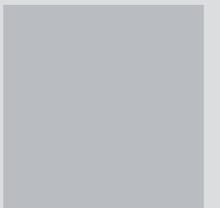


# Juliusz Bursche



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**BE** BIOGRAFIE  
WYSTAWY  
ELEMENTARNE

# Juliusz Bursche (1862–1942). Birth and Youth

Juliusz Bursche was born on September 19, 1862 in Kalisz, to the family of Ernest Wilhelm Bursche, a Lutheran pastor, and Matylda, née Müller. He was the oldest of many siblings. His younger brothers and sisters were: Maria, Ernest, Adolf, Matylda and Emil (1872–1934), who later became a physician. In 1881, from the second marriage of the widowed Ernest to Maria Matylda Harmel, his half-brother Edmund was born, who also later became a pastor, and a professor at Warsaw University (d. 1940), followed by Alfred (1883–1942), a lawyer, Henryk (1885–1941), a chemist, Zofia, Aleksander, and Teodor (1893–1965) an architect. Providing an education for so many children was possible because of the family rule that the older siblings supported the younger ones in their learning.

→ Father of Juliusz Bursche  
POLONA



→ Prince General Józef Zajączek (1752–1826). As governor of the Kingdom of Poland in 1816, he issued a decree on the *settlement of useful foreigners, factory owners, craftsmen and farmers in the country*. The authorities granted certain privileges to the newcomers, hoping that German industrialists and skilled craftsmen or farmers who were familiar with good farming practices would contribute to the development of the country. The Bursche family settled on Polish soil around 1825.  
POLONA



← Mother of Juliusz Bursche, Matylda née Müller  
POLONA

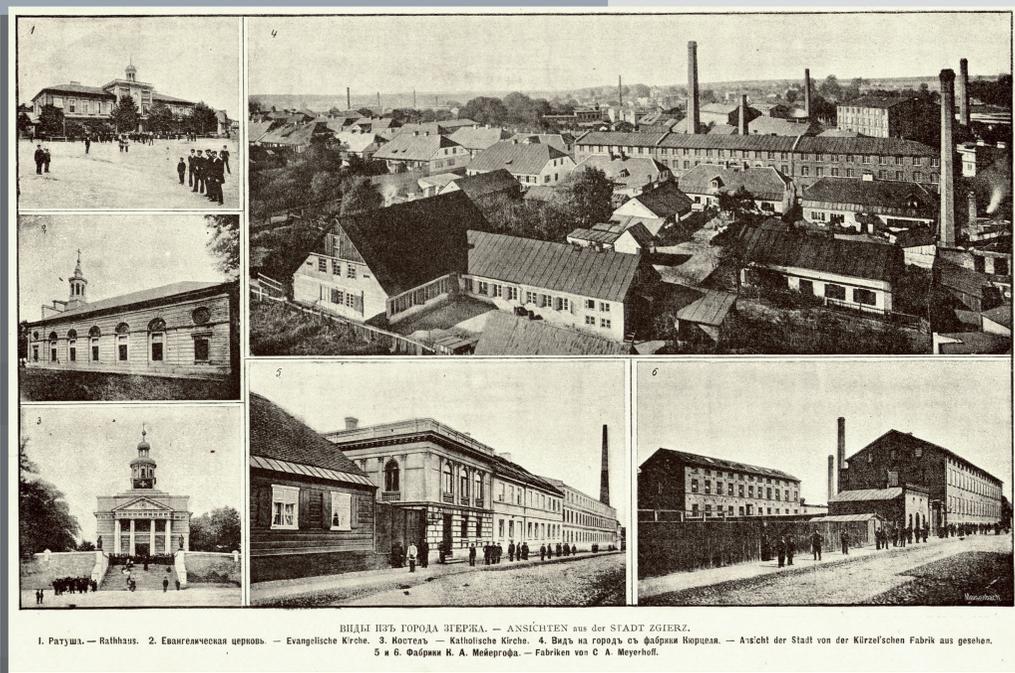
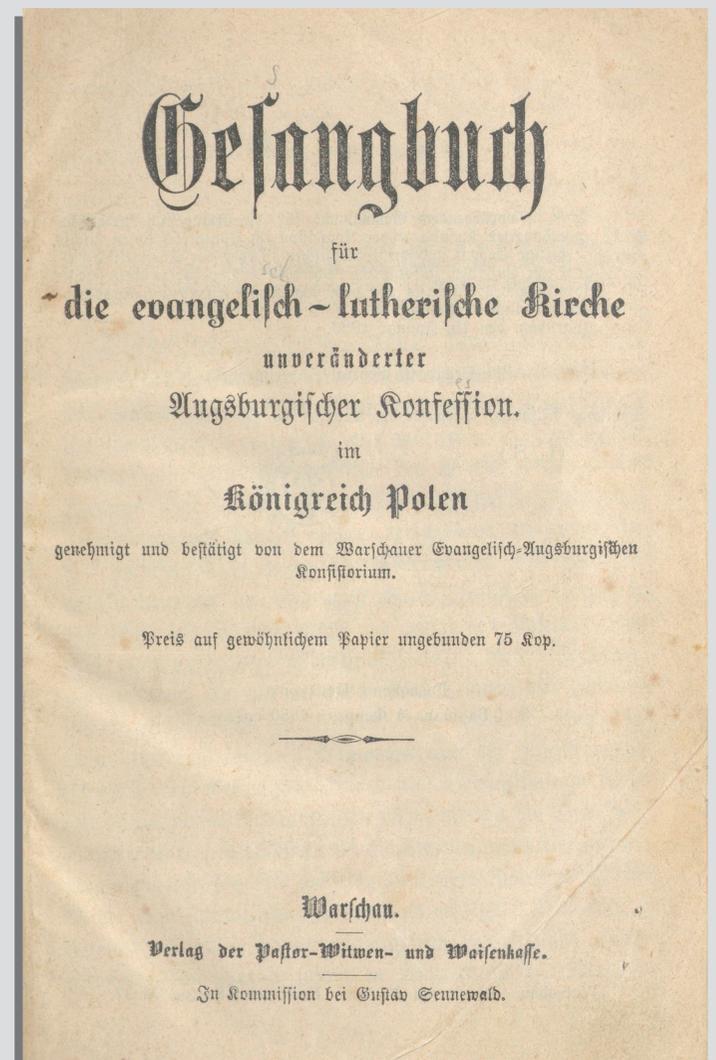


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# German Upbringing

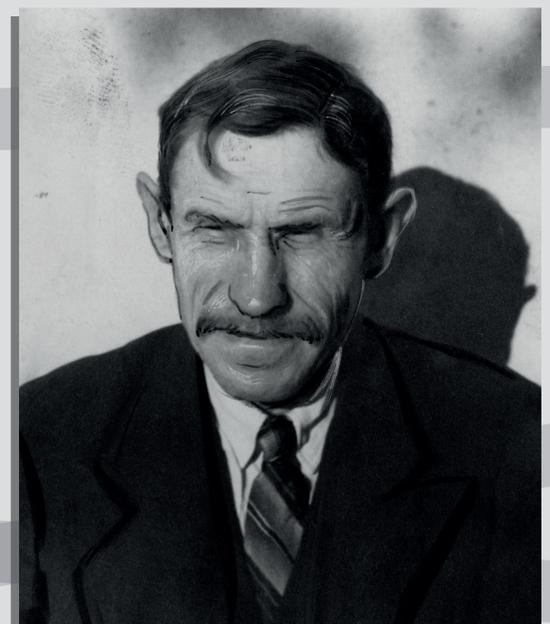
German culture was preserved in the family home of Juliusz Bursche. Zgierz, a city in the Łódź district, where Juliusz's father worked from 1866 to 1904, was densely settled by Germans. Because of this, the immigrants often retained their language, customs and religion brought from their country of origin for a long time. Also, the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Kingdom of Poland, with the exception of several parishes, retained its German character at that time. Lutherans constituted about 5% of the population of the Kingdom of Poland. As a child, Juliusz Bursche spoke German on a daily basis.

→ Songbook used in the Evangelical-Augsburg Church in the Kingdom of Poland in the 1880s.  
 POLONA



↑ A photograph of Zgierz from the album *Ansichten aus den Städten Lodz, Zgierz und Pabianice*, published in 1889 (only in German and Russian)  
 POLONA

→ Apart from the inhabitants of the newly established industrial districts, German settlers were also reluctant to integrate with the Polish population. One of the factors that contributed to the preservation of the German nature of farm settlements were the so-called cantorates – elementary schools established by the settlers. Pictured: Cantor from the town of Błonie (later photograph)  
 POLONA



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1880

# Among the Polish Dorpatians

Juliusz Bursche decided to become a pastor and, in accordance with the laws of the Russian Empire, graduated in Evangelical Theology from the University of Dorpat (now Tartu in Estonia), which enjoyed considerable autonomy. His studies (in 1880-1884) proved to be a turning point for the formation of his Polish national identity as a future pastor. Dorpat was a thriving academic centre and Polish intellectual life flourished there as well. There, students of Evangelical theology had the opportunity to become familiar with the idea of Polish Evangelicalism.



← Juliusz Bursche in 1880-1884  
📍 POLONA



↑ Dorpat University Building (later photograph)  
📍 NAC



← The so-called “compass,” logo of Konwent Polonia, the oldest Polish academic organization, which was active at the University of Dorpat since 1828. Juliusz Bursche was a member and maintained ties with this organisation for the rest of his life  
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1884

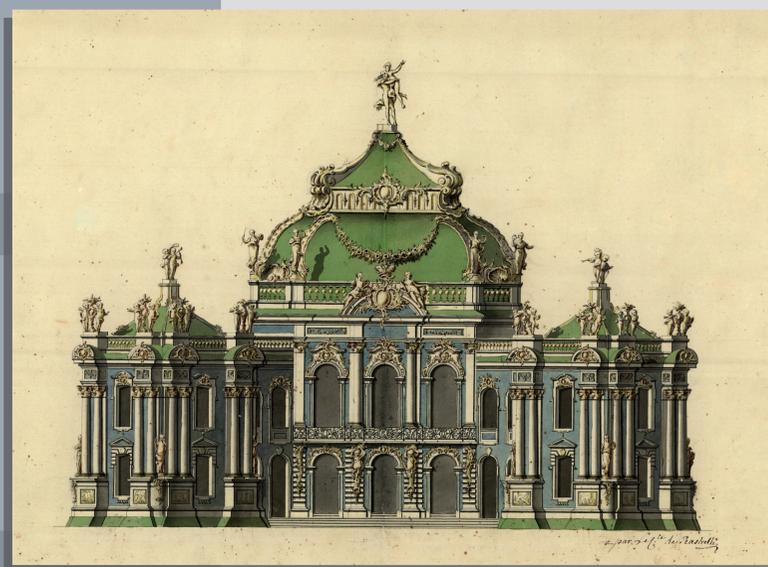
# From Vicariate to Church Leadership

After graduation, Juliusz Bursche worked for less than a year in the Warsaw Parish of the Holy Trinity, and then for three years as a parish priest in Wiskitki near Żyrardów (most of the parish members were industry workers). In 1885, he married Amalia Helena Krusche, daughter of a wealthy factory owner from Pabianice. In 1888, Juliusz Bursche started working for the Warsaw parish again, supervising church education, charity institutions, missions (an outpost in Africa) and publishing activities. He quickly rose in the church hierarchy, and in 1904 he was elected General Superintendent (the head) of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Kingdom of Poland.



→ Juliusz and Amalia Helena Bursche, ca. 1900  
 POLONA

→ Election to the office of General Superintendent involved a presentation at the imperial court. Juliusz Bursche's presentation took place at Tsarskoye Selo, the Tsar's residence near St. Petersburg  
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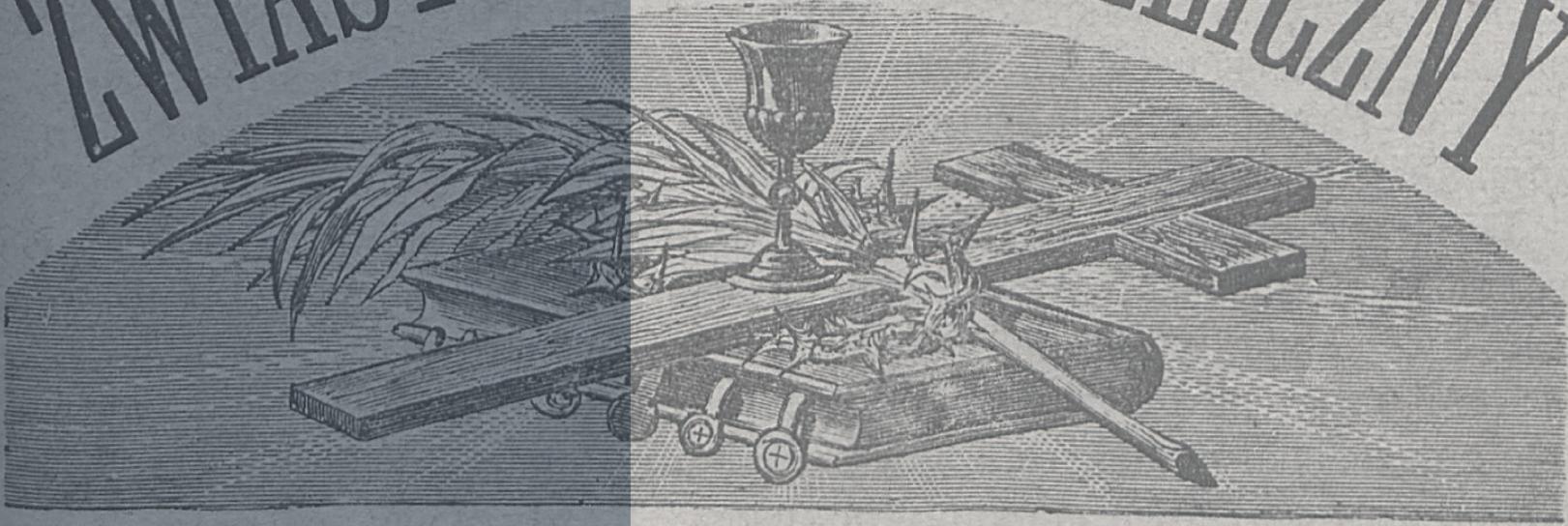
→ The parish of the Holy Trinity in Warsaw was polonised. Services had been held in Polish on a regular basis since the 1860s, and occasionally even earlier. This church was an important place on the cultural map of Warsaw. Frédéric Chopin gave a concert there in 1825. Polish Evangelicals, both Augsburg and Reformed, made a significant contribution to the economic, cultural and social development of the Polish lands in the 19th century and the interwar period  
 POLONA



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ZWIASTUN

EWANGELICZNY



przy współudziale ks. ks. pastorów Schultza z Nowego Dworu i Schoeneicha z Lublina redagowany przez ks. pastora Burschego w Warszawie.

# About Polish

# Evangelicals

Zwiastun Ewangeliczny wychodzi 15 dnia każdego miesiąca. Przedpłata wynosi rocznie w Warszawie rb. 1 kop. 50; z przesyłką pocztową 50 kop. w innych miastach 50 kop. 50 f. Dziesięć egzemplarzy pod jednym adresem 50 kop. Ogłoszenia przyjmuje Skład główny: księgarnia Miska w Warszawie, Elżbietańska Nr. 19. Można też u redaktora pod adresem ks. pastora Bursche w Warszawie, Królewska Nr. 19.

TREŚĆ:

Nasza modlitwa w dniu konfirmacji.—Krótki pogląd na wzrost kościoła chrześcijańskiego.—Tolerancja.—Jeszcze o Chinach (dalszy ciąg).—Śladem Jezusa. Powieść (dalszy ciąg).—Z prasy.—Wiadomości z kościoła i ze świata.—Ofiary.—Nabożeństwa.—Odpowiedzi redakcji.—Ogłoszenia.

**We will strive, devoid of any chauvinism and with recognition of other needs, but with ferocity and relentlessness, to ensure that Polish people are given their rightful place in the Evangelical Church, and we will insist with the same determination that Evangelicals are given their rightful place in Polish society. For us, the normal state in the church is complete equality of nationalities, and our political ideal is a Poland that gives equal rights to all religions and respects the language rights of foreign minorities.**

Proclamation of Juliusz Bursche and his associates, Zwiastun Ewangeliczny, 1905.



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↑ Zwiastun Ewangeliczny was a magazine of Polish Evangelicals, established and edited by Pastor Leopold Otto (1819-1882), published again in 1898-1914. POLONA

1915

# Wartime Turmoil

After the outbreak of World War I, the Russian authorities decided to forcibly evacuate over one hundred thousand Lutherans, mostly from rural areas, deep into Russia. They were viewed by the imperial officials as Germans, and therefore potential saboteurs. Juliusz Bursche, who protested against this, was also deported. It was not until the summer of 1917 that he managed to leave Russia for Stockholm. From there, he returned to Poland after several months of efforts. He held the position of the head of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Republic of Poland until the outbreak of World War II (in the second half of the 1930s was elevated to the position of bishop, vested as the head of the Church).

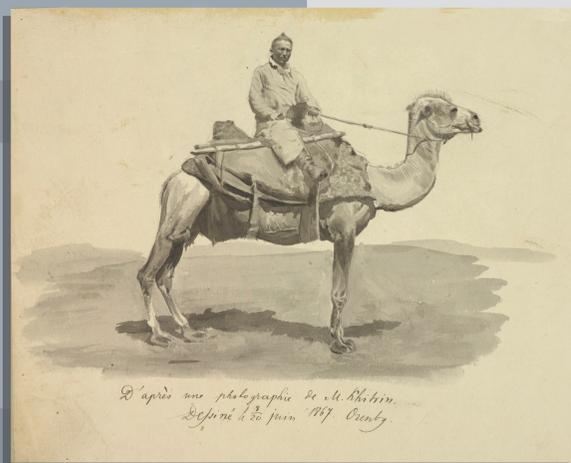


↑ A total of 2 to 3 million refugees found themselves in Russia, of which about 13% were Poles. The living conditions of this group were extremely hard, and help was provided by the Polish Central Citizens' Committee (CKO). Pictured: students and teachers of the CKO's Polish Gymnasium in Moscow

📍 POLONA

→ In Russia, Juliusz Bursche stayed in Orenburg, among other places. The boundary between Asia and Europe was a place of exile for many Poles. Pictured: Sketch made by Tadeusz Korzon in Orenburg in the 1860s.

📍 POLONA



↑ Juliusz Bursche (third from left) maintained contacts with Scandinavian Protestants established during World War I for the rest of his life. The photograph shows a group of Scandinavian theologians visiting Polish President Ignacy Mościcki

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# In the World of Great Politics

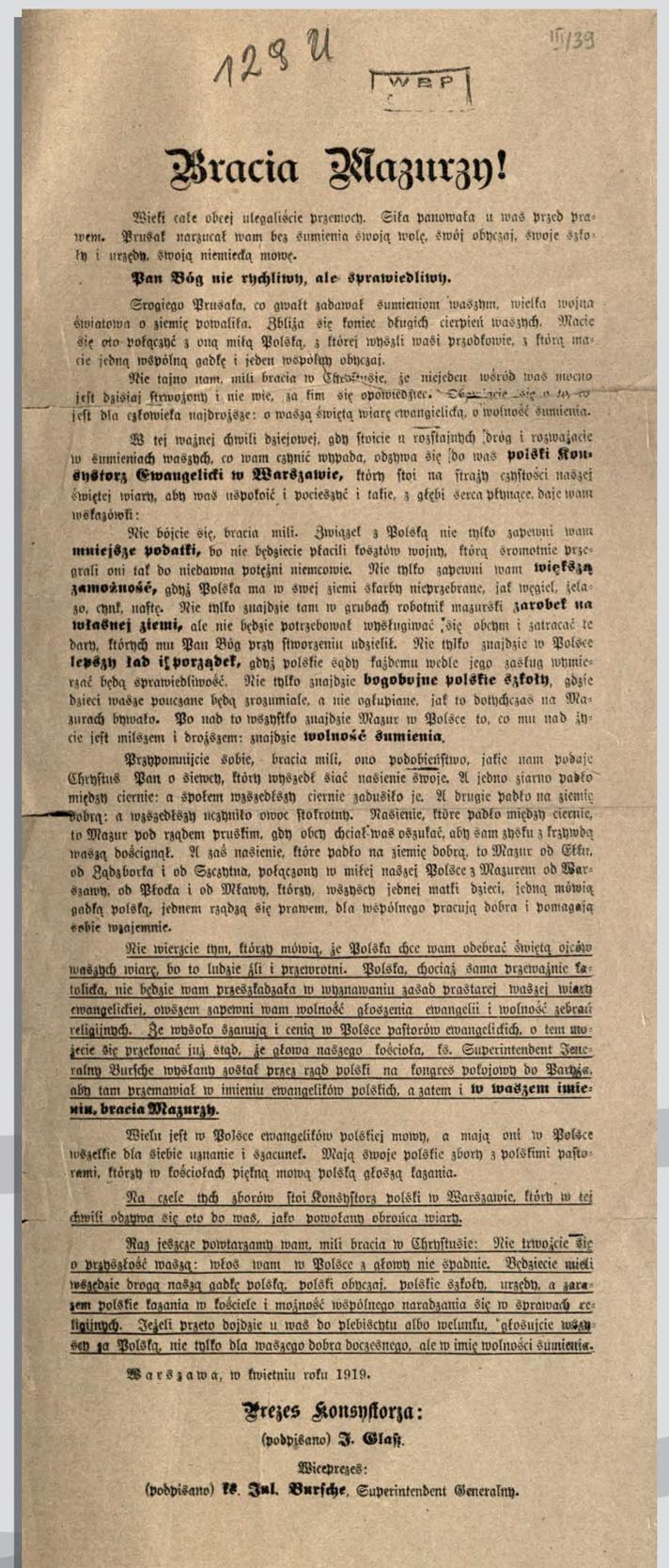
At the request of the Polish National Committee, from the beginning of February to 11 March 1919 Juliusz Bursche was involved in the work of the Polish delegation to the Paris Peace Conference that ended World War I. For many years, Juliusz Bursche called the Silesians and Masurians the *Polish Evangelical people* on the pages of *Zwiastun Ewangeliczny*. At the conference, he tried to convince delegates from the United States, Great Britain, and France that Masuria, Upper Silesia, and Cieszyn Silesia should be arbitrarily given to Poland. When the decision to hold a plebiscite was made, he immediately joined the plebiscite campaign. He took an active part in public life throughout the interwar period.

→ The eldest daughter of Juliusz Bursche, Helena, was a member of the board of the Plebiscite Association of the Polish Evangelicals

POLONA

→ *Appeal to the Masurian Brothers* from the plebiscite period, in which the Polish authorities of the Evangelical-Augsburg Church, urging them to vote for becoming part of Poland

POLONA



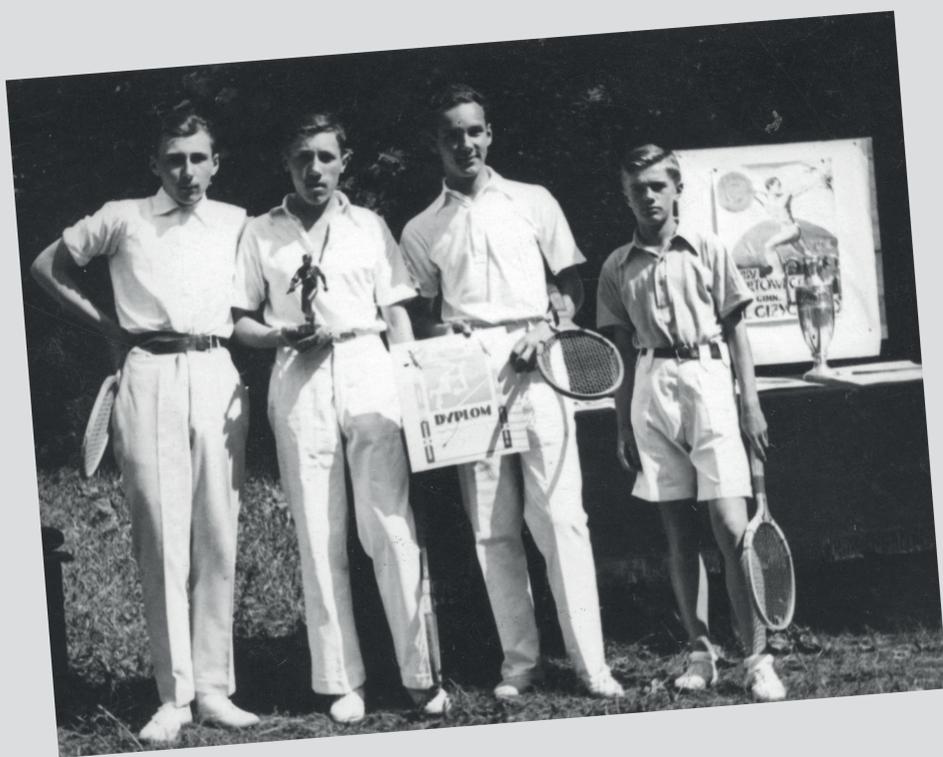
← Juliusz Bursche during elections to the Senate, 19 September 1935; in the first row, third from the right

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# Not Just External Ecclesiasticism, nor Fossilised Rituals...



← Students of the Mikołaj Rej Gymnasium run by the Evangelical-Augsburg Church during a tennis competition in 1934. The school also accepted students of other faiths

📍 NAC

Apart from his pastoral work, developing and consolidating church structures from the three partitions and patriotic activities, Juliusz Bursche also considered various social initiatives to be very important, and believed all church members should participate in them. During the partition and the interwar periods, as General Superintendent he initiated, organised and supported various educational institutions (also for the disabled) and charitable, missionary and patriotic organisations. He also worked with international Protestant organizations, including the Movement for Practical Christianity.



← Juliusz Bursche was one of the founders of the Polish Educational Society in Wisła

📍 POLONA

→ The Evangelical Hospital was a church charity institution with a very long tradition, dating back to 1736. Starting in 1889, Juliusz Bursche supervised the deaconesses (nurses) working at the hospital. During World War II, the hospital staff helped Jews from the ghetto, and then resistance fighters during the Uprising

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# The Bursche Family in the Interwar Period



↑ Photograph of a party organised by the Krusche and Ender company, 1930s. Stefan Bursche's daughter, Jadwiga (sitting in the armchair second from the left) won the award for the most beautiful garment made from the products of its factory

▣ Collections of the Gardawski and Łupienko families

Juliusz and Amalia Helena Bursche had many children. Helena (1886–1975) became headmistress of the Anna Vasa Gymnasium in 1925. Thanks to her kindness and discretion, even poorer students could obtain a good education from this school. Stefan (1887–1940) worked as an engineer from 1929 and was one of the managers and shareholders of the Krusche and Ender textile factory in Pabianice. He was well trusted by the workers. Her next children were Maria (1889–1974), Julia (1893–1965), and Aniela (1896–1980), who worked as a stenographer in the Polish Sejm and Senate for almost the entire interwar period.

The Bursches were a wealthy intellectual family and led a lifestyle typical of that social stratum.



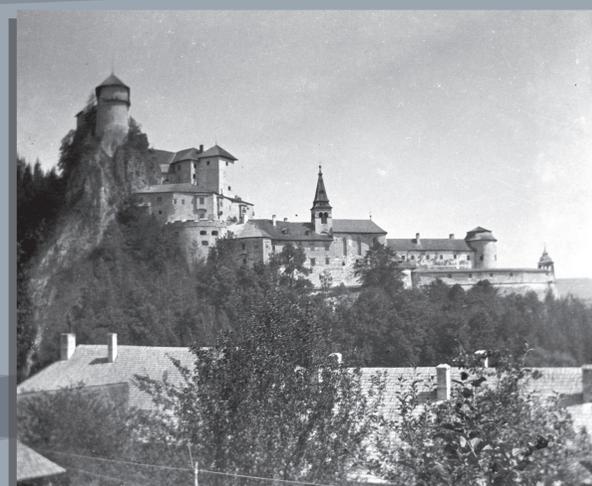
↑ The Polish flag flies above the main entrance to the Bursche summer house in Wisła; photograph from the early 20th century. Residence of the Polish President was built in Wisła between 1929 and 1930

▣ Collections of the Gardawski and Łupienko families



↑ Mountain hiking and travelling were the family passion. Pictured: one of the trips to Orava Castle in Slovakia (right; left: at the Morskie Oko). After a streetcar accident in 1910, Juliusz Bursche was unable to take part in demanding hikes; amputation of his foot was necessary

▣ Collections of the Gardawski and Łupienko families



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# Violent National and Religious Conflicts

Starting in the second half of the 19th century, the growing German-Polish antagonism and the strengthening of the stereotype of Polish Catholicism caused resentment towards Polish Lutherans among part of Polish society. Relations within the Church were also strained, in particular shortly before the outbreak of World War II. Juliusz Bursche often opposed the persecution of both Polish and German Protestants (for example, he advocated for the right of German children to religious instruction in their native language). At the same time, he spoke out unequivocally against Pan-Germanism and later National Socialism that was spreading among the German members of the church.

→ A photograph of the Evangelical-Augsburg Church in Łuck, signed "kircha." The term was considered offensive by Lutherans. On the other hand, it was here that the Nazi-supporting pastor Alfred Rudolf Kleindienst worked from 1921 to 1938

[POLONA](#)



→ The magazine Rola, published between 1881 and 1912, repeatedly attacked Polish Protestants and Juliusz Bursche himself. Its founder, Jan Jeleński, and his nearest circle were known for their radical clericalism

[Wikimedia Commons](#)



← Sports competition in Berlin, 1936. The University of Warsaw competes against the University of Berlin. German youth giving the Hitler salute. Owing to Juliusz Bursche's initiative, who wanted to avoid sending future pastors to study in Germany, the Faculty of Evangelical Theology was established at the University of Warsaw in the early 1920s

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↓ A student of the Mikołaj Rej Gymnasium run by the Evangelical-Augsburg Church donates weapons purchased with contributions by gymnasium students to the Polish Army, 1937.

📷 NAC

***We, Evangelical Poles, who are an integral part of the Polish nation, whose lives and feelings are rooted in it, need not to be called at this historic moment to sacrifice our means and blood on the altar of our Homeland. No sacrifice will be too great for us to resist the power that seeks to offend the majesty of the Polish Republic.***

Juliusz Bursche, Address  
to Evangelicals in Poland, September 1939.



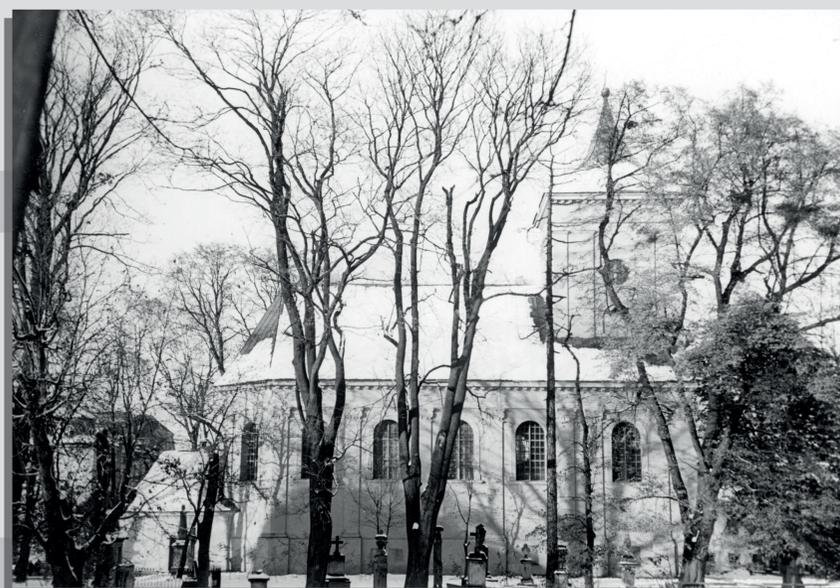
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NARODOWEJ

1939

# The First Weeks of World War II

After the outbreak of World War II, Juliusz Bursche decided to remain in Poland, despite appeals from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to leave the country. Persuaded by his family, however, he agreed to leave Warsaw. He got off the evacuation train in Lublin and went to the local Lutheran parish where his friend Aleksander Schoeneich, who died in the spring of 1939, had worked for many years. The *Deutsche Lodzer Zeitung* published a false report in October that he had been abandoned in that city by the fleeing Polish government. After a few weeks, the Germans managed to trace the Bishop's whereabouts. He was arrested on 3 October 1939.

→ After a bombardment in September 1939: the tenement house at Wierzbowa Street in Warsaw. The Consistory, where the Bursche family lived, was located in this building  
📷 NAC



← Lublin Evangelical-Augsburg Parish, the last where the Bishop worked  
📷 NAC

← Pastor Aleksander Schoeneich (1861–1939) from Lublin, a Polish patriot who took an active part in social life  
📷 Wikimedia Commons



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1939–  
1942

# Sharing the Fate of the Nation

After his arrest, Bishop Juliusz Bursche was taken for interrogation to Radom and then to Berlin. From 22 January 1940, he was a prisoner at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. He was kept in a special, isolated barrack, called a Zellenbau. He died on 20 February 1942 in a state police hospital in Berlin, under unexplained circumstances. The Bishop's brothers, Edmund, Alfred, and Teodor, and his grandson, Henryk Wegener, were also held in a concentration camp. His son Stefan, who refused to sign the Volksliste and openly criticised Nazism, was shot in 1940. Only Teodor Bursche survived the war.



↑ Prisoners of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp  
📷 Wikimedia Commons

→ Heinrich Himmler (1900–1945), head of the SS and Gestapo, German war criminal. He made a note on the Bursche family records: *Diese Familie ist auszurotten* (This family must be eradicated)  
📷 Wikimedia Commons



↓ Symbolic grave of Juliusz Bursche at the Evangelical-Augsburg Cemetery in Warsaw. In 2017, it was determined that the Bishop's body was cremated and his remains were buried at the Reinickendorf Cemetery in Berlin  
📷 Mateusz Opasiński, Wikimedia Commons



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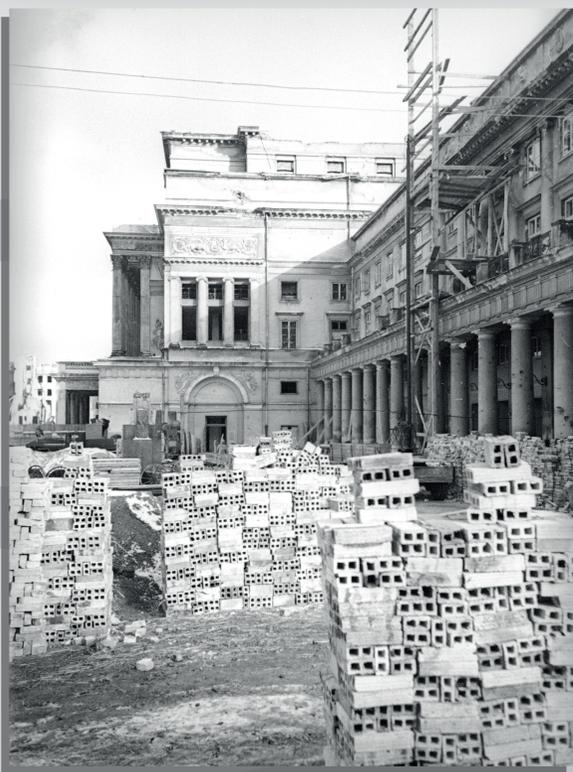
# ...Whose Names Are Well Recorded in the History of the Polish Nation



← In 2018, on the 100th anniversary of Polish independence, the President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda, posthumously awarded the Order of the White Eagle to 25 individuals who made great contributions to the reconstruction of the Polish state after World War I. One of them was Bishop Juliusz Bursche. Portrait of Juliusz Bursche by Stefan Norblin  
📷 NAC

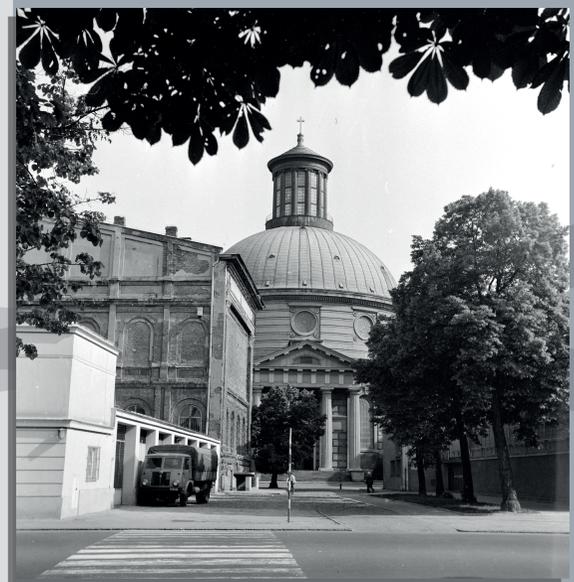
In his letters from the camp, the Bishop expressed his deep concern for the future of Polish Protestantism, the building of which he considered his life's work. The situation of the Evangelical-Augsburg Church in Poland was difficult not only during the German occupation, but also after the end of the war, when the number of parish members decreased dramatically due to war losses, migrations and deportations.

Nevertheless, Poles – Evangelicals of German ancestry, *whose names – as Juliusz Bursche put it – are well recorded in the history of the nation*, made a lasting contribution to the growth of Polish society. Companies established by the Wedels in Warsaw, the Scheiblers in Łódź or the Fibigers in Kalisz continued to operate, albeit in a modified form, and names such as Samuel Bogumił Linde or Gebethner and Wolff have become part of Polish culture.



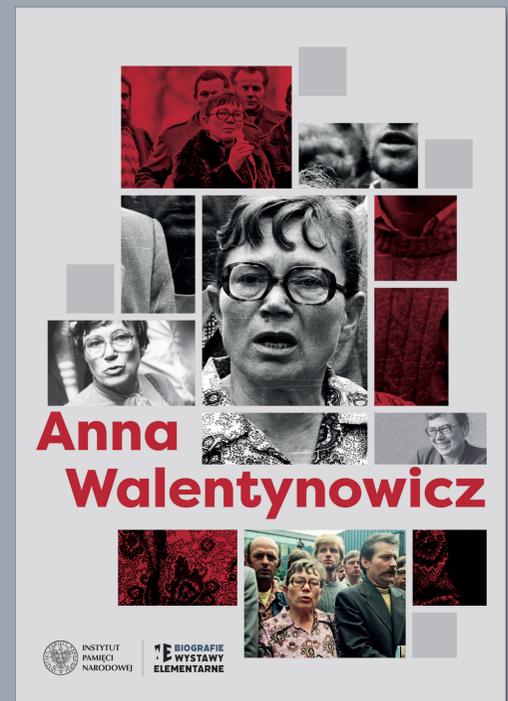
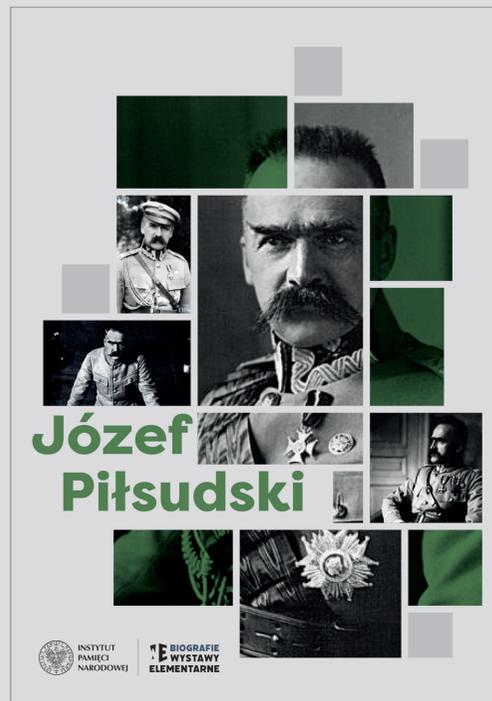
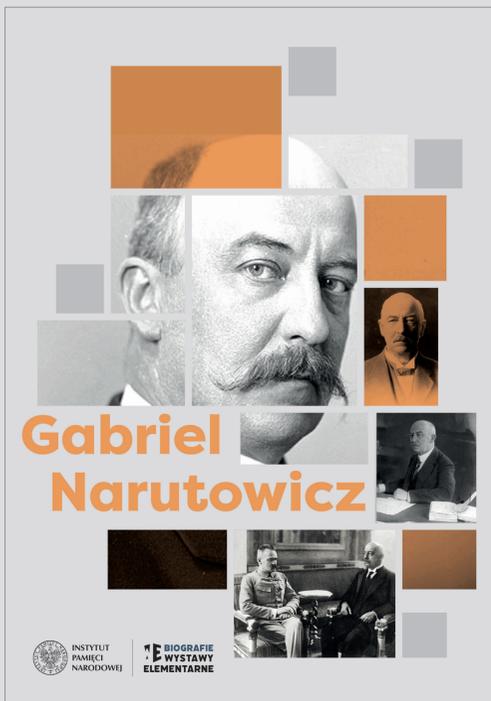
↑ Reconstruction of Warsaw, before 1950. Pictured: the Grand Theatre, near Wierzbowa street. As an architect, Teodor Bursche was involved in rebuilding the country from war damage. After returning from the concentration camp, he worked for the Warsaw Reconstruction Office and the Monuments Conservation Office  
📷 NAC

↓ The Church of the Holy Trinity, damaged during the war and after reconstruction. The Evangelical-Augsburg parish is still active there today  
📷 NAC

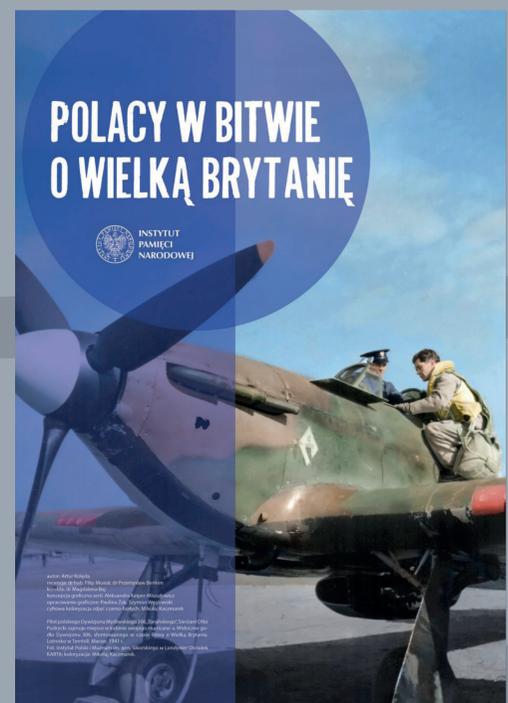


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