

DISPLACED HISTORIES: ANTI-SEMITISM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF POZNAŃ, 1919-1939

SUMMARIES

Maciej Michalski, Krzysztof Podemski

Anti-Semitism at the University of Poznań, 1919-1939: An Introduction

The monograph “Antisemitism at the University of Poznań in the years 1919-1939: Displaced Histories” presents the results of several years of work of the members of the Commission for the Investigation of Cases of Persecution of Persons of Jewish Origin at the University of Poznań before World War II and its collaborators. The appointment of the Commission and setting the goals of its work were the result of a decision made in the fall of 2019 by the then rector of Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Prof. Andrzej Lesicki, and the creation of this book is the result of the continuation of his research intention by his successor at the rector’s office, Prof. Bogumiła Kaniewska. Rector Lesicki appointed a commission composed of Prof. Anna Wolff-Powęska, Prof. Piotr Forecki, Prof. Maciej Michalski, Prof. Krzysztof Podemski (chairman), and Prof. Rafał Witkowski. The immediate reason for its creation was the publication of the writer and journalist Maciej Zaremba Bielawski, referring to the decision of the Association of Physicians of the Polish State to close that association to physicians of Jewish origin in November 1937. Zaremba Bielawski’s statement was followed by his November 2018 appeal to the Chancellor of Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań to place a plaque commemorating this event on the Collegium Maius building. Rector A. Lesicki did not consent to the hanging of the plaque in the proposed form. This decision was primarily motivated by scientific integrity, since research on anti-Semitism at the University of Poznań had never been conducted systematically. Rector Lesicki, assuming that this issue requires scientific recognition, decided in the summer of 2019 to appoint the above-mentioned commission.

The authors of the texts collected in this monograph present a twenty-year history of Jewish female and male students of the University of Poznań in the period from the establishment of the university in the spring of 1919 to the outbreak of World War II in the fall of 1939. The articles presented in the publication, in accordance with the objectives of the committee's work, focus mainly on various forms of anti-Semitic violence experienced by Jewish male and female students from the Polish majority. This fundamental issue is outlined against the background of the history of anti-Semitism at Central European universities, the interwar history of Poznań, a city where, especially in the 1930s, anti-Semitism was omnipresent, and in the context of voices of Polish intellectuals of the interwar period.

The analyses carried out by the Authors and included in the presented work show that at the beginning of the twentieth century, the national-democratic ideology of the bourgeoisie and the sparse intelligentsia of Poznań perceived the Polish community within the framework of the nationalistic ideology of national purity prevailing at that time. After the establishment of the Polish state in 1918 and the incorporation of Poznań and Greater Poland (Wielkopolska) into it in 1919, a mass exodus of Germans and Jews identifying with Germanness began. At that time, there was hope for the creation of a nationally-unified Poznań and Greater Poland. The then emerging fear of Jewish migration from the former Kingdom of Poland can be interpreted in this context as a threat to the emerging opportunity to create a nationally-monolithic space. It was not until the early 1920s, in a city inhabited by about 1.5 percent of Jews, that slogans of an anti-Semitic nature and unrelated to the actual presence of this religious and national group in Poznań began to appear on a larger scale. The analyses presented in this book show that one of the foci of anti-Semitic ideas in the city was, among others, the University of Poznań, a local version of *Alma Mater antisemitica*. The figure of the "imaginary Jew" disseminated by nationalistically-oriented youth at the time effectively poisoned the already tenuous relationship between the minority, sometimes vestigial, group of Jewish students and the majority group of other – predominantly Polish and Catholic – students.

Due to their scientific interests, the members of the Rector's Commission worked on various aspects of anti-Semitic violence at the University of Poznań. The committee also invited scholars whose analyses enriched the work of the team and supplemented areas not covered by previous research. Taking into account the various thematic parts, the content of the book is divided into three parts. The first one leads from Anna Wolff-Powęska's research on the broad Central European context of the spread of anti-Semitism at universities, to Krzysztof Podemski's account of the reaction of Polish intellectuals of the interwar period, especially sociologists, to anti-Semitic content. The first part also includes an article by Rafał Witkowski on the context of the presence of Jews in Poznań and Greater Poland in the first decades of the 20th century, and a study by Maciej Michalski on the history of relations between the University of Poznań and its authorities and Jewish students, and between Jewish and Polish students. The second part of the book provides basic archival inquiries that discuss Jewish female and male students at the University of Poznań as a social group. The one and a half year of archival research yielded two texts by Celina Barszczewska, Oliwia Gromadzka, Magdalena Patrzalek-Graś, and Agnieszka Zawisza. The first text discusses the structure and condition of the personal archives of Jewish male and female students. The second one is an attempt to paint a collective portrait of Jewish female and male students of the University of Poznań in the interwar period. The same sec-

tion provides an article by Maciej Michalski on the statistical portrayal of the Jewish student community. Finally, the third part of the book discusses the anti-Semitic practices of Polish students of the University of Poznań in the interwar period and the anti-Semitic atmosphere of Poznań in the 1930s. In an extensive study, Piotr Forecki focuses on the role of Polish students and student organizations functioning at the university in the spread of anti-Semitism, as well as their participation in acts of violence against Jewish students. The Polish and foreign Yiddish press in the context of reporting on the events at the University of Poznań was analyzed by Aleksandra Gluba-Pieprz. Rafał Witkowski presented the events related to the adoption of the “Aryan paragraph” in 1937 in Poznań by the extraordinary general congress of the Association of Physicians of the Polish State, which included members of this professional organization. Bogumiła Kaniewska and Maciej Michalski analyzed the content of the anti-Semitic press in Poznań in the 1930s in the context of building the hostile figure of the Jew and the traitorous figure of the “shabbosgoy” who favors him. Agnieszka Baszko carried out a similar study, analyzing the anti-Semitic press in the context of anti-Semitic drawings. The analytical articles are complemented by the presentation of selected sources closely related to the presented articles, prepared by Małgorzata Praczyk and Tomasz Schramm.

PART ONE

Anna Wolff-Powęska

Central European universities in the shadow of anti-Semitism

The main research problem presented in this work is the reconstruction of the attitude of academics and students in the countries emerging after the end of World War I as a result of the disintegration of the Habsburg and Hohenzollern empires, towards students and lecturers of Jewish origin in the period up to the outbreak of World War II. This concerns Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Austria.

The aim of the text is to report on a comparative analysis of the situation of Jews at universities in the above-mentioned countries, taking into account the main factors shaping anti-Semitic attitudes, i.e., the ideological and political climate as well as historical and cultural conditions in Central Europe and their consequences. Thus, such issues as the demographic situation of the newly established countries as a result of the First World War, population relations after the border changes, their impact on the situation of Jewish students at universities, the nature of anti-Semitic speeches, the attitude of state authorities and individual universities, and the role of nationalist and fascist groups in the use of verbal and physical violence are examined.

Similar factors influenced the fate of Jewish students around the world, including the fact that Jewish communities were beneficiaries of modernity, Enlightenment ideas, and emancipation. With their entrepreneurship and enthusiasm for science, they instilled jealousy in those around them. Their new position, scientific and economic achievements contrasted all the more with the world of metropolitan poverty. Particularly in Catholic countries, where the Jewish world, which long ago should have been condemned to nothingness, continued and developed, the new situation was not accepted.

The factor supporting hostility towards ethnic and religious minorities at the turn of the 20th century was the mass emigration of Jews from the most discriminatory areas. Countries that, like Hungary, had lost a significant part of their territory as a result of the Trianon arrangements, sought to remedy their sense of humiliation. They were the first to implement a *numerus clausus* for Jewish students. The escalation of hostility towards Jewish students was heavily influenced by the rise of nationalist and radical-right movements and fascism. Countries that regained their independence after centuries strove with a neophyte's zeal for national homogenization. Everywhere except Czechoslovakia, academic youth were the vanguard of anti-Semitic propaganda and violence.

Krzysztof Podemski

Jews and anti-Semitism in the experience and texts of Polish sociologists during the interwar period

The article is an attempt to reconstruct the sociological discourse in Poland in the years 1918-1939 concerning Polish-Jewish relations. The aim of the text is to present the sociological interpretations of the political conflict at Polish universities, Polish-Jewish relations and anti-Semitism “through the eyes” of sociologists of the period in question. The primary sources are the texts by Polish and Jewish sociologists published in Poland in the years 1918-1939.

Sociologists active in the interwar period, despite ideological and generational differences, were strongly critical of racist doctrines and theories. If they used the term “race”, as Ludwik Krzywicki and Florian Znaniecki did in the early stages of their scientific development, it was only in a cultural, not biological sense. Even if in Znaniecki's early works we can find texts which, especially from today's perspective, can be interpreted as anti-Semitic, it is difficult to accuse the later texts of both Znaniecki and other leading Polish sociologists of such an overtone. Those scholars opposed xenophobia, nationalism and violence in their scientific analyses, public writings and public speeches, but at the same time tried to understand their social roots. Some, especially Stefan Czarnowski, Aleksander Hertz, Ludwik Krzywicki, and Stanisław Ossowski, sought explanations for anti-Semitism, including aggression at universities, class inequalities and economic conditions. Others, including Jan Stanisław Bystron, Czarnowski, and Znaniecki, sought answers to the phenomenon of Polish anti-Semitism in the historical and cultural specificity of Poles, including the role of Catholicism in the identity of the Polish peasant and noble. Hertz and Znaniecki also drew attention to the historical and cultural specificity of the Jews, especially to life in the diaspora and casteism, which cut off the followers of Judaism from other inhabitants of Poland. Bystron, Hertz, and Znaniecki also drew attention to the universal phenomenon of national megalomania and the juxtaposition of “one's own” and “foreigners”, as well as to the historical conditions in which the expansion of racist ideology grows. Finally, Polish sociologists were able to individually, such as Czarnowski, Krzywicki, and Leon Petrażycki, and collectively, such as Bystron, Czarnowski, Józef Chałasiński, Krzywicki, Ossowski, and Znaniecki, publicly protest against anti-Semitism at Polish universities in the second half of the 1930s. They were not, of course, the only intellectuals or scholars who expressed their opposition to violence at universities, but the presence of such a significant number of these few adepts of the then young field of knowledge, which was sociology, is worth noting.

Rafał Witkowski

A persecuted minority. Jews in Poznań between the First and Second World War

The article outlines the functioning of the Jewish community in Poznań in the interwar period against the background of the activities of other communities in Greater Poland (Wielkopolska) and other regions of the Second Polish Republic.

The basic element distinguishing the Jewish community in Poznań in the former Prussian partition, i.e., in the Grand Duchy of Posen (Provinz Posen), was the small number of Jewish communities compared to other cities in Poland. The outflow of the Jewish population from that area was visible since the mid-nineteenth century, and intensified especially in the years 1918-1921, after the incorporation of a large part of Greater Poland and Pomernia (Pomorze) into the new Polish state. The number of Jews in Poznań decreased until the end of the 1920s, after which it started to grow slightly. However, it never exceeded 2% in the interwar period.

The life of the Jewish community in interwar Poznań was regulated by legal acts inherited from the Prussian state. It was not until the end of the 1920s that new legal regulations were introduced, subordinating the functioning of the community to state authorities. Regardless of the legal situation, the head of the Jewish community in Poznań was Martin Cohn, elected for this position in successive elections. The basic function of the community was to organize the religious and social life of its members. The former was organized around three synagogues and a rabbi, who was initially Jakob Freimann, and then, until 1926 – Dawid Szyja Sender. Social activities focused on various charity societies, caring for the elderly, orphans and the sick, and educating young Jews. The activity of these associations was particularly visible in the final period of the interwar period. The political activity of the community members was somewhat weaker. Until the mid-1930s, it was limited to the activities of Zionist organizations.

The professional structure of the Jews of Poznań was stable and was limited to the activities of merchants and craftsmen. Some of them made a living by renting premises and flats. Several members of the community were engaged in liberal professions and industry.

Maciej Michalski

Anti-Jewish attitudes and activities at the University of Poznań in the interwar period

The article is an analysis of the policy of the authorities of the University of Poznań in the fields of admitting Jewish students, their reactions to anti-Jewish riots and verbal and physical violence against Jewish students, as well as the process of closing the university to Jews. These issues are outlined against the background of similar events in other Polish academic cities, as well as against the background of the state's policy towards national minorities in the interwar period.

Even before the establishment of the university in Poznań, its organizers drew attention to the need to introduce regulations regarding the number of Jewish students at the University of Poznań. It resulted from the belief that the percentage of students belonging to national minorities should correspond to the percentage of these minorities in the society of the Poznań Province. However, such regulations were not introduced for Germans or other minorities,

but for Jews. Consequently, a *numerus clausus* of 2% was advocated. Despite legal prohibitions of such solutions, they were practiced at the University of Poznań. The second topic related to violence against Jewish students concerns the issue of their spatial separation in lecture halls. Though a bench ghetto was not introduced in Poznań, there was a practice of violent exclusion of Jewish students from lecture and training rooms. This was particularly evident at the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Pharmacy, where the exclusion was also reflected in limited access to dissecting rooms on the pretext that the Jewish community had not provided materials for anatomical exercises. This resulted in the introduction of a condition stating that Jewish candidates for the Faculty of Medicine could not be admitted until the delivery of anatomical specimens. The Faculty was closed to student candidates in the 1936/1937 academic year. Other faculties of the University of Poznań followed this example.

PART TWO

Celina Barszczewska, Agnieszka Zawisza, Oliwia Gromadzka, Magdalena Patrzalek-Graś
**Jewish students of the University of Poznań in the years 1919-1939
in the light of archival materials: A source study analysis**

The article reports on archival research on Jewish students studying at the University of Poznań in the years 1919-1939. Its aim is to present the internal organization of the preserved archival materials (personal files of male and female students) and their external analysis. The article is the result of research conducted by the authors in the period between October 2019 and September 2021 in the archives of Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Karol Marcinkowski University of Medical Sciences in Poznań, University of Life Sciences in Poznań, and Eugeniusz Piasecki Academy of Physical Education in Poznań. The aforementioned archives contain documents from pre-war faculties: Philosophy (later Humanities), Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Law and Economics, Medicine, Agriculture and Forestry, Department of Pharmacy, and the Department of Physical Education, which constituted separate units as a result of post-war changes in the structure of the University of Poznań. The article provides information on the method of storage and the specificity of archival materials, as well as a description of the sources found in the examined student files. The discussed source materials include: enrolment cards, application forms, matriculation certificates, admission cards, ID books, master diplomas and their copies, CVs, certificates of no liabilities, birth and baptismal certificates, oaths, certificates of completion, achievement cards, and personal questionnaires. The documents collected in the course of studies are a valuable source of knowledge about the history of the University of Poznań, the lives of its male and female students and their social background. The archival materials were used to compile a statistical portrait of Jewish male and female students in the article Collective portrait of Jewish male and female students of the University of Poznań based on the analysis of the archival resources contained in this volume.

Oliwia Gromadzka, Magdalena Patrzalek-Graś, Celina Barszczewska, Agnieszka Zawisza
A collective portrait of Jewish female and male students at the University of Poznań in the interwar period

The text reports on archival research in the field of social history and microhistory, taking as its subject a group of Jewish students who were affiliated at the University of Poznań in the years 1919-1939. Its aim is to draw a collective portrait of the group using social categories based on historical sources, such as sex ratio, place and date of birth, declared nationality, nationality, or declared mother tongue, among others.

The article is the result of research conducted in 2019-2021, including the analyses of the archival resources of Poznań universities, which were separated from the structures of the University of Poznań in the course of post-war reforms. These included the archives of Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Karol Marcinkowski University of Medical Sciences in Poznań, University of Life Sciences in Poznań, and Eugeniusz Piasecki Academy of Physical Education in Poznań. The subject of the research were the personal documents of male and female students collected in student files divided into units existing in the interwar period: Faculty of Philosophy (from 1925, Faculty of Humanities), Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Faculty of Law and Economics, Faculty of Medicine and Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, as well as the Department of Pharmacy and the Department of Physical Education. The data were used to create statistical tables, which were then used to draw a social portrait of the group of Jewish students of the University of Poznań, presented in this article.

Maciej Michalski

Jewish students at the University of Poznań in 1919-1939 in a statistical perspective

The main purpose of this paper is to examine the number of Jewish students at the University of Poznań in the interwar period diachronically and by faculty. A comparison with the number of Jewish students at other state universities is also taken into account. The corpus of historical sources includes both data collected by the University of Poznań itself and those submitted to the Central Statistical Office.

The analysis of the statistical data allows for drawing general conclusions about the variation in the number of Jewish students at the University of Poznań in the interwar period. Two characteristic trends are noticeable. First, the percentage of people of “Jewish faith” was relatively low. Regardless of whether we compare the Poznań data with other Polish universities or treat them separately, in the entire interwar history of the University of Poznań, only in the initial period of its functioning the percentage of Jewish students exceeded 2%. Second, the percentage of “Jewish” students fluctuated over the period under study. From a relatively high level in 1920/21, reaching almost 3%, this percentage systematically fell to the lowest value in the 1925/26 academic year, when out of nearly 3,000 students in Poznań, only four declared their “Jewish faith”, which constituted slightly more than 0.1% of the total number of students. Since then, the number of Jewish students in Poznań increased, reaching its peak in the academic year of 1934/35 (according to the Central Statistical Office data) or 1935/36 (according

to university data), and then it began to decrease again, until in 1937/38 it reached 0.87% of the total number of students. In absolute terms, the number of Jewish students was four in 1925/26, 84 in 1934/35, and 87 in 1935/36.

The fact that in the first half of the 1930s the number of Jewish students at the University of Poznań gradually increased is puzzling, as it was a period when anti-Semitic moods at the university and in the city reached a dangerous level, including the use of physical violence. The effects of anti-Semitic incidents, however, were clearly seen in the late 1930s, when the percentage of Jewish students decreased. Yet, it is difficult to determine to what extent the change in the number of Jewish students at the University of Poznań was related to anti-Semitic incidents, and not to the general migration trends of the Jewish community in Poland. Undoubtedly, however, the decrease in the number of Jewish students from the 1936/37 academic year was related to the fact that from that moment on – due to the intensification of anti-Semitic tendencies – not a single candidate declaring Jewish faith became a first-year student at the University of Poznań. There was no “Jewish faith” column present in the official statistics of the students admitted for the academic year since then.

PART THREE

Piotr Forecki

“We took up a ruthless fight against the Jews.” Students of the University of Poznań in the service of anti-Semitism

In the interwar period, Polish universities became the main arena of the national camp’s fight against the Jews. They were a place for testing the slogans and methods used in the struggle, as well as for shaping their supporters among young people. The goal of this struggle was not only to limit the number of Jewish students, but also to eliminate them from various student organizations, separate them from the rest, and finally remove them completely from the walls of the academy. This battle was part of a much more far-reaching project, which was most generally summarized by the neologism “revival”. Among other things, it called for the removal of Jews from academic, social, economic, political, and cultural life, and ultimately, from the territory of Poland. The main aim of the article is to present an outline of the past of students of the University of Poznań, who in the years 1919-1939 not only committed various anti-Semitic actions against their colleagues within the walls of the university, but also promoted anti-Semitism in the public space of interwar Poznań and fought against Jews in other cities. They mainly used verbal, but sometimes also physical violence. They had their own extensive organizational structures, published newspapers and distributed numerous leaflets, and were supported by some university staff and clergy. In the service of anti-Semitism, Poznań students undertook their own initiatives, as well as reacted to events that took place in other academic centers, co-creating a regional representation of this racist youth uprising against the Jews. However, while in the literature on the so-called “university anti-Semitism”, there are many publications about students from other university centers in Poland, those from the University of Poznań have not been given special attention. Therefore, this article is an attempt to fill in this existing

gap. It consists of three thematically-separated parts, each of which is chronologically important, and whose preservation allows us to observe the dynamics of the described events, especially the progressive radicalization of the Poznań nationalist students. The first part of the article describes the activities of student associations operating at the University of Poznań, which can be considered anti-Semitic in terms of their programming. This resulted from the declarations and resolutions adopted by them, as well as other documents defining their ideological face. The next part of the text is devoted to various forms of anti-Semitic violence involving students, which took place within the walls of the university. The final considerations, however, are devoted to their anti-Jewish activities outside the university – in Poznań, in the region, and in other Polish cities. Numerous monographs and scholarly articles were used in the preparation of this article. Among them, the results of research conducted by Natalia Aleksyńska, Andrzej Bucholz, Antoni Czubiński, Agnieszka Graboń, Sabina Haszyńska, Lucyna Kulińska, Kamil Kijk, Jacek Misztal, Andrzej Pilch, Szymon Rudnicki, and Patryk Tomaszewski proved particularly helpful. Above all, the article was based on diverse source documents available in the Archives of Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, the Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance, and the State Archives in Poznań. It was also extremely useful to search the local press and magazines published by nationalist students at the time. As the research presented in this article shows, it was they who took action against real and imaginary Jews, and everything they considered Jewish. They were the driving force behind the pressure on the authorities of the University of Poznań. They destabilized academic life and transferred violence from the university to the city.

Aleksandra Gluba-Pieprz

**“The Law of the Baton and the Castet” at the University of Poznań.
Jewish press against anti-Semitism in 1935-1938**

The article analyzes reactions of the Polish and foreign Jewish press to a series of anti-Semitic events and incidents that took place at the University of Poznań in 1935-1938. The aim of the article is to analyze press reports and journalistic reactions published in the Jewish press in Poland and abroad, commenting on a series of anti-Semitic attacks against Jewish students at the University of Poznań in the second half of the 1930s.

The source material consists primarily of the Polish and Yiddish weekly *Poyzner Shtime* (“Poznań Voice”), the Lviv-based *Kontratak* (“Counterattack”), the Gdynia-based *Przegląd Zachodni* (“Western Review”), and the Chicago-based *The Jewish Sentinel*. I also use Yiddish dailies: the Warsaw-based *Der Moment* (“The Moment”) and the Paris-based *Naye Presse* (“New Press”). Contextually, I use a magazine that defines itself programmatically as anti-Semitic – the Poznań-based weekly *Potęga Polski bez Żydów* (“The Power of Poland without Jews”).

The text has been divided into parts that are arranged in chronological order, according to the order in which individual articles and press releases appeared in the selected periodicals published in Poland and abroad (especially in the USA). This way of ordering the narrative made it possible to reconstruct the reported events, which were also presented in thematic brackets – a separate place in the text is occupied by the issue of the Poznań Jewish community, its organization, and the public debate on the situation of Jews in Poznań (for this purpose, I primarily quote fragments

of the bilingual Polish-Yiddish magazine *Poyzner Shtime*; Eng. “Poznań Voice”), while a different place is occupied by reflections on the events taking place on campus and the reactions of the university authorities. In the text, I place particular emphasis on highlighting the scale of violence (both physical and discursive) directed against the representatives of ethnic minorities. For this purpose, I use the example of an anti-Semitic journal from Poznań entitled “Potęga Polski bez Żydów” (“The Power of Poland without Jews”). A separate part of the article is devoted to a kind of “war of word” which took place between the anti-Semitic propaganda press and the Jewish press. In the article, I present a selection of illustrations that appeared in the Lviv-based Polish-Jewish periodical *Kontratak* (“Counterattack”). Moreover, by including the issue of anti-Semitism at the University of Poznań in the broader context of anti-Jewish sentiments at Polish universities in the second half of the 1930s, I present an exemplification of the reactions of the selected representatives of the Polish intelligentsia. The conclusions of the research indicate that reports on anti-Semitism at the University of Poznań in 1935-1938 were carefully reported, and their recipients were readers of the Polish and foreign Jewish press (in Polish, English, and Yiddish). The persecutions of Jewish students at the University of Poznań were often discussed in a broader context, against the background of events which took place in other Polish university centers.

Rafał Witkowski

“Aryan Paragraph” passed during an extraordinary general assembly of the Association of Polish State Physicians in Poznań on October 17, 1937

The article discusses the process of closing professional unions and associations to Jews. The analyzed example is the interwar corporate medical association called *Związek Lekarzy Państwa Polskiego* (The Association of Polish State Physicians), which united almost all people with medical education (physicians and pharmacists). The statutes of this association were amended in 1937, first at the convention in Warsaw in May, and then during the congress in Poznań in November.

The text presents both the legal steps which led to the adoption of the “Aryan Paragraph”, and, most importantly, the effects of its introduction for the Association itself, for physicians as a whole and for the state of health care in interwar Poland. The intellectual base of the Association of Polish State Physicians were the medical faculties of the individual universities of the Second Polish Republic. In Poznań, it was the University of Poznań, where the Faculty of Medicine had been operating since 1920, and the convention of the Association in 1937 was held in the rooms of the Faculty at the Collegium Medicum.

The article also outlines examples of other professional corporations and associations that closed their ranks to Jews in the second half of the 1930s.

Bogumiła Kaniewska, Maciej Michalski

Powerful words. Jews in the anti-Semitic press in Poznań in the 1930s

This article has two primary purposes. Firstly, it aims to present the phenomenon of the anti-Semitic press in Poznań in the interwar period. Secondly, it provides an attempt to reconstruct the image of the imaginary Jew and imagined Jewry presented in the anti-Semitic press in Poznań.

Thus, we are talking about the area of mental constructs which, with the help of words printed in the press, took real shape and became a reader's reality. Their relation to the actual state of affairs will not be the subject of attention, although one may risk a thesis that the image of the Jew presented in the anti-Semitic press in Poznań was far from reality. Due to the avalanche of anti-Semitic content in the analyzed press articles, it is impossible to take a critical stance on each of the views they included. It is also impossible to deconstruct the twisted paths of anti-Semitic logic and the anti-Semitic view of reality. Besides, it would not yield any creative results. We assume that the articles published in the anti-Semitic press in Poznań presented an imaginary world, a false and distorted picture of reality, and their aim was to evoke hatred, arouse anxiety and fear, and build a social distance between the Polish and Jewish communities.

Anti-Semitic press is understood as press titles entirely devoted to the fight against the Jews. In the 1930s, between two and six such titles were published weekly in Poznań. These included: "Czarna Księga", "Pająk", "Pod Pręgierz", "Potęga Polski bez Żydów", and "Samoobrona Narodu". It is estimated that their total circulation could reach 80,000 copies.

The world presented in the Poznań anti-Semitic press was divided into two parts. The first one, positively valued, was inhabited by Poles, sometimes Aryans. It was an orderly world with the domination of the Christian religion and non-Semitic national ethnoses, a world of clear social rules. This monolithic sphere was attacked on all sides by the sworn forces of four million Polish Jews and countless legions of Jews living in other countries. Without exception, the Jewish "newcomers" were portrayed in a negative light, always guided by ignoble and sinister intentions, and their ultimate goal was to "invade", "control", and "occupy" the Polish state, so as to profit from the previously controlled branches of the economy and to exclude Poles from them. The Jewish "newcomers" were the source of all the misfortunes that plagued Poles. They brought crime with them, they cheated by selling goods, and they were to blame for the spreading social plagues – human trafficking, prostitution and other crimes. Jews were also disloyal, most often working as spies for the communists or for an "anonymous superpower" led by the Jewish government – they spied on, acted to the detriment of the Polish state, and sought to weaken it. In the historical context, Jews were portrayed as disruptors of order, opponents of the state and the king, rivals with the bourgeoisie, benefiting from the partitions and the collapse of the Polish uprisings in the 19th century, and finally, opponents of the reconstruction of the Polish state in 1918.

In this clearly bispheric world, however, there were individuals who, disregarding the Polish national and religious identity, entered into various relationships with Jewish merchants. These – as the anti-Semitic press wrote – "shabbosgoy" and "traitors" to the nation, religion, and race were stigmatized and marked by name, and their images were published. Their attitude was condemned because, according to the description of the world provided in the anti-Semitic press, the influx of Jews was increasing and the rivalry between Poles and Jews was intensifying. As reported, reinforcing the need for a tightening of the course, this rivalry intensified also in other countries. This was also reflected in the situation in Germany after 1933, as well as in other countries following German anti-Jewish legislation.

Press articles and the topics they discussed played a huge role in strengthening the anti-Semitic activity that intensified in Poland in the 1930s. The content of the analyzed articles was programmatically targeted at discriminating against the Jewish community, and the language used in them dehumanized and turned Jews into inhuman beings seeking world domination.

Agnieszka Baszko

“Shoddy rhetoric”. Anti-Semitic drawings in the Poznań press in the 1930s

The paper presents an analysis of anti-Semitic press published in Poznań in the 1930s in the context of anti-Jewish drawings.

The analysis focuses on selected representative drawings, which were treated by the Poznań publishers of anti-Semitic magazines as an important tool of persuasion, accompanying articles or functioning on their own.

The article is based on five anti-Semitic magazines published in Poznań in the 1930s: “Pająk”, “Pod Pręgierz”, “Samoobrona Narodu”, “Potęga Polski bez Żydów”, and “Bez Pardonu”.

The article is divided into three parts: an introduction (description of anti-Semitic magazines published in Poznań in the 1930s), an analysis of press drawings on the broadly understood “Jewish question”, and a conclusion. The collected research material, comprising over 400 drawings, was divided into five main groups: 1) Poznań and Greater Poland “avant-garde in the fight against Jewry”, 2) Jews as a threat to Poland, 3) Defensive actions against the Jewish threat, 4) Jews as a threat to the world, and 5) What the Jews look like. The analysis of several hundred drawings allows for the conclusion that the palette of themes, motifs, and propaganda means used by their authors was poor and used a few basic conceptual and pictorial clichés. The images in anti-Semitic writings had a simple purpose – to reinforce the message conveyed by words stating that the Jew is always the enemy. Most of the drawings, with a few exceptions, were artistically weak; they did not use sophisticated methods, wit, or finesse, and they left no room for doubt, nor did they allow for multiple interpretations. The hostility towards Jews in anti-Semitic magazines was expressed directly in words, and the drawings were used as method of fueling hostility and inciting hatred towards the Jewish people. Like the entire anti-Semitic narrative, the drawings became more virulent over the years, and the accompanying captions contained much more aggression. There were relatively few Jews in Poznań and Greater Poland, compared to the rest of the Polish lands, but paradoxically, this was what predestined Poznań and Greater Poland – according to the publishers of anti-Semitic magazines – to a leading role in the fight against the Jews.

Translated by Rafał Witkowski