Bem, Berliner, Tenenbaum & Rozenchwajg, Rajcher. "Tul" roofing felt factory, owners: Landau & Szwarcbaum, Rozenchwajg.
33. Ribbons: Szlezinger.
34. Prams: Grosman Bros., Wolfowicz & Ptr.; "Kankan" factory, owners: Kohn & Kongrecki.
35. Fountain pens: Guterman & Fligelman; "Omega" – Waga & Wrocławski, Zborowska.
36. Regular pens: Jutusz Szaja.
37. Wood processing: Deres; "Strug" factory, Lajchter & Kopinski, Szpaltyn Bros.
38. Copper rolling: Borensztajn & Rotbart.
39. Celluloid (various operations) owned by: Glazer, Stanisław Wajnberg & Son, Zeligzon, Seweryn Landau, Lewkowicz, Lewkowicz & Son, Mytz-Epsztajn, Fridman, Chaim Kenigsberg, Sztajnhart & Szpic.
40. Metal toys, owned by: Ofner, Hocherman & Hamburger, Weksler Bros., Edelist, Koniarski & Izaak Szaja.
41. Wall-clocks: Chananie Goldberg.