

EPSTEIN (EPSTEJN, EPSZTAJN, EPSZTEIN) Bernard Berek (1898-1943), a soldier in the war against the Bolsheviks, doctor, social activist. He was born on 27th December 1898 w Noworadomsko (Radomsko).

In 1918, Epstein graduated from the H. Sienkiewicz I State Gimnazjum in Częstochowa, later studying medicine at the University of Warsaw. In November 1918, as a member of the Academic Legion, he took part in the disarming of the Germans in Warsaw. Soon, within the ranks of the Academic Legion's 36th Infantry Regiment, he took part in the relief of Lwów. In the fighting on the Ukrainian front, on 1st September 1919, he was assigned to the Ujazdowski Hospital, where he was later directed to a medical course. He fought in the 1919-20 war against the Bolsheviks. In February 1920, he was transferred to the 4th Medical Battalion in Wilno and, in April of that same year, to the 3rd Reserve Sanitary Company. He was demobilised at the end of 1920. He was promoted to the rank of Second-Lieutenant Reserve Assistant Doctor. On 1st January 1921, as a reserve officer, he was assigned to the 9th Sanitary Battalion in Siedlce. After his promotion to the rank of Lieutenant, on 2nd January 1932, he was assigned to the 4th District Hospital in Łódź. He completed his medical studies at the University of Warsaw and received his diploma on 5th December 1925.

For around three years, he practiced in the provinces as an internal medicine doctor, until he later moved to Western Europe. There, he specialised in urology at university clinics in Vienna, Lyon and Paris. In mid-1929, he settled in Częstochowa. As a urologist, he practised in the "Dobroczyńność" Charitable Society for Jews Hospital. He also ran his own private practice and owned an analytical laboratory at ul. Śląska 4.

He was active communally in the area of health care. He was a member of the board (Secretary) of the Society for the Protection of the Health of the Jewish Population in Poland TOZ. He was a co-organiser of and speaker at "Anti-Tuberculosis Days" and worked with the Częstochowa branch of the Polish Red Cross. In 1922, he co-organised the Częstochowa branch of the Committee to Aid Jewish Students "Auxilium Academicum Judaicum". In 1936, he was a member of the electoral commission for the election to the Częstochowa Jewish Community Council (*Gmina*). He belonged to the Częstochowa branch of the *Związek Żydowskich Uczestników Walk o Niepodległość Polski* (Association of Jewish Participants in the Fights for Poland's Independence). He was mobilised in 1939 and took part in the battles against the Germans. He was taken prisoner by the Germans, soon released, after which he returned to Częstochowa.

At the beginning of the occupation, he was living at Aleja 11 which, from April 1941, was within the ghetto area. In September and October 1942, during the liquidation of the ghetto, he avoided being deported to the extermination camps. After that, he lived in the Częstochowa "Small Ghetto". Together with his family, he was murdered on 20th March 1943, during the "intelligentsia *akcja*" mass execution at the Częstochowa Jewish Cemetery. His name can be found on the tombstone, erected in 1946, on the mass grave burial site (grave Nos. 28–31 III). He was awarded the 1918-1921 War Medal, as well as the "Orlęta" badge for fighting for Lwów.

His wife was Irena née Rajcher (1903?-1943), a bacteriologist. They had two sons - Aleksander (2nd May 1936 Częstochowa - 1943) and Seweryn (1932?-1943).

Gliński, *Słownik lekarzy i farmaceutów*, vol. I, p. 81, vol. II, p. 573 (supplement to biography); *Sienkiewiczacy*, p. 229; *Żydzi polscy w służbie Rzeczypospolitej*, vol. I, p. 353 (photograph). - Wyględowski, *Chirurgia i chirurdzy*, p. 206; *Z dziejów Żydów w Częstochowie* (J. Mizgalski), -. 242. – "Express Częstochowski" 1929, No. 128, p. 3; "Goniec Częstochowski" 1930, No. 63, p. 6, 1932, No. 260, pp. 3, 4, 1935, No. 3, p. 3; "Nasz Głos Powszechny" 1936, No. 2, p. 3, No. 3, p. 4; "Ostatnie Wiadomości Częstochowskie" 1932, No. 66, p. 4; - *Rocznik oficerski 1923*, *Rocznik oficerski rezerw 1934*, pp. 221, 757. - APCz, Wydz. Powiatowy I/422, p. 74 (list of doctors). – "Pierwsza uzupełniona lista akademików, ochotników Legii Akademickiej z 1918 r." (mszps in the collection of the Jagiellońian Library).

Juliusz Sętowski, Wiesław Paszkowski