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"I Don't Know if They Really Hated Us or if It Was for Fun": Memories of Anti-Jewish Violence Perpetrated by Students of the Catholic University of Lublin in Oral Histories from the Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre Centre

Abstract: This article explores the narratives describing the interactions between students of the Catholic University of Lublin and the local Jewish population. It analyzes oral histories from the "Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre" archive using the theoretical framework of intergroup contact theory, intersectionality, and the concept of contact zone. The study presents the accounts thematically, according to the circumstances of the violent behavior, and notes its gendered nature—it was perpetrated mostly by Catholic men. Moreover, it seeks an explanation for these situations and, finally, points to the theory of memory of meanings as a helpful interpretative tool.

Keywords: Jewish-Christian relations, Jewish-Catholic relations, interwar Poland, antisemitism, intergroup contact, contact zones, street violence.

Słowa kluczowe: relacje chrześcijańsko-żydowskie, relacje katolicko-żydowskie, międzywojnie, antysemityzm, kontakt międzygrupowy, strefy kontaktu, przemoc uliczna.

Introduction

The history of the Jews of Lublin and the memory thereof has been a subject of academic research for a long time, starting from the pioneering monograph written over a hundred years ago by Majer Bałaban[1] to studies by contemporary scholars such as Adam Kopciowski, Konrad Zieliński,

[1] Majer Bałaban, *Die Judenstadt von Lublin* (Berlin, 1919).

Marta Kubiszyn, and others.[2] Notably, the historians focus mainly on the last decades of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century as well as the Holocaust.

This modest contribution aims at presenting yet another angle regarding the memory of Jewish life in interwar Lublin—oral histories describing the troubled relations between the local Jewish population and students of the Catholic University of Lublin (henceforth: KUL),[3] as so far no targeted research has been done on the memory of involvement of KUL and its students in antisemitic discourses and campaigns.[4] This article, drawing on research included previously in my doctoral dissertation,[5] aims to initiate a scholarly discussion on this topic by asking questions regarding the remembered character of the described relations, the dynamics of

[2] See, e.g.: Adam Kopciowski, *Wos hert zich in der prowinc? Prasa żydowska na Lubelszczyźnie i jej największy dziennik „Lubliner Tugblat"* (Lublin, 2015); id., "Zarys dziejów Żydów w Lublinie," in Joanna Zętar, Elżbieta Żurek, Sławomir Jacek Żurek (eds.), *Żydzi w Lublinie – Żydzi we Lwowie. Miejsca – Pamięć – Współczesność* (Lublin, 2006); Marta Kubiszyn, Adam Kopciowski, *Żydowski Lublin. Źródła – obrazy – narracje* (Lublin, 2021); Marta Kubiszyn, Stephanie Weismann, "Urban Landscape as Biographical Experience: Pre-War Lublin in the Oral Testimonies of Its Inhabitants," *Polish Journal of Landscape Studies* 3 (2020), 6:49–65; Marta Kubiszyn, "The Witness's Perspective: Destruction of the Lublin Jewish Community in Non-Jewish Oral Testimonies," in Joanna Posłuszna (ed.), *Psyche, Trauma, Memory* (Kraków, 2017), 11–24; Konrad Zieliński, Nina Zielińska, *Jeszywas Chachmej Lublin. Uczelnia Mędrców Lublina* (Lublin, 2003); Konrad Zieliński, *W cieniu synagogi. Obraz życia kulturalnego społeczności żydowskiej Lublina w latach okupacji austro-węgierskiej* (Lublin, 1998).

[3] Although the University was initially called *Uniwersytet Lubelski* (University of Lublin), in 1928, the adjective "Catholic" was added to its name. As the oral histories at hand refer predominantly to the 1930s, I consequently use the post-1928 name *Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski* (KUL).

[4] Such an examination of conscience was done for example by Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. See Maciej Michalski, Krzysztof Podemski (eds.), *Wyparte historie. Antysemityzm na Uniwersytecie Poznańskim w latach 1919–1939* (Poznań, 2022). The publications addressing the socio-political life of KUL students mention various aspects of student life, including their membership in cultural and political organizations, but do not openly discuss antisemitism. See, e.g., Grażyna Karolewicz (ed.), *Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski we wspomnieniach pierwszych studentów z lat 1918–1925* (Lublin 1978); Grażyna Karolewicz, Marek Zahajkiewicz, Zygmunt Zieliński (eds.), *Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski. Wybrane zagadnienia z dziejów Uczelni* (Lublin 1992); Grzegorz Bujak (ed.), *Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski 1918–2018*, vol. 1: *1918–1944* (Lublin–Warsaw 2019). Jerzy Berezowicz's memoir in Grażyna Karolewicz (ed.), *Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski w latach 1925–1939 we wspomnieniach swoich pracowników i studentów* (Lublin, 1989) is an exception. He recalls how in the academic year 1932–1933 university students in Poland organized anti-Jewish riots and how members of the "Hetmania" group at KUL attacked Jews in the Saxon Garden with bats (ibid., 173).

[5] Magdalena Dziaczkowska, "The Memory of Meanings: The Images of Jewish-Catholic Relations in Interwar Lublin in Oral Histories" (Ph.D. dissertation, Lund University, Lund, 2023), available at: https://www.ht.lu.se/en/series/9675361/ [retrieved: 22 Sept. 2023].

prejudice and discrimination possibly underpinning the acts of violence narrated in the stories, and the role of factors such as gender, class, and age in engaging in the antisemitic violence or becoming its victim.[6] Hopefully, this article will spark academic interest and invite a more extensive and thorough investigation of the topic.

The sources for this study come from the Oral History Archive of the "Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre" Centre in Lublin and thus present personal childhood or early-adulthood memories of former Jewish and Catholic inhabitants of Lublin in the studied period. The content of the narratives will be compared and analyzed in the light of intergroup contact theory, intersectionality, and Mary Louise Pratt's theory of contact zones.[7] She introduced the concept of a contact zone as a "social space where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination."[8] In interwar Lublin, just as in so many other contexts, the street was a contact zone where the asymmetricity of the minority-majority relationship was often manifested. Although Lublin Jews seemed to be a second majority rather than the minority, as they constituted one-third of the population,[9] the

[6] Unfortunately, I was not able to check these sources against police archives or other sources that would illustrate how these hate crimes were registered and treated by the authorities. Thus, this article does not aim to assess the accuracy of the oral histories but rather describes what image of the KUL students and their engagement in antisemitic violence these sources convey.

[7] See, e.g.: Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Reading, 1954); Thomas F. Pettigrew, Linda R. Tropp, "A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 90 (2006), 5:751–783; Thomas F. Pettigrew, Linda R. Tropp, Ulrich Wagner, Oliver Christ, "Recent Advances in Intergroup Contact Theory," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 35 (2011), 3:271–280; Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Identity Politics, Intersectionality, and Violence against Women," *Stanford Law Review* 43 (1991), 6:1241–1299; ead., "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine" (paper presented at the University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989), available at: https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/faculty_scholarship/3007 [retrieved: 18 Apr. 2024]. Since these pivotal publications much has been published on intersectionality. On contact zones see, e.g., Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession* (1991), 33–40.

[8] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2nd edition (London–New York, 2008), 4. In the context of Jewish-Christian relations in Poland, the concept was introduced by Eugenia Prokop-Janiec. See, e.g., Eugenia Prokop-Janiec, "Contact and Conflict: Polish-Jewish Contact Zone," *Tematy i Konteksty* (2020), 1:197–211.

[9] See Andrzej Jakubowski, Urszula Bronisz, Elżbieta Łoś, *Historia Lublina w liczbach. History of Lublin in Figures* (Lublin, 2018), Tabl. 101. I use the term "second majority" to indicate that although theoretically a minority, Jews enjoyed considerable autonomy and their everyday experience was that of living in a well-established Jewish community where they had full agency and would not need to mingle with non-Jews for extended periods. Moreover, historically, they had the experience of being the majority of the town's

accounts of interactions in the contact zones strongly suggest that they were being pushed to the margins and into minority status by at least some members of the majority group. Such dynamics naturally should be seen in the context of the interwar identity conflicts and redefinitions of Polishness by the National Democracy party (*Narodowa Demokracja*, *Endecja*) in the Second Republic of Poland.[10] Street violence was merely a reflection of the struggle to be free from Jewish dominance—a topic omnipresent in the public discourse at the time.[11]

Antisemitism and the Catholic University of Lublin

In fact, before delving into the sources, the reader deserves an introduction explaining how these discourses resonated with KUL and its students. Firstly, it must be kept in mind that KUL did not accept non-Christian students and, due to this, did not experience the often-violent confrontations between Christian and Jewish students that occurred at other Polish universities at the time. Thus, the issues of *numerus clausus* or ghetto benches did not exist. While alumni memoirs from this period describe the university's friendly and tolerant atmosphere, particularly towards non-Catholic (e.g., Protestant or Orthodox) students,[12] a number

population in the nineteenth century and one can assume that the memory of this position was still strong in shaping their sense of the ingroup versus the outgroup. In that sense, their identity was not exactly that of a minority.

[10] On the topic of redefinitions of Polishness, see, e.g.: Paul Brykczynski, *Primed for Violence: Murder, Antisemitism, and Democratic Politics in Interwar Poland* (Madison–London, 2018); Kamil Kijek, "Polska akulturacja, żydowski nacjonalizm? Paradygmat 'akulturacji bez asymilacji' a świadomość polityczna międzywojennej młodzieży żydowskiej na podstawie autobiografii YIVO," in Konrad Zieliński (ed.), *Wokół akulturacji i asymilacji Żydów na ziemiach polskich* (Lublin, 2010), 85–112; Brian Porter-Szűcs, "The Birth of the *Polak-Katolik*," *Sprawy Narodowościowe. Seria nowa / Nationalities Affairs. New Series* 49 (2017), 1–12; id., *Faith and Fatherland: Catholicism, Modernity, and Poland* (New York, 2011); id., "Antisemitism and the Search for a Catholic Identity," in Robert Blobaum (ed.), *Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland* (Ithaca–London, 2005), 103–123; Eugenia Prokop-Janiec, *Pogranicze polsko-żydowskie. Topografie i teksty* (Kraków, 2013).

[11] Regarding the discourse of liberation or emancipation from harmful Jewish dominance, see publications discussing the National Democracy program and the activities of the Green Ribbon League (Polish: *Liga Zielonej Wstążki*). See, e.g.: Kamil Kijek, "Zanim stał się Przytyk. Ruch Narodowy a geneza zajść antyżydowskich w województwie kieleckim w latach 1931–1935," *Zagłada Żydów* 14 (2018), 45–79; Mateusz Pielka, "Radykalizacja nastrojów antysemickich w latach trzydziestych w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej," *Scripta Historica* (2015), 21:123–149.

[12] See, e.g., the memoirs of Maria Strawińska, Eugenia Grzegorzewska, Jadwiga Rosińska-Abramowiczowa, Janina Biernacka-Iwaszkiewicz, Erna Maciejewska, Helena

of Jewish Lubliners recall the University as the *alma mater* of antisemitic rowdies. Josef [1923] remembers that "there was the Catholic University of Lublin . . . and there was a concentration of these extreme antisemites there."[13] This statement suggests that there had to be another channel of antisemitic expression. Given the intensity of antisemitic behaviors at universities in general, perhaps it is not surprising to expect it from KUL as well. The dynamics of this phenomenon, however, must have been different if the university had no Jewish students. It might be worth noting that one of the KUL rectors in the period (1925–1933), Fr. Józef Kruszyński, was a notorious antisemite whose activities and writings have been well-researched by Anna Łysiak (Majdanik).[14] It seems likely that his opinions might have been formative for students as he published extensively (therefore his works were easily accessible) and publicly spoke about the harmfulness of "Talmudic Judaism." Although he stopped his antisemitic publication activities at the request of Aleksander Cardinal Kakowski upon becoming the rector, his convictions and circulating publications must have contributed to the overall atmosphere—tolerant of, if not openly encouraging, antisemitic discourses. Unfortunately, no studies explore the impact of his teachings on the students, showing whether those who displayed antisemitic attitudes employed the tropes of religious anti-Judaism more often than "regular" secular antisemitism, which could be related to Kruszyński's views. What seems more certain is the correlation between the escalation of antisemitic behaviors among KUL students and the general rise of antisemitic attitudes in Polish society in the mid-1930s, coinciding with the tenure of the next rector, Fr. Antoni Szymański, who was not known as an antisemite.

When it comes to the records of students' engagement in antisemitic attacks, the University archives seem to remain silent.[15] However, it is

Jezierka-Manugiewiczowa, Cecylia Świderkówna-Petrykowska in Karolewicz (ed.), *Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski we wspomnieniach pierwszych studentów z lat 1918–1925*.

[13] Josef Fraind, "Antysemityzm w przedwojennym Lublinie" [interview, recorded by Tomasz Czajkowski, 17 Dec. 2006], in Ośrodek „Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN", https://biblioteka.teatrnn.pl/dlibra/publication/121245/edition/115498/content [retrieved: 29 Sept. 2023]. All the oral histories used in this study were given in Polish, the translations are mine.

[14] Anna Łysiak, "Judaizm rabiniczny i współczesny w pismach teologów katolickich w Polsce w latach 1918–1939" (Ph.D. dissertation, Jagiellonian University, Kraków, 2003); ead., "The Rev. Kruszynski and Polish Catholic Teachings about Jews and Judaism in Interwar Poland," *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte* 16 (2003), 1:52–75.

[15] My research in 2018 yielded no results. Not a single record I accessed in the archive pertained to the issue at hand.

known that National Democracy became increasingly influential among university students. Although the University authorities initially refused to legalize the All-Poland Youth (*Młodzież Wszechpolska*) and the National Youth Organization (*Organizacja Młodzieży Narodowej*) as well as their political rival, the "Ogniwo" Association of Independent Socialist Youth (*Stowarzyszenie Niezależnej Młodzieży Socjalistycznej „Ogniwo"*), justifying the decision as being necessary in order to shield students from political activism, eventually All-Polish Youth was registered in 1933/34 with Professor Wit Klonowiecki as the faculty member in charge.[16] Marek Czyrka, a historian researching National Democracy in interwar Lublin, claims that in that period Lublin was home to robust youth organizations connecting young people with National Democratic ideals and that the All-Poland Youth Academic Association and the Youth Movement of the Camp of Great Poland had significant influence on the socio-political life of young people at the university as well as of the city's youth in general.[17] This must have had an impact on students. Although National Democrats were only the third most powerful political force among students (after *Odrodzenie* and supporters of the *Sanacja* regime),[18] they dominated several KUL student organizations. Among the policies they espoused was the need for defending Polish economic interests from overly privileged Jewish tradesmen and artisans, and consequently to lead boycotts of local Jewish shops.[19]

The narratives

While researching the images of Jewish-Catholic relations in the interwar period, I came across fourteen oral histories mentioning interactions between KUL students and the local Jewish population, all of them harmful in nature. Eight oral histories came from Jewish inhabitants of Lublin (two men and six women) and six from Christian ones (three men and three women). The group shows a diversity of social, political, and religious backgrounds, although the Jewish interviewees come predominantly from

[16] Marek Czyrka, "Związek Akademicki Młodzież Wszechpolska i Ruch Młodych Obozu Wielkiej Polski w Lublinie w okresie II Rzeczypospolitej," *Niepodległość i Pamięć* 16 (2009), 1:112.

[17] Ibid., 121.

[18] Robert Derewenda, "Uniwersytet za rektora ks. Antoniego Szymańskiego (1933–1939)," in Bujak (ed.), *Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski*, 179.

[19] Czyrka, "Związek Akademicki," 112.

middle-class backgrounds.[20] One ought to remember that none of them was explicitly asked the questions about their memories of KUL and its students, and those who did mentioned them spontaneously. The interviewers conducted semi-structured interviews and asked only very general questions about interwar Lublin, their childhood, relations between Jews and non-Jews, etc. Thus, it is possible that many more interviewees had memories of encounters between KUL students and Jews but might not have thought them important enough to mention if they were not an integral part of the story they wanted to share. Moreover, the nature of oral histories makes them valuable sources for the study of memory but they do not provide access to the past itself, thus this study emphasizes memory rather than the direct connection between memory and the past.[21] Hopefully, this article, which explores the narrative memory rather than specific historical events, will inspire a historical study on the topic focusing on the past events.

The descriptions of the encounters might be divided into three main themes: economic boycott, violence in the leisure areas (such as the Saxon Garden), and other antisemitic violence. In each of these situations, the violence was described as organized differently and KUL students played a slightly different role. While this article focuses on violent encounters at the group level, it should be kept in mind that negative intergroup dynamics do not exclude the possibility of parallel or subsequent positive individual encounters between members of the two groups. This theme cannot be explicitly addressed in this article due to the length limits, but it is worth noting that the sources mention people who were avowed antisemites and participated in anti-Jewish boycotts in the interwar period, however, offered help to individual Jews during the Holocaust, often at great personal risk.[22]

[20] The inverted ratio of social classes between the interwar and postwar Jewish community seems to be characteristic of the Jewish group due to patterns of survival during the Holocaust. Often, the better-off people had higher chances of surviving. More about the problem of representation in these sources can be found in Dziaczkowska, "The Memory of Meanings," 162–164.

[21] I defend the position that one has no access to the past as such but only its images and records, therefore the inferred conclusions about the past have to be careful. On the other hand, on the cognitive level, the narrative memory of the past can be much more important and influential in the present than the past itself.

[22] See, e.g., Jochewed Flumenker, "Stosunki polsko-żydowskie przed wojną i podczas wojny" [interview, recorded by Tomasz Czajkowski, 15 Nov. 2006], in Ośrodek „Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN," https://biblioteka.teatrnn.pl/dlibra/publication/102754/edition/97434/content [retrieved: 22 Sept. 2023].

Economic boycott

As many as eight of the fourteen narrators speak about the economic boycott of Jewish shops led by KUL students.[23] This action was a part of a larger campaign aimed at defending Polish trade against foreign domination. Calls for anti-Jewish economic boycotts had already appeared for the first time at the end of the nineteenth century and were a permanent fixture in National Democracy propaganda from 1907. These boycotts and calls for them became increasingly more aggressive from mid-1935, culminating in expressions of violence such as the Przytyk pogrom of 1936.[24] In Lublin, the action was coordinated by the All-Poland Youth Academic Association, among others, and in the collective memory seems to be strongly associated with KUL students. One of the Jewish Lubliners, Sara [1923], a teenager then, recalls:

> In the spring of 1939, students of the [Catholic] University of Lublin began picketing the shop and glued the words "Don't buy from a Jew" to the glass window. Whenever I was passing by, I would enter this store because their son was my friend. They [the picketers] told my friends what was written here. So, I said, "It doesn't concern me." They didn't understand. They introduced themselves to me, shook my hand. They introduced themselves to me, so I introduced myself. And I said out loud, "My name is Sara Zoberman." They turned pale and felt very, very uncomfortable.[25]

She describes how the students led the action and talked to clients to dissuade them from shopping there. It is with some pride that she describes how she managed to embarrass the picketers who assumed she was not Jewish, implicitly denouncing their stereotypical (classist-racial) way of thinking about Jewishness. As the daughter of a well-off middle-class family (and thus she was well dressed) with "Polish" features (fair eyes

[23] Interestingly, only three of the eight Jewish interviewees (less than half) and five of six Catholics (the majority) speak about the economic boycott, meaning that the narratives come predominantly from the latter.

[24] There are repeated claims in the literature on the topic that the Minister of Internal Affairs, Felicjan Sławoj Składkowski, intentionally propagated the boycott. However, Arkadiusz Adamczyk claims that this stance needs further verification. See Arkadiusz Adamczyk, "Wokół premierostwa Felicjana Sławoja Składkowskiego. Uwagi i spostrzeżenia," *Acta Universitatis Lodzensis. Folia Historica* 60 (1997), 91–92.

[25] Sara Grinfeld, "Antysemickie hasła na sklepie papierniczym Kestenberga" [interview, recorded by Tomasz Czajkowski, 5 Dec. 2006], in Ośrodek „Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN," https://biblioteka.teatrnn.pl/dlibra/publication/102577/edition/97258/content [retrieved: 22 Sept. 2023].

and hair), it was easy for the picketers to assume she was part of their ingroup. She highlights how shocked they were by her name, suggesting their surprise at encountering a Jew who did not look differently from them, as if they expected Jews to stand out visually. As in many other situations of intergroup conflict, the tendencies to essentialize the Other, present them as repugnant and adhere to stereotypical images, were also seen in this story. These tendences are certainly reflected in Sara's account.[26]

It is worth noting, however, that she describes the entire situation as unpleasant but practically devoid of substantial consequences for the shoppers. The picketers talked to her but refrained from taking further action. Another woman, a Christian and a KUL student herself at the time, remembers that when the pickets took place "in the last two years before the outbreak of the war" the students took more drastic means to prevent non-Jewish clients from patronizing Jewish shops:

> Please imagine this scene. On Krakowskie Przedmieście, opposite the Church of the Holy Spirit, there was a clothing store. My mother and I went there together, maybe not to buy something, but just to see how the sewing was done, what was being sewn . . . I was very proud of my white university cap, a white cap, [with] a white and amaranth stripe, a gold stripe here: we had a gold one, and the humanities department had a silver one.[27] I was wearing that hat too. When we entered the Jewish store, I saw a group of friends taking photos of us. But they didn't hang mine on the board at KUL.[28]

Janina [1919] describes a picket in front of one of the clothing stores in the city center where she went with her mother and how the students took photos of the clients (university students only?) and then posted them on an announcement board at the university to shame them publicly.[29] She recalls feeling relief when her photos were not posted and elaborates in

[26] About the issue of the repugnant Other, see Susan Harding, "Representing Fundamentalism: The Problem of the Repugnant Cultural Other," *Social Research* 58 (1991), 2:373–393. See also Andrei Oișteanu, *Inventing the Jew: Antisemitic Stereotypes in Romanian and Other Central-East European Cultures*, trans. Mirela Adascalitei (Lincoln, 2009).

[27] Robert Derewenda mentions that the colors of the caps were related to the corporations the students belonged to. They could choose one out of five: Korabia, Concordia, Astrea, Gdynia, and Hetmania. The latter was an ideological equivalent of the All-Polish Youth. See Derewenda, "Uniwersytet za rektora," 181. The caps play an important role in the stories because they allow for the identification of individuals as students.

[28] Janina Smolińska, "Polacy i Żydzi w Lublinie" [interview, recorded by Aneta Ogrodnik, 1 Dec. 2002], in Ośrodek „Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN," https://biblioteka.teatrnn.pl/dlibra/publication/35207/edition/34084/content [retrieved: 23 Sept. 2023].

[29] Publishing photos of Christian clients in local press can be seen as the context to the students' actions.

her story on the potential reasons for being spared this shame. She does not mention, however, any other repercussions or discrimination against clients or Jewish owners.

Anna [1923], a slightly younger Catholic woman, describes a more aggressive way of punishing patrons of such shops:

> students from the Catholic University of Lublin, pulled these tricks (*robili takie hece*) such as when two Polish women were walking . . . They went into a Jewish [shop] and bought something there in this haberdashery shop, something like . . . panties, bras—when they came out of that store in winter, I remember it like it was yesterday, two students came up with a razor blade and cut her fur coat from top to bottom from the back. They cut it, they cut it like this. And then she looks at it—it's all cut up. It was as a punishment because she did not go to a Polish shop, but to a Jewish one. It was just such a fight: they were the KUL-ists. There was Mr. Skarżyński and Mr. Lipski, two students whom I remember, and they always cut people's coats as a punishment for going out and buying them. Well, because the Jews prospered and simply wiped out the Poles. The Pole was closing his shop while the Jew was prospering.[30]

Influencing the clients through conversation, as Sara recalls, feels to be a relatively mild means of persuasion. Taking photos infringes on privacy and could be considered more aggressive, but destroying someone's belongings is yet another step towards radicalization and dangerously approaches physical violence. The forms of "mild" punishment and discrimination described above were, however, directed only towards the clientele. Nonetheless, the stories strongly suggest that the border of physical violence was crossed *vis-à-vis* the shop owners and their properties. A Catholic, Adam [1928], describes it as follows:

> But generally, there were these antisemitic slogans: "Beat the Jews." There were militia groups that smashed windows in Jewish stores. A lot of it was under [German] influence I mean that it was following the German example, because the Nazis started to destroy Jews at home and it spread to the East. Maybe not to the same extent as in Germany, but here in Poland there were also these anti-Jewish demonstrations and various unpleasant, inhumane situations. Were there such riots here in Lublin? Yes, indeed. There were broken windows on Krakowskie Przedmieście where Jews lived. There were militias,[31] **mostly students**, National

[30] Anna Proskura, "Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w przedwojennym Lublinie" [interview, recorded by Marek Nawratowicz, 26 Sept. 2007], in Ośrodek „Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN," https://biblioteka.teatrnn.pl/dlibra/publication/137143/edition/131014/content [retrieved: 22 Sept. 2023].

[31] Informal grassroots-organized fighting groups of civilians often affiliated with a specific political party.

> Democrats. National Democracy. There were groups of people beating Jews, but their main focus was taking it out on shop windows and Jewish shops. Of course, not to the point of killing a Jew. But hitting Jews, they chased them. They broke windows, destroyed stores, and robbed the interiors. There were such incidents, unfortunately, I say, unfortunately, but they did happen.[32]

He mentions special militias, which included a considerable number of students, smashing windows, robbing shops, and beating Jews.[33] Thus, the memory of the gangs of National Democracy youth transgressing the borders of bodily integrity as well as ownership is quite vivid in the story.

Such accounts are not rare. Another Catholic interviewee, Mieczysław [1926], tells a similar story:

> There were situations when students from the Catholic University of Lublin came with clubs and broke windows. It started on Krakowskie Przedmieście—there were numerous Jewish shops there, but they closed [the windows] quickly. There used to be these sliding metal bars and they closed [them] quickly. And here on Bramowa Street they no longer had [bars], because they were poorer people, [and the students] were coming, breaking windows, shouting: "Down with the Jews! Down with the Jews!" (*Na Żydów!*). They would smash things for a bit. They didn't go far, they still went to the Market Square, but they were afraid to go further, they were too "brave" because there were a lot of Jews there. But the Jews were submissive, they somehow did not defend themselves against them.[34]

This account sheds some light on the borders of the contact zone in this case. The area of violence could be understood as a contact zone because it is a scene of asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination,

[32] Adam Tomanek, "Stosunki polsko-żydowskie przed wojną" [interview, recorded by Tomasz Czajkowski, 9 June 2004], in Ośrodek „Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN," https://biblioteka.teatrnn.pl/dlibra/publication/120044/edition/114331/content [retrieved: 22 Sept. 2023]. Emphasis mine. Mieczysław Zych also claims that "there were situations when students from the Catholic University of Lublin came with batons and broke windows." See Mieczysław Zych, "Antysemityzm w przedwojennym Lublinie" [interview, recorded by Wioletta Wejman, 5 Apr. 2006], in Ośrodek „Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN," https://biblioteka.teatrnn.pl/dlibra/publication/125832/edition/119932/content [retrieved: 22 Sept. 2023].

[33] Zofia, a Jewish woman, repeats the story about throwing stones in the context of the boycotts and the luck her father had: "There were also cases where National Democratic youth broke windows in shops of Jewish merchants. You had to close the shop windows' shutters. They threw stones at shop windows or people. This didn't happen to my dad. However, his store was picketed as part of a boycott by the National Democratic youth. I remember that after these events he came home very depressed. It was a very unpleasant experience." Zofia Weiser, "Polacy i Żydzi w Lublinie" [interview, recorded by Robert Kuwałek, 1 Dec. 2001], in Ośrodek „Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN, " https://biblioteka.teatrnn.pl/dlibra/publication/34621/edition/34020/content [retrieved: 22 Sept. 2023]. She, however, does not connect it with the KUL students.

[34] Zych, "Antysemityzm w przedwojennym Lublinie."

of encounter and struggle between two groups. The majority's representatives are shown in the story as dominant because Jews did not defend themselves. Thus, it seems as if the representatives of the majority could inflict as much violence as they wanted in the contact zone. This zone, however, has its limits and there seems to be an undefined force preventing them from going too deep into the Jewish neighborhood. They lack the courage to do so, most likely because they feel that part of the town is not "theirs" anymore.[35] They do not know what to expect. Some interviewees mention high levels of crime in the Jewish neighborhoods—maybe the thought of that is what stopped the Catholic aggressors.

Another important question to be asked about the quoted fragment is why the Jews did not defend themselves in these stories. What was the source of this fatalism? Mieczysław continues to explore this question in his account:

> My father said that if they, the Jews, had taken up their clubs they would have chased them away, and my mother replied: "They would've chased them away and the police would've arrested them." **This meant that the Jews were always in a losing position.** Although I remember one shoemaker . . . he had very little work, but he was sitting in front of this workshop and talking to us, but he was some kind of politician, because, as I noticed, I realized I asked my father later and he said that everything was being done against the Jews. And we say: "No, how come, in what way?" "Have you seen any Jews working in city hall?" I remembered it, I went to my father, and my father said: "Yes, indeed, there are no employees there. There are no Jews in the state administration."[36]

Mieczysław points to the structural inequality and the lack of representation of the Jewish community among the local authorities. Indeed, Jews were not allowed to serve in the public administration offices, so no Jews worked in the city hall. Nonetheless, the Jewish community was always represented in the city council by members of various Jewish parties, with majority shifting in the interwar period from Agudat Yisrael to the Bund.[37] This form of representation, however, apparently was not perceived as sufficient to remedy cross-group tensions, and could be seen as insufficient support for the minority by the authorities. The intergroup contact

[35] To read more about what makes space "theirs" and "ours", see Dziaczkowska, "The Memory of Meanings," 227–281.

[36] Zych, "Antysemityzm w przedwojennym Lublinie." Emphasis mine.

[37] See Zbigniew Zaporowski, "Żydzi w Radzie Miejskiej Lublina 1919–1939," in Tadeusz Radzik (ed.), *Żydzi w Lublinie. Materiały do dziejów społeczności żydowskiej Lublina* (Lublin, 1995), 237–244.

theory names four conditions for peaceful intergroup contact leading to decreased tension and intergroup prejudice.[38] In addition to the authorities' support for the intergroup contact, it also mentions equal group status within the situation, common goals, and intergroup cooperation. None of these conditions are met in the cases of economic boycott and related antisemitic violence described. The story told by Mieczysław suggests not only the lack of adequate representation and the unequal status of both groups but also the biases of the police. He recalls his mother being sure that if Jews called for help from the police, they would be arrested instead of the perpetrators. Such circumstances can easily contribute to feelings of resignation and losing faith in one's agency, leading to the passive submission described in the story. Although the stories paint a vivid picture of Jewish helplessness and passivity in the face of the economic boycotts, one can observe that this was not always the case.

Violence in leisure areas

The second theme in the descriptions of interactions with the KUL students refers to the violence in the leisure area of the Saxon Garden. Five interviewees (four Jewish and one Catholic) include in their narrative descriptions of physical violence inflicted upon Jewish visitors in the Garden. Mira [1914] remembers that before the war, spatial segregation was not strong enough to restrict the movements of the Jewish population outside of the Jewish neighborhoods:

> We didn't have our own ghetto, we went from Nadstawna Street to Krakowskie Przedmieście Street, to the Saxon Garden. We walked. And a lot of them, like students, were such that when they saw Jews, they shouted: "Jews to Palestine!" And they chased us. But there were no cases of beatings or injuries.[39]

She is not specific about whether the students attended the KUL or the local gymnasiums, but she highlights that there was no actual physical harm done. Other Jewish interviewees remember differently. Sarah [1922] sets the following scene:

[38] See Thomas F. Pettigrew, "Intergroup Contact Theory," *Annual Review of Psychology* 49 (1998), 65–85.

[39] Mira Shuval, "Stosunki polsko-żydowskie przed wojną" [interview, recorded by Tomasz Czajkowski, 29 Dec. 2006], in Ośrodek „Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN," https://biblioteka.teatrnn.pl/dlibra/publication/103488/edition/98156/content [retrieved: 22 Sept. 2023].

> Saturday in Lublin, especially Saturday afternoon, was a day when all Jewish maids had a few hours off after lunch. [We] young people, we did not go to school on Saturday, only on Sundays, [so] in the afternoon we also went to the Garden . . . But **the university students**, we called them Endeks, had a game. On Saturday afternoon, between two and three they would go to the park, to the Saxon Garden, with these [clubs]—there was this stickball game, it's like baseball, it's just flat [the club], not round, just flat. When you get it on your head, it hurts. And they chased the maids, and they chased the young people. As for the [Jewish] youths, the girls were always surrounded by boys who also had these [clubs] and [would] beat them back. And these maids were always in their twenties or thirties. It was very easy to beat them: they couldn't run that fast. And they always caught and hit them. The police were there to take care of us. But when these Polish youths beat these Jews, everyone looked away. But when these Jewish youths would hit back, the police always came and arrested them. "Because you guys started hitting." That, it was every Saturday.[40]

Given her age, Sarah describes a certain *status quo* in the 1930s, probably after 1935.[41] She claims that the attackers were KUL students who would come to the park with stickball bats specifically to target Jews on Shabbat afternoons when they knew they would be there. She also indicates that they targeted Jewish youths and maids specifically. They would chase and beat Jewish maids, who had no protection and "could not run that fast." Sarah describes also how Jewish boys would bring their clubs to defend their female friends. In another fragment, she mentions how shrewd the students were in their way of hitting their victims:

> They beat us not enough to send us to the hospital, but enough that you come home with bumps on your head, bumps on your hands, beaten up, your nose, your nose was bleeding. And it was like that every Saturday, except when it was raining . . . So, it was every Saturday. It was always my mother waiting at home when I came. Will I be beaten? Will I have time to escape if they don't hit me? And usually, I didn't get hit in the head with a stick. They were very smart; they didn't hit [us] in the head. Shoulders, from the front, hands [places] that were not so visible. So, these young people were smart. And why did they hate us? I don't know if they really hated us or if it was just for fun.[42]

[40] Sarah Tuller, "Młodzież polska biła Żydów w Ogrodzie Saskim" [interview, recorded by Tomasz Czajkowski, 11 Dec. 2010], in Ośrodek „Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN," https://biblioteka.teatrnn.pl/dlibra/publication/101291/edition/95957/content [retrieved: 22 Sept. 2023]. Emphasis mine.

[41] After the death of Piłsudski, antisemitic violence increased significantly.

[42] Tuller, "Młodzież polska."

The most unjust aspect of this situation seems to be indifference of the police, who pretended not to see the antisemitic violence but would notice and arrest Jews who tried to defend themselves. This is related to the structural discrimination, inequality, and lack of support from the authorities mentioned above. In her conclusion in the quoted fragment, Sarah raises the issue of the attackers' motivation—whether they hated Jews, or perhaps it was some sort of game. We will leave this question for now but will return to it later.

Further elaborating on the violence in the Saxon Garden, Sarah says she heard that the students would often overturn the park benches on which Jewish girls would sit so that they would fall to the ground. A similar story is also told by a Catholic woman, Janina [1924]:

> And, for example, the students—I know this from a story because I did not see it—when little Jewish girls sat down nicely on the benches, one on one side, the other on the other there, the students talk, talk, at some point, they take the bench, they lift it up, oh gosh, the Jewish girls get dumped onto the grass. And that [happened] often, it was repeated. They then ran away, not to the front [entrance], because the police were there, but towards our building, there were stairs built like that, an additional entrance, and they would run away through these stairs. But they were not so common accidents, rather, but I just heard that they did… I didn't see [it myself].[43]

The fact that such situations are remembered by both Jewish and Catholic Lubliners strongly suggests that there might be some truth to the descriptions. Another account by a Catholic man [1924] gives us an even more convincing argument for the veracity of these accounts. He recalls taking part in what he calls "pranks." In oral histories, this term usually signifies physical antisemitic violence perpetrated by teenage boys and is an interesting example of how language can transform reality or at least the memory thereof.[44] Using such a term allows the perpetrator to reduce the weight of the offence and thus their responsibility while putting the victim in the position of an uncooperative, humorless grump who simply does not know how to take a joke. It also makes the victim second-guess the offense, like Sarah did in the fragment quoted above, wondering if

[43] Janina Kozak, "Stosunki polsko-żydowskie przed wojną" [interview, recorded by Tomasz Czajkowski, 23 Sept. 2005], in Ośrodek „Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN," https://biblioteka.teatrnn.pl/dlibra/publication/124575/edition/118729/content [retrieved: 20 Sept. 2023].

[44] Dziaczkowska, "The Memory of Meanings," 409–411.

the violence was just "for fun." He remembers the situation from the perspective of a "prankster":

> At our young age, sometimes such pranks (*psikusy*) were played on Jews. Why? Because on Saturday you couldn't walk on Krakowskie Przedmieście. They joined hands and walked along the entire width of the sidewalk. The walk was from the Kraków Gate to the Saxon Garden. When there is the first lane and the second lane [in the front], you couldn't find a free place to sit there. There was no free bench there. Everything [everyone] was sitting and resting. We were the ones who did such pranks sometimes. You put on a student cap and showed up, and you tipped over the bench with the Jewish girls. And so on until dusk. When dusk was falling, the Jews no longer showed up. And it was scary to walk through their neighborhood at night. It was dangerous, they could attack you.[45]

At least two issues in this fragment could be of great interest to a researcher. The violence and dislike for the visibility of Jews in the city center are somewhat unsurprising. What draws one's attention is the element of pretending to be a student by wearing a student cap. Firstly, it remains a mystery how a young boy would obtain one—did he borrow or steal it from his older friends or brothers? Did he find it by chance? Moreover, it is fascinating that he makes the connection between perpetrating antisemitic violence and the university cap, as if without it he could not do so. If he felt like attacking Jews, why didn't he simply act on it? Why did he need the cap to carry out his "pranks"? Does it mean that the KUL students were so strongly associated with the antisemitic violence that it "entitled" him to do the same? Or maybe it gave him some sort of protection in the eyes of the police? Finally, what could one assume about the previously quoted fragments—how many of the students in the recollections were actual students and how many were teenage boys eager to taunt and bully others?

Another important point this report raises resembles the account of Mieczysław [1926] and refers to the insecurity he felt in the Jewish neighborhoods. Although other stories indicate the submissive nature of the Jewish population and the fact they did not fight back, the narrator feels that they would beat him once he entered "their" area. He continues the story by mentioning the high levels of crime in the Jewish districts, but one cannot be certain as to what extent his expectations reflect his

[45] For ethical reasons, the author has opted to omit this man's name. She can be contacted directly to obtain further details regarding this oral history: "Polacy i Żydzi w Lublinie" [interview, recorded by Marta Stachura, 1 May 1998], in Ośrodek „Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN."

attitude (he is beating Jews entering "his" space and thus expects the same if he enters "theirs") or pangs of conscience (he deserves to be beaten in return). One also cannot refrain from wondering whether such an act of vengeance would be perceived as a prank.

One of the Jewish interviewees, Josef [1923], who was an ardent Bundist, recalls the retribution that young Jewish men, interestingly in cooperation with PPS (Polish Socialist Party) youth, inflicted on Saxony Garden attackers:

> Those from the Jewish militia dressed up as Hasidim and entered the Saxon Garden on Saturday because on Saturday all the people wanted some greenery, they all went there. Well, these students from the Catholic University of Lublin attacked them, but they did not get a response [right away] because they planned together with PPS to drag them through Krakowskie Przedmieście and the Kraków Gate on Grodzka Street, then trap them in the Jewish district and teach them a lesson. I only remember that the ambulance ran from both sides all day long. They were taking these students away. And from then on, it was quiet in Lublin.[46]

This is the only substantial account of Jews fighting back I found in this collection of oral histories. Undoubtedly, we owe it to the fact that Josef was an activist and thus probably had direct experience of this rare situation. He explains in another fragment how the Bund often cooperated with PPS in various fields, including their common activity against the Endeks. In this particular case, it seems that PPS cooperated not only with the Bund but perhaps with other organizations as well. Together, they crafted a plan to dress in ultra-Orthodox garb as Hasidim were considered physically weak and were more often than others a subject to ridicule and attack. Once the students attacked them, these fake observant Jews ran back towards the Jewish neighborhoods (for instance Grodzka Street), leading the students into a trap. When the students entered the area, they were surrounded and beaten ("taught a lesson"). Consequently, numerous casualties had to be taken to the hospital, but there was no anti-Jewish physical violence in the park from then on. Josef also mentions that other forms of violence continued (such as the economic boycott), but not the beating.

This fascinating account, certainly shaped by Bundist values of the narrator (including agency), shows an alternative to the Jewish passivity described above. The young Jews owned their agency and chose to fight back. Undoubtedly, the aspect of joining forces with a non-Jewish organization

[46] Fraind, "Antysemityzm."

was very encouraging. In this case, the Jewish and PPS youth fulfilled the four conditions of successful intergroup contact: they had equal status in the situation, a common goal to beat the Endeks, cooperated to reach that goal, and had the support of the authorities—their party leaders. Naturally, this was possible due to their ideological commonalities (common values), which underpinned their agreement and collaboration. In this situation, although the larger structural discrimination against the Jews persisted (the support of the authorities was absent), the support of a single social group was enough to create cooperation, encourage Jewish agency, and enable them to fight back. The wording Josef uses ("teaching a lesson") suggests that the aim was not to stop the antisemitic violence altogether, there seems to be no hope for that, but rather to preserve dignity and show that Jews can fight back and possess the agency and ability to do so.

Finally, one cannot but notice that the attackers are always young men. One could thus ask to what extent the antisemitic violence ascribed to the KUL students can be seen in terms of the general tendency of young people to form smaller groups and persecute outsiders. It is not uncommon for young men to form gangs and bully those they deem less worthy, and usually such violence thrives in places with strong social and ethnic divisions. It is possible that the students would have found a group of victims even in the absence of Jews. It is certain, however, that the National Democracy encouraged this specific direction of violence. Moreover, I did not find any accounts describing KUL students engaging in violence against any other specific social group. The oral histories mention only attacks against Jews. A study of complementary sources could shed more light on this problem.

Antisemitic violence in general

While the accounts undoubtedly focus on the forms of antisemitic attacks described above, they also mention other antisemitic activities of KUL students, all of which were directed against their peers or younger children. Elżbieta [1923], a Catholic woman, remembers how they "liked to scare the kids" attending the Jewish school on Niecała Street,[47] though she does not mention how.

[47] Elżbieta Margulowa, "Dzielnice żydowskie" [interview, recorded by Ewa Koldryn, Mariusz Sadłowski, 16 Dec. 1998], in Ośrodek „Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN," https://biblioteka.teatrnn.pl/dlibra/publication/33719/edition/33207/content [retrieved: 22 Sept. 2023].

Jochewed [1919] recalls her life as a neighbor to the students with much more detail:

> Students at the Catholic University of Lublin lived opposite our house. At that time, there was one university in Lublin, KUL, a Catholic university. And these boys were known [for] not particularly liking Jews. But they were making different gestures at us through the window. That's why we always told them: You [say] "down with the Jews, Jewish women with us (*precz z Żydami, Żydóweczki z nami*). We like Jewish women, but we don't like Jews."[48]

She sets the scene, telling the interviewer that the KUL students were known for their dislike of Jews. Despite that, they teased Jewish girls and sought to interact with them. Jochewed remembers how she and her girlfriends would respond by teasing them that they disliked Jewish men but were happy to flirt with Jewish women. She recalls in detail the escapades at an ice rink where she and her friends would skate and meet some non-Jewish boys:

> Some of the boys were our age, let's say in the same classes, they were quite polite. But some people—you could see the hatred right away. Because as soon as he realized that she was Jewish, he put his foot down to trip her onto the ice with his skates. Those [Jewish girls] who went to Polish schools had more to do [with Polish boys] because the schools held coed evenings. And with us, I mean with the Jewish high school, there were also [meetings] sometimes, but less often. So, they had Polish friends from other Polish schools. For example, there was the state junior Staszic Gymnasium, where the Jews also tried to go, because it was also at the highest level. The girls' school [was] Unia, where you paid a small fee, the same at Staszic. But there were more Jews there, like in Unia, like in the women's Unia. Quite a lot. For example, when there were meetings, I mean evenings, we danced together. Sometimes you could sense that he was dancing, but he remembered that he was [dancing with] a Jewish woman. We would say to those students: "You say 'down with the Jews, Jewish women with us'." Jewish women were as a rule considered rather pretty girls, but there were young people like that [antisemitic].[49]

Jochewed's memories resonate with the cultural tropes of the beautiful exotic Jewess present in the European *imaginaire*[50] and manifested in the

[48] Flumenker, "Stosunki polsko-żydowskie."

[49] Ibid.

[50] See, e.g.: Ulrike Brunotte, "The *Beautiful Jewess* as Borderline Figure in Europe's Internal Colonialism: Some Remarks on the Intertwining of Orientalism and Antisemitism," *ReOrient* 4 (2019), 2:166–180; Hildegard Frübis, "The Figure of the *Beautiful Jewess*: Displacements on the Borders between East and West," in Ulrike Brunotte, Jürgen Mohn, Christina Späti (eds.), *Internal Outsiders – Imagined Orientals? Antisemitism, Colonialism and Modern Constructions of Jewish Identity* (Würzburg, 2017), 61–71. See also Bożena

Polish collective memory in personages such as Esterka (a mistress of King Casimir the Great) or Rachela from Stanisław Wyspiański's *The Wedding*.[51] As she describes it, however, not every Christian boy was attracted to Jewish girls. She concludes the section by claiming that although there were some nice people, "the majority, unfortunately, were those who did not like [Jews]."[52]

Her account is particularly interesting because of the gendered and classist character of antisemitism she describes. Like Sara, whose story was discussed in the section on the economic boycott, Jochewed seems to have experienced less antisemitism because she was a well-dressed girl and a student at the gymnasium and thus would not be physically attacked but rather subjected to minor harassment. She also seems to suggest that when Christian boys knew Jewish girls from school, they tended to be less malicious, which is in line with the contact theory. At the same time, however, she claims that when dancing with Christian boys at a party she had a feeling that some of them always remembered that she was Jewish, likely meaning that they were less cordial and expressed their prejudices.[53] Therefore, their contact did not remove the prejudice towards the outgroup.

Conclusion

The details of the analyzed narratives show an image consistent with the broader context of interwar Poland regarding the negative forms of contact between university students and the Jewish population. The circumstances of violent encounters such as the economic boycott or street violence (Saxon Garden) mentioned above are not surprising. The fact that both Jews and non-Jews speak about this confirms that such events took place, although human memory can be mistaken regarding the details. Despite these imperfections, previous research confirms that the memory of meanings remains intact. Dorota Kuncewicz *et al.* draw

Umińska-Keff, *Postać z cieniem. Portrety Żydówek w polskiej literaturze od końca XIX wieku do 1939 roku* (Warsaw, 2001).

[51] It is also worth mentioning Wilhelm Feldman's *Piękna żydówka* (*Beautiful Jewess*). Although the book focuses on assimilation rather than the trope of a beautiful Jewess, it does, however, include hints suggesting the presence of this trope, such as the descriptions of Klara, the protagonist, at the beginning of the book.

[52] Flumenker, "Stosunki polsko-żydowskie."

[53] Ibid.

attention to the fact that although the narrator can consciously shape the narrative by emphasizing or downplaying (if not intentionally hiding) some elements of the remembered past and forget the details of events, the memory of meanings is unchanged.[54] It means that the "signs" (people, ideas, events) continue to have the same meanings in the most basic sense of the impact these elements had on the narrator. For example, one can forget the details of one's childhood encounters with their grandmother but will remember that she was either a warm, caring, and loving presence in their life or a cold, distant, and severe person. Similarly, although the details of the oral histories analyzed above might not be possible to verify, the meanings remain valid. In this short investigation of the relationship between KUL students and the local Jewish community, the sources agree on the asymmetry of these relations, discrimination and violence, and indicate a few contact zones where this struggle took place: Jewish shops (economic boycott), leisure areas (Saxon Garden), and the street or public areas in general (other cases). Therefore, these—by definition—*public* spaces are remembered as areas of exclusion where the authorities turn a blind eye to the attackers while blaming the victims.

These contact zones are remembered as dominated by gangs of young men, often affiliated with KUL, who took a few factors into account when choosing their victims. In terms of the economic boycott, the clients of the shops were merely harassed, while the owners and their properties were directly physically attacked. Then, when it comes to street violence, including in leisure areas, women and girls from the higher social classes were more protected by cultural norms and thus aggression was directed towards the lower classes, including women, with particular attention to those who "looked" Jewish. Despite the overall impression of Jewish inertia and submission, the sources also include accounts of Jewish agency and taking revenge on the attackers. This is possible thanks to organization and support from non-Jewish bodies which helped with the planning and implementation. Importantly, antisemitic violence seems to have been only perpetrated by young men, women attackers appear to be completely absent from the stories. On the one hand, this is strongly in line with the cultural norms of the era when women were supposed to be silent, nice,

[54] Dorota Kuncewicz, Ewa Sokołowska, Jolanta Sobkowicz, Dariusz Kuncewicz, *Po ciszy. Rozważania o komunikacji opartej na kontekście* (Lublin, 2019). Dorota Kuncewicz, Ewa Sokołowska, Jolanta Sobkowicz, "Usłyszeć niewypowiedziane, czyli o interpretacji psychologicznej za pomocą narzędzi teorii literatury," *Polskie Forum Psychologiczne* 20 (2015), 3:409–426.

and polite. No one would expect any physical violence from them. On the other hand, more subtle forms of harassment were at their disposal but are not mentioned in the stories at all. Perhaps the lower number of women students at the university (approximately 25–27 percent) translated into their actions being less visible, or perhaps they were less interested in antisemitic campaigns—women were often perceived as less "political" than men, and in fact they seemed to be more interested in cultural and intellectual associations than in political organizations.[55]

In addition, one wonders to what extent violence was a patriarchal tool used to punish anyone "disrupting" the system, for example by showing up in the public leisure areas when they "should" stay in their segregated neighborhood. Moreover, the attackers narrating their aggression tend to soften their accounts and avoid responsibility by using the term "prank" (*psikus*) to describe their actions. It would be interesting to research if the deformation happened solely at the level of language or if it is a cognitive deformation and they really believed their actions were pranks. The latter is not impossible, as Sarah's story suggests the internalization of this way of thinking by the victims. Thus, the deformation of meaning would impact not only the perpetrators (for whose benefit it was crafted) but also gaslight the victims and disrupt their perceptions of victimization.

Due to the small number of interviews, it is difficult to draw further conclusions regarding the motives of engagement in antisemitic violence and explore how class, economic background, and level of religiosity shaped the narratives. It is even more difficult to understand how these factors influenced the person's eagerness to engage in antisemitic violence. Considering the context of interwar Poland, one can think on how the economic crisis and uncertainty contributed to the polarization of society and the scapegoating of minorities; the memories analyzed here certainly reflect such mechanisms. They also most certainly draw a direct link between antisemitic violence and Endek sympathies to the extent that "KUL students" and "Endeks" are terms used interchangeably by

[55] For the number of male versus female students, see, e.g., "Sprawozdanie ze Stanu K.U.L. w Roku Akademickim 1935/36" as well as "Sprawozdanie ze Stanu K.U.L. w Roku Akademickim 1936/37" and "Sprawozdanie ze Stanu K.U.L. w Roku Akademickim 1937/38". They indicate 1,078 students in total (294 female students) in 1935/36, 1,201 (310 female students) in 1936/37, and 1,400 (352 female students) in 1937/38. The memoirs included the volumes edited by Grażyna Karolewicz (*Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski we wspomnieniach pierwszych studentów z lat 1918–1925* and *Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski w latach 1925–1939 we wspomnieniach swoich pracowników i studentów*) seem to suggest such preferences on the part of the female students.

some of the interviewees, like Sarah [1922]. This means that no matter what happened, KUL students as a whole are remembered as National Democrats by at least some members of the Jewish community originating from Lublin. Further research on the academic culture, attitudes, and prejudices of KUL students would clarify to what extent such images correspond with actual events, although historians point to other political forces as more significant in the academic milieu. Nonetheless, the Endek component was strong enough to color the picture of the academic youth in interwar Lublin as a whole. "A little leaven leavens the *whole* lump," says St. Paul in Gal. 5:9—we can see this particular mechanism in the examples of narrative memory analyzed in this study. And if it did so with memory, the life experiences of the Jewish interviewees in that period were likely also "colored" by the antisemitic violence of the KUL students. Further historical research might help answer this question.

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