

NEUFELD Daniel (1814 Praszka near Wieluń - 1874 Warsaw) teacher, translator, writer, editor, bookshop owner. His father, Mosze Mełamed (he was referred to by that nickname), owned a traditional religious school, but was a hidden *maskil* (a supporter of *Jewish enlightenment*). Apart from Daniel, he had two other sons:

- Karol, a well-known Warsaw merchant, father of the first Polish journalist and prolific translator, Bronisław Neufeld, and
- Zygmunt Salomon, father of → Maurycy Neufeld.

Initially, Daniel studied at his father's school. He was then a student of → Jakub Bursztyński. After Bursztyński left Praszka, his father sent Daniel to the Piarist Faculty School in Wieluń, something which irritated the local Jews. He lived and ate with a poor Jewish craftsman. The school was closed in 1832. Daniel wanted to study medicine but, at that time, it was impossible. He settled in Działoszyn and worked as a private teacher.

He then married in Praszka, from where he was brought to Częstochowa by → Jakub Bursztyński, who had organised a school and wanted to hire Neufeld as a teacher. While waiting for this to happen, Neufeld gave private lessons in Hebrew and Polish. Thanks to these lessons, he became quite popular in the city. The Jews appreciated that, despite being a *maskil* (a supporter of reform in Jewish life), he had remained a religious Jew and possessed a great theological knowledge. Poles appreciated him for his patriotic attitude and for his very good knowledge of the Polish language and Polish literature.

From Częstochowa, he sent articles and correspondence to the "*Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*" - it was his literary debut. When Bursztyński's plan collapsed, Neufeld asked the Warsaw [education] superintendent for permission to open a private, elementary school for Jewish children – his request was refused. It was then that a few influential Częstochowa Jews asked Education Minister Uwarów for permission for Neufeld to be able to teach. On 2nd May 1847, he was permitted to open a school in Praszka, as he was formally a permanent resident in his hometown. However, Praszka was too small to be able to maintain a private school there. Resistance from the local traditionalists was too strong.

On 23rd September 1850, he turned to the superintendent for permission to sit for the examination to receive a teaching diploma. He justified his request by saying that he had completed the curriculum of the district school, which was the same as the curriculum of the general subjects of the Rabbinical School. Two

months later, he received a refusal. The superintendent stated that the title of “teacher” required graduation from a gimnazjum or completing the full course at the Rabbinical School.

In April 1851, he did not turn to the superintendent, but to the director of the Governate Gimnazjum in Piotrków. He requested permission to open a private school in Częstochowa, and not Praszka. He received that permission in July 1851. He opened a model school at ul. Garncarska 23, one of the best in the province. The school had a dormitory, because children from other towns and cities also attended. Hebrew was taught there by Josef Szenhak, a *maskil* and author of many books in the field of natural sciences.

Neufeld wanted to expand the school’s curriculum so that his students could enter a gimnazjum after graduation. In February 1852, he asked the superintendent for permission to teach French, history and geography. He was refused. Neufeld’s school continued until May 1860. Over the course of ten years, the school had educated a generation, who later occupied an important place in the Jewish life of Częstochowa. Many Jewish merchants and doctors Łódź, Włocławek and Płock attended Neufeld’s school. It is not known as to whether he was a good educator, but he employed good teachers. There was a time when the school had over a hundred students, a quarter of them coming from outside of Częstochowa. The majority of them came from wealthy homes, because staying in Neufeld’s boarding school cost a lot of money.

Neufeld was not a practical man. For this reason, he did not treat his school, or even the boarding school, as a business. The school was not well administered and, over time, began incurring losses. For that reason, Neufeld had to close it.

At that time, Orgelbrand invited him to Warsaw and asked him to edit the Judaic section of a huge Polish encyclopaedia, which he had begun to publish. At the end of May 1860, Neufeld wrote a request to the education superintendent for permission to move his school to Warsaw. But, two months later, he withdrew the request himself.

His ties to Częstochowa remained, as his family had remained there. Before leaving, Neufeld established a bookshop there, which he entrusted to his daughter. His son-in-law soon became the owner → Leopold Kohn.

Neufeld had ambitions for which Częstochowa was too small. In March 1859, he wrote to the Warsaw superintendent, submitting a project to reorganise Jewish elementary schools in the Kingdom. In April 1861, after some minor

amendments had been made, the project was presented to Aleksander Wielopolski. It was an expression of a change in Neufeld's attitude. He had earlier emphasised teaching as the superior task. Now, he brought to the fore the functions of education - preparation for life in a modern society. He became more conciliatory towards the traditionalists and towards traditional, Jewish education. In order to widen education, he advocated for the expansion of the network of Jewish, elementary schools. He wanted to introduce, into them, Polish language and secular subjects. Initially, he was in favour of German as a teaching language - at least at the beginning of studies (due to its similarity to Yiddish). He later opted for the Polish language and Polish-language textbooks. He supported schools for girls, with the same (or similar) curriculum as that for boys.

To members of self-education circles, meeting in the home of Henryk Toeplitz on ul. Daniłowicza, he gave lectures on the subject of Hasidism. It was the first time that an objective view of this religious movement had been attempted.

It was then that the idea was born of creating his own journal, with research on the history of the Jewish people being conducted by Jews. Leon Kronenberg financed "Jutrzenka [Morning Star] – a Weekly for Polish Israelites", published in the Polish language in 1861-1863. Neufeld was also a participant in the Polish-Jewish fraternity. In 1862 (or 1863), he organised a patriotic demonstration of Jews and Poles in the railway station hotel (now the "Polonia"). He was arrested. On 23rd October 1863, the authorities shut down the offices of "Jutrzenka".

In November 1863, Neufeld was again arrested and sent to Czelabińska. To him, the road to exile was a shock and a disappointment. Poles, representatives of the nobility, did not show the slightest solidarity with the Jewish exiles. He returned from exile after two years, totally shattered mentally.

He was forbidden to live in Warsaw, so he left for Piotrków. However, until 1868, he collaborated in the editing of Samuel Orgelbrand's *Encyklopedia powszechna* [*Universal Encyclopaedia*]. He mainly occupied himself with working on literature and as a translator. He was the author of *Modlitewnika dla Żydów-Polaków* [*Prayer Book for Jews-Poles*] (1865), *Modlitw dla dzieci żydowskich* [*Prayer Nook for Jewish Children*] (1865), *Modłów starożytnych Izraelitów* and [*Prayers for Ancient Israelites*] (1865). He also translated the Torah into Polish.

On 21st July 1868, Neufeld's son-in-law, Leopold Kohn, opened a bookshop for him in Piotrków (on the corner of ul. Sieradzka and plac Pobernardyńskiego), but

business was bad and Neufeld again returned to Warsaw. He had no job. He became ill, so his relatives (the decisive voice being that of his brother Karol) placed him into the St. John of God Hospital for the Mentally Ill on ul. Bonifraterska. Neufeld asked to be taken out of there. Finally, physically and mentally depressed, he was transferred to the Jewish hospital on ul. Twarda, where he died in agony on 15th October 1874, forgotten by everyone. He was buried in the Jewish cemetery on ul. Okopowa (sector 1 row 41 No. 3). In 1879, the "Tygodnik" editorial office in Piotrków collected funds for a monument on Neufeld's grave.

His wife was Eleonora Laja née Herszlik (1819-1899). He had daughters - Henrietta Jeta Herszlik (1837 Praszka - 1862 Częstochowa), and Rozalia, married to Leopold Lazarus Kohn. Thanks to the selfless support of → Dr Adolf Abram Sztern, he could send his sons to study medicine. Ludwik Samuel (1845 Częstochowa - 1878 Radom) was a doctor in the Mohylewski Regiment, stationed in Radom. He committed suicide, when he was accused of taking a bribe. Being very ambitious, without waiting for the end of the investigation which cleared him of the charges, he shot himself. Jakub Henryk (1849 Praszka – 1906 Langenschwarzbach in Prussia) initially practised in Częstochowa, and later in Sosnowiec (as a factory and school doctor). He was a social activist and the author of medical publications.

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