

**BURSZTYŃSKI** (BURSZTYN) Jakub (1790-1852) clerk, sworn translator, teacher. He was born in Zagórow, in the Słupca District, the son of Mojżesz and Eleonora née Mośk. Initially, he lived in Kalisz, where he worked as a private Hebrew teacher and then, later, as a sworn translator (from Yiddish and Hebrew) for the Kalisz Province Commission. In 1821, in Kalisz, he submitted a proposal to establish a Polish-language elementary school. He also led a campaign to create, there, a private secular school for Jews. However, his goal was not achieved due to opposition from Orthodox Jews

He later settled in Praszka as a private teacher. Amongst his students was → Daniel Neufeld. In 1828, in Częstochowa, he was employed as secretary to the *Kehilla*. It was also intended that he be a teacher and preacher in the local synagogue. At that time, the Częstochowa municipal authorities would refuse Jewish teachers the right to residency and Bursztyński's two predecessors, Gotenberg and Imier, were ordered to leave the city. Thanks to the intervention of *Kehilla* president, → Herc Kon, Bursztyński was permitted to live in Częstochowa for three years (1828-31). However, he was not allowed to bring his family. (He probably disregarded this ban.)

Bursztyński knew the Polish language very well which, at that time, was a rarity. He was, therefore, commissioned to write petitions, commercial letters and was even a translator for the Częstochowa Sąd Pokoju [Magistrate's Court]. Dissatisfied local lawyers reported him to the Częstochowa City Council and the municipal authorities forbade him from writing applications. He did not comply and, in a memorandum to the City council, he showed that what he doing was legal. During the November Uprising, the dispute died down but, at the end of 1831, his residency permit expired and the city authorities told him to leave the city (within five days). Then the provincial authorities permitted Bursztyński to stay on condition that he live in the Jewish district.

At that time, he endeavoured to reform the local Jewish education system. He developed a Polish language school project and undertook to teach religion and ethics free of charge. Although he proposed the creation of a parents' council, headed by a rabbi, the Orthodox opposed the project. He was supported by the *Maskil*<sup>1</sup>, headed by *gmina* president Herc Kon. His plan was presented several times in the city's synagogue and *Beit Ha'Midrash* [Study Hall], and a meeting of eminent persons was organised to discuss it. In 1840, the plan was presented to the authorities. The City Council welcomed it enthusiastically and the Mayor recommended the plan to the higher authorities. Bursztyński was so certain of

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<sup>1</sup> TN: a followers or adherents of the *Haskalah* movement.

obtaining permission that he brought to Częstochowa D. Neufeld who, at the time, was giving private lessons. However, the school was not established because the Russian authorities were against Polish schools for Jewish children.

In this period of hunger and crisis, 1846-47, Bursztyński appealed to the Częstochowa Jews to implement charity in a systematic manner and not only in the form of donations to the poor who came knocking at their door. They should tax themselves for a fund to support the poor and should set up charitable institutions. He also published a similar appeal in the pages of the "*Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*" newspaper, to which he sent several letters from Częstochowa. He died on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1852, a victim of the cholera epidemic.

Bursztyński married twice. From his first marriage to Anna Estera née Hurwicz (circa 1798-1833), he had three children: → Salomona Salez, Dawid and Teresa. Widowed, he married (on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1834 in Częstochowa) the divorcee Bajla Goldflus née Berman (circa 1802-1884), with whom he had five children: Helena (1834-1910), married name Wiernik, Anna Frajdla (1838-), married name Lewkowicz, Aleksander (1843-), Dobra (1846-1852) and Aron (1851-1852).

J. Szacki, *Jidn in czenstochow bis cu der erszter welt-milchome*, in: *Czenstochower Jidn*, pp. 16, 19–20; JB, *Russland und Polen. Czenstochau*, "*Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*" 1841, No. 40, pp. 567–568; M. Wodziński, *Oświecenie żydowskie w Królestwie Polskim wobec chasydyzmu. Dzieje pewnej idei*, Warsaw 2003, pp. 57, 94, 123. - *Rocznik częstochowski. Kalendarz 1903*, p. XXXII (regarding son Aleksander). - APCz, unit No. 58, death records: No. 17/1833, No. 99/1852, No. 116/1852, No. 132/1852 (Jakub's death record), No. 39/1884 (Bajla's death record); marriage record No. 7/1834; birth records: No. 69/1834, No. 15/1838, No. 80/1843, No. 46/1846, No. 15/1851.

**Wiesław Paszkowski**