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## Sources in the State Archives in Częstochowa for Researching the History of the Częstochowa Jewish Community to 1939

The State Archives in Częstochowa is an institution which was established by the Minister of Education on 21st July 1950. One of its main tasks is to collect, preserve and make available material from the region of the former Częstochowa Province, which existed between 1975 and 1998. Material stored in the Archives derives from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, with a small number of documents from the 17th and 18th centuries. The most important archives include state and local government administrative records (general and special), amongst which, deserving of special attention, are the *Records of the City of Częstochowa* from the years 1759–1948, records of judicial institutions (courts and prosecutors' offices), notaries' records, records of industrial plant, craft guilds, banks, cooperatives and registries of various religions.

Despite the fact that there are a good many gaps in the stored collections (a lack of records from 19th century provincial and gubernatorial institutions and records from the periods of both World Wars), material from the State Archives in Częstochowa constitutes an invaluable cultural legacy and resource for researching the history of Częstochowa and its region. The resources of the State Archives in Częstochowa now comprise 1,132 archival units, numbering 251,938 archival units with a size of more than 3 kilometres of files<sup>1</sup>.

Similar to other institutions, our pre-1939 archive also contains sources for researching the history of the Jews. Some of these resources have been explored in detail while others, however, still await further researching. In 2001, the Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych (the Managing Authority of State Archives) circulated a collective publication entitled *Źródła archiwalne do badań dziejów Żydów w Polsce (Archival Sources for Researching the History of Jews in Poland)*<sup>2</sup>, which had collected the preliminary results of research conducted, within all State Archives in Poland, on the subject of Judaica. The publication contains an article by Przemysław Snoch<sup>3</sup>, being the results of his preliminary research.

In 2004, further research was conducted by Archive Director Elżbieta Surma-Jończyk, the results of which were presented in the exhibition *Żydzi Częstochowianie (The Jews of Częstochowa)*, and later in a conference and in the publication "The Jews of Częstochowa - Co-existence, Holocaust, Memory. An Academic Conference, Częstochowa 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> April 2004"<sup>4</sup>. The exhibition was first displayed in Częstochowa and in Warsaw,

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<sup>1</sup> Por. F. Sobalski, *Dzieje Częstochowy i województwa częstochowskiego: Informator o materiałach w archiwach państwowych*, Częstochowa 1992 („Ziemia Częstochowska”, 19); tenże, *Dawne Archiwum Miejskie Częstochowy*, Częstochowa 2005.

<sup>2</sup> B. Woszczyński i V. Urbaniak (ed.), *Źródła archiwalne do badań dziejów Żydów w Polsce*, Warsaw 2001.

<sup>3</sup> P. Snoch, *Materiały do dziejów Żydów w zasobie Archiwum Państwowego w Częstochowie*, [in:] *ibid.*, pp. 109–114.

<sup>4</sup> E. Surma-Jończyk, *Źródła archiwalne do dziejów częstochowskich Żydów*, [in:] J. Mizgalski (ed.), with a foreword by Sigmund Rolat, *Żydzi Częstochowianie – współistnienie, Holocaust, pamięć. Konferencja naukowa. Częstochowa 22–23 kwietnia 2004 r.*, Częstochowa, 2006, pp. 233–249.

and later in the United States of America (in, among other cities, New York, New Jersey and Cincinnati), before returning to Częstochowa. The exhibition's return to the city on the Warta and the idea of providing a permanent home for an exhibition on the history of Częstochowa Jews became a monograph for motivating further research after 2004. That task was undertaken by Ewa Dubaj, Manager of Department I of the State Archive in Częstochowa. She systemised documents which had been discovered earlier and broadened that research by including material which had been included into the archive inventory after 2004<sup>5</sup>.

Preliminary archival research conducted at the end of 2015 and the start of 2016, encompassed not only archival resources, but also the Archive's library collection. This was because this rich library collection contains legal documents which regulated the functioning of the Jewish community in the Duchy of Warsaw and in the Congress Kingdom of Poland. Especially valuable to historians is the almost complete collection of orders, issued, by the authorities, contained within the Law Gazettes of the Kalisz Department<sup>6</sup> from the years 1809-1844 and in the Law Gazettes of the Congress Kingdom of Poland<sup>7</sup> from the years 1818-1870. They include legal documents such as:

- a decree by King Fryderyk August, dated 17th October 1808, suspending, for a period of ten years, the rights of the Jewish people<sup>8</sup>;
- a decree by Tsar Aleksander I, dated 27th March 1821, on the matter of surnames for Jews<sup>9</sup>;
- a decree by Tsar Aleksander I, dated 1<sup>st</sup> January 1822, terminating Jewish *kehillas*<sup>10</sup>;
- a decree by Tsar Aleksander I, dated 20<sup>th</sup> June 1822, on the organisation of homes for Jews in cities<sup>11</sup> and
- a decision by Tsar Nikolas I, dated 9th November 1853, forbidding Jewish women from shaving their heads prior to getting married<sup>12</sup>.

The Archive library also contains, albeit in a fragmentary quantity, copies of Jewish newspapers published in Częstochowa, among them being *Das Naje Wort (The New Word)*, *Unzer Czenstochower Express (Our Częstochowa Express)* and *Częstochower Cajtung (The Częstochowa Newspaper)*, as well as an almost complete collection of *Goniec Częstochowski*

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<sup>5</sup> Niniejszy artykuł jest więc zaktualizowaną wersją tekstu Elżbiety Surmy-Jończyk cytowanego w poprzednim przypisie.

<sup>6</sup> The Law Gazette of the Kalisz Department began in 1807. In 1817, its name was changed to the Law Gazette of the Kalisz Province and from 1837 it was known as the Law Gazette of the Warsaw, Governate.

<sup>7</sup> The Law Gazette of the Congress Kingdom of Poland was issued in the years 1815–1871.

<sup>8</sup> “Art. 1: For the next ten years, we suspend the political rights of the Jewish residents of Our Duchy in the hope that, during that time, they will remove the hallmarks which distinguish them from other residents. Art. 2: The above regulation will not, however, prevent Us from permitting specific persons of that faith, prior to the passage of the time mentioned above, from enjoying political rights when, on Our high favour, they have discharged those condition which, in a separate device, we will order concerning the people of the Jewish faith”. (...) Law Gazette of the Kalisz Department No. 2, dated 8th January 1809 – No. inv. 1, p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> “Every Jew residing within the Congress Kingdom of Poland should, within six months of the declaration date of this Act, declare and confirm, on the public offices' census, the first name and surname which he has used and that which he will, continuously, use in the future (...) Whoever has never had or cannot prove he has had his or her name should declare the name he will take and continue to use henceforth”. (Law Gazette of the Congress Kingdom of Poland 1820, No. 30, pp.134-139).

<sup>10</sup> “In order to prevent continuing complaints from all sides of Orthodox Jewry, regarding the pressuring and oppressing of the poor by previous *kehillas*, and given the submissions of Governmental Commissions regarding the abolition of these *kehillas* following the establishment of synagogue supervisors, we have decided: Art. 1: From the declaration date of this order, all so-called *kehillas* in Orthodox Jewish communities, operating within Our cities, will be abolished”. (Law Gazette of the Congress Kingdom of Poland, Vol. 7, 1820, No. 31, pp. 275-278).

<sup>11</sup> Law Gazette of the Congress Kingdom of Poland, Vol. 7, 1820, No. 32, pp. 384-389.

<sup>12</sup> Law Gazette of the Congress Kingdom of Poland, Vol. 47, 1853, No. 143, p. 29.

(*The Częstochowa Messenger*)<sup>13</sup>, a newspaper published in Częstochowa between 1906 and 1939. This last collection provides a rich collection of material for researching the relations between the Jewish and the Polish communities.

Amongst the oldest records preserved in the archives, the municipal local government records are dominant. This group of records is, in fact, the largest collection of records preserved in the State Archives in Częstochowa. This collection is entitled *The Records of the City of Częstochowa* and comprises more than 14,000 individual archives from the years 1759-1948, containing within it the most diverse information on the activities of the Jewish community in Częstochowa.

Following the abolition order dated 20/12/1821 (01/01/1822), all *kehillas* within the Congress Kingdom of Poland, on the order of the Kingdom's Viceroy on 20/11/1822, were replaced by Jewish community council, initially called "parishes" and then later "synagogue districts". These councils performed many functions linked not only to the religious life of the community, but also with the establishment and running of hospitals, poorhouses, care for orphans and the elderly, plus the maintenance of cemeteries and primary schools. They were also able to collect and distribute membership fees. Moreover, these councils represented their communities to state and municipal authorities, issued "Certificates of Poverty", certifications for the obtaining of passports, etc.

The oldest, individual records from the Old Polish Period relating to the Jewish community in Częstochowa can be found in the Częstochowa Registers of Property Transactions<sup>14</sup>. In addition, in this section, one can find a large number of archival documents from the beginning of the 19th century which include correspondence regarding the granting, to Orthodox Jews, permission to settle within the city, leasing income matters, inventories following the deaths of Orthodox Jews and the care of orphans following the deaths of their parents. Amongst the most significant documents are *A List of Orthodox Jews Who Have Illegally Insinuated Themselves Into the City*, dated 10th August 1826, containing the names of 90 individuals<sup>15</sup>, as well as *A List of Names of Registered Orthodox Jews, Aged From 20 to 30, Including Those Counted by the City Mayor in 1865*, containing 178 names<sup>16</sup>.

Within *Evidence of Synagogue Cash Fund Accounts in the City of Częstochowa*, for the year 1841, one can find, among other things, accounts for medicines for the Jewish Hospital from the pharmacy of F. Kamiński, accounts for the renovation of the ritual bath, for the renovation of the school, for the accompaniment of the Cantor, a list of expenses relating to the treatment of the Jew Josef Wolf in the Municipal Hospital, a list of poor Jews to whom flour for Pesach had been distributed, as well as information supplied by the synagogue supervisors showing that income from weddings in 1841 was put towards the rabbi's salary.

*A Listing of the Existing Real Estate and Assets Owned, in 1830, by the Kehilla of the City of Częstochowa* shows that, at the time, the Jewish Community Council owned:

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<sup>13</sup> *Goniec Częstochowski (Częstochowa Messenger)* – a socio-cultural daily newspaper published by Franciszek Dionizy Wilkoszewski, originally under the name *Wiadomości Częstochowskie (Częstochowa News)*, *Dziennik (The Daily)*, *Dziennik Częstochowski* and, from 01/01/1907, *Goniec Częstochowski (Częstochowa Messenger)*.

<sup>14</sup> APCz, Records of the City of Częstochowa, Ref. 1, *Księga radziecka miasta Częstochowy 1759–1765* and Ref. 14346, *Księga miejska Częstochowy 1766–1774*.

<sup>15</sup> APCz, Record of the City of Częstochowa, Ref. 33.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Ref. 224.

- “a brick synagogue comprising a section for men and a section for me”;
- “a brick public school”;
- “a brick public baths”;
- “a brick public hospital”;
- “a cemetery encircled by a wall”;
- “a vaulted archive”.

Individual items were included in a detailed listing of owned equipment<sup>17</sup>. *Records of Synagogue Interests* for the years 1834-1846 are supplemented by records of *Synagogue Cash Accounts* for the years 1843-1847, with proofs of accounts for income and expenditure of synagogue funds for the years 1835-1847.

There are quite a number of similar records from the Russian period, namely records generated after 1867, i.e. expenses incurred on behalf of the community, taxation arrears, Jewish community council budgets and records relating to *cheders* – for example:

- *Synagogues, synagogue caretaking and other synagogue expenses* - 1883–1884<sup>18</sup>;
- *Rabbinic and synagogue, synagogue caretaking and other synagogue fees* - 1883–1884<sup>19</sup>;
- *Fees regarding the rabbinate, the synagogues and the cheders* - 1887–1888<sup>20</sup>.

A group of material important to the researching of the history of Częstochowa Jews includes the *Registers of Permanent Resident of the City of Częstochowa*, covering the years 1870-1930. These registers, indexed alphabetically, include a great deal of valuable information about individuals and about entire families, such as date and place of birth, date and place of death, marital status, social origins and religion<sup>21</sup>.

Within the *Records of the City of Częstochowa*, materials can also be found regarding:

- education within the Częstochowa a Jewish community, including records concerning *cheders* from 1887-1894 and 1902-1903<sup>22</sup>, records of the *Towarzystwo Opieki Szkolnej* (The School Welfare Society)<sup>23</sup>, the *Związek Szerzenia Oświaty wśród Żydów* (The Union for Spreading Education Amongst Jews)<sup>24</sup>, the *Szkoła Przemysłowa Rzemieślnicza dla Żydów w Częstochowie* (The Industrial Trade School for Jews in Częstochowa)<sup>25</sup>, the *Szkoła Doksztalcająca Zawodowa dla Terminatorów Żydowskich* (The Trade School for Jewish Apprentices)<sup>26</sup>, the *szkoła elementarna Talmud Tora* (the Talmud Torah elementary school) from the years 1915-1918<sup>27</sup>, elementary schools, together with schedules and timetables of school activities<sup>28</sup>,

<sup>17</sup> For example, in the hospital, there was: *a large pot and two smaller copper pots, a bed with bedding, an eiderdown, pillows and sheets, three black mattresses, two iron spades, a bier, a funeral car with a black coffin stand.*

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Ref. 734.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Ref. 759.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., Ref. 825.

<sup>21</sup> Thanks to these entries, we can establish, among other things, the dates when Rabbi Nachum Asz and his wife Sura (nee Arensztejn) were born, and that Sura died in Częstochowa on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1928. A note in the register indicates that she was issued with death certificate No.21/1928.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., Ref. 836, 856, 906, 970, 995, 1019, 1218, 1243.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., Ref. 4921, 7121.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., Ref. 4929, 7433, 7434.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., Ref. 7474, 8138.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., Ref. 7474.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., Ref. 7408.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., Ref. 4907, 4912, 4913, 4918, 4919, 4922, 4931, 4939, 7410.

courses for the illiterate<sup>29</sup> and the payment of wages to teachers of religion in the city's religious schools in 1916<sup>30</sup>;

- health and social welfare, among others, the Jewish Hospital in Zawodzie for the years 1907-1913<sup>31</sup>, the *Towarzystwo Dobroczynności dla Żydów* (the Welfare for Jews Association), the *Robotnicza Strzecha Dziecięcej* (the Workers' Children's Shelter), the *Towarzystwo Ochrony Zdrowia Ludności Żydowskiej* (The Society for Health Care for the Jewish Population)<sup>32</sup> (correspondence, constitution), the *Zakład kąpielowego braci Kremskich* (the Kremski Brothers Baths Complex)<sup>33</sup>;
- commercial life, including lists of workers in Częstochowa enterprises, e.g. the *Wykaz handli i przedsiębiorstw ulicami* (A Listing of Traders and Enterprises by Street) from 1879<sup>34</sup>, a listing of 1914 companies<sup>35</sup> as well as listings of Jewish craftsmen from, for example, 1928<sup>36</sup>;
- day-to-day life, including the participation of the Jewish community in events important to the city like, for example, the visit of Marshall Foch in 1923 and President Mościcki in 1932<sup>37</sup> or celebrations marking the anniversary of Poland regaining its independence<sup>38</sup>.

In addition, the *Records of the City of Częstochowa* contain more than 3,000 individual sets of archival records concerning investment in construction, i.e. technical plans, cost estimates, rough plans, maps of sites, etc. That documentation, held within the collection of the Technical Department, contains valuable supplementary information to the actual records. Apart from plans for houses and small industrial plants, it also contains plans for Jewish institutions, organisations and associations, including the 1926 plans for the building of a vinegar factory owned by S. Częstochowski and J. Nussbaum, a 1934 plan for premises for Kenigsberg for the manufacture of chemical-galvanised-technical products, a plan for the construction of a single-storey building on land belonging to a gardening firm at ul. Rolnicza 89 in Częstochowa in 1935<sup>39</sup>, plans to add showers to the existing Kremski Brother Baths complex, a building plan for the Trade School for Jews at ulica Nadrzeczna 7 in 1938<sup>40</sup>, a plan for the reconstruction of a laundry and boiler room for the Jewish hospital in Zawodzie in 1933<sup>41</sup> or the addition of a boiler room to the property at ul. Garibaldiego 18 in 1933<sup>42</sup>.

Register records from the beginning of the 19th century form an important archival resource. Civil registries and registers were introduced, together with the Napoleonic Code, into the Congress Kingdom of Poland. In 1808, Fryderyk August, Saxon king and prince of

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., Ref. 4922, 4939, 7456.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., Ref. 7087.

<sup>31</sup> Among others, transfer of land for the construction of a hospital, a map of the land, lists of patients; also Ref. 2717, 7525, 7630.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., Ref. 7393, 7528, 7923.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., Ref. 8360, 8363.

<sup>34</sup> Her can be found "Wykaz pracujących w Drukarni W. Kohna i A. Oderfelda" (Ibid., Ref. 3331).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., Ref. 4934.

<sup>36</sup> From a list of 1,197 registered craftsmen who are running their own workshops within the city of Częstochowa (Ibid., Ref. 8680).

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., Ref. 5258, 8038.

<sup>38</sup> In correspondence regarding celebrations to be held in the synagogue (Ibid., Ref. 5287, 7874).

<sup>39</sup> APCz, Records of the City of Częstochowa, Technical Department, Ref. 9859, 12199, 12531.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., Ref. 10992, 13527.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., Ref. 11632, 11762.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., Ref. 11857 (the Mikveh was located at this site).

Warsaw, decreed the introduction of civil registry records. In principle, secular registrars were to maintain registers. However, due to a lack of appropriately educated individuals, it was left to clergymen to perform the task. This state of affairs continued until 1825, when civil registry records were merged with church registers. By a decision of the viceroy, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1825, local mayors were appointed to create records for non-Christians, including Jews. Additionally, by a decision of the Administrative Council on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1830, rabbis were obliged to create a record following their conducting of a religious rite.

Civil registers contain many items of valuable personal information, i.e. age, marital status, profession, parents' address, baptised children, newly-weds, surnames and marital status of witnesses to various events and even, in some instances, the cause of a death<sup>43</sup>.

The State Archives in Częstochowa store the *Akta Stanu Cywilnego Okręgu Bóżniczego w Częstochowie z lat 1826–1915 (Civil Register of Local Synagogues in Częstochowa 1826-1915)*, which consists of 391 individual archives, containing records of births, deaths and marriages. Amongst them, there are also a certain number of records containing proofs and annexes to marriage records. They also contain the birth records of individuals coming from outside the council area, death records of spouses where widows or widowers were remarrying and divorce documents, etc., which could confirm the eligibility of both parties to remarry.

Records for Jews, dating prior to 1826, can be found within *Akta Stanu Cywilnego Parafii Rzymskokatolickiej św. Zygmunta w Częstochowie (The Civil Register of the Roman Catholic Parish of St. Zygmunt in Częstochowa)*, in which the oldest notations date back to 1808<sup>44</sup>. This valuable information concerning the beginnings of Jewish settlement in Częstochowa is complemented by annexes to marriage records from 1809 to 1826. In the main, information contained in these documents concern events from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and served the needs of the Częstochowa Jewish Council of Elders in ascertaining the eligibility of two people to get married. Today, it represents a valuable research resource for, among others, genealogists.

An important historical source, unfairly undervalued and hence rarely used by researchers, are the notary records. This legacy left by Częstochowa's notaries is extremely rich. The twenty three notary offices which operated in Częstochowa between 1809 and 1945 left a rich amount of material for research<sup>45</sup>. These include sale-purchase contracts, prenuptial agreements, wills, testimonies, donations, etc. There is a particularly large amount of material from the city's range of commercial and social life, as well as wills to which lists of the deceased's assets are often attached, along with instructions as to how to distribute them. Over many years, Dariusz Złotkowski<sup>46</sup> researched the wills contained in the Częstochowa State Archives. His research indicates that, although in 1808, Jews constituted only 26% of the population of Old Częstochowa, their participation in its commercial life was significant.

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<sup>43</sup> J. Dziwoki, *Księgi metrykalne wyznania mojżeszowego w zbiorach Archiwum Państwowego w Częstochowie*, [in:] J. Mizgalski, M. Soja (ed.), *Tożsamość a stereotypy. Żydzi i Polacy*, Częstochowa 2014, pp. 144–155.

<sup>44</sup> W *Księdze urodzeń Parafii Częstochowskiej w powiecie częstochowskim departamencie kaliskim z lat 1808/1809* contained the birth records of fifteen Jews, the first of them is Record No.2 of 1809 (APCz, Civil Registry of Roman Catholic Parish of St. Zygmunt in Częstochowa, Ref. 1).

<sup>45</sup> The subjects of commercial transactions were not only real estate or raw materials, but also synagogues benches, e.g. Notary record No. 253/1821 (APCz, The Notary Office of Antoni Truszkowski in Częstochowa).

<sup>46</sup> He published the results of his research in a three-part publication entitled *Wiedząc dobrze to z wyroków Boga Najwyższego, iż kto się rodzi, umierać musi.... Testamenty z pierwszej połowy XIX wieku w świetle akt notariuszy częstochowskich*, published in 2005, 2006, 2011.

Also, amongst the special civil records are those produced by the *Urząd Skarbowy w Częstochowie* (*Censtochovskoe Kazennoe Upravlenije – Częstochowa Taxation Office*) from 1829 to 1873<sup>47</sup>. They contain interesting material regarding regulations concerning the collection of a Kosher Tax, records concerning rental income and matter of “abuse” (e.g. *records of falsifying Bavarian beer*). *Records Concerning the Propination Income of Orthodox Jews in Towns and Villages* for the period 1829–1865 or *Records Concerning the Kosher Tax Regulations in the Congress Kingdom of Poland* between 1843 and 1859. These are examples of materials which aid research into the socio-economic conditions in 19th century Poland. Moreover, the records contained in *Towarzystwo Kredytowe Miasta Częstochowy* (*The Loan Society of the City of Częstochowa*) for the years 1899–1950 include those concerning loans for the purchase of real estate. These can be used to reconstruct the topography of Jewish ownership in the city<sup>48</sup>.

The largest and most diverse number of sources, for researching the history of the Jewish community of Częstochowa, emanate from the inter-War period. Only the most important of these will be discussed here. Amongst those are, above all, are the general and special administrative records.

The general administrative records to 1939 in the State Archives in Częstochowa are represented by district (*powiat*) level institutions. The oldest and most diverse of these can be found in *Starostwo Powiatowe Częstochowskie z lat 1919–1939* (*Częstochowa District Office 1919-1939*), where one can find records relating to that Office’s activities, covering the territory comprising Częstochowa (excluding the Grodzkie district), Janów, Krzepice, Mstów, Olsztyn and Przyrow, as well as twenty-two village councils. Among the 1,145 individual archives, one can find material relating to Jewish organisations and associations which were active in Częstochowa, These include:

- Związku Żydowskich Inwalidów Wojennych, Wdow i Sierot Wojennych (The Union of Jewish War Invalids, Widows and Orphans)<sup>49</sup>
- Stowarzyszenia „Szomraj Szabos W’hadas” – Przestrzeganie Soboty i Głównych Zasad Religii (“Shomrei Shabbos Ve Hadas” Association for the Keeping of Saturdays and the Main Principles of the Religion),
- Stowarzyszenia Kobiet Żydowskich *WIZO* Oddział w Częstochowie (The Częstochowa branch of *WIZO*, a Jewish women’s organisation),
- Towarzystwa Ochrony Zdrowia Ludności Żydowskiej Oddział w Częstochowie (The Częstochowa branch of the Society for the Protection of the Health of the Jewish Population)<sup>50</sup>
- Żydowskiego Związku Handlu Starzyzną (Jewish Union of Junk Traders)<sup>51</sup>.

The unit designated with reference number 47 contains material concerning the registration of various Jewish associations, such as the Jewish Trade Union of Master Bakers, the “Strzecha Robotnicza” Association, The Committee to Aid Jewish Students – “Auxilium Academicum Judaicum” branch in Częstochowa, the Special Bible Learning Association, the

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<sup>47</sup> The Tax Office probably already existed in Częstochowa from the time of the Duchy of Warsaw. It ceased activity in 1873. A residual collection remains comprising fifty five individual archives.

<sup>48</sup> The association was established in 1898 and, until 1918, operated under the name *Čenstochovskoe Gorodskoe Kreditnoe Obsčestvo*. However, during World War II, it was called *Tschenstochauer Stadtische Kreditverein*.

<sup>49</sup> APCz, Starostwo Powiatowe w Częstochowie, Ref. 43, 49, included here are items of correspondence regarding registration of unions and their constitutions.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., Ref. 48, m.in. statut stowarzyszenia „Szomraj Szabos”.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., Ref. 65.

“Ahava Torah” Association, The Jewish Gymnastics-Sports Association, The Association Against Exceptional Pain “Beis-Lachem” branch in Częstochowa and the Jewish Hiking Association<sup>52</sup>.

Moreover, in this section, one can also find a large amount of material concerning prayer-houses located in various parts of the city, some with sketches or plans of the buildings, minutes of the District Office’s Sanitary Committee, correspondence concerning permission to conduct prayer services and various certifications issued by the Jewish Community Council<sup>53</sup>. In one file, entitled “*Sprawy Gminy Wyznaniowej Żydowskiej*” (“*Jewish Community Council Matters*”) from 1922-1929, one can find the registration cards of Jewish temples, among them the Community Synagogue (the “Old Synagogue”) at ul. Nadrzeczna 32 and the Nowa Synagoga (the “New Synagogue”) at ul. Wilsona 11 and of the clergy, including Chief Rabbi Nachum Asz and Rabbis J. Prokosz, N. Grynfield and J. Klajnplatz. There is also the registration card for the Jewish Community Council in Częstochowa which includes details such as offices, date of formation, address, number of prayer-houses, information regarding the Council’s assets, the number of members, its annual budget, the composition of the Council’s Board and the composition of the Council itself<sup>54</sup>.

In another archival file there are the records of elections to the Board and Committee of the Jewish Community Council of Częstochowa from the years 1930-1932<sup>55</sup>.

Among items within “*Zmiany wyznań*” (“*Change of Faith*”) from 1922-1934, one can find correspondence, including several applications, to the District Administrator for the registration of a change of religion (from Jewish to Catholic, or vice-versa), as well as the renouncing of the Jewish faith so as to register as a non-believer<sup>56</sup>.

This section also contains documents for researching the economic life of Częstochowa during the inter-War period, including Jewish entrepreneurs. For example, there is correspondence with the District Administrator on various commercial matters, plans for factories and small industrial plants and industrial certifications<sup>57</sup>. Although in a much smaller quantity, there is material for researching cultural issues such as the history of the Jewish Workers Library (correspondence from the years 1928-1930 regarding the library, a list of books) and plans for Wolberg’s cinema-theatre on al. Marii Panny 12, from 1923<sup>58</sup>.

The administration records also include the *Wydział Powiatowy w Częstochowie z lat 1919-1939* (*Częstochowa District Department 1919-1939*). Here one can find material which includes Jews such as, lists of the unemployed, lists of city and town councillors, merchants, doctors and farmers.

Another group of records encompasses the *Starostwo Grodzkie Częstochowskie z lat 1933-1939* (*Częstochowa District Town Office 1933-1939*), in which can be found material concerning religious councils such as council budgets from specific years, members of boards

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., Ref. 47, including correspondence regarding organisation registrations and status confirmations, constitutions, lists of founders and board members.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., Ref. 364, 365, 366.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., Ref. 366.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., Ref. 367.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., Ref. 368.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., Ref. 537, 542.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., Ref. 76. “Teatr u Wolbergów” – the colloquial name used by city residents. Its first official name was the “Apollo Theatre”, later, from 1915, the “Teatr Nowości” and, finally, from 1919 “Teatr Polonia”



and committees, council registration cards, lists of clergy and places of worship, as well as correspondence on matters such as the creation of prayer-houses<sup>59</sup>.

The minutes of meetings of the Jewish Community Council deserve special attention. They include drafts of budgets as well as material regarding Jewish guilds such as the Guild of Jewish Tinsmiths and Roofers, the Guild of Jewish Hairdressers and Wigmakers<sup>60</sup>, the Guild of Jewish Tailors, the Guild of Jewish Furriers and Milliners<sup>61</sup>, the Guild of Jewish Metalworkers, the Guild of Jewish Bakers and Pastry Cooks<sup>62</sup>, the Guild of Jewish Butchers and Smallgoods Makers<sup>63</sup>, the Guild of Jewish Leather Workers, the Guild of Jewish Carpenters and Turners and the Guild of Jewish Upholsterers and Brush-makers<sup>64</sup>.

The above material also contains the minutes of guild meetings, constitutions, budget balance sheets, lists of members and amounts of fees paid.

Other files worth attention are those entitled “*Personel sanitarny: lekarze, dentyści, farmaceuci, felczerzy*” (“*Sanitary Personnel: Doctors, Dentists, Pharmacists, Paramedics*”) from the years 1935-1937. These records contain correspondence, including applications for registration in the liberal professions and for the conducting of practices. These applications were directed to the Health Department of the Kielce Provincial Office.

Within the section of the Częstochowa District Department one can also find monthly reports by the municipal District Administrator on the socio-economic situation within the District Office’s area. These also include matters relating to ethnic minorities, political parties, trade unions and anti-Jewish excesses as recorded by the police<sup>65</sup>.

Amongst the records produced by the special civil service in the section *Powiatowy Urząd Ziemski w Częstochowie (District Territorial Office in Częstochowa)*<sup>66</sup> from the years 1920-1933 can be found material concerning parcels of state and private assets, the distribution of bonds, the merging and exchanging of real estate and the lending of money. The District Territorial Office in Częstochowa reach encompassed the Częstochowa and Będziń Districts, and reported to the Regional Territorial Office in Kielce. After this office was abolished in 1933, its functions were taken over by the District Administrator’s Office in Częstochowa.

*Urząd Rozjemczy do Spraw Najmu w Częstochowie (Częstochowa Leasing Mediation Office)* is another organisation worthy of attention. The Office was established in 1919 as the result of an Act dated 28<sup>th</sup> June 1919 and was intended to safeguard the interests of tenants. This archive is incomplete, containing documents from 1921-1935 in sixty six files. The majority of its records relate to matters of setting rentals and other benefits concerning the leasing of premises, as well as records regarding evictions, e.g. “*records in the matter of Chana Gąsiorowicz and Fajgel Cymerman against Herszl Kohn regarding the setting of*

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<sup>59</sup> APCz, Starostwo Grodzkie Częstochowskie, Ref. 56–64.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., Ref. 215.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., Ref. 217.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., Ref. 219, 220.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., Ref. 221, 222.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., Ref. 223.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., Ref. 288–294.

<sup>66</sup> Territorial Offices were established under an Act dated 6th July 1920. Their task was to introduce and strengthen a new agrarian system in accordance with principles approved by the Sejm on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1919.

rental” or, 1934, “records in the matter of the Mizrachi Association against C. Potasiewicz and others regarding the setting of rental”<sup>67</sup>.

Among the court records preserved in the Archives are those deserving of special attention, such as the *Sąd Okręgowy w Piotrkowie Wydział Zamiejscowy w Częstochowie* (Piotrków Circuit Court – Non-Residential Department in Częstochowa) from 1928-1939 as well as the *Sąd Grodzki w Częstochowie* (Częstochowa Municipal Court) from 1929-1939. The *Sąd Okręgowy w Piotrkowie Wydział Zamiejscowy w Częstochowie* (Piotrków Circuit Court – Non-Residential Department in Częstochowa) was created on 24th December 1928 by a decision of the Minister of Justice. Until then, all matters were decided by the Piotrków Circuit Court. The Non-Residential Department was divided into three sections: Civil, Criminal and Commercial Registrations. For some of these matters, this court was the “Court of First Instance”, while for matters commenced in the Municipal Court, it was the “Court of Second Instance”. For matters commenced in the Non-Residential Court, the “Court of Second Instance” was the Appeals Court in Warsaw. W zespole tym na szczególną uwagę zasługują rejestr handlowy i akta rejestrowe firm działających w Częstochowie w latach 1917–1939<sup>68</sup>.

In the commercial register, in accordance with regulations (i.e. the Commercial Registry Decree dated 7th February 1919, and later issued by the Minister of Justice), one can find information about companies subject to registrations, This information consists of such data as:

- Entry number
- Company name and address of head office
- Name of sole trader or names of partners
- Description of business
- Specific legal conditions of trading
- Legal relationship of partners
- File reference number, date of registration, signature.

For example, in Business Register Vol.1, Section A, Page No. 467<sup>69</sup>, one can find information about a company called “W. Kon i Oderfeld Częstochowa”, whose owners at the time were Jakub Kon, Dawid Oderfeld, Henryk Oderfeld and Stanisław Oderfeld The company operated as a partnership which “exists from 1st July 1869”. (However, its founders were Wilhelm Kohn and Adolf Oderfeld in 1869.)

Supplementary information about the company is included within “*Akta Sądu Okręgowego jako rejestrowego w Piotrkowie dotyczące firmy ‘Zakłady graficzno-papiernicze w Częstochowie Kon i Oderfeld’*” (“Records of the Circuit Court in Piotrków Relating to the Registration of the ‘Kohn and Oderfeld Częstochowa Graphics-Paper Plant’”) <sup>70</sup>, in which one can find:

- An announcement of the company’s registration dated 22nd May 1917
- Company name at the time of registration – “Printing and Lithography, Coloured Paper Factory
- Head office (Częstochowa, ul. Teatralna 30),

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<sup>67</sup> APCz, Leasing Administration office in Częstochowa, Ref. 31, 59.

<sup>68</sup> The unit contains the files of the commercial register established in the Imperial German District Court in Częstochowa.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., added to the unit, Ref.23/1.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., Ref. 1610.

- Details of notarised, prenuptial agreements
- Notarised changes of company name, such as, in 1925, following the deaths of the company's founders Wilhelm Kohn and Adolf Oderfeld, the name was changed to "Zakłady Graficzno-papiernicze w Częstochowie" ("Czestochowa Graphics-Paper Plant")
- Original signatures of the partners.

Moreover, within the records of both the abovementioned courts, there exists a rich amount of material for researching the communal-traditional life of the Jewish population during the inter-War period of the 20th century. Within this section, there is material concerning corrections to civil register records (corrections to first names<sup>71</sup>, dates of birth), confirmations of deaths<sup>72</sup>, divorce matters<sup>73</sup>, division of inheritances<sup>74</sup>, as well as criminal matters, e.g. smuggling across borders, illegal sale of currency, using another person's identity documents, the illegal slaughter of cattle, defacing of sacred images, the incitement of Christians against Jews, the ownership of trademarks, etc.<sup>75</sup>

Worthy of recommendation, especially for the research of relationships in the areas of social issues, economic issues, working conditions and apprenticeships, which also indirectly contribute to researching work conditions within the city, including the Jewish community, is the section containing records of the *Sąd Pracy w Częstochowie (Częstochowa Labour Court) from the years 1929-1939*, which include more than 3,000 individual archives.

In accordance with an order by the Polish President, dated 22nd March 1928, the Labour Court was established to *settle civil disputes, arising from labour and vocational training, between employers and employees or trainees, as well as between employees within the same enterprise, and to settle criminal matters such as the non-compliance with legal regulations concerning the hiring of employees*. And so this court had the task of settling two types of matters – civil disputes arising from work conditions, as well as criminal matters regarding non-compliance with employment regulation – work times, workers' leave, health and safety at work, etc.

The largest group of records in this section concerns payments for work done. Complainants included workers, craftsmen, caretakers, housemaids, as well as clerical workers. These records often had attached to them amounts due, workers accounts books and certificates of different kinds. Quite often, these records concern the eviction of workers from factory houses. The next group of attachments to these records are often numerous dismissals, explanations or witness statements informing the court of workers' living conditions. The majority of records emanate from between 1929 and 1933, i.e. a period of economic crisis<sup>76</sup>.

<sup>71</sup> APCz, Sąd Grodzki w Częstochowie, Ref. 205.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., Ref. 214 - Gerszon Chorzewski, death reported four years later due to enlistment in armed forces, Ref. 202 – Aron Najman reported three years later as being born a twin, Ref. 203 – Gryna Zysla Kajzer

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., Ref. 88, 87, 86, 80, 79, 387, 388.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., Ref. 13, 6, 7, 44,46, 157, 163, 196, 376, 385.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., Ref. 346, 340, 389, 317, 256, 355, 359.

<sup>76</sup> As examples, several matters: *Stefania Dzierzkowska v. Szpitalowi Towarzystwa Dobroczynności dla Żydów o 33 zł* (APCz, Sąd Pracy w Częstochowie, Ref. 62); *Dawid Minc v. Towarzystwu Doroczności przy gminie Żydowskiej o 100 zł* (Ref. 69); *Moszek Borensztajn v. firmie Migros sp. z o.o. o 1050 zł* (Ref. 139); *Icek Mendel Moszkowicz v. Romanowi Staszcykowi o eksmisję* (Ref. 923).

The State Archive in Częstochowa also contains school records, including report cards from various Jewish schools such as the Berek Joselewicz Private Co-educational Comprehensive School, Dr F Axer's High School, Comprehensive Schools 15, 13 and 5, the seven-class Zofia Wainsztko Co-educational Comprehensive School, as well as matriculation certificates of Jewish students<sup>77</sup>.

One of the numerous primary schools in Częstochowa, which were attended by Jewish youth, was the General Public School No.13 in Częstochowa. Established in 1921, the school was located at ul. Narutowicza 19/23, and was open until 1939. School Principal was Nacha Szacherówna, born 6th October 1888. The archive contains records concerning organisational matters, correspondence with the Schools Inspectorate, school inventory registers, Pedagogical Council minutes books, evaluation books and duplicates of school report cards<sup>78</sup>.

Some of the school library's documents have also been preserved, among them three volumes of the school's pupil library inventory, the school's teacher library inventory, as well as an inventory of educational resources. A great deal of valuable information can be obtained from the reports preserved within the Archive. For example, the number of children enrolled as at 1<sup>st</sup> December 1926 was in total 547. The number in the third department was 355 children.

The library at the school was established from contributions by the children, donations from the Towarzystwa Szerzenia Oświaty wśród Żydów (Association for the Promotion of Education Amongst Jews), donations from teachers and the school principal. (It was established on 12th January 1923. It held a total of 1,065 books, all in the Polish language.) The Archive's resources also contain records of the *Sekcji Wspierania Niezamożnej Młodzieży Szkolnej w Częstochowie przy Towarzystwie Szerzenia Oświaty wśród Żydów* (Section for Supporting the Poorest School Children in Częstochowa Through the Society for the Promotion of Education Amongst Jews) from 1918 to 1924. It is not a large archive, containing only six files. It contains material which includes information on the Section's activities such as minutes of meetings, activity reports, membership registers, etc.<sup>79</sup>

The Częstochowa Archive contains a large number of records of enterprises operating in Częstochowa to 1939. Among them are also records regarding such large plants and enterprises such *A.Kohn & J.Markusfeld's Paper Factory and Mill for the years 1899-1944* or the *Częstochowa "Warta" Jute and Flax Mill S.A. for the years 1906-1945*. Jewish entrepreneurs were the founders and owners of many enterprises which were important to our city - Kohn, Sigman, Markusfeld, Oderfeld and Ginsberg are only some of these.

The above reviews takes in only the most important records created up to 1939 and which are of Jewish interest. What have been presented here are sources concerning the city of Częstochowa. But it should be remembered that there were also Jewish communities in municipalities around Częstochowa, such as in Mstów, Kłobuck, Lelów, Żarki and Janów, and even further away in Pławno, Praszka, Pajęczno and Koniecpol. And even though their history is not as richly documented through as many preserved register records, administrative records and remnants of guild records, they still deserve to be remembered as residents of the Częstochowa region.

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<sup>77</sup> APCz, The Tadeusz Kościuszki State Male Teachers Seminary in Częstochowa, Ref. 34, 40.

<sup>78</sup> These school files are contained within 60 individual units.

<sup>79</sup> This is a small archival unit, containing 6 files.