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ŻYDZI W ŁODZI – NOWE PERSPEKTYWY

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"Not to spread generalized and always insulting slogans of hatred…": The "Jewish Question" and the Polish Press in Łódź before World War I

Abstract: The article discusses the "Jewish question" in the Polish-language press in Łódź at the turn of the twentieth century (until the First World War). The following titles were analyzed: *Rozwój*, *Goniec Łódzki*, *Kurier Łódzki*, and *Nowy Kurier Łódzki*. These journals represented different ideological profiles. Especially after the Revolution of 1905, *Rozwój* demonstrated support of National Democracy, while *Goniec* and its successors—*Kurier Łódzki* and *Nowy Kurier Łódzki*—belonged to the progressive camp. This had a direct impact on their attitudes toward Jews and the Jewish question. While *Rozwój* quickly became openly antisemitic and anti-Zionist, its competitors followed a path typical of the Polish intelligentsia of the time, in which different positions clashed. In the end, however, the press in Łódź did not show any greater originality of views on the issue than the Warsaw press, and the multinational character of the city, which required the cooperation of many ethnic and religious groups, did not prevent the local press discourse from promoting the idea of assimilation to antisemitic attitudes.

Keywords: Łódź, press discourse, intelligentsia, assimilation, antisemitism, Zionism, 1905 Revolution.

Słowa kluczowe: Łódź, dyskurs prasowy, inteligencja, asymilacja, antysemityzm, syjonizm, rewolucja 1905.

Introduction: Poles, Germans, and Jews in the industrial city

At the turn of the twentieth century, a profound redefinition of Polish-Jewish relations occurred. The belief in the idea of the assimilation of Jews into Polishness was severely shaken in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The flourishing national self-consciousness of the Jews

was confronted with the antisemitic turn in Polish politics.[1] Jerzy Jedlicki stressed that, during the Revolution of 1905, for a significant part of the public, "the Jew became the personification of the internal enemy, plotting to deprive the Poles of the benefits of the expected autonomy and to transform the Polish Kingdom into a Judeo-Polonia."[2] National Democracy successfully transformed itself from a radical movement of young intelligentsia into a modern right-wing party. National Democrats used antisemitism skillfully in their political rhetoric.[3] After the Revolution of 1905, Polish-Jewish relations, already complicated, transformed into open conflict and increased radical antisemitism in the public discourse. These processes happened mainly in Warsaw, which was at the same time the capital of Russian Poland and the "Jewish metropolis,"[4] where the forming of a modern Jewish society was underway.[5] The rise of political antisemitism, on the one hand, and the views proclaimed by its opponents, on the other, have so far been the subject of much interest among historians.[6]

In this context, the "Jewish question" and the rise of antisemitism in the Polish press of Łódź remains less recognized and has been analyzed in existing literature only as a background for other problems.[7] Meanwhile, the context of Łódź seems to be interesting. The city, often referred to as the "Polish Manchester," was the most industrialized urban center in the Kingdom of Poland, with an unusual multi-ethnic social composition that forced different ethnic groups to work together while retaining

[1] Brian Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland* (New York, 2000); Theodore R. Weeks, *From Assimilation to Antisemitism: The "Jewish Question" in Poland 1850–1914* (DeKalb, 2006); Agnieszka Jagodzińska, *Pomiędzy. Akulturacja Żydów w Warszawie w drugiej połowie XIX wieku* (Wrocław, 2008), 58–65; Grzegorz Krzywiec, "The Polish Intelligentsia in the Face of the 'Jewish Question' (1905–1914)," trans. Agnieszka Kreczmar, *Acta Poloniae Historica* 100 (2009), 133–169.

[2] Jerzy Jedlicki, "Resisting the Wave: Intellectuals against Antisemitism in the Last Years of the 'Polish Kingdom'," in Robert E. Blobaum (ed.), *Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland* (Ithaca–London, 2005), 60–79.

[3] Wiktor Marzec, *Rebelia i reakcja. Rewolucja 1905 roku i plebejskie doświadczenie polityczne* (Łódź–Kraków, 2016); Grzegorz Krzywiec, *Polska bez Żydów. Studia z dziejów idei, wyobrażeń i praktyk antysemickich na ziemiach polskich początku XX wieku (1905–1914)* (Warsaw, 2017).

[4] See: Glenn Dynner, Francois Guesnet (eds.), *Warsaw. The Jewish Metropolis: Essays in Honor of the 75th Birthday of Professor Antony Polonsky* (Leiden, 2015).

[5] Scott Ury, *Barricades and Banners: The Revolution of 1905 and the Transformation of Warsaw Jewry* (Stanford, 2012).

[6] Blobaum (ed.), *Antisemitism and Its Opponents.*

[7] Agata Zysiak et al., *From Cotton and Smoke: Łódź – Industrial City and Discourses of Asynchronous Modernity 1879–1994* (Łódź–Kraków, 2018), 37–100.

their cultural distinctiveness, as well as partial spatial segregation.[8] Łódź, inhabited in 1897 by more than 90,000 Jews who constituted a quarter of the city's population, was, together with Warsaw, the center of the Jewish community in the Polish lands at the turn of the twentieth century. Seven percent to nine percent of the Kingdom's Jewish population lived in Łódź and both cities accounted for almost twenty-five percent of the total.[9] This was the result not only of large-scale industrial development but also of the influx of Litvaks, Jews migrating from the interior of the Russian Empire in the latter years of the nineteenth century.

The aim of this article is to analyze the "Jewish question" from the perspective of the Polish press published in the city, which was particularly prone to national antagonisms, and the place where mutual proportions of various ethnic groups precluded open confrontation between Poles, Germans, and Jews. Firstly, this paper offers an analysis of how the Polish intelligentsia of Łódź problematized the "Jewish question" before the First World War. To answer this question, the Polish press of Łódź is examined: *Rozwój* (1897–1915), *Goniec Łódzki* (1898–1906), *Kurier Łódzki* (1906–1911), and *Nowy Kurier Łódzki* (1911–1918).[10] The fourth Polish-language newspaper published in Łódź before the First World War, Jan Grodek's *Gazeta Łódzka*, which appeared from 1912, did not play a major role. These journals shaped Polish public opinion in the industrial city for years. Through their analysis, it is possible to examine changes in Polish-Jewish relations at that time from the perspective of the growing Polish intelligentsia living in the industrial city. Therefore, it is worth asking whether the Polish-language discourse forming in Łódź at the time had any special features or was rather merely a reflection of trends forming at a national level.

It should be added, however, that a separate study is required of the attitude toward the "Jewish question" in the German and Yiddish press published in Łódź. German titles had a longer history in the city than the Polish ones and underwent similar ideological divisions in the early

[8] Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, *Lodz: Geschichte einer multikulturellen Industriestadt im 20. Jahrhundert* (Paderborn, 2022), 16–47.

[9] Wiesław Puś, *Żydzi w Łodzi w latach zaborów 1793–1914* (Łódź, 2003), 28–29.

[10] For short history of local press in the nineteenth century Łódź, see: Kamil Śmiechowski, "Prasa i publicystyka," in Jarosław Kita (ed.), *Łódź. Historia miasta poprzez wieki*, vol. 2: *1820–1914* (Łódź, 2023), 575–587. For history of *Goniec Łódzki*, *Kurier Łódzki*, and *Nowy Kurier Łódzki*, see: id., *Łódzka wizja postępu. Oblicze społeczno-ideowe "Gońca Łódzkiego", "Kuriera Łódzkiego" i "Nowego Kuriera Łódzkiego" w latach 1898–1914* (Łódź, 2014).

twentieth century.[11] Finally yet importantly, after the Revolution of 1905, the Yiddish press in Łódź burgeoned.[12] The Yiddish press, alongside German and Polish titles, also participated actively in creating discourse concerning the city. However, this "jargon press" was ignored by Polish newspapers, mostly due to language barriers. Although knowledge regarding the German and Yiddish press of Łódź before 1914 is severely lacking, the huge project that is currently being conducted at the University of Łódź will enable the much-needed analysis of the interaction between the press of different national groups in Łódź. This paper is therefore the first trailer for further publications.[13]

New century and the new press

Traditionally, Łódź, which flourished as a huge textile center after the Polish government decided to build a settlement for textile craftsmen there in the 1820s, was considered a city without a developed intellectual life.[14] The German and Jewish bourgeoisie, who controlled the local textile industry, trade, and property, were considered to have poor taste and little culture, in contrast to the Polish elite, which consisted of old nobility and young urban intelligentsia. To be called a "Lodzermensch" was by no means a compliment in the public discourse in Russian Poland.[15] At the same time, the turn of the twentieth century was the point at which opportunities became more accessible in the city for many educated Poles, who, together with their Jewish and German colleagues, quickly began to

[11] Some basic information can be found in: Monika Kucner, "Prasa niemiecka w Łodzi 1863–1939," in Andrzej K. Kuczyński, Barbara Ratecka (eds.), *Niemcy w dziejach Łodzi do 1945 r.* (Łódź, 2001), 209–234; Marcin Michoń, "'Lodzer Zeitung' (1863–1915) jako historyczne zwierciadło relacji społeczno-politycznych w Łodzi," *Studia z Dziejów Państwa i Prawa Polskiego* 22 (2019), 127–140.

[12] Leszek Olejnik, "Z dziejów prasy żydowskiej w Łodzi w latach 1904–1918," in Stanisław Liszewski, Wiesław Puś (eds.), *Dzieje Żydów w Łodzi 1820–1944* (Łódź, 1991), 140–157.

[13] The project about the images of daily life in the multicultural press of Łódź is conducted by Monika Kucner with participation of Dariusz Dekiert, Karolina Kołodziej, Joanna Mikosz, Kamil Śmiechowski, and Anna Warda and is financed by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

[14] "What is striking in Lodz is above all the lack of culture," renowned journalist Stefan Gorski stated in 1904; see, e.g., Stefan Gorski, *Łódź spółczesna – obrazki i szkice publicystyczne* (Łódź, 1904), s. 8.

[15] Winson Chu, "The 'Lodzermensch': From Cultural Contamination to Marketable Multiculturalism," in Kristen Kopp, Joanna Niżyńska (eds.), *Germany, Poland and Postmemorial Relations: In Search of a Livable Past* (New York, 2012), 239–258.

form a local circle of intelligentsia. Although it is believed that no social initiatives in Łódź were possible without the cooperation of different ethnic groups, the *résumés* of Poles who were employed as lawyers, doctors, or journalists differed from the experiences of their colleagues. They were often educated in Warsaw, so their ambition was formed in dialogue with nationwide public opinion, set mostly in Warsaw. For some of these professionals, Łódź was only a staging post in their professional careers, while Warsaw remained their final destination.[16] As a result, they brought to Łódź the level of knowledge typical of the Polish capital, and the experience of living in an industrial center, so different from Warsaw, was often a shock for them.[17] In the period immediately preceding the turn of the twentieth century, Łódź, culturally dominated by Germans, who had had their own press in Łódź from 1863, still had no Polish newspapers, and city affairs were reflected only in journals published in Warsaw. The first Polish-language daily in Łódź was the *Dziennik Łódzki*, which was published from 1884 to 1892. This newspaper tried to operate in the extremely difficult conditions of the "Polish Manchester" in the 1880s, which was considered to be culturally poor and "dominated" by alien communities. As the organ of the sparse "colony" of Polish intelligentsia in Łódź, *Dziennik Łódzki* promoted the positivist idea of assimilation of the ethnic communities that composed this melting pot of cultures and nations.[18] This goal was best articulated by Henryk Elzenberg, the *Dziennik*'s editor, who himself came from an assimilated Warsaw Jewish family. In a letter that he wrote to a famous Polish writer Eliza Orzeszkowa, he declared that his "social ideal . . . would be to make Poles out of 40,000 Jews and perhaps as many Protestants."[19] After *Dziennik* was closed, there was no Polish-language press in Łódź for several years. This situation changed at the turn of 1897 and 1898, when two new titles, *Rozwój* and *Goniec Łódzki*, were published.

It is worth emphasizing that *Rozwój* and *Goniec Łódzki* had different trajectories and directed their message to different audiences. *Rozwój* was the original project of the entrepreneur Wiktor Czajewski, who can be

[16] Especially among artists, there was a belief that Łódź was a good place to develop one's professional *curriculum vitae*. There is even a saying in Polish that "the season in Łódź will not hurt" [Sezon w Łodzi nie zaszkodzi]. However, similar opinions dominated among other professionals, including lawyers or journalists.

[17] Kamil Śmiechowski, *Z perspektywy stolicy. Łódź okiem warszawskich tygodników społeczno-kulturalnych* (Łódź, 2012).

[18] Marzena Iwańska, *Prasa pozytywistów warszawskich wobec Żydów i kwestii żydowskiej* (Łódź, 2006).

[19] Jacek Walicki, *"Dziennik Łódzki". Nasze 115-lecie* (Łódź, 1999), 31.

considered the ideologue of Polish nationalism in Łódź. He treated the newspaper to some extent as a Polish community center in a multinational city. Its goal was to strengthen the Polishness of Łódź and in particular to confront the German and Jewish influences that were well-established in the city. Czajewski was a staunch antisemite who remained influenced by the emerging nationalistic party, although he himself never played a significant political role within National Democracy. At the same time, *Rozwój* had to confront the realities of a multicultural city, especially in its early days, which tempered the militant zeal of its publisher. *Goniec Łódzki*, unlike *Rozwój*, did not seek confrontation with the national groups cohabiting Łódź. This newspaper, founded as a commercial initiative of aristocrat Henryk Łubieński, had a rather turbulent history, including long-term financial problems, changes of owners and editors, and disagreements with the censors. Despite these difficulties, *Goniec* was characterized by a high level of journalism. After Stanisław Książek became the editor in late 1903 and early 1904, the newspaper's progressive program crystallized. In 1905, *Goniec* openly favored the Revolution and members and sympathizers of the workers' parties published in its pages. As a result, it was closed by the authorities in the spring of 1906, being described as "noxious and dangerous" and its closure was confirmed by a court ruling in early 1907. However, as early as 1 April 1906, taking advantage of the opportunities arising from the liberalization of press regulations, Książek inaugurated a new paper entitled *Kurier Łódzki*, employing former *Goniec* columnists. *Kurier* was so closely related to its predecessor, both in its numbering and in the layout of its contents and its graphic design, that it was not so much a replacement of one periodical by another as a continuation of the same one under a different title. In fact, this procedure was repeated again in 1911, when the suspended *Kurier* was replaced by *Nowy Kurier Łódzki*, which survived until the end of the Great War.[20]

Goniec's program of the "socialization" of Łódź as the main task of the city's intelligentsia determined its attitude toward the "Jewish question." It consisted of pushing into the background all cultural divisions affecting the local community. Articles written by members of the editorial board and printed in the Warsaw press condemned the mutual resentment between the two peoples, insisting that it was not the result of any coherent social program, but of "excited emotions and class, religious, and racial

[20] Śmiechowski, *Łódzka wizja postępu.*

prejudices." The newspaper distanced itself from both antisemitism and Zionism and argued that "the most developed agitational action, the most zealous propaganda . . . will not lead to the disappearance of millions of Jews from us. They will remain here forever."[21] The remedy for both of these harmful phenomena was to be education, which, in the intention of Polish liberals, would in time lead to the disappearance of cultural distinctions between Poles and Jews. This was not an innovative approach. It was education that was generally treated by the positivist milieu as the golden mean, which was to solve the "Jewish question" as well as many other serious social problems in an unspecified way. The means of achieving this goal in the conditions of Łódź focused on promoting cooperation between Poles and the Jewish intelligentsia of the city. Perhaps the most tangible manifestation of this approach was the work of members of the assimilated intelligentsia of Jewish origin on the editorial board of the paper and its successors. Collaborators of *Goniec* and *Kurier* included journalists Paweł and Mieczysław Hertz, columnist Henryk Fraenkel, who became famous for his courageous political articles in the era of the 1905 Revolution, theater critic Mieczysław Guranowski, musician Feliks Halpern, and many others.[22] Additionally, some notable representatives of the Łódź Jewish intelligentsia—Seweryn Sterling, Ludwik Przedborski, Jakub Lewin, and others—also occasionally published in the newspaper.

Given the certain rivalry between the sparse circle of Polish intelligentsia in Łódź and the well-organized and highly traditional German bourgeoisie, open conflict with Jewish readers would not have been to the liking of the editors of the two Polish newspapers, who hoped to develop Polish cultural life in the city. An article published in *Rozwój* even emphasized that the "Polonization" of the city was the magazine's real agenda. The city's existing professional and cultural associations were seen as targets, and the city's Polish community as an army at war: "One of our first tasks is to conquer these societies, remove foreign elements from their positions, and replace them with Polish elements. The Polonization of these institutions must be on our minds, especially since Polish Łódź should have Polish institutions," Czajewski's magazine argued.[23] However, it was difficult to implement this program in the reality of Łódź. For this

[21] "Z pism i książek," *Goniec Łódzki* (1899), no. 6, 2–3. All quotes from Polish journals are translated by the author of the article.

[22] Puś, *Żydzi w Łodzi*, 121–122.

[23] "Czyja wina?," *Rozwój* (1899), no. 224, 1–2.

reason, *Rozwój* concentrated primarily on combating German influence in Łódź, while initially taking a rather restrained position on the "Jewish question" or even avoiding it.[24] *Goniec*, unlike its competitor, which sought cooperation with the Jewish intelligentsia of Łódź, consistently tried to avoid provoking potential conflicts within the city. The Jews, understood as a traditional community centered in the Qahal, did not seem to be a threat to the realization of the idea of developing a civil society in Łódź. On the contrary, the vision of Zionism spreading increasingly further seemed frightening to the editors of Polish newspapers. Against this background, however, there was a significant difference between *Rozwój* and *Goniec*. Czajewski and his colleagues believed that Zionism had grown from a bizarre view propounded by Viennese Jews to a great threat. In 1902, *Rozwój* reprinted several texts from the Warsaw press. The article originally published in *Gazeta Polska* specifically denounced the strong influence of Zionism among teachers in Galicia, which supposedly instilled anti-Polonism among Jewish youth. It stated with alarm, "Zionists teach the youth there, Zionists preside over student circles, Zionists organize election agitations, Zionists give direction to the economic actions of their fellow believers."[25] In turn, these activities were supposed to have, as is typical of antisemitic discourse, a hidden purpose:

> in the midst of all this work and toil, the first thing on their minds is to sever the moral ties that the Jewish people could have with the land. Of course, the Jew must first become indifferent to all that surrounds him, or how could he desire Zion? His soul must free itself from all local ties, otherwise he would not long for Zion. And it is even better if this soul begins to hate everything that surrounds it.[26]

The conclusion could be only one: "fathers of the Jewish people should not be surprised that even with the growth of Zionism, antisemitism can also develop on the other side."[27]

It is interesting that *Rozwój* did not take its own position on Zionism but continued to rely on the authority of *Gazeta Polska* from Warsaw, at the time a notable newspaper that shaped the opinion of the public alongside *Kurier Warszawski* and *Słowo*. In subsequent issues, *Rozwój* continued to

[24] Jan Chańko, "Gazeta 'Rozwój' (1897–1915). Studium źródłoznawcze" (PhD dissertation, University of Lodz, Łódź, 1980), 347.

[25] "O syoniźmie słów kilka," *Rozwój* (1902), no. 218, 4.

[26] Ibid.

[27] "O syoniźmie słów kilka," part 2, *Rozwój* (1902), no. 220, 4.

reprint articles on Zionism from *Gazeta Polska*, which became increasingly antisemitic. In one, it was declared,

> [I]t is not true that Zionism is supposed to be an answer to antisemitism. Zionism arose from the same source that gave rise to antisemitism, i.e., the exclusivity and economic and social ruthlessness of the Jews. It is the self-contained product of Jewish thought. Zionism only modernized the age-old ideal of Jews returning to Palestine.[28]

According to this logic, characteristic of antisemitic discourse, not only were the Jews responsible for antisemitism, but they were also the ones who hated the Christians. Therefore, the *Gazeta Polska* editorial board argued, the Jewish masses "for their part eagerly threw themselves into the new doctrine, finding in it both a practical embodiment of their age-old religious dreams and a free outlet for the urges of hatred, greed, etc." In another reprinted article, the Jewish intelligentsia associated with the Haskalah was described as "disguised hacks who, having assumed the outward semblance of culture, did not in fact care at all about the ethical and economic revival of the Jewish masses."[29]

Goniec Łódzki did not engage in polemics with *Rozwój*. In 1903, the editors of this newspaper inaugurated their own debate on the "Jewish question." After reprinting a text by the well-known right-wing columnist Bolesław Koskowski, who argued that the "Jewish question" actually remained unrecognized due to the Christians' ignorance of Jewish culture and language,[30] *Goniec* called for letters on the subject. The first of the published responses was a letter sent to the editor by Ludwik Bułhan. This author claimed that such a thing as the "Jewish question" did not exist at all, "there is, however, the question of the relationship of each of us with the Jew Aron, the broker, with the Jewish woman Esther, who maintains the sherry trade, with the doctor Natan, the banker Maurice, and so on. . . . Some Jews are morally and materially dependent on us," Bułhan continued, "and on others again we depend. . . . So the Jewish question is an all-human question, that is why any consideration of it separately as such with even the best will seems to me to be a Sisyphean task"[31]—the author proved, proposing a solution to the problem of relations with the Jews on

[28] "Polemika w sprawie syonizmu," *Rozwój* (1902), no. 236, 5–6.
[29] Ibid.
[30] "Kwestia żydowska," *Goniec Łódzki* (1903), no. 124, 1–2.
[31] L[udwik] Bułhan, "W kwestii nieistniejącej kwestii," *Goniec Łódzki* (1903), no. 127, 1.

the grounds of adherence to the teachings of Christ, who was to say "love one another, by this know that you are my disciples."[32]

The second article was a reprint of an interesting statement made in a similar survey of the *Przegląd Tygodniowy* by an "author well acquainted with the matter," Mrs. Regina Eiger-Lilientalowa,[33] who tried to explain to the public the popularity of Zionism. Far from being a product of the Jewish masses, she argued, it was the product of an enriched bourgeoisie unable to endure the antisemitism that beset it at every turn. As she argued, "an intelligent Zionist is a Jew who, having failed to assimilate, has retained a close bond with his people." In the author's opinion, the Polish intelligentsia, while fighting Zionism, should not act against the awakening of national feelings among the Jews, but rather stop measuring them "by the standard of their tastes." "The people want to develop in their own way, and that is enough for them to be granted the right to free cultural development, just like any other nation. And what is wrong with a Jew wanting to reach humanity in the Jewish way,"[34] Eiger-Lilientalowa asked in conclusion.

In the third article, containing the responses to the survey, an unknown author, signed Mr. K., searched for historical causes of conflicts between Christians and Jews. He noted with regret that despite the undeniable contributions of Jews to European culture and civilization, the Old Continent was still afflicted by the "terrible disease" of antisemitism. In his view, Zionism was merely a defensive reaction to racial hatred, which should disappear with the disappearance of antisemitism. At the same time, he categorized both antisemitism and Zionism as evil tendencies that divided people according to racial differences rather than according to moral concepts and merit.[35]

This was the last voice in the discussion, suddenly interrupted for equally unknown reasons as why it was started in the first place. It is worth noting, first of all, the serious difference between *Rozwój* and *Goniec* in the perception of the "Jewish question." In *Goniec*'s opinion, Jews were not the "mass" but a collective consisting of specific people. Instead of

[32] Ibid.

[33] Regina Liliental (1875–1924) was a renowned ethnographer, the pioneer of studies in the culture of Polish Jews.

[34] "Kwestia żydowska II. Z *Przeglądu Tygodniowego*," *Goniec Łódzki* (1903), no. 138, 1–2.

[35] "Kwestia żydowska (Odpowiedzi) III: Jeszcze kilka słów w kwestii żydowskiej," *Goniec Łódzki* (1903), no. 140, 1.

instructing, the liberal newspaper wanted to "understand," which led it not only to redefine its position on the "Jewish question" but also to revise its assessment of Zionism. It was considered not as an anti-Polish program treated as a threat but rather as an ephemeral defensive reaction against antisemitism. The flattering article on Theodor Herzl, published after his unexpected death, was also an expression of this approach.[36]

The opinion regarding assimilation was also evolving. On the eve of the Revolution of 1905, in a commentary concerning the latest voices of the Warsaw press on the "Jewish question," it was argued that the entire mass of Jews who felt no ties to Polishness should by no means be excluded from society: "the Jews here are already Polish Jews, they have as little qualification to become Palestinians as to live on the Moon."[37] It was argued that assimilation affected primarily the highest levels of society: "We would like to see Jews of all people at the top of the social pyramid, but in the meantime one must take into account the cultural differences in the various social strata."[38]

The Revolution of 1905 and the rise of antisemitic discourse

All the redefinitions that occurred in the pages of the Polish press at the turn of the twentieth century had to confront the reality of the turbulent years of 1905–1907. This was the period when, on the one hand, the difference in the perception of the "Jewish question" between the two rival Polish newspapers from Łódź finally crystallized and when, on the other, *Goniec*, and later the *Kurier Łódzki*, began their march in an antisemitic direction. *Rozwój* became a purely national-democratic title and the last ties that bound it to the Jewish intelligentsia of Łódź were severed. Czajewski's newspaper tried to align itself with the discourse of the Polish right at that time, which—as Grzegorz Krzywiec identified—recognized the Revolution of 1905 as a historic catastrophe and a dangerous violation of the principles of social order, leading directly to anarchy.[39] The leading role in this worldview was played by the Jews, who were accused of being behind socialism and thus behind the revolution itself. This was a *cliché* that for years had been in the repertoire of antisemites, who

[36] "Nad mogiłą Herzla," *Goniec Łódzki* (1904), no. 188, 4–5.
[37] "Asymilacja," *Goniec Łódzki* (1905), no. 14, 1–2.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Krzywiec, *Polska bez Żydów*, 159–177.

had already accused Jews of demoralizing the Christian population and negating the existing social order. The identification of socialists with Jews and the presentation of the socialist idea as "the essential product of Jewish degenerate mentality" was one of the elements of the ideological offensive of National Democracy and Roman Dmowski from the early years of the twentieth century. Subsequently, they penetrated the minds of journalists sympathetic to National Democracy. In *Rozwój*, those theses were expressed especially in the famous article "Wolność czy zbrodnia?" [Freedom or crime?], where Czajewski insinuated that the fratricidal struggles were caused by "foreign, hostile forces," implicitly Jewish.[40]

The antisemitic tone of *Rozwój* led to the downplaying of the threat of pogroms. As early as May 1905, *Goniec* reported the existence of certain groups in the town who wanted to provoke a pogrom by spreading rumors of Jews desecrating Catholic shrines. "Do not believe the slanderers who are fishing in murky waters," the newspaper urged its readers.[41] It was against this backdrop, incidentally, that the sharpest conflict between Czajewski's newspaper and the editorial board of the *Goniec Łódzki* occurred. It happened after a small-sized article titled "Czarna secina nie istnieje" ("The Black Hundreds[42] does not exist!") was published in December 1905. In this article, Czajewski argued that there were no structures of the Black Hundreds in Łódź responsible for the pogroms in Russia and he therefore considered it inappropriate for the Jews of Łódź to undertake any self-defense actions.[43] The editorial board of *Goniec* called this text "vicious." It expressed supreme indignation that, at a time when "pogroms were staged . . . in one hundred and thirty towns in Russia, the blood of thousands of people was spilled, thousands of women, children, and old people were mistreated," *Rozwój* could downplay the threat of pogroms.[44] To minimize the threat of pogroms, *Goniec* published a proclamation stating that "the Polish people will not stain their hands with fraternal blood" and a letter from Rabbi Eljasz Majzel, calling on the Jewish population to be calm.[45] Shortly afterwards, *Goniec* published an article by Wiktor Monsiorski, which examined more closely the activities of the Czarna

[40] "Wolność czy zbrodnia?," *Rozwój* (1906), no. 249.

[41] "Plotki," *Goniec Łódzki* (1905), no. 134-a, 1.

[42] The Black Hundreds were ultra-nationalist groups in late Imperial Russia, responsible for many pogroms.

[43] "Czarna secina nie istnieje!," *Rozwój* (1905), no. 277, 6.

[44] "*Rozwój* – i 'czarna secina'," *Goniec Łódzki* (1905), no. 308-b, 1–2.

[45] *Goniec Łódzki* (1905), no. 300, 2.

Sotnia [Black Hundreds] in Łódź. The author was more interested in the principles of the Black Hundreds rather than the indigent rank-and-file members recruited from the interior governorates of the empire. As he wrote, "in Łódź, as, indeed, in our entire country, we have a large number of do-gooders who desire a return to the system of old, to the system of whips and bribes, and are trying by all means to regain the paradise lost."[46] According to Monsiorski, these people meeting regularly "in one of the government schools" intended to incite pogroms in "Polish Manchester."[47] When the great pogrom in Białystok occurred in June 1906, *Kurier Łódzki*, which replaced *Goniec*, widely reported on the situation in that city[48] and joined actively the help campaign.[49] Pogroms were also strongly criticized in the following weeks. Both *Kurier Łódzki* and its successors were resolute against all forms of aggression and violence against the Jewish population and were ready to help the victims. Against this background, *Rozwój* took a completely different approach, downplaying the danger and noting only when Jews left the town for fear of pogroms.[50]

However, this does not mean that *Goniec*, *Kurier Łódzki* and, after 1911, *Nowy Kurier Łódzki* were resistant to the virus of antisemitism. During the Revolution of 1905–1907 and in the years that followed, they underwent a development characteristic of the liberal press in the Kingdom of Poland at that time. During the Revolution, demands for cultural autonomy arose among a significant portion of the Jewish population. The real shock to Polish public opinion was that not all Jews supported the demand to Polonize the schools, to take advantage of the period of political reform in Russia to put Yiddish on an equal footing, or to keep Russian as the language of instruction. *Goniec* disagreed, arguing that it was in the Jews' best interest to abandon the "jargon" and adopt Polish.[51]

A similar position on this issue was taken by the *Kurier Łódzki*. In 1906, it published a polemic with the author of an article of the same title published in a Russian newspaper who, after accurately characterizing the negative position of Polish society on the issue of the recognition of

[46] W. M. [Wiktor Monsiorski], "Jeszcze kilka słów o 'Czarnej Sotni'," *Goniec Łódzki* (1905), no. 307-b, 2.

[47] Ibid.

[48] *Kurier Łódzki* (1906), no. 73-b, 1–2.

[49] "Od redakcji," *Kurier Łódzki* (1906), no. 75, 2.

[50] Marta Sikorska-Kowalska (ed.), *"Wolność czy zbrodnia?" Rewolucja 1905–1907 w Łodzi na łamach gazety "Rozwój"* (Łódź, 2012), 301–303.

[51] "Żargon, czy język polski," *Goniec Łódzki* (1905), no. 272a, 1–2; "Język polski w szkołach żydowskich," *Goniec Łódzki* (1905), no. 318-b, 1–2.

Jewish jargon as a full-fledged language, nevertheless advocated meeting the demands of Jewish circles according to the principle that "the language of instruction should be the language of the child" and "the court is for the citizen, and not the other way around."[52] For the newspaper from Łódź, this was further proof that "the demands of the Jewish nationalists grow with each passing day," and it categorically declared that "equality, but not privileges—this is the answer of the entire Polish society to the wild pretensions of the Jewish nationalists."[53]

Cultural aspirations of the Jews, liberated by the Revolution, intensified the increasingly harsh comments. *Kurier Łódzki* readily resorted to the authority of Warsaw's press, from which it drew articles on the subject. In an article from June 1907 entitled "Czas obudzić się!" [Time to wake up!], the Zionists, now called "Jewish nationalists," were portrayed in the worst possible light. According to the liberal magazine *Prawda*, quoted by the *Kurier Łódzki*, the movement, until recently still considered a harmless defensive reaction, was now growing into a great force that wanted to "plague and trample on the assimilation aspirations sanctified by historical tradition."[54] Additionally condemned with the utmost indignation were the "Polish progressives," who were said to be yielding to "a small handful of fanatics," to whom, however, one must not yield to under any circumstances, because "if we allow them (the Zionists) to continue unhindered, . . . then in ten or twenty years the nationalists will reign supreme on the battlefield and will dictate orders to them (the assimilationists), like their slaves, they will dictate orders."[55]

On the one hand, the text quoted above illustrates well the extent of the negative emotions caused by the growing popularity of Zionism and, on the other hand, it shows how little the Polish intelligentsia knew about the processes taking place at the center of the Jewish community. The article's insinuation that the socialists were "infected" by the Zionists' idea of cultural autonomy for the Jews should be considered a misunderstanding. After all, identical slogans were preached by the Socialist Bund, which greatly expanded its ranks and gained considerable influence in Łódź during the revolutionary period. It is rather surprising that only the Zionists were credited with the demand for the development of their own

[52] D., "Żydzi w Polsce," *Kurier Łódzki* (1907), no. 98, 1–2.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Adam Wizel, "Czas obudzić się!," *Kurier Łódzki* (1907), no. 123, 1–2.
[55] Ibid.

socio-cultural life, which was characteristic of most of the radical young Jewish intelligentsia, regardless of whether they supported the national movement or socialism. Alternatively, it is important to emphasize the fact that, of the two currents, it was Zionism that was so badly received by the "progressive" editors of *Goniec* and *Kurier*. Perhaps evidence can be found in the economic views of those journals that advocated the "socialization" of economic life through various forms of economic self-help. However, one must rightly repeat after Konrad Zieliński that this postulated "socialization" always amounted in practice, however, to the idea of the Polonization of successive spheres of life with production and trade at the forefront.[56] The Zionists, emphasizing at every step the national face of the Jewish community and its aspirations, frightened the Polish intelligentsia, if only for the reason that, by embarking on the same sweeping national program, they would not only create even stronger competition for Polishness in a multinational city, but would probably put Polish economic aspirations in a precariously weak position. Such a key to interpreting the problem is suggested by an article from September 1907, in which the *Kurier*, discussing a book by Catholic columnist Hans Rost entitled *Gedanken und Wahrheiten zur Judenfrage: Eine Soziale und Politische Studie* [Thoughts and Truths on the Jewish Question: A Social and Political Study], the theses of which he clearly sympathized with, wrote that, while any attempt to persecute the Jews is "naturally excluded," it is necessary to promote "self-help in a noble, ethical sense" and to bear in mind that "every fist torn out from under the hitherto position of capitalism is at the same time a weakening of Jewish influence."[57]

Election fever

The astonishment of the Polish intelligentsia at the idea of Jewish cultural autonomy was accompanied by an even greater astonishment at the active political activity of the Jewish community. After the promulgation of electoral law for the First Duma in December 1905, there was a clear division of voting blocs in the city, the dividing line being national-religious issues. Attempts at consensus failed as each side insisted on the candidacy of its representative. The industrialist Maurycy Poznański is

[56] Konrad Zieliński, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie na ziemiach Królestwa Polskiego w czasie pierwszej wojny światowej* (Lublin, 2005), 79.

[57] "Głos w sprawie żydowskiej," *Kurier Łódzki* (1907), no. 286, 3.

said to have declared that the deputy from Łódź must be a representative of the Jewish community.[58] Meanwhile, it was clear to the editors of *Goniec Łódzki* that "the Polish candidate here must be a national without any reservations. . . . The Polish candidate can only be a native Pole. . . . A Polish candidate should therefore be proposed to us by the National-Democratic Party."[59]

This test of strength, like all subsequent elections to the Duma, was won in Łódź by National Democracy, placing Antoni Rząd in parliament. The peculiar "national" character of the elections to the First Duma decisively influenced this time the attitude of *Goniec*. In view of the boycott of the elections by the socialists and the division of the electoral blocs into national ones, the daily from "Polish Manchester" could not have any doubts regarding which side to take. However, taking the national position before the elections did not protect the paper from facing accusations in 1906 that it was financed by Jews and the Polish Progressive Party. Boycotted by National Democracy, the journal believed that this situation would only give it "energy and strength to continue its work, which can undoubtedly be judged by people who love true progress."[60]

The political landscape was completely different the following year when the socialists entered the next elections. The Bund formed an electoral coalition with the SDKPiL; the Jewish Election Committee, which grouped mainly the bourgeoisie, aligned with the Progressive Party. *Kurier Łódzki*, analyzing the situation before the elections, highlighted the difficult position of Jewish voters. As the author of the article, Benedykt Bojanowski, argued, "if Jews were equal, they would, of course, join together with Poles in such parties as would suit the interests of this or that Jewish group."[61] In the meantime, it was necessary to concentrate on choosing such a party that would "most sincerely defend their national rights." Such a party, of course, was not National Democracy, which "waged a fierce struggle against the Jews and identified victory over them perhaps with the victory at Chocim."[62] Faced with a multitude of possible alternatives, the Jewish electorate had great difficulty choosing and was divided by different political opinions. Note that, just as two years previously, *Goniec* had no doubts about the national option, so now its successor was uncertain

[58] Puś, *Żydzi w Łodzi*, 210–211.
[59] R., "Przed wyborami," *Goniec Łódzki* (1905), no. 266, 1.
[60] "Od redakcji," *Kurier Łódzki* (1906), no. 29-b, 1.
[61] Benedykt Bojanowski, "Dwie koncentracje," *Kurier Łódzki* (1907), no. 37, 1–2.
[62] Ibid.

about the class character of the upcoming elections: "It would be unacceptable, however, for Jewish workers not to vote together with Polish workers," the author of the article concluded.[63] And this time, the position taken by the newspaper gave rise to an attack on it. Zygmunt Bartkiewicz, an author of the pamphlet describing Łódź in 1907, lamented that the newspaper had taken a supposedly un-Polish stance.[64]

Against the backdrop of the ideological evolution of *Goniec* and *Kurier*, *Rozwój* showed far-reaching consistency. According to Marta Sikorska-Kowalska, "National Democracy owed its successes, among other things, to the support of the largest newspaper in the city."[65] *Rozwój* consistently promoted and supported the program of National Democracy, which, during the revolutionary period with regard to Łódź, "resorted to counter-revolutionary slogans, fighting socialist parties, and stoking antisemitic sentiments."[66] However, the antisemitic stance of the newspaper was temporarily softened when Jewish voters supported national candidates for various reasons. This was to be the case in the elections to the Second Duma, when Czajewski "winked" at Jews and his newspaper argued that "Jews were never persecuted by Poles."[67]

The national question, revealed and crystallized in the Revolution, was a significant factor of conflict in Łódź elections until the outbreak of the First World War. It was to prove particularly inflammatory during and after the elections to the Fourth Duma, when the representative of the Jewish Electoral Committee, Majer (Meir) Bomasz, and the socialist Eugeniusz Jagiełło were elected deputies from Łódź and Warsaw, respectively. These candidates won with the Polish nationalists, supported by National Democracy, so the Polish public believed that Jewish voters had decided to attack the Poles. The situation in Łódź was only slightly calmer. *Rozwój* acquired the dubious reputation of being the most antisemitic periodical published in Łódź. However, the *Nowy Kurier Łódzki*, which had been published since 1911, did not remain an impartial observer in these disputes, either.[68]

[63] Ibid.

[64] Zygmunt Bartkiewicz, *Złe miasto. Obrazy z roku 1907* (Warsaw, 1911), 60.

[65] Marta Sikorska-Kowalska, "Wybory do Dumy w cieniu rewolucji 1905–1907 roku w świetle łódzkiej gazety *Rozwój*," in Małgorzata Dajnowicz, Adam Miodowski (eds.), *Polityka i politycy w prasie XX i XXI wieku* (Białystok, 2016), 122.

[66] Ibid.

[67] "Przed wyborami. Zebrania przedwyborcze," *Rozwój* (1907), no. 27, 1.

[68] Zieliński, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie*, 76.

The Polish press of Łódź unanimously succumbed to the blackmail of National Democracy and the criticism of assimilation expressed in its pages took the form of open attacks on the Polish intelligentsia of Jewish origin. Analyzing the results of the elections in Warsaw and Łódź, *Rozwój* explicitly excluded such people from the national community:

> There is no such oddity in the world as a French-German or a Russian-Pole. It is possible to be the president of a charitable organization and the president of a sports club at the same time, and even the president of a national hunting club, but for one person to belong to two nations, we have never heard of it. . . . We can only go together with the Poles (of the Mosaic faith) as well as with the Protestant Poles. The non-Polish Jew is indifferent to us, and with him to the economic struggle, whether today or tomorrow we must stand.[69]

A short time later, the newspaper quoted an ominous declaration by the usually moderate *Kurier Warszawski*, which, unable to reconcile the victory of the socialist Eugeniusz Jagiełło, supported by Jewish voters, with the historian Jan Kucharzewski in Warsaw, thundered: "the triumph of the Jews is temporary. We have a deep sense that the Jews will pay dearly for it."[70] Such proclamations, essentially pogrom-like in nature, heralded the boycott campaign launched by National Democracy just before the outbreak of the Great War. *Rozwój* actively supported it, thinking of effective ways to exclude Jews from trade and commerce.[71] It was close from there to the concept of "national capitalism," which became the basis of right-wing urban politics after Poland regained its independence.[72]

Against this background, the *Nowy Kurier Łódzki* still manifested some differences from the radical *Rozwój*. The most important of these was the absence of aggressive speeches against the Polish intelligentsia of Jewish origin. In the opinion of this newspaper, which was associated with the liberal camp and had undergone a fundamental crisis after the Revolution of 1905 that led to the aberration of "progressive antisemitism," Zionism was blamed on the "dark Jewish masses," who, unlike the intelligentsia "imbued with Western culture," were supposedly under the influence of the Litvaks, i.e., the Russian Jews who arrived in Poland in the second half of the nineteenth century.[73] This does not mean, however, that the

[69] "Wybory w Łodzi II," *Rozwój* (1912), no. 241, 1–2.

[70] "Poseł żydowski z Warszawy," *Rozwój* (1912), no. 258, 4.

[71] S. R., "Jak podźwignąć nasz handel?," *Rozwój* (1912), no. 277, 4–5.

[72] Zysiak et al., *From Cotton and Smoke*, 132–149.

[73] "'Precz z asymilacją!'," *Nowy Kurier Łódzki* (1912), no. 17, 5; Zyg. Mont., "Masa żydowska, a oświata," *Nowy Kurier Łódzki* (1912), no. 73, 2–3.

newspaper's attitude toward the intelligentsia of Jewish origin in Łódź did not deteriorate during this period. The most characteristic symptom of this development was the reaction to the proclamation published in the pages of the newspaper in 1913. A group of prominent citizens of Łódź, both Jews and Poles, including the former deputy Aleksander Babicki and the prominent physician Seweryn Sterling, called for a de-escalation of the conflict. Citing "the highest ideals and best traditions of Polish culture," the signatories urged "not to spread generalized and always distasteful slogans of hatred on religious or racial grounds, and to live and cooperate in harmony and friendship" with that part of the Jewish intelligentsia in Łódź that distanced itself from Zionism.[74] Although the editor of *Nowy Kurier*, Stanisław Książek, was among the signatories, the newspaper decided to respond to the contents of the proclamation. Supporting in principle the calls for softening the mood, it expressed the view of the collapse of assimilationist ideas and called on "Poles of the Mosaic faith" to take sides according to the principle: "I am a Jew – or: I am a Pole."[75]

Conclusions

Such an attitude was not only evidence of the Polish intelligentsia's lack of understanding of the changes taking place within the Jewish community and of the phenomenon of multiple cultures as such. It was also an expression of a certain moral crisis in what had hitherto been considered "progressive circles."[76] Being Polish, traditionally understood as a political identification, not an ethnic one, was reduced to ethnicity, as in the dream of National Democracy. Łódź was no exception. Before the First World War, Czajewski, with his devoted antisemitism, was the victor, while Elzenberg's ideas for the assimilation of the German and Jewish communities of Łódź were totally bankrupted.

The attitude of the Polish press in Łódź to the "Jewish question" before the First World War was ambivalent. Even if the reality of the industrial city forced different ethnic and religious groups to cooperate in solving many problems caused by the rapid and uneven development of the city, it was quite obvious that things went wrong over time. It can be said that the divisions that existed between the right-wing *Rozwój* and the liberal

[74] "Odezwa," *Nowy Kurier Łódzki* (1913), no. 36, 1–2.
[75] "Z powodu odezwy," *Nowy Kurier Łódzki* (1913), no. 37, 1–2.
[76] Maciej Janowski, *Polska myśl liberalna do 1918 roku* (Kraków, 1998), 247.

Goniec Łódzki, *Kurier Łódzki*, and *Nowy Kurier Łódzki* reflected, as through a lens, the ideological differences that took place in Polish society at that time. The development of these newspapers, however, was a development in a clearly negative, antisemitic direction. Visions of urban citizenship formulated in the specific melting pot of cultures and nations presupposed a greater degree of tolerance for otherness than those formulated in the "mainstream" of Polish public discourse.[77] However, Polish newspapers were unable to develop their own position on the "Jewish question" and, surprisingly, tended to copy the discourse shaped in the Polish capital.

From this point of view, the discourse trajectory described above raises the fundamental question regarding the degree of openness of the ethnic communities that composed multicultural Łódź. For many years, local political elites and some historians have promoted the thesis of a "city of dialogue of cultures," but this dialogue is not reflected in historical sources. At the same time, it is impossible not to notice that the mechanisms of forced cooperation between Germans, Poles, and Jews, imposed by the autocratic tsarist regime before 1914, were a fairly effective vaccine against the rise of ethnic-based violence. It seems, however, that the Revolution of 1905 led to the collapse of this mechanism. Łódź, which owed more than perhaps any other city in Poland to the Jewish intelligentsia, and without which not only the prosperity of the city in general, but also the development of Polish-speaking culture in particular, would not have been possible, was inevitably headed for a deep ethnic conflict in interwar Poland.[78]

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[77] Zysiak et al., *From Cotton and Smoke*, 98–99.
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