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ABSTRACT

This work shows how one East European minority community fostered a distinct ethnic identity while attempting integration into the majority culture. The attempt involved the establishment and development of separate Jewish institutions, including Jewish newspapers, schools, and cultural organizations. As community leaders endeavored to integrate into the Polish community, they challenged Polish society not only to accept the presence of multiple ethnic groups but to embrace the cultural diversity multiethnicity provided.

Writing in Polish, Jewish nationalist intellectuals created a modern, multifaceted Jewish identity that combined Zionist ideology with elements of Polish culture. Private Jewish schools promoted a distinct ethnic identity, but they also prepared Jewish children to function in the larger society. Jewish academic, professional, theatrical, social, and sports organizations arose alongside more traditional Jewish religious organizations in Krakow, resulting in a more secular and diversified Jewish community. These organizations did not, however, serve to separate the Jewish community from the Polish population, but at times they promoted Polish patriotism and a Jewish affiliation with Polish culture. In short, the Jews of Krakow began to develop unique subcultures with
varying components of Zionist Hebrew, Polish national, traditional religious, and secular Yiddish elements. An examination of these subcultures helps to understand the complex reality of Jewish life in interwar Poland. The Jews of Krakow were not a people apart, but part of a nation trying both to maintain its own sense of identity and enter into the larger Polish community.
In memory of my parents.

Richard Martin (1926-1998) and Rose Marie Martin (1934-1984)

And for Jaroslaw R. Romaniuk, whose support and patience are invaluable.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Jews of interwar Krakow developed a distinctly modern Jewish national identity in Poland that denied neither Jewish heritage nor Polish citizenship. In their attempts to assert both Jewish and Polish identities, the Jewish institutions of Krakow represented varying subcultures within Polish society and within the Jewish community itself. The development of Polish patriotism among the leading Jews of Krakow paradoxically allowed for the formation of a separate Jewish national identity. Private Jewish institutions, including newspapers, schools, and cultural organizations promoted a distinctive Jewish identity while advocating Jewish integration into the majority society. These institutions existed as individual entities and did not usually result from unified efforts of the entire Jewish community. Nonetheless. they represented some of the most important elements within the city's Jewish life and. in their goals and programs. they reflected a growing involvement with Polish life and Polish national culture.

The independence of Poland after 1918 signalled significant change for the ethnic and national minority groups within the country. including Jews. Ukrainians. Germans.
and Byelorussians. In Polish, this period is often referred to as a "rebirth," echoing the rhetoric of East European intellectuals who led "national awakenings" all over the region. Such rhetoric is not entirely unjustified. Only during the interwar period were Poles, as well as the country's national minorities, developing modern education systems, a highly diversified press, and cultural organizations which supported all manner of professional activities and leisure interests. It was not until after the end of World War I that Poles, Jews, and the other national minority communities in the Polish state began to develop organizations of city life that resembled the complex network of urban institutions we recognize today. The unprecedented freedom of a nominally democratic Poland presented all ethnic groups within the country with the opportunity to grow politically, socially, educationally, and economically. The private and public institutions these groups developed -- the schools, the political organizations, the libraries, the reading rooms, the sports clubs, the theater societies -- made evident the nation's multiethnic character.

The Jews of interwar Krakow, just like Jews elsewhere in the Diaspora, tied themselves to the majority culture in which they lived while at the same time working on behalf of Jewish national development. Out of necessity, the leaders of Krakow Jewry accepted a broad definition of Jewish identity inclusive of many ideologically diverse Jewish groups along with a practical, administrative definition of Polish identity. Jewish nationalists in Krakow fought against the politically active Jewish assimilationism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but did so in a way that was calculated to aid
the Krakow Jewish community in adapting to the goals and needs of the Polish state. Ethnic minority groups often develop and maintain a cultural identity separate from the majority population, but this does not always imply a wish for the disintegration of a multiethnic or multinational state. The development of a separate cultural identity may even help a minority population to integrate into the majority society. This work shows how one East European minority group fostered and supported a distinct ethnic identity while attempting to integrate into the larger community.

How did the Jews of Krakow maintain their community in face of linguistic and cultural assimilation? The history of Jewish organizational life in Krakow points to a continuing support of basic Jewish needs and the cultural aspirations of the community toward the development of Polish, Yiddish, and Hebrew culture. At the same time, the development of Jewish education and the history of the Jewish press in Krakow show clearly how participation in Polish culture affected the Jewish community's development. A study of the city's Jewish press, schools, and cultural organizations shows that Krakow's Jewish community leaders made serious efforts to assert a separate national identity while conforming to the needs of the administrative nation to which they belonged. By focusing on larger institutions, such as the Jewish schools and newspapers, as well as smaller cultural organizations, such as community theaters and sports teams, I am able to survey a wide range of the community's activities. This survey reveals a commitment to a separate Jewish ethnic identity and the larger Polish state and culture.

Scholars of minority history have already observed that modernization does not necessarily lead to assimilation, but the case of Polish Jews illustrates a variation on this
theme. The following study highlights how Jews lived Jewish lives within the context of a modernizing Poland. The development of a modern educational system, the growth of a free press, and the emergence of an incredibly diverse civil society in the form of social and cultural organizations affected all groups within the Polish state. The freedom that allowed for the establishment of these organizations was one of the very positive benefits of Polish independence for the Jews. The growth of so many different associations, however, only increased the diversity of the Jewish community. Those who worked to unite the Jewish community behind a nationalist or religious ideal now faced challenges from within their own community as well as from increasingly aggressive Polish nationalists.

How the state regulated the emerging civil society often conditioned the extent of assimilation as well as the nature of the relations between majority and minority. As Ezra Mendelsohn has asked so succinctly, were conditions in interwar Poland good for the Jews, or bad for the Jews? Mendelsohn rightly concluded that Polish society may have been both hospitable and hostile, writing "The experience of Polish Jews between the wars was a combination of suffering, some of which was caused by anti-semitism, and of


achievement, made possible by Polish freedom, pluralism, and tolerance. The task is to understand how the Jewish community's freedom to participate in a fledgling democratic society affected it, as well as to identify the factors that limited that freedom.

Krakow's Jews deserve greater attention if one is to fully appreciate both the difficult experience of the citizens of a multicultural state within a struggling, turbulent democracy and the tragedy that followed the Nazi invasion of Poland. An examination of the Jewish community of Krakow is most illuminating given that city's position both as a center of Polish Jewry and as a center of Polish culture. Krakow, like other Polish cities, was a city where different cultures conflicted and coexisted. At the same time, Krakow has been touted as the "most Polish of Polish cities." Though Krakow has not been the capital of Poland for centuries, the city still enjoys a reputation far beyond its borders. A study of Krakow's largest minority community suggests the ways in which majority and minority cultures may have influenced each other and restores the experience of minority communities to the historiography of Poland. Recognizing that minorities responded to the challenges of life within multilingual communities without denying their own identity will help scholars of ethnic relations understand how national identity was constructed within the context of Eastern Europe more generally. This local study highlights

3Mendelsohn. "Interwar Poland: good or bad for the Jews?" 138.

similarities between Jewish nationalism and the more inclusive, romantic Polish nationalism developed in the nineteenth century. Further, it suggests the challenges the Polish state faced in constructing a civil society that would protect Polish citizens of all ethnicities.

In his work on the Jews of East Central Europe between the wars, Mendelsohn defines two different types of Jewish communities in East Central Europe, a West European type and an East European type. Mendelsohn describes East European Jews as more traditionally religious, much more accepting of Jewish nationalist ideas, and as representative of "the relative weakness of acculturation and assimilation." In contrast, West European type Jewish communities in Eastern Europe were more assimilated, less nationalistic, and more involved with the political activities of the host state. Mendelsohn explains well the exceptions to this useful typology, but he does not challenge it directly. He writes.

In modern Jewish history in the Western world, the classical pattern has been progression from nonacculturation and nonassimilation to acculturation and efforts to assimilate, from the physical and spiritual ghetto to integration, of one sort or another, into the broader society. In interwar East Europe, this pattern is not in evidence. The East European-type communities, despite a certain, and sometimes even an impressive, degree of acculturation during the 1920s and 1930s, remained basically Yiddish-speaking, lower middle class and proletarian, and strongly influenced both by religious Orthodoxy and by modern separatist Jewish nationalism.

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Krakow’s Jews certainly illustrate the impressive degree of acculturation Mendelsohn mentions, but they also integrated into Polish society extensively enough during the interwar period that they cannot be easily classified as either “Eastern” or “Western.” These labels point to very general trends within the pre-1939 European Jewish community, but they do not help us to understand how the Jewish communities met the challenges they faced as a result of antisemitic restrictions or how Jews developed a vibrant culture in interwar Eastern Europe.

The official Jewish community leadership and the Jewish intellectuals of Krakow increasingly identified with Jewish nationalist goals in the twenties and thirties but they also began to integrate into Polish society. They were developing a Jewish cultural identity that was neither Western nor Eastern, but rather Jewish and Polish. By examining how Jews began to literally build their own national home in Krakow while accepting Polish patriotism and the more inclusive form of Polish nationalism stemming from the noble tradition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, this study challenges the accepted typology of Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. Local studies of Jewish communities in Eastern Europe focusing on Jewish culture as well as politics are likely to continue to challenge this typology. While the similarities Mendelsohn points out lead to understandable generalizations, historians need local studies illustrating the uniqueness of European Jewish communities to confirm or deny broad conclusions. Krakow was perhaps more acculturated than other Polish Jewish communities, but it was also the fifth largest Jewish community in the country. The Jewish nationalism expressed in Krakow.
the types of organizations founded there, and the need to integrate into Polish society were present in other Polish cities as well. By focusing on one community, we can better understand how Jews experienced their Jewish identity in their daily lives, in the schools, in the theaters, or at the soccer games. Studies such as this one on Krakow will aid in the development of a comparative Jewish historiography that will clarify trends in European Jewish cultural, political, economic, and social development.

The increased attention paid to Polish-Jewish studies in the West in the last decade has provided the foundation for new studies in East European Jewish history. This includes much work on local Jewish communities in Poland has been done by Polish scholars.\(^8\) This work has documented the experiences of the Jews of many different communities throughout Poland, but most of these articles present only a general overview of the Jewish community concerned. The two most important works on interwar Polish Jewish communities have been written by Gabriela Zalewska, on Warsaw, and Waclaw Wierzbieniecki, on Przemysl. Both works are serious attempts to

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determine the structure of the Jewish communities by an examination of statistical data and the role of the Jews in the local economy. Zalewska and Wierzbieniecki succeed in presenting a picture of the economic position in which the Jews found themselves, but neither seriously addresses questions of Jewish cultural life or national identity. Both rely primarily on sources in Polish, and perhaps it is this reliance that determines the scope of their work. Using sources available in Yiddish and Hebrew as well as Polish allows one to study Jewish history in Poland more comprehensively and present a wider range of Jewish views. Furthermore, while economic competition affected the Jewish community greatly, especially in the late 1930s, economic specialization was not a significant factor in determining Jewish ethnic identity. Antisemitism, religious difference, language, and residential segregation all played more important roles.9

The historiography of urban Poland, still in its beginning stages, has yet to take full account of the country's national minorities.10 Scholars have widely explored Krakow's rich history as a medieval city and have extensively documented the history of

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10 See the fourth volume of Dzieje Krakowa (The History of Krakow) as a good example. This edited series can be considered as the standard history of the city. In the fourth volume, dedicated to the interwar period, the only section devoted to the history of the Jewish community concerns exclusively religious issues. Jews active in municipal politics are discussed, but the majority of the community receives little attention. This shortcoming unfortunately detracts from the overall excellence of the work. Janina Bieniarzowna and Jan Malecki, eds., Dzieje Krakowa: Krakow w latach 1918-1939 (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1997).
Krakow's churches, monuments, and art. This artistic and architectural heritage is fascinating in itself and can no doubt be explored in relation to the Jewish community, but other aspects of the city's history are important as well. There has yet to appear a single volume survey of the history of Krakow in English or of the history of its Jewish community. The eminent Polish-Jewish historian Majer Balaban chronicled the early history of the Krakow Jewish community in his two-volume *Historja Zydow w Krakowie i na Kazimierzu 1304-1868*. Andrzej Zbikowski has written a major work that addresses many different facets of Jewish life in Krakow from 1867 to 1918. Zbikowski's work relates primarily the history of the official Krakow Jewish community [the *kahal* (Yiddish), *kehilla* (Hebrew), or *gmina* (Polish)], relying extensively on the records preserved in the Jewish Historical Institute, where the author is a researcher. Zbikowski outlines the history of the Jewish community from emancipation until the eve of Polish independence and the relative political dominance of the Zionists/Jewish nationalists within the Jewish community. An important addition to the history of fin-de-siecle Krakow, *Zydzi krakowscy* is meant intentionally to address the lack of attention to Jewish issues in other, more general studies.

An increasingly popular tourist destination. Krakow is the subject of many

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guidebooks and brief works for popular audiences, but scholarly material in English is limited to survey articles of the period before World War I and the interwar period. The survey articles by Jan Malecki, Jacek Purchla, Francis W. Carter, and Lawrence Orton provide the best introduction in English to the history of Krakow and its ethnic minorities. At least one scholarly article in Yiddish has been written on interwar Krakow. Kalman Shteyn examines the relationship between the Jews and the city government from his own perspective as a participant.

While the historiography of Krakow in Polish is much more developed, important aspects of urban life are barely touched upon, notably the experiences of the city's minority communities. Much of the work on Krakow by Polish historians simply excludes the Jewish community, focusing on other issues such as urban development, architecture, and art history. Such lacunae are surprising given Krakow's prominence

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among Polish cities.\textsuperscript{15} Local studies of Polish-Jewish communities such as Krakow can help us to understand the circumstances of Jewish life before so many were led to their tragic deaths. By evaluating the ways in which Jews expressed their identity within the larger Jewish and Polish communities, we can examine the commitment to Jewish nationalism as well as the phenomenon of assimilation.

Focusing more on questions of cultural allegiance and national identity than on economic structure and occupational specialization, this study has developed from questions raised by historians examining Jewish history and culture outside of Poland.\textsuperscript{16} These questions, not fully addressed in the Polish context, include the nature of assimilation and acculturation and the role of the Jewish intelligentsia in developing Jewish nationalism.\textsuperscript{17} The works on Vienna and Odessa by, respectively, Marsha Rozenblit and Steven Zipperstein, describe the political and cultural structures of the

\textsuperscript{15} The historiographical situation regarding the city of Warsaw is significantly better, with the work of Edward Wynot and Gabriela Zalewska as excellent models. See Edward D. Wynot, Jr., \textit{Warsaw Between the World Wars: People of the Capital City in a Developing Land, 1918-1939} (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1983) and "Urban History in Poland: A Critical Appraisal." \textit{Journal of Urban History} 6, no. 1 (November 1979): 31-79; and Gabriela Zalewska, \textit{Ludność żydowska w Warszawie w okresie międzywojennym}.


Jews, explaining the levels of acculturation and assimilation and the uniqueness of the community. Rozenblit's work provides a valuable study of assessing assimilation within an urban environment, while Zipperstein's work on the Odessa Jewish community highlights the role of Jewish intellectuals. In addition, Harriet Pass Freidenreich's history of the interwar Jewish community of Vienna examines the consequences of political conflict within one ethnic community.¹⁸

Each of these authors takes a different approach to the community being studied: Rozenblit is concerned with issues of social history; Zipperstein, cultural; and Freidenreich, political. Other historians of Jewish urban life have focused on more specific topics, most notably Rainer Liedtke. His recent work on social welfare in the Jewish communities of Hamburg and Manchester examines the development of separate Jewish institutions and the subsequent effect on national identity.¹⁹ His work rests on a much better developed historiography, most notably Bill Williams's book on Manchester Jewry.²⁰ Concluding that the formation of separate Jewish social welfare organizations stemmed partly from a desire to acculturate newly arrived Ostjuden, Liedtke shows how these separate organizations only served to aid the cause of a separate Jewish cultural identity. This work reveals a similar phenomenon occurring in Poland, only decades


later, after the establishment of an independent Polish state. Neither solely a study of assimilation nor of Jewish intellectuals, this study takes the examples of the Jewish communities further west and east as models with which to compare the Jews of Krakow.

Given the relative lack of attention to the Jews of Krakow and other Polish cities, it is premature to draw any definitive conclusions about the Jews, the urban history of Poland, and the division of Jews in the East and West. Studies of Jewish communities in Poland outside of Galicia reveal the importance of considering regional differences. Alan Levenson's article on the Jews of Posen (Poznan) is especially relevant in this context.\textsuperscript{21} Levenson posits a Jewish identity for the Jews of Posen that shows them to be neither \textit{Ostjuden} nor German Jews. At first glance, this description seems to fit the Jews of Krakow as well. While migration to Krakow swelled the city's Jewish population until the turn of the century, acculturation toward Polish had already begun, especially among the elite.\textsuperscript{22} At the same time, newly active Jewish nationalists in Krakow began to transform a community that distinguished itself clearly in terms of ethnic difference into one that maintained that difference because of nationalist, and not necessarily religious, goals. Levenson has concluded that the Jews of Posen distinctly affected the fate of German Jewry, providing German Jews with religious leaders and guidance. Such a claim cannot, however, be made for the influence of Krakow Jewry on the rest of the


\textsuperscript{22} Jan M. Malecki describes the movement of Jews from Kazimierz to the city center in his article on Jews in nineteenth century Krakow. "Cracow Jews in the 19th Century: Leaving the Ghetto." 93.
Galician Polish-Jewish population, since the Jews of Krakow in Western Galicia competed with the Jews of Lwow in Eastern Galicia for cultural influence.

This study adds to the literature on Jews and the urban experience by addressing questions of cultural identity. The focus on various forms of Jewish culture demands an examination of Jewish institutions in the city that have not yet drawn the attention of Polish, American, or Israeli scholars of Jewish studies. Other secondary work concentrates on specific aspects of the Krakow Jewish community, such as Jews within Krakow's Jagiellonian University, religious life in interwar Krakow, or the Yiddish theater. These works have added significantly to our knowledge of the organizations in which Krakow Jews participated. But while the Polish-language historiography on the Jews of Krakow calls attention to Polish sources often ignored by other historians, few Polish scholars use sources in Yiddish or Hebrew, preventing them from considering the implications of a trilingual culture for a minority group. Thus, the Polish-language historiography cannot answer questions about the roles each of these three cultures played in the lives of Jews and in what ways they were important to different segments of the

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24 See especially the PhD dissertation of Barbara Malecka, "Ludność żydowska w Krakowie w latach 1918-1939" (University of Warsaw. 1993) and the master’s thesis of Krystyna Samsonowska, "Zarys funkcjonowania żydowskiej gminy wyznaniowej w Krakowie w latach 1918-1939" (Jagiellonian University. 1991).
Jewish community. A notable exception is the work of Miroslawa Bulat at Jagiellonian University. Bulat's ground breaking study of the Yiddish theater in Krakow is vital to understanding how Yiddish culture developed among a polonized Jewish community.25 My own study explains how Jewish community leaders in Krakow formed organizations that did not privilege Yiddish. Hebrew, or Polish language Jewish culture exclusively but instead focused on how best to retain a unique ethnic Jewish identity.

Not fitting the definition of a political nation, the Jews have often been excluded from surveys of nationalism in Eastern Europe, a fact which makes it difficult to assess the relationship of the Jews to the majority culture. Neither the older, now standard volume Nationalism in Eastern Europe nor the more recent National Character and National Ideology even attempts to include adequate discussions of the ideologies of the Jews (in any of the chapters on the different countries of the region).26 Nonetheless, the Jewish experience of cultural nationalism during the interwar period highlights what stateless East European ethnic communities had to do to become at first a cultural, and only then a political, nation. While political and cultural nationalism may only be different aspects of the same phenomenon, the distinction for the Jewish community is


While many Jews were optimistic that the goals of a Jewish political nationalism could be achieved, others recognized that both Jews and non-Jews would more easily accept a nationalism which focused on the improvement of the material conditions of Jewish culture and society in the Diaspora. Thus Jewish leaders worked toward developing a Jewish nation in much the same way as nineteenth century Polish intellectuals had done for their own nation -- by writing and discussing the ideals of a cultural nation separate from the nation in political control. Their ethnic identity was expressed culturally and politically, but it was the cultural goals that could be achieved more easily for a stateless group. Therefore, many of the Jews of Krakow before World War II were trying to achieve concrete goals, which can loosely be defined as cultural rather than political. These goals included, among others, a rapprochement with the Poles through a Polish-language Jewish press, the development of a thriving school system, and the establishment of a permanent residential Yiddish theater troupe in the city.

Peter Sugar has pointed out that, in spite of late twentieth century conceptions of the thought of Herder, the early nineteenth century German philosopher championed a "happy humanity composed of free nationalities cooperating with each other peacefully." The rhetoric of Jewish organizations in interwar Krakow often reflected Herder's utopian goal. Herder was not likely their direct inspiration: rather, the

\[\text{\textsuperscript{27}}\text{Peter Sugar. "External and Domestic Roots of East European Nationalism." Nationalism in Eastern Europe. 15.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{28}}\text{Just as it reflected the utopian, idealistic nature of mid nineteenth century romantic}\]
multiethnic environment in which they lived demanded that Jewish community leaders figure out how to live as a minority in a Polish nation state. The Jews, an extraterritorial minority, worked toward Herder's utopian ideal most consistently, even in the tumultuous days of the late 1930s. The following study shows how the Jewish community of Krakow adopted the Polish language and Polish culture at least partly in a concerted effort to reach out to and identify with the Polish community. Such efforts were not unknown in interwar Eastern Europe. Emil Dorian describes his attempt to bridge the gap between Romanian and Jewish societies in his diary. The Quality of Witness: similarly. Raphael Patai shows in his memoir how his father, the well known Zionist Joszef Patai, continually labored to introduce Hungarians to Jewish culture and was comfortable as both a Magyar and a Jew. Thus, asserting a separate cultural identity, even a national identity, did not preclude efforts to integrate into the majority culture.

While Ernest Gellner has described nationalism as the result of modernization and industrialization, others, most notably Liah Greenfeld and Irina Livezeanu, have argued the converse, suggesting that nationalization and national mobilization in some cases

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occurred before the development of modern education and industry. In the lands of Poland, both Polish and Jewish nationalisms were well developed before the interwar period presented them with the opportunity to develop modern political and educational systems. Nationalism was the impetus for the founding of separate Jewish schools, for example, not the result of educating Jewish children in exclusively Jewish schools. Moreover, nationalism for the Jews in Poland was the expression of a distinctive ethnic identity that existed prior to the economic modernization of interwar Poland and of the Jewish community.

As Jeff Spinner has argued, political boundaries may shape identities, but the development of separate institutions is about the establishment of those boundaries. In other words, separate institutions may serve as a bureaucratic framework for an ethnic community if a government does not. Roman Szporluk has suggested that the organizations of civil society serve as vehicles for the expression of cultural nationalism. It was these organizations (described by John Keane as "scientific and literary circles, schools, publishers, inns, manufacturing enterprises, religious


33 Roman Szporluk. "In Search of the Drama of History." East European Politics and Societies 4. no. 1 (Winter 1990): 134-
organizations, municipal associations, independent households that, outside of the bureaucratic apparatus of the state, developed a Jewish identity separate from the majority nation. The institutions discussed in this study -- the schools, the political organizations, the libraries, the reading rooms, the sports clubs, the theater societies -- are clearly part of a modern infrastructure, part of a developing society that we can recognize as similar to ours, and similar to the non-Jewish societies among whom the Jews lived.

The unpublished material of Zofia Wordliczek in the archives of the Krakow city museum provides an idea of the range of the separate institutions that were founded during the interwar period. Her work is the most helpful starting point for any research into the Jewish history of the city. Separate institutions, such as the Jewish clubs listed by Wordliczek, the Yiddish theater, or the Jewish student organizations at the university provided the private spaces where ethnic identity could flourish. The private Jewish organizations discussed here gave Jews the opportunity to learn about their own cultural practices and even to familiarize themselves with the language and culture of the majority. The goal of a liberal society is to "give the lower class people the security to reach their possibilities, even though cultural bonds may be stretched and broken in the

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35 Zofia Wordliczek. "Wystawa." Muzeum M. Krakowa, Stara Synagoga. This material includes tables and charts developed from primary sources and brief summaries of various aspects of Jewish life in Krakow.

36 For a discussion of private space and ethnic identity, see Jeff Spinner. The Boundaries of Citizenship. 168-172.
Cultural bonds were indeed stretched and broken during the interwar period: the modernization of the Polish Jewish community entailed a certain identification with the Polish government and Polish culture as well as an assertion of unique ethnic identity. This is precisely why the ethnic homogeneity of post-war Poland is so tragic. Efforts such as those of the Jews of Krakow to forge an identity compatible with life in a multicultural society suggest that both Jewish and Polish societies were developing in ways that now can never be realized.

Rather than describing how Jews lived separately from Poles, this work suggests that the development of a distinct ethnic and national identity did not exclude contact with the majority and, in some cases, promoted it. Though this study focuses on the history of a minority population, this history can not be told without an evaluation of the influence of the majority community on the minority culture. This influence was most visible in the antisemitism Jews experienced in all levels of society. Constitutional guarantees of the Polish state did not overturn previously existing laws which often placed restrictions on the Jews, including restrictions regarding the use of Yiddish and Hebrew in public life. Nationalist groups made several attempts to challenge Jewish citizenship from the very inception of the state. These challenges accompanied efforts to introduce a *numerus clausus* (a restriction on the number of Jews allowed to be educated

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in the universities) in the early 1920s. As elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe, proposals for antisemitic legislation increased in the late 1930s. The Polish government "avoided the establishment of any openly discriminatory laws," but the climate Polish nationalist students and political leaders created threatened the Jewish community as never before. The "ghetto benches" of the universities, attacks on Jewish students, and legislative initiatives forbidding ritual slaughter combined to make many Polish Jews question their place within the still relatively young multicultural republic.

While many Polish Jews, most especially the country's Zionists, considered emigration to Palestine an appropriate response to antisemitism, Polish language and Polish culture still penetrated the daily life of the Jewish community in many ways. For example, Polish national holidays were celebrated in Jewish schools, homework about Polish bishops was assigned to Jewish students in Jewish schools by Jewish teachers, and Polish was the daily language of a large segment of the Jewish community. For many of the Jews writing in Polish or attending Polish schools or plays, it was possible to be both Jewish and Polish at the same time. The Jewish culture lost during the Holocaust was often one that Jews expressed in Polish.

My own examination of Jewish civil society in Krakow demonstrates that the Jews were continuing what the sociologist Milton Gordon would term cultural

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39 For an extended discussion of the attempts to limit the number of Jewish students in the universities, see Szymon Rudnicki, "From 'Numerus Clausus' to 'Numerus Nullus.'" in From Shtetl to Socialism, Studies from Polin, ed. Antony Polonsky (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1993).

assimilation, or acculturation, that is, adapting to the cultural patterns of another group.\textsuperscript{41} This process continued throughout the interwar period but it was not the cause of the disappearance of the Jewish community. Rather, it went along with a process of increasing Jewish national identification. The most important contribution of this work is to reveal how Jews in Krakow attempted to integrate into Polish society yet remained Jews at the same time.

By examining the efforts of the Polish state to develop a uniform society and how the Jews of Krakow remained Jews in the face of antisemitism and linguistic assimilation, this study illustrates how one community courageously acknowledged its difference while refusing to settle for the second class position the majority culture often placed it in. This study also shows the strategies local minority communities can employ to adapt to the majority community. For minority groups, multiple identities are possible, and perhaps preferable, when the minority confronts systemic changes, such as those after World War I. More importantly, separate minority conceptions of national identity are not necessarily destabilizing for the majority government or society. Jews in the Diaspora had always possessed more than one identity by definition, being able to consider themselves, for example, as both Jews and as imperial subjects or citizens of the country in which they lived. Jewish nationalists, as demonstrated in the context of interwar Krakow, supported the Polish state and were intensely patriotic. This was in part a

response to the antisemitism of Polish society and, because of the Zionists' own linguistic and cultural assimilation, a natural development of Jewish nationalism in Krakow immediately after the war. Searching for ways to achieve equality of opportunity in political, social, economic, and cultural life, Jewish community leaders established organizations to meet their needs and to educate Jews for lives as Jews and as Polish citizens. Becoming both Polish and Jewish was perhaps unavoidable, even desirable, in spite of an often hostile environment.

Jews in interwar Krakow (and elsewhere in Poland) can be divided into several different categories. These include the traditionally religious, the culturally Jewish but secularized, the nationalistic but acculturated, and the assimilationists who maintained ties with the organized Jewish community. The term "assimilated Jews" in the context of interwar Poland has been used to describe those Jews who regarded themselves as "Poles of the Mosaic persuasion" and who did not identify with the Jewish community at all.42 This group would include, to take better known examples, the poets Julian Tuwim and Boleslaw Lesmian. The president (or mayor) of Krakow in the late 1930s, Mieczyslaw Kaplicki, and the city's garrison commander Bernard Mond are local, Krakow examples. The cultural identity of Polish Jews like Tuwim or Kaplicki remains an important topic for research. In Krakow, assimilated Jews like Kaplicki and Mond placed themselves outside of the Jewish community and thus do not come under consideration in this work.

Used here, "assimilationists" refers to those Jewish leaders who favored assimilation for the Jewish community as a political movement. This group looked to assimilation before 1918 as a viable political solution to Poland's Jewish question but remained active within the Jewish community after postwar notions of self-determination and Poland's grudging acceptance of the Minorities Treaty nearly guaranteed the failure of an assimilationist political movement. The assimilationist political leaders, such as Samuel Tilles and Rafal Landau, were usually educated at Krakow's Jagiellonian University. Active in both city politics and within the *kahal*, these assimilationist leaders had not completely merged into the larger Polish community.

The peace of 1918 allowed for the development of independent states in Eastern Europe and unleashed new discussions of the place of national character in national ideology, a phenomenon which took place in the Jewish community as well. Unlike most other developing nations in interwar Eastern Europe, the Jews developed their national consciousness without the benefit of a political state apparatus or even any kind of official government support. A reading of Krakow's *Nowy Dziennik* (New Daily, Krakow's Polish-language Zionist newspaper) indicates that Jewish leaders in the city distinguished themselves from those in the West. This is not especially surprising, given the particularities of the Jewish situation in Poland, including the Jews' greater numbers, reliance on Yiddish, and greater commitment to traditional Judaism. The Jewish leaders

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43 For a discussion of the role of national character and national ideology among other East European nations, see the edited volume of Ivo Banac and Katherine Verdery, *National Character and National Ideology in Interwar Eastern Europe*. 

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who emerged in Krakow during the interwar period clearly identified themselves with Jewish nationalism and distanced themselves from the assimilationists, even launching campaigns within the kahal (eventually successful) to take the leadership away from them. The need to develop Jewish society after the war was taken as a given by the editors of *Nowy Dziennik*. They recognized that Polish Jews were different from the more assimilated West European Jewry. One writer stated unequivocally that "we do not want to assimilate on the Western model." There seems to have been an awareness that East European Jewry did not follow the same pattern of development as West European Jewry, even if they too acculturated. This writer does not mention the assimilated nature of the Jewish communities in Prague or Budapest or explain which of these Jewish communities is “Eastern” or “Western.” Jewish leaders in interwar Krakow had no desire to preside over the assimilation of their community. In stating that they did not wish to emulate Western Jewish leaders, they were demonstrating their wish to develop a new form of Jewish identity that allowed for participation in both majority and minority cultures.

While common religious and cultural traditions continued to bind the Jews together in one national group (in spite of their many differences), their use of the Polish language bound them to another group as well. a tie Jewish nationalists expressed as loyalty to an administrative state they hoped would provide the conditions necessary for Jewish national development. Language remained "a mediator of authentic national

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experience." tying acculturated Polish Jews to Poland while the common cultural traditions reinforced a separate national identity as Jews. The "linguistic promiscuity" of the Jews did not act as a hindrance to Jewish identity. nor was it always a step on the road to complete assimilation. Rather, it was a tool to be employed in the making of Jewish nationalists and Jewish national autonomy.

This study underscores the multiplicity of ways that Jews could be Jews in interwar Poland. Social and economic modernization did not necessarily demand the destruction of ethnic particularity. What remains to be studied are the ways in which Jews and Poles accommodated the culture of the other group. My research has revealed that the Jews in Krakow did accommodate Polish culture while asserting their own identity at the same time. Echoing the earlier work of Calvin Goldscheider and Alan Zuckerman, Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katzenelson have insisted on the importance of the Jewish tie to the non-Jewish community. In their recently edited volume on emancipation, Birnbaum and Katzenelson assert that the process of emancipation illustrates that there were many different ways in which Jews could demonstrate their Jewishness.


Local Jews simply had to "build their own home." to establish the political, educational, social, and cultural institutions that would defend and support their community.\footnote{Wilhelm Berkelhammer. "Narodziny 'Nowego Dziennika' (Wspomnienie)." \textit{Nowy Dziennik}. 11 July 1923, 6-8. This article concerned the necessity of separate Jewish newspapers in the Polish language for the Jewish community, an issue discussed further in Chapter 3. "'Building Our Own Home': The Jewish Press of Interwar Krakow."} After 1918, the political situation changed drastically: in a new era of national self-determination, Jews could proclaim their national identity more freely than before. Still, short of emigration, the options Jews faced in making political, economic, and social decisions were often limited by the majority society.\footnote{For a theoretical discussion of the options of minorities, see the work of Frederik Barth. \textit{Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference} (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969). For a thorough discussion of the limited options of the Jews in Europe, see Zygmunt Bauman. "Exit Visas and Entry Tickets: Paradoxes of Jewish Assimilation." \textit{Telos} 77 (Fall 1988): 45-79.} Antisemitism worked to separate the Jews from Polish culture, but it also spurred the development of separate Jewish institutions which hoped to instill Jewish national, cultural, or religious ideals, while integrating Jews into the majority culture that so often rejected them. As antisemitism increased in Krakow and throughout Poland in the 1930s, Jews responded by continuing to build their own cultural community, by opening schools and founding Yiddish newspapers. Like the institutions founded earlier, these too played a role in integrating Jews into the majority culture. The Jewish leaders of interwar Krakow built a "home", a network of private organizations where Jews could express their hopes and fears for their own community and serve their own material, educational, social and cultural interests. In anti-Jewish Poland, this included, perhaps somewhat surprisingly,
the attachment of the Jewish community to the larger Polish society. It is perhaps not an accident that Isaac Deutscher, who wrote the well-known work *The Non-Jewish Jew*, spent the early years of his career writing for *Nowy Dziennik* and translating Hebrew poetry into Polish.

With the secure establishment of the Polish state, the Jews could now look after their own needs and work toward goals of Jewish national autonomy. As a writer for *Nowy Dziennik* pointed out, Jews supported the cause of Polish nationalism by declaring themselves as Poles in the Austrian census of 1910, recognizing the need for an independent Poland and the role such a state could play in the achievement of their own goals. By the census of 1921, the time had come to identify themselves as Jews.\(^5\)

Jewish national goals were, to an extent, dependent on the success of the goals of Polish nationalism. Even if the rhetoric of *Nowy Dziennik* exaggerates the Jewish affiliation with the Polish cause, it remains clear that there was a new identification with the national goals of the Jewish community, an identification that was made possible only by the establishment of an independent Polish state.

As Jewish nationalists recognized their ideological similarities to the romantic Polish nationalism of the nineteenth century, they also provided for their community practically. Through the founding of schools, the presentation of lectures, the efforts to provide Jewish children with a Jewish education. These initiatives insured a high level of Jewish ethnic cohesiveness. As Polish politics drifted toward the right, especially after

the death of Jozef Pilsudski in 1935, the need to unite as a community and to integrate into the Polish state was even greater. Irina Livezeanu has described the narrow options of secular Jewish intellectuals as young ethnic Polish members of the intelligentsia stepped up their efforts to remove Jews from the universities and limit their chances for professional advancement. The need to provide opportunities for Jewish children, to insure their material survival and future in Poland no less than the future of the Jewish community itself, led many Jewish leaders to encourage separate Jewish education even as they publicly advocated Jewish integration into the Polish community. That Jewish leaders managed such apparently conflicting goals in the face of their own diversity and the ever present antisemitism only attests to the sincerity of their efforts and the skills they brought to the task of building the institutions that would house their community.

The most important sources for a study of Krakow's Jews are archival information about Jewish organizational life, the Jewish press, and the memoir literature of the Jews from Krakow who survived the Holocaust. Remarkably, the records of the official Jewish community of Krakow survived the war and can be accessed at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. These records reflect the concerns of the official organization of the Jewish community and are in that respect limited. The kahal of a Polish Jewish

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community focused on very local concerns, such as the regulations for the ritual slaughterhouses and baths, the collection of community dues, relief of the poor, disputes between synagogues, and the religious education of the community's Jewish children. As a result, these records are primarily useful when considering views of religious life.

Zbikowski mined these sources for his study and I have used them extensively in mine, though they are much less useful for questions of cultural life and identity. The involvement of the Krakow kahal in cultural life was minimal, though it occasionally subsidized cultural institutions such as the Yiddish theater (a subsidy won after quite a long fight) and provided small scholarships for Jewish students. Of equal importance for this study are the materials in the Polish state archives in Krakow and Warsaw. These include police reports on Jewish organizations, the registration of Jewish organizations with the city, and official inspection reports of private Jewish schools. These documents occasionally reflect the biases of the majority community, as can be seen in the concern with Jewish political organizations of the left.

Providing much more information on the cultural orientation of the Jewish community is the Krakow Jewish press in Polish and Yiddish, and, though only marginally during the interwar period, in Hebrew. The presence of a daily Jewish

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53 Czesław Brzoza, "Jewish Periodicals in Cracow (1918-1939)." Bibliographies of Polish Judaica International Symposium Cracow 5th-7th July 1988 (Proceedings) (Cracow: Research Center of Jewish History and Culture in Poland. 1993). 55-111. This bibliography of the Jewish press of interwar Krakow is based on extensive research in city and state archives. Brzoza lists the dates of publication, noting any interruptions, as well as the likely circulation based on police registers and any supplements that the newspapers might have published. This collection of bibliographies also includes the very helpful bibliography compiled by Ewa Bakowska, "Polish Language Jewish Press in
newspaper (in Polish) gave Krakow some standing within the Polish Jewish community. This newspaper, *Nowy Dziennik*, is an inexhaustible source of information on Krakow’s Jewish community, culture, and politics. *Nowy Dziennik* provides the perspective of an educated, Zionist Jewish elite. Other views of the Jewish community can be found in the Yiddish press, which in general catered to a significantly more traditional audience.

The memoir literature of Jews from Krakow who survived the Holocaust or who had emigrated before the war often provides the most detailed picture of individual Jewish lives. The memorial books of Krakow, *Sefer Kroke* and the Memorial Book of the New Cracow Friendship Society, provide the most detailed information of Jewish life in the city, along with memoirs published in Polish and Hebrew. These memoirs have been written, however, primarily by well-educated members of the community, inclined during the interwar period toward either Jewish national ideals or Polish cultural life. More problematic, many of them focus primarily on the Holocaust and not on the

the Holdings of the Jagiellonian Library." 111-183. See also the article by Brzoza, "The Jewish Press in Krakow (1918-1939)." *Polin*. 133-146.

interwar period. Such is the case with the excellent memoir of Halina Nelken, which details life before the war, but focuses primarily on her experiences in the Krakow ghetto and the concentration camps from 1941 to 1945. The autobiography and memoirs of Henryk Vogler are a notable exception.

After surveying the period before the establishment of an independent Poland in Chapter 2. "The Legacy of the Pre-Independence Jewish Community." I turn to an extensive discussion of the role of the press, schools, and cultural organizations in shaping a unique Jewish ethnic identity. Chapter 3. "Building Our Own Home': The Jewish Press of Interwar Krakow." and Chapter 4. "The Yiddishist Reaction to Assimilation: Religious and Cultural Responses." concern the factors that led to the development of the Jewish press in Krakow and the response of the press to the phenomenon of assimilation. Given the influence of the Polish-language Jewish press in Krakow, it is the Polish-speaking Jewish intelligentsia for whom we have the most reliable source of information. Writing in Polish, the editors of Krakow's *Nowy Dziennik* defined themselves very clearly as both Polish patriots and Jewish nationalists. In articles on assimilation, citizenship, and Jewish nationalism, the writers of *Nowy Dziennik* placed themselves in between the assimilationists active in Krakow Jewish life before 1918 and the more traditionally Orthodox population of the city. Developing a Jewish nationalism that did not exclude Polish identity, the writers of *Nowy Dziennik* focused on Zionist ideology and contemporary aspects of Yiddish and Hebrew culture. The paper often published Yiddish and Hebrew poetry and prose in Polish translation. *Nowy Dziennik* was read by Jews all over Poland. An important Zionist newspaper, *Nowy Dziennik* was
perhaps more significant as an international Jewish newspaper in the interwar period than as a local Jewish daily. While its pages include some of the best information about Jewish life in the city and articles written by the city's most prominent Jewish leaders, international and national news often took the lead over stories of local interest. In contrast, the Yiddish weekly *Dos yidishe vort* (The Jewish Word, appearing irregularly from 1926 to 1939) published long reports of the meetings of the Jewish community and addressed local concerns much more often than *Nowy Dziennik*. Significantly, the community was not able to sustain a Hebrew periodical of any kind during the interwar period. Other important Jewish periodicals from interwar Krakow include *Walka* (Struggle), a Bundist academic journal published in Polish, and *Di post*, a Yiddish weekly that appeared from 1937 to 1939. The editors of *Di post* published articles by some of the writers for *Nowy Dziennik*, focusing much more on issues of high Yiddish culture than *Dos yidishe vort*, and subsequently, neglecting local issues. Organizations of Jewish workers and merchants also published their own periodicals. Many titles appeared during the interwar period focusing on different aspects of Jewish life, politics, economics, or culture, but many of these did not appear for more than one issue.

Standard theories of nationalism justify a focus on the educational institutions of the Jews of Krakow, the subject of Chapters 5 and 6. Ernest Gellner has asserted that education is the minimal precondition for the development of a national political unit.\(^{55}\) In the context of interwar Krakow, the question was not so much the achievement of an

independent unit but one of the requirements for full citizenship in the Polish state. Education confers citizenship and “an educational system must operate in some medium, some language... and the language it employs will stamp its products.” Participation in Polish and Jewish educational institutions conditioned Jewish children to enter the larger society, both Polish and Jewish. Examining how Jewish children were educated can tell us more about the Polish and Jewish cultures to which they were exposed as well as the effects of this exposure.

Chapter 5. "Making Jews Polish: The Private and Public Education of Jewish Children." and Chapter 6. "Maintaining Community: Jewish Participation in Private Jewish Schools." examine both Polish private and public schools attended by Jewish children, with the aim of measuring the influence of both traditional and more innovative forms of Jewish education. The overwhelming majority of Jewish children attended Polish public schools. Private Jewish schools promoted a distinct ethnic identity, but they also helped to integrate Jewish children into the larger society. None of Krakow's private Jewish schools were exempt from Polish cultural influence. Even those schools oriented toward providing a more traditional Jewish religious education were required to meet curriculum requirements for instruction in Polish language, literature and history. Students from private Jewish schools also participated in academic programs with students from Polish public schools, indicating the changing environment in which Polish and Jewish children were educated.

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Gellner. Thought and Change. 159-160.
School registers and attendance records, from the state archives in Krakow, have helped in determining how many Jews attended Polish schools where the primary language of instruction was Polish. The curriculum offered by the schools to Jewish students can be evaluated from the publications of the schools themselves, the records of the Jewish community, and the Jewish press. The Zionists directed the most important private Jewish school, the Hebrew gymnasium, which developed from effort to found a bilingual, Polish-Hebrew, school as early as 1902. Other important schools included those run by the Mizrakhi, the religious Zionists, and the traditional *khadorim* and Talmud Torahs, which provided religious instruction for a large number of Jewish boys. While the Hebrew gymnasium was at the forefront of private Jewish secular education in Poland, the schools founded by Sore Shenirer in 1917, the *Beys Yakov* schools, provided a foundation of religious education for Jewish girls that was not previously available to them. Interestingly, but not surprisingly in a city with as high a rate of linguistic assimilation as Krakow, there was no school with Yiddish as the official language of instruction until 1937. Private Jewish schools were an attempt to reconcile minority identity with the demands and pressures of the majority. While the establishment of private schools may be seen as the first step toward a kind of cultural autonomy, the schools also represent the attempt to integrate both Jewish and Polish experiences into the

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57 Wojewódzkie Archiwum Państwowe w Krakowie, Kuratorium Okręg Szkolny Krakowskie. Some of the school registers are located in the archives of the schools themselves. Archives of individual schools were not large and primarily hold materials from after 1945, but some did still have prewar registers and other materials. Individual schools are discussed in Chapter 5. "Making Jews Polish: The Private and Public Education of Jewish Children."
lives of Jewish children.

The establishment of other Jewish cultural institutions provided different ways for Jews to express their Jewishness. While an examination of the schools will indicate the direction of Jewish education in the interwar period. Chapter 7. "Organizing the Jewish Street: Varieties of Cultural Life." aims to show the contemporary scope of Jewish cultural life. Jewish academic, professional, theatrical, social, and sports organizations arose alongside more traditional Jewish religious organizations, resulting in a more secular and diversified Jewish community. These organizations did not, however, serve to divide the Jewish community from the Polish population. At times, they even promoted Polish patriotism and a Jewish affiliation with Polish culture. For example, the Krakow Yiddish Theater Society premiered the plays of Stanislaw Wyspianski in Yiddish, and the Jewish Amateur Scene Club specifically encouraged its members to learn and improve their Polish. This chapter is based on the reports of political organizations, reading rooms, sports clubs, and other organizations kept by the Krakow police. These reports reveal the activities of the groups and their political orientation, if any. In some cases, the reports of the organizations themselves are available, especially important in the case of the reading rooms, as they detail the readings and lectures the organizations sponsored. In addition, the Jewish press often reported on the cultural activities in the city, announcing meetings and publishing reports of the groups' activities. The Zionist youth organizations published accounts of their activities in regular

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58 Wojewódzkie Archiwum Państwowe w Krakowie. Starostwo Grodzkie Krakowie.
journals published in cooperation with Zionist youth groups in other Polish cities. Organizations of Jewish artists in Krakow also published journals devoted to literature and the visual arts. One of the most important cultural organizations in the Jewish community was the Yiddish theater society, founded by the literary critic of the Polish-language Jewish daily. This chapter includes an evaluation of the position of the theater society in Krakow based on the sources in both Polish and Yiddish.\footnote{This includes primarily the Jewish press in both Polish and Yiddish as well as information from the state archives. Wojewódzkie Panstwowe Archiwum w Krakowie.}

A study of the Yiddish theater in Krakow, along with an examination of the other institutions discussed above, suggests that there emerged between Poland’s Orthodox Jews and assimilated Jewish intellectuals a distinct modern Jewish identity that combined forms of Jewish nationalism with elements of Polish culture. During the interwar period, many Orthodox Jews continued to live strictly observant lives in the shtetls throughout Poland. Other Jews, like Tuwim, Lesmian, Kaplicki and Mond, entered into Polish literature or politics, assimilating into Polish society and leaving behind their Jewish heritage. The Jews of Krakow began to develop unique subcultures during the interwar period, distinguishable from traditional Jewish culture as well as from Polish culture. The difficulties faced by the ethnic minority groups that resided within the boundaries of an Independent Poland were not easy to solve. They involved the fundamental issues of definitions of national autonomy, cultural autonomy, and political sovereignty. As Gerald Stourzh has written about the final years of the Habsburg Empire, national autonomy was meant to reduce national strife but was instead "a policy of pacification by the means of..."
separation and isolation, not by true conciliation and integration." Stourzh argues that national autonomy separates and isolates, but an evaluation of the Jewish community in Krakow suggests otherwise. Poland's minorities did not enjoy any official approbation of national autonomy, but the many separate organizations developed did grant Jews some control over their material conditions and educational and cultural development. If national autonomy is defined in terms of culture rather than politics, the experience of Krakow's Jews shows that an ethnic community can develop, even flourish, while adapting to the majority community at the same time. As late as 1937, the Jewish community was still founding new Jewish institutions, such as Polish-language Jewish schools, indicating a belief in the future of the community and its ties to the Polish cultural environment.

Several writers have suggested that Jews and Poles lived together yet separately. But when one considers the daily life of much of the Jewish community in Poland, this idea is rather difficult to understand. The history of the Jewish press, schools, and cultural organizations in Krakow shows that Jews and Poles did not live in two separate worlds, but in an environment that allowed for Jews to learn about and even adopt Polish culture. While a large segment of this community may very well have lived in cultural

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isolation. others. most notably, the Jews of Krakow. lived in a society that provided for close contact with the other. Polish. national community. if not mutual interaction. Interethnic contact is present in the testimony of Polish Jews who went to public school with Polish children, read newspapers in Polish, and attended Polish theater. This contact challenged exclusivist definitions of Polish nationalism and inflamed the pre-existing antisemitism, as happened in Krakow in the late 1930s, when Jewish students at Jagiellonian University were forced to sit on "ghetto benches." If the Polish and Jewish communities were completely separate, mutually impenetrable, or two different worlds, the wall between them was crumbling in the interwar period. The attempts to rebuild the walls in the late 1930s testify to the extent to which they had fallen down.
CHAPTER 2

THE LEGACY OF THE PRE-INDEPENDENCE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Jews have been present in Krakow since 1176. They lived on the narrow streets of the old city, very near the city center, on the same streets where the university would be built in 1364 and on which acculturated Jewish students would be attacked in the late 1930s. Their physical location in the city center at such an early date indicates they were never very far from Poles and Polish culture. But the history of the Jews of Krakow is also the history of the Jews of Kazimierza, the neighboring city in which Jews lived after various regulations excluded them from Krakow. In the modern period, this history is at least in part the story of how Jews returned to the city center, physically, politically, socially, and culturally.

The settlement of Jews in Kazimierza occurred only gradually until the late fifteenth century. The area of Kazimierza, known today as Krakow's Jewish neighborhood and just outside of the old town, was not founded as a separate settlement until 1335. when the Polish king Kazimierza the Great established the town as a commercial rival to Krakow. Jews settled in Kazimierza shortly after its founding; the two cities were
originally separated only by the city walls. The synagogue which became known as the Alte Shul (Old Synagogue) was built in Kazimierz as early as 1407. In the late fourteenth century, Jews living on the streets where the university was to be built were forced to give up their homes and move to another nearby location (today's Plac Szczepanski). Two fires within the last twenty-five years of the fifteenth century exacerbated the already tense relations between the town's Jews and non-Jews, and in 1495, King Jan Olbracht expelled the Jews from Krakow.\(^1\) They went to Kazimierz, which was thereafter known as a *miasto zydowskie* (Jewish city).

In time, synagogues and cemeteries were established, and Kazimierz became one of the most important intellectual centers of Polish Jewry. Perhaps the most notable Jewish leader to emerge from Kazimierz in the sixteenth century was Rabbi Moses Isserles (1520-1572), the codifier of Jewish religious law known widely as the "Remuh." In his study of the spiritual legacy of Polish Jews, Byron Sherwin notes the conflict between Krakow's Rabbi Moses Isserles and Isaac Luria.\(^2\) Luria argued that the study of non-Jewish sources by Jewish scholars could damage the Jewish tradition. In contrast, Isserles employed the works of Aristotle in his analyses of Jewish law. The use of non-Jewish culture by Jewish leaders in the interwar period echoes Isserles' unorthodox approach to the study of Jewish tradition. Even during the medieval period, Jewish

\(^1\)For a detailed examination of the politics surrounding the move of the Jews of Krakow to Kazimierz in 1495, see Bozena Wyrozumska, "Did King Jan Olbracht Expel the Jews of Krakow in 1495?" in *The Jews in Poland* Volume 1, ed. Andrzej Paluch (Krakow: Jagiellonian University. Research Center on Jewish History and Culture in Poland. 1992).

leaders in Krakow looked to outside sources to assist in the organizing of their own community.

Isserles is best known for his codification of Jewish law, but later Jewish leaders emphasized Isserles' friendly relations with the non-Jewish community. Ber Meisels, the chief rabbi of Krakow in the mid-nineteenth century, remarked that Isserles "indicated to us that we should love the Polish nation above all other nations, for the Poles have been our brothers for centuries." Isserles' legacy enriched the Jewish community of Krakow greatly, giving it a reputation that reached far beyond the city's borders. Rabbi Isserles also reflected on the conditions for Jews in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The social scientist Feliks Gross has written that conditions for the Jews were "favorable" in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Comparing the situation of the Jews in Krakow to the Jews in Germany, Rabbi Isserles wrote to a friend: "I believe it is better to eat dark bread in our countries...because in our lands we do not feel hatred, as you feel in Germany."

Immigrants from Bohemia and Moravia, Germany, Italy, Portugal, and Spain added to the community, increasing economic competition between Jews and non-Jews and making it necessary to expand the areas in which Jews could own real estate and live.

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In the 1570s, the population of Krakow numbered just over 2,000. Restrictions placed on the Jews' ability to trade in the city were occasionally overturned, only to be put in place again later. After their settlement in Kazimierz, the Jews continually fought for rights to trade and work in the city until the emancipation of the Jews in the Habsburg lands in 1868.

In spite of the economic antisemitism, the Jewish community of the city continued to grow. Many yeshivas flourished in Kazimierz during the seventeenth century, making Krakow an important center of Jewish learning and a place of pilgrimage for many Orthodox Jews until this day. The first yeshiva in the city was founded in the late fifteenth century by Jacob Pollak. The work of Rabbi Isserles assured that Krakow would remain a place of pilgrimage for religious Jews. His *Mapah* accompanied Joseph Karo's *Shulhan Arukh*, a set of legal codes applied to daily life. Rabbi Isserles' grave still stands in the city's old Jewish cemetery, near what is known today as the Remuh synagogue.

In the next centuries, trends within the Jewish community would leave a permanent mark on the city's Jews. Hasidism came to Krakow in the 1780s, attracting many Jews of the lower classes. But Kazimierz also became subject to Austrian governmental influence and German enlightenment ideas. When Poland was partitioned and Krakow found itself under Austrian rule, the town of Kazimierz became an administrative district of Krakow in 1800. After 1809, Krakow was a part of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, until the Congress of Vienna established the Republic of Krakow in 1815. During the period of the Republic, there were slightly over ten thousand Jews
living in Krakow, making up over a quarter of the city's population.\textsuperscript{6} The Republic lasted only until the Austrians again annexed Krakow in 1846. but this period allowed the Poles of Krakow at least some degree of self rule. This historic memory of relative freedom became important as Poland continued under the rule of the partitioning powers. It is at least partly this historic memory that made visiting Poles to Krakow, such as Stefan Zeromski, marvel at the Polishness of the city.\textsuperscript{7} Krakow has come to be known colloquially as the "Polish Athens." due largely to its royal heritage and its role in \textit{fin de siècle} Polish culture. Greater cultural autonomy in Galicia after 1867 allowed for the development of Polish cultural institutions in Krakow. In addition, the influence of German culture in Krakow remained minimal, as Lwow was the administrative capital of Galicia and thus had more direct contact with the Austrians.\textsuperscript{8} As Lwow had the greater tie to Vienna, Krakow was left free to become a center of Polish culture: indeed, the artistic movement Young Poland (\textit{Mloda Polska}), the artistic movement of \textit{fin de siècle} Krakow, assured Krakow's status as the spiritual center of the divided Polish nation. In Krakow, a city of primarily Poles and Jews, Jews could identify with the West through a Polish culture that acted as a mediator for Vienna.\textsuperscript{9}

Widely regarded as a bastion of Polishness during the period of the partitions.


\textsuperscript{8}Orton. "The Formation of Modern Cracow." 107.

\textsuperscript{9}Unlike the city of Lwow, Krakow did not have a sizable Ukrainian population.
Krakow nonetheless was home to a significant minority population, and political developments within the Austrian empire always affected the Jews. The emancipation of the Jews accompanied greater cultural autonomy for the Poles in 1867/1868. The more liberal conditions of the Austrians in the mid-nineteenth century, combined with internal trends of the Jewish community such as the Haskalah, made it possible for the Jews of Krakow to acculturate toward Polish culture in the late nineteenth century, thus transforming Jewish national identity. In the early to mid nineteenth century the Jews of Krakow were primarily oriented toward German culture. A group of maskilim in 1844 established what came to be known colloquially as the "Tempel," the Synagoga Postepowa or Progressive Synagogue. The synagogue arose through the efforts of the Association of Progressive Israelites (Stowarzyszenie Izraelitow Postepowych). Services in this architecturally impressive synagogue in the Moorish Renaissance style were first conducted in German, highlighting the influence of the Haskalah on the maskilim of Krakow and their differentiation from less assimilated, more Orthodox Jews. But by the time Ozjasz Thon became rabbi at the Tempel, services were held in Polish and the Tempel served as the spiritual center of Krakow's acculturated Jewish leadership. This "reform" synagogue built in the 1840s with German as the language of prayer was clearly assimilationist but, not unlike the Great Synagogue in Warsaw, became increasingly Zionist at the turn of the century. Thon led the Tempel as well as the Zionists of Krakow and the region of Malopolska until his death in 1936.

The emergence of Polish as the language of reform Judaism in Krakow is not the only evidence of a Jewish tendency toward greater involvement in aspects of the majority culture. Indeed, both Polish and Jewish writers often described contacts between Poles and Jews in the mid to late nineteenth century. For example, Rabbi Ber Meisels supported the uprising in Krakow in 1846. The high point of cooperation between Polish Jews and Polish romantic nationalists came during the 1863 uprising against the Russian empire. As Feliks Gross has written about the Jews in Poland, and specifically Krakow, during the nineteenth century. "...a tie between Polish patriotic insurrectionists and Polish Jews was established and a foundation laid for future integration and unity."

Jewish participation in the city government was a part of this future integration. Perhaps partly due to the moderate political climate, political movements of very different persuasions found a home in Krakow. The Jews, too, were able to find a place within city government as early as the last years of the twentieth century. As Jews began to move increasingly toward Polish culture at the turn of the century, a group of politically active Jews served at various times on the Krakow city council. Jozef Sare was the first city council member not to renounce his Jewish religious identity.

The kahal (in Yiddish, kehilla in Hebrew, gmina in Polish) was the mostly

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autonomous Jewish community organization governing the most important questions of Jewish religious life and acting as the formal representative of the community in interactions with first Polish and then Austrian authorities. Throughout the nineteenth century, control of the kahal was the focus of constant struggle between the assimilationists, or progressives, gathered around the Tempel, and the city's Orthodox community. The assimilationists and Orthodox clashed over additional issues as well, most notably over Jewish religious education in the public schools. As might be expected, the assimilationists favored a gradual polonization of the Jewish community while the Orthodox fought for the instruction of Hebrew and continued to establish and maintain the *khadorim* for the religious education of Jewish boys. The Zionist movement began to grow in Krakow in the first decades of the century. In 1918, the Zionists were poised to take over the political and cultural leadership of the community. Finally, in the late 1920s, they were victorious in the kahal elections and their position as leaders within the Jewish community was consolidated.

The Jewish nationalists began to win over larger and larger segments of the Jewish community after World War I. The nationalist movements of other European nations in the mid to late nineteenth century were to have their own impact on Krakow as well. Jewish nationalists began to establish their own organizations in the city, including a reading room and lending library and organizations whose purpose was to establish private Jewish education in the city. The first Zionists in Krakow espoused their views in the Hebrew periodical *Ha-micpe*, which appeared from 1904 to 1921. In the last years of
the war, however, another periodical appeared, the Polish-language Jewish daily Nowy Dziennik (New Daily), which grew to have international significance within the Jewish community and became the most important newspaper of Krakow Jewry.

Nowy Dziennik was founded amidst the turmoil of war and at least partly in response to the violent antisemitic outbreaks of 1918. The pogrom in Krakow of April 16-21, 1918, in which one Jewish man was killed, was said to be the "revenge of the Poles for Chelmszczyzna," the territory in the east occupied by the Red Army after the establishment of the Central Ukrainian Council in February 1918. A recent increase in the price of flour may also have been a significant factor in the civil unrest. The pogrom intensified the fear of the Jewish community and suggested that relations between Poles and Jews would change for the worse after the period of independence. The importance of the pogroms in Poland at the end of World War I, in late 1918 and early 1919, cannot be underestimated in the development of Jewish national consciousness in Poland, and particularly in Krakow. The antisemitic violence coincided with the reorganization of the Polish state, and Jewish nationalists responded to this in various ways, depending on where they lived. Western Galicia was more clearly on the side of Polish independence than the other regions of Poland, because of Krakow's unique position under Habsburg rule. Yet the need for self-defense among Jews in Krakow is clear.

15 Zbikowski, Żydzi krakowscy. 304-305.

In response to the pogrom atmosphere in Krakow, the editors of Nowy Dziennik called for the formation of a Jewish National Council (Zydowska Rada Narodowa), a self-defense organization.¹⁷ The Jewish National Council originally included the general Zionists, the labor Zionists and the Jewish socialists. The socialists bowed out of the Council in December of 1918, to be replaced by the Mizrahi, the religious Zionists, making the Jewish self-defense organization much less an organization representing Krakow Jewry and more of a Zionist tool to protect and defend the Jewish community. Like the formation of the Jewish National Council, the establishment of Nowy Dziennik in July of 1918 signalled a new level of activity for the Jewish nationalists. The editors of Nowy Dziennik made urgent pleas in its first issues for the cause of Jewish self-defense, while at the same time expressing genuine enthusiasm for the establishment of an independent Poland, recognizing this as part of the solution to the terrible conditions the Polish Jews found themselves in. Thus, the history of Jewish national development in Krakow cannot be separated from the history of antisemitism and the history of independent Poland.

In spite of Jewish support for an independent Poland, tensions between Poles and Jews increased in 1919 when a trivial incident in the Sukiennice (Krakow's Cloth Hall, the dominant feature of the market square) erupted into a full-scale pogrom.¹⁸ The incident involved an altercation between a Jewish merchant and two soldiers from the division of the Polish legionnaire, General Haller. Some in the Polish press termed the


subsequent looting of Jewish stores the result of "Jewish-German-Ukrainian" provocateurs. Others called on the "good" elements among the Jews to continue their fight against the Jewish nationalists. Haller's commanding officers denied that any of their soldiers had participated in what the socialist journal *Naprzod* unhesitatingly termed a pogrom.\(^{19}\)

While the leaders Adolf Gross and Jozef Sare still advocated their assimilationist stance and began working with the Union of Poles of the Jewish Faith based in Warsaw, the Zionists who had founded the Jewish National Council spoke out against ethnic violence and positioned themselves to take over the leading position in Krakow Jewry. Though it took them ten years to win any electoral victories in the kahal, the Zionists succeeded in establishing a network of ethnically based organizations that addressed many important needs of the Jewish community, including the care of Jewish children orphaned during wartime. Indicating the tensions between the different Jewish groups, an important article in *Nowy Dziennik* called the kahal the "foundation of nation building" and asserted that assimilationists should not be allowed within the kahal.\(^{20}\) Zbikowski also points out that the establishment of the Hebrew gymnasium in 1918, the culmination of the efforts of a Jewish educational society that had been founded in 1902, added to the increasing influence of the Zionists at this time. Jewish assimilationists like Jozef Sare were increasingly weakened as a result of the Zionist political activity in Krakow during and after the last years of the war. While Polish Jews did not demand a Jewish political

\(^{19}\)Cited in Zbikowski. *Zydzi krakowscy*. 308.

state within Poland. the recent success of Polish nationalism. the establishment of an independent Poland. inspired Jewish nationalists to work harder to achieve their goals.

The issue of which groups represented the Jewish community is a particularly difficult one. The different Jewish political groups in Krakow included the Zionists (themselves divided into several factions), Agudes yisroel (the newly formed political party of the Orthodox), groups of independent Jewish leaders who advocated assimilation toward Polish culture, and the Bund (the nationalist party of the Jewish working class). Within the community, political power was centered in the local governing bodies of the Polish Jewish communities or in the growing Jewish press which expressed definite political opinions. Thus, in Krakow, assimilationist leaders governed the community, but the Zionists were most active in developing a separate Jewish culture.

The assimilationists and Orthodox controlled the kahal in Krakow for decades before the interwar period, having come to the workable political accommodation that the Jewish assimilationist leaders would act as a liaison with the Polish community while the Orthodox would manage religious matters such as the rabbinate, mikvah (ritual bath), and ritual slaughter. This arrangement did not work after World War I, when Jewish nationalists and Zionists increasingly began to argue for the democratization, nationalization, and secularization of the kahal. The Zionists wished to transform the kahal from an organization based on a religious community into a communal institution that encompassed all the varying groups within the Jewish community, both religious and

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21 Samsonowska. Zarys funkcjonowania zydowskiej gminy wyznaniowej w Krakowie w latach 1918-1939, 40-43.
secular.

This desire alone challenged the traditional structure of the community. As one
scholar has noted, the democratization of Poland begun in 1918 seemed to some to be a
chance for the democratization of the Jewish community. Polish Zionists lobbied for
the democratization of the kahal before the Polish parliament, or Sejm. Eventually, new
regulations for the kahals adopted by the state in 1927 led to greater democratization of
the kahal by allowing for more political parties to participate in the kahal elections. The
two interwar elections for the governing board of the kahal in Krakow, in 1924 and 1929,
demonstrate the effects of these regulations. The Zionists conducted intensive election
campaigns before each election. Their opponents were a coalition of the assimilationists,
led by Rafal Landau, the president of the kahal, and the Orthodox, the so-called
kahalnicy. The coalition, unlike the Zionists, stressed the kahal's religious functions. In
1924, the Zionists only attained one seat on the governing board out of 25, but in 1929
they were more successful, winning 9 seats. The kahalnicy still had more seats, having
won 11, but the Zionists of Krakow had finally achieved some success in their long
struggle to wrest control of the city's official Jewish community from the alliance of the

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22 Samsonowska. Zarys funkcjonowania zydowskiej gminy wyznaniowej w Krakowie w
latach 1918-1939, 41.

23 Jewish males over the age of 25 who were permanent residents in Krakow were eligible
to vote. Samsonowska. Zarys funkcjonowania zydowskiej gminy wyznaniowej w Krakowie
w latach 1918-1939, 30-31.

24 Samsonowska. Zarys funkcjonowania zydowskiej gminy wyznaniowej w Krakowie w
latach 1918-1939, 43-60.
This victory signalled an end to one chapter of the city's Jewish history and reflected the increasingly visible profile of Jewish nationalism in interwar Poland.

Still, the assimilationist leader Rafal Landau remained president of the kahal throughout the interwar period. Assimilation as a viable political option for the Jewish community had clearly died by 1918, but its leaders did not become Jewish nationalists. Rather, they continued to work within the Jewish community, giving way as necessary to the emerging Zionists. While the Tempel never lost its influence within the Jewish community, the more assimilationist Jewish leaders did lose influence as Krakow's Zionists became more active. The threat of Jewish nationalism encouraged the assimilationist leaders and the Orthodox to close ranks in an alliance against Jewish nationalist influence within the kahal. This unlikely political partnership led the official community until 1939.

While the Zionists had yet to win over the entire Jewish community, their focus on practical political solutions made them a formidable presence in the Jewish political arena. Even such a relatively acculturated city as Krakow could not escape the influence of the Zionists. The emergence of a Jewish nationalist politics that worked concretely and openly for goals of Jewish national autonomy transformed the Jewish community. Ezra Mendelsohn chronicles how the Zionists set out consciously to "take over" Jewish

25Scheduled elections for 1936 were indefinitely postponed, at least partly because of the fear that the Bund, the party of the Jewish working class, would participate and take advantage of increasing influence within Poland due to a significant increase in Polish antisemitism. Bundist influence within the kahal would have been rejected by Zionists, Orthodox, and assimilationists alike.
politics in Poland and how they succeeded in this task, due in no small measure to the
able efforts of Zionist leaders such as Yitzhak Grunbaum, Leon Reich, and Ozjasz
Thon.\(^{26}\) Ozjasz Thon was without doubt the most significant Jewish political leader to
come out of Krakow: his influence on the Zionist politics of Western Galicia is
unparalleled, while his contributions to the betterment of the position of the Jews in
Krakow cannot be underestimated. After his arrival in Krakow in 1897, Thon taught the
Jewish religious classes in the public schools. He was also instrumental in founding the
Hebrew gymnasium and, even during the interwar period when he served as a delegate to
the Sejm, the Polish parliament. Thon presided over the gymnasium’s matura
examinations for Hebrew language and literature.

Like the rise of Jewish nationalism in the city, linguistic acculturation and cultural
assimilation were signs that the community was changing in some important ways, most
notably in the functioning of the kahal and in patterns of residential segregation. The
population of Krakow during the interwar period grew from nearly 184,000 in 1921 to
over 245,000 in 1935. Jews consistently made up about 25% of that total, over 28% in
1935. Most of these Jews, 56.9%, lived in Kazimierz and Stradom, the neighboring
district.\(^{27}\) In these two districts, Jews made up 71.2% of the total population. The next
largest Jewish neighborhood was Podgorze, directly across the river from Kazimierz.

While Francis W. Carter points out the importance of residential segregation for the

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\(^{27}\) Piech. *W cieniu kościołów i synagog*. 23. See also *Drugipowszechny spis ludności z
dn. 9 XII 1931 r. Miasto Kraków*. Statystyka Polska, Seria C. zeszyt 64, tab. 10-11.
maintenance of ethnic ties among the Jewish community, he also notes that the more upwardly mobile Jews of Krakow had begun to move to other districts, notably Srodmiescie, the center of the city, by 1910. But there was still no need to establish a synagogue outside of Kazimierz until the 1930s.

Frustratingly, there is no exact data regarding the number of Jewish speakers of Polish, Yiddish, or Hebrew in interwar Krakow. Statistics from the Polish censuses of 1921 and 1931 are problematic, given the ambiguity of the questions asked and the involvement of the press in (successfully) attempting to influence the results for political ends. According to the census of 1921, there were 45,229 people in Krakow who identified as of the Jewish faith. Of this total, 18,058, or just less than 40%, identified themselves as being of Polish nationality. The rest, with some exceptions for other nationalities, presumably identified as Jews by nationality. The total number of Jews by religion in 1931 was 56,515. 41.3% declared Yiddish as their native language and


29Piech. W cieniu kosciolow i synagog. 17. Also see Skorowidz miejscowosci Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej opracowany na podstawie wynikow pierwszego powszechnego spisu ludnosci z dn. 30 wrzesnia 1921 r. i innych zrodel urzędowych. t. 12. Wojewodztwo krakowskie i Slask Cieszynski. Warsaw. 1925. 17.

30Ogolne wyniki spisu ludnosci. domow. budynkow. mieszkan i zwierzat domowych w Krakowie z 30 wrzesnia 1921 r. (Krakow: Biuro Statystyczne Miasta Krakowa. 1924). 112.

39.8% declared Hebrew. Because the 1931 census did not ask specifically about nationality, it is difficult to make direct comparisons. In 1931, declaring a Jewish language was the only way to express Jewish nationality.

An examination of the interwar census results can show us how the editors of Nowy Dziennik identified with the goals of Jewish nationalism, even at the newspaper's own expense, and artificially inflated the number of native Hebrew speakers in the city. Calling for the Jews of Krakow to identify their native language as Hebrew or Yiddish, rather than Polish, Nowy Dziennik (and other Jewish newspapers throughout Poland as well) encouraged the affirmation of a separate, national identity for a minority within a multiethnic state. At the same time, this campaign diminished the number of Jews who should more truthfully have declared Polish their native language. While Dos yidishe vort merely noted that the census of 1931 had been taken (remarking that Jews in Krakow, as elsewhere throughout Poland, declared Yiddish their native language), Nowy Dziennik wrote extensively on the subject in the days before the census. The editors of Nowy Dziennik regretted that the census, unlike in 1921, did not include any explicit question about nationality. They feared that the situation of the Jews would return to what it was before the war, when they were regarded as simply a religious

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33 "Nokh der folks-tseylung in kroke." Dos yidishe vort. 11 December 1931. 4.

34 "Jezyk ojczyzny." Nowy Dziennik. 29 November 1931. 10.
community and not as a nation. To insure that Jews would be regarded as a separate nationality, they instructed their readers to declare Yiddish or Hebrew their native language, making a clear distinction between native language and language of daily use. As the numbers just cited make clear, the newspaper was successful in its campaign.

The statistician and historian Jacob Lestchinsky, in his article on the native language of the Jews in independent Poland, describes such results as completely unrealistic: Jewish nationalists had succeeded in increasing Jewish nationalist consciousness but had distorted the statistics. Lestchinsky, comparing the 1931 census to previous census results, concludes that such high numbers for Krakow and other cities can only be accepted if we absurdly assume that ten years of Polish statehood and political domination put an end to linguistic assimilation. Significantly, the appeal of the Jewish nationalists in Krakow was made in Polish, demonstrating by this as well how Jews in interwar Krakow developed their own separate national identity using the Polish language. The census figures also show that Krakow was linguistically very different than other large Polish cities such as Warsaw or Lwow. While 41.3% of the Jewish population in Krakow declared Yiddish as their native language, 88.9 per cent of Jews in Warsaw and 67.8 per cent of Jews in Lwow did so. But only 5.6% of Warsaw’s Jews declared Hebrew, and only 7.8% declared Hebrew in Lwow. The 39.8% of Jews in Krakow who declared Hebrew their native language were answering Nowy Dziennik’s call to identify themselves as Jews by nationality, even though they most likely spoke

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Polish, rather than Yiddish or Hebrew, in their daily lives. The census figures point to the success of the post-1867 polonization efforts and the acculturated nature of Jewish life in Krakow.

Jews wishing to integrate into the Polish community faced many obstacles, not the least of which was hostile neighbors. Polish nationalism was divided into two opposing camps: that of Jozef Pilsudski the federalist and Roman Dmowski the National Democrat. Pilsudski's brand of more tolerant Polish nationalism, as opposed to Dmowski's exclusionary ideas, naturally appealed more to Polish Jews. The Krakow Jewish community, in its unfailingly enthusiastic support of Pilsudski until his death in 1935, exhibited a belief in the conception of Polish nationalism that, in theory at least, was broad enough to encompass a role for another national minority in Polish national life. To the bitter disappointment of those same supporters of Pilsudski, however, the state did not go far enough to meet the wishes or needs of the Jewish community leaders. As Poland became increasingly authoritarian after Pilsudski's death, more ethnically based conceptions of Polish nationalism came to the fore and there was little place for the Jews within the Polish nation. Still, many Jews had already adopted the Polish language and graduated from Polish schools. They faced discrimination in education and limitations on their professional careers. Any hopes that the Polish government would act

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36 For a succinct presentation of the conflict between the nationalisms of Roman Dmowski and Jozef Pilsudski, see the article by Alexander J. Groth, "Dmowski. Pilsudski and Ethnic Conflict in Pre-1939 Poland." *Canadian Slavic Studies* III. no. 1 (Spring 1969): 69-91.
benevolently toward its minority communities in hopes of achieving a stable state had long since disappeared. But many Jews retained their commitment to the Polish state and nation. Reporting on the 1937 Polish Independence Day celebration, the kahal publication *Gazeta Gminna* described the activities sponsored by the Jewish community for the Polish national holiday. The celebration in the progressive Tempel included a choir singing the Polish national hymn *Boze cos Polske* (God Bless Poland); in the Alte Shul, a stronghold of the Orthodox, the Polish tune was also sung, but with Hebrew lyrics. Whether progressive or Orthodox, the Jews of Krakow adapted to their Polish surroundings.

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Private Jewish newspapers, schools, and cultural organizations in Krakow were a testament to the emergence of several Polish Jewish subcultures, representing different ways in which the Jews of Krakow reconciled their Jewish identity with their lives in the Diaspora. Many of the Jewish organizations founded during the interwar period were cultural groups intended for the educational betterment of the Jewish community. Whether expressed in Polish, Yiddish, or Hebrew, the aspirations of Krakow's Jewish community leaders were to unite a diverse community within a particular conception of Jewish identity, and for some, to integrate this community into the larger society.

A survey of the Jewish press shows that the Jews of Krakow attempted to maintain their own ethnic identity in spite of internal divisions and in the face of growing pressures to assimilate to Polish society. Examining how the publishers, editors, and writers behind the growing Jewish press of Krakow attempted to shape the discussion of Jewish national identity helps us to identify different groups within the city's Jewish
intellectual community, to distinguish their varied goals, and to begin to determine their influence within Krakow as well as within the larger Jewish community. In publishing newspapers with all kinds of views, the Jewish intellectuals and community activists of Krakow provided Krakow's Jews with different ways to identify as Jews in a changing social and political environment.

The forms of Jewish identity in Krakow included traditional religious Orthodoxy as well as different versions of Zionism and Yiddish cultural politics. Jewish national identity prospered in Krakow in spite of what the Yiddish press termed an "assimilationist plague." and the Jewish press itself was proof of that. Yet all of the Jewish newspapers published in interwar Krakow revealed a level of unease with the state of the contemporary Jewish community. Jewish leaders could not easily reconcile different conceptions of religious and secular identities. The divisions within the community did not help the Jews (in Krakow, as elsewhere in Poland) in the struggle to improve material conditions. build a homeland in Palestine, and be respected by other communities and nations, but they did insure that individual Jews had the opportunity to affiliate with the Jewish community in different ways.

Proclaiming adherence to a form of Jewish national identity, however, did not preclude participation in the Polish state or Polish cultural life. The most convincing evidence of this is the success of Nowy Dziennik, Krakow's Zionist-oriented Polish-language daily newspaper. Polish culture was also important for those writing for the Yiddish press. The publication in the Yiddish press of contemporary Polish poets in
Yiddish translation demonstrated a serious attempt to acquaint the Jewish community with Polish culture. Paradoxically, both the Zionist and the Yiddishist press in Krakow were educating their Jewish readers in the Polish language and culture. In addition, the most important titles of the interwar Krakow Jewish press openly encouraged Jews to learn Polish and to participate in Polish cultural life.

This study of the press is an initial response to the research questions Chone Shmeruk posed in his influential article on the trilingual nature of Polish Jewry. Shmeruk called for research on the Jewish press in Polish that would compare it to the Jewish press in non-Jewish languages in other countries. Unfortunately, the secondary literature on the Jewish press of interwar Poland is rather limited and still far from addressing comparative concerns. In a general article on the Polish-Jewish daily press, Michael Steinlauf has raised significant questions of linguistic assimilation. Steinlauf asserts that linguistic assimilation had advanced considerably during the twenty years of the Second Republic, a conclusion my study of the press in Krakow confirms. Examining how the Polish-language Jewish press in one major city attempted to integrate Jews into Polish culture while insisting on a separate Jewish national identity, this chapter lays the groundwork for future studies comparing Nowy Dziennik to Jewish dailies elsewhere in other languages.

Like all Polish Jewish communities, Krakow Jewry was trilingual. The language

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debate within the Jewish community was not new: it had begun well before the Yiddish language conference in Czernowitz in 1908. There, Jewish leaders discussed whether Yiddish or Hebrew should be the national language of the Jews, and Yiddish was declared a national Jewish language. While the Yiddish intellectuals gathered there stopped short of declaring it the national language, the conference achieved some official recognition for what was commonly called zargón. One linguist has written. "During the interwar period Yiddish became the true cultural and national language of Ashkenazic Jewry." None of the three languages used by the Jews in Poland, however, can objectively claim to be "the true cultural and national language of Ashkenazic Jewry."

Since Polish, Yiddish, and Hebrew were all used in different contexts, such claims are nonsensical unless some larger value system is taken into consideration (such as claiming Hebrew as the true national language because of its specifically religious uses). Research into the Jewish press of Krakow suggests that generalizations such as Nath's are not very useful in describing the complex ways in which Jews expressed their Jewish identity.

The work of Czeslaw Brzoza shows that, if one takes the Jewish press as a guide to the linguistic identification of a community, Polish was by far the most important language of Krakow's Jews, while Yiddish and Hebrew played lesser roles. By the

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4 Czeslaw Brzoza. "Jewish Periodicals in Cracow (1918-1939)." Bibliographies of Polish Judaica International Symposium Cracow 5th-7th July 1988 (Proceedings) (Cracow: Research Center of Jewish History and Culture in Poland. 1993). 55-111. This bibliography of the Jewish press of interwar Krakow is based on extensive research in city and state archives. Brzoza lists the dates of publication, noting any interruptions, as well as the likely circulation based on police registers and any supplements that the
1920s. Krakow's Jews had been polonized to a greater extent than those in other Polish Jewish communities because of Galicia's unique experience under Habsburg rule, which had allowed for a great degree of Polish political and cultural autonomy. The Polish-language Nowy Dziennik was the city's only Jewish daily newspaper during the interwar period. Titles such as Rzut (Look) and Sztuka i Zycie Wspolczesne (Art and Contemporary Life) addressed literature and art, respectively. Przegląd Zydowski (Jewish Review) and Rzemiosło i Przemysł (Trade and Industry) were concerned primarily with economic issues and published for Jews involved in commerce. In general, these trade publications had a greater circulation than the most successful Yiddish titles. Dos yidishe vort and Di post.\(^5\) In Krakow, even the Bund, the Yiddishist Jewish labor organization, published in Polish, for example, its theoretical journal Walka (Struggle). A group of Jewish women edited and published the long-lasting magazine for children, the Polish-language Okienko na Swiat (Window on the World), featuring stories, poems, and puzzles about Jewish holidays and Jewish and Polish leaders such as Ahad Ha-Am and Ignacy Moscicki. And, perhaps most significantly, the kahal published its official publication, Gazeta Gminna, not in Yiddish or Hebrew, but in Polish. In addition, Dos yidishe vort added a Polish section, beginning with one or two pages in the mid thirties, and increasing in later years. Further, the publications of the Zionist youth organizations.

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\(^5\)For example, Brzoza cites a circulation of 1000-2000 copier for Rekodzielo i Przemysł from 1923-1936, but only 500-700 for Dos yidishe vort and 1000 for Di post.
such as *Diwrej Akiba* (The Sayings of Akiba. Hebrew. in Polish transliteration) and *Ceirim* (Youth. Hebrew. in Polish transliteration) were initially published in Polish as well, though they sometimes included short sections in Hebrew. That the Bund, with its Yiddishist politics and devotion to the education of the Jewish worker, should publish in Polish indicates the uniqueness of Krakow's Jewish community. Moreover, the simple lack of an extensive Yiddish or Hebrew press in Krakow demonstrates the extent to which linguistic assimilation had already taken place.

Krakow's Jewish newspapers, in both Polish and Yiddish, most likely circulated informally among many readers. But circulation numbers for *Nowy Dziennik* and other Polish-language periodicals make it clear that Polish was the dominant language of Krakow's Jewish press. *Nowy Dziennik* was by far the most influential Jewish newspaper in Krakow, with a circulation that, according to state and police registers, ranged from 4,000 to 18,000 copies. The longest running Yiddish publication, *Dos yidishe vort*, had a circulation ranging from 500 to 700 copies. Thus, even if one accepts the lower estimate for *Nowy Dziennik*, it is clear that the Polish-language Jewish publication enjoyed a much larger readership.

*Nowy Dziennik* provides the best example of Jewish leaders and intellectuals in Krakow fighting both for Jewish separateness and uniqueness as well as for integration.

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6 These sections often increased in the number of pages later years.

7 The circulation numbers are taken from police registers from 1918 to 1939, which might explain the huge variation, assuming the lower numbers for the newspaper's early years. In "The Jewish Press in Krakow," Brzoza explains that *Nowy Dziennik* "achieved the peak of its potential in 1929, when its circulation reached 11.000-18.000" Brzoza. "The Jewish Press in Krakow." 146.
into the larger community. As such, the newspaper deserves special consideration. While its pages include some of the most detailed information about Jewish life in the city and articles written by Krakow's most prominent Jewish leaders, including the respected rabbi, Zionist politician, and delegate to the Polish parliament, Ozjasz Thon, international and national news often took precedence over stories of local interest. *Nowy Dziennik* appeared throughout the entire interwar period, the only Jewish newspaper in Krakow able to sustain itself for such a long time. There is even some indication that the Hasidim of Krakow read *Nowy Dziennik.*

Despite polonization, Yiddish remained an important Jewish language in the city, though Krakow was never a center of Yiddish culture comparable to Warsaw or Vilna. Jews from Krakow relate that Yiddish was the daily language of Kazimierz, which was also home to the most beloved Yiddish folk poet and composer, Mordecai Gebirtig. Yiddish newspapers were published in Krakow, but on a very irregular basis. *Dos yidishe vort,* the most important of these, appeared weekly from 1925 to 1932, but only irregularly from 1932 to 1939. Politically, the newspaper was religious Zionist in orientation and so was published with a partly Orthodox audience in mind. Another Yiddish title, *Dos likht,* served the needs of those in the Orthodox community who did not identify with Zionism, but appeared only for a year in 1931. Other Yiddish titles included *Der reflektor,* published in the mid 1930s, and *Di post,* published from 1937 to 1939. Both focused primarily on issues of Yiddish cultural life and published many

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8This, according to an article from 1930 regarding a conflict between Thon and the Hasidim of Krakow published in *Dos yidishe vort.* "Di "bebe" bokhurim (belts-bobov) organizirn demonstratsies gegn dep. dr. Thon." *Dos yidishe vort.* 28 November 1930, 3.
interviews of international Yiddish writers as well as original prose and poetry. *Der reflektor* and *Di post* aspired to a higher level of journalism than *Dos yidishe vort* and aimed to attract a larger, more international audience.

Yiddish was present in the political life of Krakow Jewry, though only marginally, as the language favored by the Poale Zion Left, a party of socialist Zionists. Many titles of Krakow's interwar Jewish press were published by political parties or other political organizations, as was common among Polish publications. Most of these were single issue publications and socialist Zionist in political orientation. Some were meant to continue but failed to appear after the first issue.

While the Polish-language Jewish press was nearly exclusively Zionist and dominated by one title, it is a mistake to speak of "the Yiddish press" as any kind of unified entity. The various Yiddish titles, discussed in the next chapter, contributed to the discussion regarding Jewish national identity by expressing views at times widely divergent from those put forth in *Nowy Dziennik* and from one another. A separate Yiddish cultural scene was reflected in the specifically culture-oriented publications *Der reflektor* and *Di post* and, to a lesser extent, in *Dos yidishe vort* and *Dos likht*. *Dos yidishe vort* and *Di post* assumed and attracted an audience that was more religious and not as politically active.

The Jewish community was not able to sustain a Hebrew periodical throughout the interwar period, attesting to the weakness of Hebrew as a daily language in Krakow. *Ha-micpe* (The Watchtower) began publication in 1904 but ceased in 1921. Shmuel J.
Imber, the well known Yiddish writer, published a short-lived weekly in Hebrew. *Shavuon* (Weekly), Zionist in orientation. No Hebrew periodical emerged to seriously promote the cause of Hebrew as the Jewish language. In an article remembering the well-liked Hebrew teacher Nakhum Mifelew, Chaim Low recalled the time when Mifelew came to him with the idea of establishing a Hebrew weekly. Low himself was skeptical, but he encouraged Mifelew to organize a meeting. Low explained that if the meeting did not provide enough motivation to establish the Hebrew weekly, it was through no fault of Mifelew, who was "the soul behind the idea." Among those who promoted the cause of Hebrew in Krakow were the writers of *Nowy Dziennik* or, like Mifelew and Low, the teachers in the Hebrew gymnasium. Mifelew's attempt to establish a Hebrew newspaper was a grass roots effort to advance the profile of Hebrew within a Jewish community that was at best indifferent, if not overtly hostile, to the cause.

The language battle, between Yiddish and Hebrew, but also among Yiddish, Hebrew, and Polish was surprisingly absent in the interwar Krakow Jewish press. The editors of *Nowy Dziennik* did not have an official policy regarding language. Perhaps this was because it was so clear that Polish was the language of communication chosen by most of the community. But *Nowy Dziennik* also included many translations of Yiddish and Hebrew literature and encouraged the study of Hebrew (as part of the Zionist program) enthusiastically. In addition, while *Nowy Dziennik* might not have encouraged the instruction of Yiddish specifically, it did support the cause of the Yiddish theater.

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10. Mojzesz Kanfer, the theater critic for *Nowy Dziennik*, also founded the Krakow
Clearly. Nowy Dziennik was interested in all expressions of Jewish national identity, in any language.

Wilhelm Berkelhammer, the editor of Nowy Dziennik, described the language question as a problem rather than a struggle (walka).\textsuperscript{11} Treating this issue as a real struggle only gave antisemites an excuse to dismiss Jews' basic claims. Rather, Berkelhammer argued, the language question should be viewed as a problem that is simply the result of certain historical phenomena. He argued that agitating against Hebrew neither helped Yiddish nor hurt Hebrew. He lamented that the development of the language question in American Jewish society was worrisome, recognizing that Yiddish schools in the United States could not stop the spread of English. The debate between Hebrew and Yiddish was not simply a matter of language, but rather a larger problem of the future in Jewish culture. Berkelhammer wrote.

Our language problem determines the development of Jewish life, and will be solved as life determines the actual language of reality, which means that each party should work on the altar of Jewish culture according to its own principles and convictions, and not considering the principles and convictions of another party as a betrayal of Jewishness and the Jewish people.\textsuperscript{12}

Berkelhammer's position was fairly moderate in a minority community often damaged by its own divisiveness. It was perhaps the only defensible position he could take as the editor of a Polish-language Jewish newspaper. The attitude of tolerance, and even

\textsuperscript{11}Wilhelm Berkelhammer. "Nasz problem językowy." Nowy Dziennik. 28 January 1925. 5.

\textsuperscript{12}Berkelhammer. "Nasz problem językowy." 28 January 1925. 5.
support for Yiddish and Hebrew was absolutely necessary, as Nowy Dziennik was prone to accusations of assimilationism because of its use of Polish.

Berkelhammer wrote in 1925, when the language issue for Jews in Poland was far from settled. Fears of the linguistic assimilation that was taking place at an ever greater rate fueled the language debate for proponents of Yiddish and Hebrew. But, for the editor of Nowy Dziennik, the priority was clearly Jewish culture, not a specific Polish, Yiddish, or Hebrew culture. Language learning was important for the Jewish community and the Zionists of Nowy Dziennik, but it did not determine Jewish national identity. They encouraged those Jews who did not know Polish to learn it and hoped all Jews would learn Hebrew; they also tirelessly promoted Yiddish culture. Unqualified support of Hebrew and Yiddish was perhaps the only way the editors of Nowy Dziennik could make up for their calculated decision to publish in Polish.

Nowy Dziennik supported the Hebrew language movement generously and enthusiastically. Nowy Dziennik reported on the Days of Hebrew in June 1927, an event designed to spread knowledge of Hebrew language and literature among Jewish youth. Nowy Dziennik freely admitted the necessity of such an event, since Jewish youth simply did not know modern Hebrew and were not acquainted with its literature. The Days of Hebrew were not an indication of the strength of a flourishing culture in Hebrew; rather, they were the initial steps by which proponents of Hebrew hoped to overcome the "apathy" of Jewish youth. The program even aimed to increase knowledge of Hebrew

13"Na powitanie Dnia hebraistow w Krakowie." Nowy Dziennik. 26 June 1927. 5-6.

14"Na powitanie Dnia hebraistow w Krakowie." Nowy Dziennik. 26 June 1927. 5-6.
among young Jewish women, with a lecture on the "Hebrew woman." Benzion Katz, who published often in *Nowy Dziennik*, described the need of Jewish youth to be acquainted with Hebrew literature in terms that judged rather harshly both the Hebrew writers and their potential readers. Katz wrote, somewhat surprisingly, that the Jewish student was a significant internal enemy of Jewish national development. The student might have "a shekel in the pocket, but in the heart -- emptiness and satan." In other words, Jewish students may have supported the movement in some concrete, material way, but they failed to give it their full spiritual support. Katz also criticized the Hebrew writers of the 1920s, asserting that they paled in comparison to the great earlier Hebrew writers Moshe Leib Lilienblum, Chaim Bialik, and Josef Chaim Brenner. Katz leaves the reader wondering how a knowledge of contemporary Hebrew literature would have aided the rapidly assimilating Jewish population, illustrating, perhaps, one of the reasons Jewish youth simply were not interested. Still, given the amount of attention *Nowy Dziennik* devoted to issues of Hebrew literature and culture, the newspaper was an important supporter of Hebrew culture in interwar Krakow.

Even more surprising is the attitude of *Dos yidishe vort* toward Hebrew. While one might expect that a Yiddish newspaper would take a different line, *Dos yidishe vort* often encouraged the study of Polish and Hebrew, recognizing the importance of Polish for its audience as well as the growing role of Hebrew within the Zionist community. Further, the paper reported on a kahal meeting where it was recognized that the city of

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Krakow was unique in not having to cope with different camps on the language position. In this way, Krakow was positively differentiated from Warsaw and Lodz, where disputes among proponents of Polish, Yiddish, and Hebrew often interrupted the business of the community, preventing it from taking action on a number of projects. Only in Krakow, according to the article, could speakers at the kahal meeting speak in the language of their choice without fear of reprisal. In addition, a writer for *Dos yidishe vort* declared in 1929 that the language battle between Hebrew and Yiddish only hurt Jews in assuring that Jewish schools would receive less support than German, Ukrainian, and Byelorussian schools because of the internal Jewish dissent. The writer implied that respect for all the languages the Jews of Krakow spoke, including Polish, would help Jews to win more state support for Jewish education. Altogether, the Yiddish newspaper was not an unqualified champion of the cause of Yiddish; rather, it sought to serve the community by pointing out how difficult questions regarding language could be solved to the greater benefit of the community.

Moyshe Blekher was the most prominent Yiddish-speaking intellectual to advocate Yiddish in the city. His establishment of two Yiddish newspapers in Krakow, *Der reflektor* and later, *Di post*, were responses to the linguistic assimilation in Krakow that had made the language question much less a burning issue than in other cities. Krakow's Jews read a Polish-language Jewish newspaper; Blekher provided them with another option. Blekher's newspapers are discussed further in Chapter 4, but they stand


as a reminder that Jewish intellectuals did not always so passively accept widespread polonization. Blekher's desperate tone in his newspapers affirms the polonization that had already occurred in Krakow but also provides an important example of a dissenting voice. Most representative of the polonization Blekher rejected was Nowy Dziennik, whose writers cared more about the content of Jewish nationalism than the form in which that nationalism was expressed.

National Identification and Assimilation in Nowy Dziennik

While Nowy Dziennik is evidence of the linguistic and cultural assimilation of Krakow's Jewry, its founders and editors were not on the margins of the Jewish community. Indeed, the paper was one of the most important Jewish institutions in all of Poland. In acculturating, the Jews of Krakow were adapting to the political and cultural realities they found themselves in. But, as they themselves asserted, acculturation did not mean assimilation. As Herbert Gans has written, "new constructions of ethnicity are themselves potential evidence of continuing acculturation." Acculturation may be a step toward assimilation, but it does not necessarily have to progress further. Prompted by the anti-Jewish violence in Eastern Galicia after World War I, Berkelhammer and other Jewish community leaders established Nowy Dziennik to support and defend the Jewish community.

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community.

*Nowy Dziennik* quickly became the primary medium of Krakow's Jewish community. The daily first appeared on July 9, 1918, when the primary concern of the editors, and no doubt readers as well, was the conclusion of four years of war. The Zionist leader Pinchas Goldwasser has been credited with the idea for a Polish-language Jewish daily as early as 1916. Other Zionist leaders argued that there simply was no demand for a Jewish daily newspaper in Polish and suggested a biweekly publication instead. ²⁰ Ozjasz Thon, Michal Ringel, Wilhelm Berkelhammer, and Adolf Stand insisted that the newspaper be a daily. Because antisemitism led to difficulties in finding a publisher in Krakow, *Nowy Dziennik* was first published in the Czech town of Moravská Ostrava from July 1918 to January 1919. From February 1919 to February 1920, the newspaper was published in Krakow, and then from February 1920 on by *Nowy Dziennik* 's own press. ²¹ The paper appeared daily except on the Sabbath, though there were times in the paper's first years when it did not appear on Mondays. The number of pages in the initial issues varied, until it was finally decided that *Nowy Dziennik* should be a twelve-page newspaper.

The founders of *Nowy Dziennik* intended from the beginning to publish in Krakow. ²² Publishing in Moravská Ostrava was problematic and only a temporary

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²² Wilhelm Berkelhammer. "Narodziny 'Nowego Dziennika' (Wspomnienie)." *Nowy
solution. The paper was printed at two in the morning and then sent to Krakow, where it arrived at six and then went on to Warsaw, Lublin, and Lwow. In addition to distribution difficulties, publishing in Moravská Ostrava meant that the paper was subject to two different censors, one in Moravská Ostrava and one in Krakow. In an article reflecting on the establishment of the newspaper, Wilhelm Berkelhammer recalled that someone had the idea to take Krakow off the title page to avoid this problem. He compared the newspaper's homelessness to that of the Jewish nation more generally: "Since no one anywhere wanted to host us, we had to build our own home. The small group concentrated around Nowy Dziennik knew this, and the entire Jewish nation must still constantly repeat this to itself." Though the founders of Nowy Dziennik were comfortable enough in the majority culture to publish in Polish, they still recognized the need for a Jewish daily newspaper.

The Polish Jewish political leader Michal Ringel, as well as Berkelhammer and Thon, all made the claim that Nowy Dziennik was the first Jewish daily in a non-Jewish language, explaining that other Jewish newspapers, such as German-Jewish newspapers, were either not dailies or were not general interest newspapers like Nowy Dziennik. Other Jewish newspapers in Europe were simply community organs or, according to Ringel, concealed their Jewishness. Ringel wrote of the founding of Nowy Dziennik:

Dziennik. 11 July 1923. 6-8.

23 Berkelhammer. "Narodziny "Nowego Dziennika" (Wspomnienie)." Nowy Dziennik. 11 July 1923. 6-8.

24 Berkelhammer. "Narodziny "Nowego Dziennika" (Wspomnienie)." Nowy Dziennik. 11 July 1923. 6-8.
Today it appears to have been a simple thing, a usual consequence of the existence of the Zionist organization, but at the time it was a brave and risky step: a crossing of the Rubicon which separated the Jewish world from non-Jewish society. At the same time, it was the building of a bridge over a gulf separating two worlds...It was the first [newspaper] which began to speak not only to Zionists and non-Zionist Jews, but simply to Polish society and its spiritual elite, appealing to the badly informed to better inform themselves.25

Far from isolating themselves in a cultural ghetto, Krakow's Jewish leaders reached out to the non-Jewish community by publishing in the majority language. Nowy Dziennik did not focus exclusively on Jewish issues or Jewish politics. Its commitment was to represent the Jewish community to Polish society and, in turn, to further acquaint the Jewish community with the majority culture. The goals of the founders indicate that they sincerely hoped their newspaper would find an audience among ethnic Poles, though they were not naive. They recognized their effort as the first of its kind and knew that attracting readers, whether Jewish or Polish, would not be an easy task. The founders of Nowy Dziennik wanted to reach out to the Polish community and build the Jewish nation. Nowy Dziennik was their attempt to meet both goals. It was most likely not well known among Poles, but as an initial effort to develop a Polish-language Jewish journalism, Nowy Dziennik stands as a remarkable achievement. The editors were more successful in "building their own home" than in gaining the full acceptance of the majority community. The decision to publish in Polish was intended to aid the Jewish community in improving its relations with the Poles. The editors of Nowy Dziennik declared that they could not understand how the Jewish community could live among Poles if they were not


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able to conduct their affairs in Polish. The decision to publish in Polish was made for specific reasons, namely, that publishing in Polish would be more likely to effect the program the newspaper set for itself. that is, "a defense of the weak and the hurt, among these, the Jews, the moral and material good of broad layers of society, agreement between peoples, brotherhood among nations, the self-determination of nations, and a just and lasting peace."26

Writing with cautious optimism. Berkelhammer explained the decision to use a non-Jewish language for a Jewish newspaper: "Feeling a threatening storm in the air as an inevitable side effect of the approaching political changes, and feeling that the wall between Jewish society and the Polish nation that was built as a result of years of misunderstanding and deliberate lies and slander must start to fall down, if not be removed immediately -- we decided to begin publishing our newspaper in Polish."27 For the editors and writers of Nowy Dziennik, national identity could be built, developed, and changed using the tools of another nation. Berkelhammer defended the newspaper against charges that it was simply an instrument of assimilation. He wrote:

We deny most assuredly that a Jewish newspaper in the Polish language is an instrument of linguistic assimilation or that it contributes to the growth of assimilation. Even if this were so, a Jewish newspaper in Polish is so important and necessary that we would take the risk of a "surplus" of assimilation and find some other way to treat or neutralize it. Three million Jews cannot live among a twenty million Polish majority and not be in constant and immediate contact with it...

26"Nowy Dziennik." Nowy Dziennik. 9 July 1918. 1.

27Berkelhammer. "Narodziny 'Nowego Dziennika' (Wspomnienie)." 11 July 1923. 6-8.
Moreover...in light of our actual multilingual ability, it is clear that perhaps even a very significant number of Jews can read only or almost only a daily in the Polish language. Whoever thinks that Nowy Dziennik with its Polish language is not a very serious instrument in the fight against assimilation is simply mistaken. We would remind the linguistic fanatics among us of the national fight of the Irish, conducted in English....A multilingual nation must have a multilingual press.28

Berkelhammer’s insistence on the multilingual identity of the Jewish community was a frank assessment of Jewish language use in Poland. Further, the attempt to reach a Polish audience signalled a changing Jewish community that was aware of its political and social position in a changing Poland. The need for a Polish-language voice of Polish Jewry was not limited to Krakow. Jewish leaders founded similar papers in Warsaw (Nasz Przeglad, Our View) and Lwow (Chwila, Moment) shortly after the establishment of Nowy Dziennik. Jewish editors such as Berkelhammer published in Polish because of a (perhaps mistaken) notion that the Jewish community only read Polish and because of a desire to build a bridge to Polish society.

In its first issue, the editors of Nowy Dziennik set forth the program for which they were working and outlined the goals of the newspaper. Nowy Dziennik was to be the voice of the Jews in Polish society; the time had come when understanding between Poles and Jews was necessary.29 Polish Jews were not underage children, an editorial pointed out. They were capable of addressing the Polish community and expressing their own intentions and goals; the time had come to do so. Berkelhammer wrote explicitly that the goal of the paper was to serve as a watchdog (posterunek) for Polish Jewry and to serve


29"Nowy Dziennik." Nowy Dziennik. 9 July 1918. 1.
faithfully the Polish republic. Whether or not it expressed the beliefs of the Jewish masses. *Nowy Dziennik* served as a voice of the Jewish community and a conduit for the most general kind of nationalist ideas.

The editorial staff of *Nowy Dziennik* remained fairly stable throughout the twenty years of its existence. Wilhelm Berkelhammer was the founders' first choice as editor and, but for the years 1921-1925, served in that post until his death in 1934. As a student in Tarnow, Berkelhammer had contributed to Zionist publications and was an active journalist, publishing in such German- and Polish-language journals as *Welt*, *Moriah*, *Judische Rundschau*, and *Wschod*. He also personally supervised the editing of *Nowy Dziennik*'s literary supplement, publishing Polish, Hebrew, Yiddish, and foreign literature, reflecting his world view that Jews belonged to all of humanity. In addition to Berkelhammer, the original editorial staff included Zygmunt Ellenberg, Jakob Freund, and Jechiel Halpern. The first theater critic was Wilhelm Fallek, and the first music critic was Franciszka Sonnenscheinowna. (Mojzesz Kanfer succeeded Fallek as theater critic and the lawyer Henryk Apte succeeded Sonnenscheinowna as music critic.) Henryk Leser served as sports editor for many years. Supplementary sections throughout the

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33Fallek. "Berkelhammer -- Drogowskaz dla obecnych i nastepnych pokolen." 3 September 1934. 3.
years featured articles on economics, literature, sports, home health, radio, film, chess, women's issues, children and youth. In 1921, the West Galician Zionist leader Yitzhok Schwarzbart replaced Berkelhammer as editor, in which position he served until 1925.

Ozjasz Thon clarified the reasons for the decision to found a newspaper like *Nowy Dziennik* in an article published for the newspaper's ten-year anniversary. First and foremost was the desire for a "rozmowa 'od narodu do narodu,'" a nation-to-nation conversation. This wish to undertake an ongoing dialogue with the Polish nation necessitated the use of Polish, however much one might wish the majority to learn minority languages. The first step in reaching out to Poles would be to speak their language and to educate them about Jewish issues. Second in Thon's list of priorities was the Zionism of its founders and their recognition of the need for an independent newspaper. This allowed for the formation of principles of citizenship and nationality for Polish Jews. This was a change from the political positions of Krakow's pre-war Jewish assimilationist leaders who, according to Thon, introduced Jews to the political marketplace as though they were a good to be traded. Thon wrote, "Patriotism was not for us a market good for which one longs to get the highest price, as it was treated by our assimilationist predecessors: rather, it is a simple, ethical obligation, one which we fulfill sincerely."

Thon objected to the pre-war assimilationists who, in his view, did not recognize that other Jewish groups expressed loyalty to the Polish state but were also working to develop political and cultural institutions that would represent the Jewish

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Nationalism for the editors of Nowy Dziennik arose from the desperate conditions the people found themselves in because of war and economic discrimination. Rather, economic conditions made explicit nationalist goals necessary and vital. It was precisely not the goal of the nationalists who wrote for Nowy Dziennik to establish a Jewish political nation of some sort within Poland or even work toward national autonomy (at least in its early issues). Instead, their goal was primarily to improve the moral and material well-being of the Jewish masses. For Krakow's Jewish leaders, for the Jewish intellectuals writing for Nowy Dziennik, nationality was not connected to political rule or political borders between different countries. Nationality was not even necessarily based on language for the writers of Nowy Dziennik. They assumed the existence of a Jewish nation based on the shared social, religious, and political heritage of the Jewish people, no part of which was ever specifically rejected by Krakow's Jewish nationalist leaders.

The Jewish nationalism of the writers of Nowy Dziennik echoed, to some extent, Polish nationalism. An article in Nowy Dziennik delineated two different types of Polish nationalism, one exemplified by the rightist National Democratic leader Roman Dmowski and the other by the romantic nationalism of Poland's nineteenth century poet, Adam Mickiewicz. Dmowski's form of nationalism expressed that nationalist's love for his own nation but only hatred for other nations and was "egoistic, brutal, and zoological." But nationalism was not always negative -- it could be more like the nationalism of

36"Nacyonalizm i nacyonalizm." Nowy Dziennik. 16 September 1919. 1.
37"Nacyonalizm i nacyonalizm." Nowy Dziennik. 16 September 1919. 1.
Mickiewicz, which expressed a love for other nations and a desire not to hurt other nations. The nationalism of Mickiewicz did not know hatred. The author wrote, "Nationalism, which is not national chauvinism, does not know slogans of hate." Indeed, nationalists should work in cooperation with other nations and respect the other nations' equal rights. The nationalism of Nowy Dziennik, according to this author, was like that of Mickiewicz. Its goal was to improve the conditions of the members of the nation, but not at the expense of members of different ethnic or national groups. The comparison to Polish nationalism recognized that not all Polish nationalist sentiment was identical. In appealing to the more positive form of Polish nationalism, the writer allowed for a conception of Jewish nationalism that permitted an identification with Polish culture.

The existence of a noble strain of Polish nationalism justified the decision to publish in Polish. Bridging the gap between the two different worlds, Nowy Dziennik illustrated how the two different nations were not so far apart in their conceptions of nationalism. The generally expressed nationalist goals assured the Jewish "masses" of the nationalists' concern, while the comparison to Polish nationalism may have been intended at least partly for the non-Jewish audience the editors hoped to attract.

In presenting the writing of some of Polish Jewry's most successful political leaders and journalistic talents, including Berkelhammer, Thon, and the Zionist leader Apolinary Hartglas, Nowy Dziennik allowed for the assertion of a Jewish national identity combined with a fervent Polish patriotism. Describing in 1924 what patriotism meant to

38 "Nacyonalizm i nacyonalizm." Nowy Dziennik. 16 September 1919. 1.
the Jewish intellectuals of *Nowy Dziennik*. Berkelhammer first quoted the Belzer rebbe, who said that the Orthodox "serve Poland, just as we served Austria." Like Thon objecting to the trading of patriotism as a political good, Berkelhammer asked whether patriotism that was so easily transferred could be patriotic. Significantly, Berkelhammer disparaged the rebbe for speaking in a "very heavy indistinct jargon" (Yiddish), claiming that if the Orthodox do not speak the majority language they can not be truly patriotic. The patriotism of the Orthodox, in Berkelhammer's description, was passive, emerging from a social and spiritual ghetto. In contrast, the patriotism of *Nowy Dziennik* was presumably more active and positive, and, at least, expressed in the Polish language.

While *Nowy Dziennik* would become increasingly, more explicitly, Zionist in its later issues, it would also give its support to the Polish state and encourage the expression of Jewish culture in Polish. Indicating that the distinction between nationalism and patriotism was more than simply semantic, *Nowy Dziennik* often included coverage of Polish cultural events, Polish literature, and Polish theater. For the group of Jewish intellectuals associated with *Nowy Dziennik*, different nations could coexist in the same state: the nations did not necessarily have to interfere with each other's development. The writers of *Nowy Dziennik* saw themselves as citizens of Poland and members of the Jewish nation and were unwilling to compromise either of these identities. This insistence on a Jewish national identity as well as a patriotic affiliation with the Polish

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state and culture challenged both Jews and Poles. In short, according to the writers of Nowy Dziennik, Poles and Jews differed over how they wished to define the Jewish community within the Polish state. Using the Latin terms, the Poles wanted the Jews to be Gente Judaei, natione Poloni (Jews by birth, Poles by nationality), while the Jews desired to be Cives Poloni, natione Judaei (Poles by citizenship, Jews by nationality). This idea of a civic, or administrative, identity, expressed in the Polish term panstwowy, is especially important for the writers associated with Nowy Dziennik. This conception of an identity that could be separated from an ethnic or national identity allowed the writers of Nowy Dziennik to assert their own Jewish national identity without sacrificing their commitment to Polish patriotism. Polish culture, and Polish identity.

Narodowosc (nationalism), for Nowy Dziennik, was organic, while panstwowszc (statehood) was practical. Loyalty to the state in which one lived was, however, quite possible. Indeed, it was an ethical obligation. Given this reasoning, Jewish nationalists were able to think of themselves as having an organic national Jewish identity, as well as a civic Polish identity. Poland could be a place of faithful citizens of Jewish nationality. Expressing the perpetual conflict of Diaspora Jewry, one author assured the Poles that Jews would always stand beside them, while assuring Jews that the Jewish leaders would not betray them.

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42 "Panstwowosc a narodowosc." Nowy Dziennik. 18 August 1918. 1.

43 "Cives Poloni, natione Judaei." 22 September 1918. 3.
One author made the same distinction between *narodowy* and *panstwowy* but then questioned how this distinction applied to the majority of the Jewish population.

According to the article, Jewish religion was "the alpha and the omega" of the Jewish masses. There was certainly no doubt as to their Jewish identity, but in what way were the masses Polish? The author recognized the need for them to learn Polish, though this did not mean the Jewish masses had to *wynarodowic* (denationalize). The author wrote, "If we state that the Jewish people in Poland are Polish in the administrative (*panstwowy*) understanding of this word, and Jewish nationals at the same time, we are only demanding recognition of and respect for something that only greedy, chauvinistic imperialism dares to uproot in human history." Thus, the author implies that anyone denying the Jews their own national identity as well as a Polish administrative identity is a greedy and chauvinistic imperialist. The admission of an administrative, governmental, or civic identity as Poles could not truly jeopardize Jewish national identity. For this writer, learning Polish did not necessarily mean any compromise of Jewish identity. The difficulty for Jewish nationalist leaders was defending this notion to both Jewish and Polish audiences.

The editors of *Nowy Dziennik* offered an explanation of Jewish national identity that clearly showed they thought of themselves as members of a national community separate from Poles.\(^4\) One author points out that dividing the Jews into two distinct groups, assimilationists and nationalists, is quite simply mistaken. Jews who had converted or who considered themselves as Poles of the Mosaic faith were in no way

\(^4\) *Nowy Dziennik.*"Pare slow wyjasnienia." 15 July 1918. 1.
numerous among the Jewish community or, indeed, a part of the Jewish community at all.
having already rejected it in favor of Polish culture. (The editors repeatedly stressed this
rejection of assimilationists in later issues.) Proclaiming that the organizational life of the
Jewish community is so intense and active now due to the devastation of the war, the
author asserted that in spirit the new Jewish nationalists (the writers and, presumably,
some of the readers of Nowy Dziennik) were actually more like the Poles working toward
Polish independence and statehood than the Poles of the Mosaic faith. In placing
themselves as Jewish nationalists on the same level as Polish nationalists, the writer
subtly asserted the demand for equal, civic rights for Jews as well as the existence of a
separate national community.

The author argued that it was wrong to assume that Jewish nationalists were
active enemies of Poles, claiming that the explicit division into two Jewish groups,
assimilationists and nationalists, denied the fact that the Jewish masses were really
Jewish. The author explains that the Jewish masses do not possess European
enlightenment; their Jewish roots are very deep and one cannot expect that they will be
assimilated even within the next ten years. The poverty of war, however, has increased
the pace of nationalism and broadened the horizons of the masses. Each day, they are less
withdrawn, less isolated, asserts the author. Nationalism, as set forth in this article,
sought simply to improve the quality of life of the Jewish masses. It did not demand
equal rights or some form of national autonomy for cultural minorities. Rather, the call
was simply to lead the Jews into the next decades with an increased identification with

45 Nowy Dziennik. "Pare slow wyjasnienia." 15 July 1918. 1.
Jewish national goals as well as a greater level of participation in Polish society.

The promotion of Hebrew and general Jewish culture did not preclude enthusiastic support for the Polish state. In an article celebrating twenty years of Polish independence, Apolinary Hartglas praised the unbelievable growth of the Polish state, as well as the Polish victory over the Bolsheviks.\textsuperscript{46} In an answer to the question of why Jewish political leaders were willing to participate in Polish politics after the establishment of the state, he responded that it was because of the obligation implied by Polish citizenship and a general solidarity with Polish national ideals. Jews expected similar justice for themselves. He wrote, "Jews see in the liberation of Poland an act of historical justice, such as they expect for themselves."\textsuperscript{47} Further, "We have done everything as befits any good citizen, and we have done more than other citizens, because no other's citizenship is questioned as much daily as is ours."\textsuperscript{48} Jews rejoiced, "not only as citizens, but also as nationalist Jews...because our joy with all of Poland flows from the same source as the belief in the liberation of our own nation. from a deep conviction that justice and freedom must finally triumph!"\textsuperscript{49} Statements such as these by Hartglas simply reflect the real dilemma of Diaspora politicians who were forced to figure out how to live as citizens of one nation-state while proclaiming loyalty to Zionist ideals. It is tempting to dismiss this enthusiasm for the state and nation of Poland as so much kowtowing to

\textsuperscript{46}Apolinary Hartglas. "Z jednego zrodła," Nowy Dziennik. 11 November 1938. 5.

\textsuperscript{47}Apolinary Hartglas. "Z jednego zrodła," Nowy Dziennik. 11 November 1938. 5.

\textsuperscript{48}Apolinary Hartglas. "Z jednego zrodła," Nowy Dziennik. 11 November 1938. 5.

\textsuperscript{49}Apolinary Hartglas. "Z jednego zrodła," Nowy Dziennik. 11 November 1938. 5.
Polish government officials, but such declarations were not mandatory. Rather, these comments reflect a general appreciation of the fact that the Jews' fate in Poland relied to a significant extent on good relations with the Polish state and nation. Not surprisingly, a 1921 editorial marking the anniversary of the Polish constitution of May 3, 1791, praised it as the "best moment of the Polish spirit." The constitution adopted in 1921 was not quite as good as that of 1791, primarily because it was led by those who were "not only able to love their own nation, but also to hate other nationalities." Cognizant of their enemies within Polish society, Polish Jewish leaders appealed to what they defined as the positive, tolerant aspects of Polish nationalism while spreading Jewish nationalism to the larger community. Furthermore, to Hartglas, the reestablishment of a Polish national state was a harbinger of the likely reestablishment of a Jewish national state, because Jewish claims to statehood had the same basis as Polish claims.

Even when, by any objective measure, the situation of the Jews in Poland worsened significantly in the late 1930s, Nowy Dziennik still argued that the Polish nation should be defended by all regardless of nationality. At a time when pogroms against the Jewish population were making the front pages, and when economic antisemitism on the part of the Polish government became more evident, Jewish allegiance to the Polish state stands out as singularly idealistic, if not foolhardy. One Krakow Jewish leader wrote.

But we dare to doubt that insulting the blue and white flag and rejecting Jewish

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50 This, in spite of the fact that the 1791 constitution did not emancipate the Jews.

51 "1791-1921." Nowy Dziennik. 4 May 1921. 1.

youth in the idea of national defense ("national" — in the administrative sense) is in line with the program of General Rydz-Smigly which he so beautifully expressed in the pithy slogan: To lift Poland higher.... However, in spite of all the bitterness we feel in light of certain offensive and unjust acts, we respond to the appeal and we offer our sacrifice for the goal of the defense of the state. For we consider that the slogan of the defense of the state before dangers which threaten it should unite all its citizens and nobody can escape from this obligation.

Ready to serve the Polish state, the Jewish community was upholding ideals of Polish nationalism which they felt should apply to the Jewish national community as well. In committing themselves to the Polish state, rather than the Polish nation, Krakow's Jewish leaders nonetheless committed themselves to the achievement of Poland's nineteenth century romantic nationalist goals.

The tragedy here is that Polish nationalism of the 1930s differed markedly from the romantic nationalism of the nineteenth century. Brian Porter's work has demonstrated how Polish nationalism turned toward the right and allowed for the hatred of other communities well before the interwar period. While Pilsudski's Sanacja regime kept the extreme nationalists out of power, it could not stop the spread of the nationalist movements that attracted the youth and students often responsible for the beatings of Jews on university campuses and anti-Jewish violence in city streets. The comments of Hartglas were made in a political environment that tolerated and supported proposals for anti-Jewish legislation and challenges to Jewish citizenship in the Polish state. Moreover, Jewish politicians and writers were not unaware of the fate of the Jews in Nazi Germany.


54 Brian Porter. When Nationalism Began to Hate (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
Many German Jews crossed the border into Poland, fleeing the Nazi regime. Polish Jewish leaders knew that constitutional republics could change into dictatorial regimes quite easily: Pilsudski’s 1926 coup itself had shown how rapidly the political situation could change.

In comparing their cause to Polish nationalism, the Jewish leaders hoped to make their own goals more understandable and more acceptable to both the Polish and Jewish public. The sincerity of the Zionists’ commitment to Poland and Polish causes was part of Jewish nationalist idealism. Commitment to the Polish state was simply a condition of existence as a national minority in a multiethnic Polish state and so was expressed in the hopeful early years of 1918 as well as in the difficult years of the late 1930s. This commitment was a reflection of a real conviction in the potential of nationalism to deliver a people from exile and not without serious implications for the development of the Jewish community in Poland. From the very start, hopes for an independent Polish state influenced the Krakow Zionists’ decision to publish a Jewish newspaper in Polish. The Polish national resuscitation of 1918 provided a model for the Jewish people who similarly had been deprived of a state for an even longer period of time. Moreover, the influence of the Polish community can be seen in public and private education and in the control exercised over Jewish organizations, as described in following chapters. Living among the Polish majority conditioned the Jewish nationalism developed in interwar Poland, as evidenced by the development in *Nowy Dziennik* of a Jewish nationalism that allowed for the expression of a Polish civic identity. At the same time, living among
Poles did not prevent the development of a Jewish nationalist identity that meant to nurture, protect, and defend the Jewish people. The Zionism of *Nowy Dziennik* hoped both to improve material conditions for the Jews in Poland and to prepare its community for emigration to Palestine. They committed both to the Zionist dream of a homeland and to the state in which they lived.

The insistence on an identity as both Poles and Jews required a new relationship with Poles, one that recognized both Jewish similarities to Poles and fundamental differences. That Jews defined themselves against other nations is not surprising. Poles, and so many others, did the same in their own national development. Important for the discussion here is the effort made by Krakow's Jewish nationalists to affirm both a Jewish and a Polish identity, however differently they may have defined each. The articles in *Nowy Dziennik* about assimilation often argued that the Zionists were developing an *uczciwy stosunek* (sincere relationship) with the Poles, something never attempted by the pre-1918 assimilationist leaders. In short, the Jews of Krakow were trying to have it both ways, to enter the majority culture without giving up their own.

The very publication of *Nowy Dziennik* indicates that Jews wanted to be a part of both Jewish and Polish cultures, without giving up any aspect of their identity. Indeed, it is this challenge to both the minority and majority cultures that makes *Nowy Dziennik* so significant. In refusing to give up their separate identity as Jews and the Polish language

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and literature to which they lay claim, the Jewish intellectuals around Nowy Dziennik posited a Jewish identity that not all Jews, and certainly not all Poles, were likely to accept. Yet in publishing in Polish, Berkelhammer and the others gambled successfully. Recognizing that Polish political rule would not always benefit the Jewish community, they hoped to stem assimilation by insuring that Polish-speaking Jews would be able to express a Jewish national identity in Polish. They were able to accept the breaking down of the language boundary between Jews and Poles because in doing so they created another one. The assertion of the nationhood of the Jews, they hoped, would prove to be another boundary between the two communities -- but one that would not prohibit communication with the majority population. While the founders of Nowy Dziennik responded to the phenomenon of assimilation by asserting their nationalist ideas, other groups in Krakow responded in different ways, affirming other boundaries between Jews and Poles.

Writing in Polish, how did the writers of Nowy Dziennik counter charges that they were simply an instrument of assimilation? In short, they recognized their position as Jews in Poland as unique, as differing from that of the relatively more assimilated Jews in Western Europe as well as from Poles and other non-Jews in Poland. They acknowledged that Polish Jewry could not remain the same economically and culturally in the face of the political, economic, and social changes that followed World War I, but they did not compromise their ethnic identity. They set themselves firmly against the assimilationist political leaders of the early twentieth century. That the writers of Nowy Dziennik...
Dziennik should be so concerned with defining themselves against the assimilationist leaders makes sense. This was necessary if their efforts to act as the unquestioned voice of Krakow Jewry were to be successful. Before 1918, the assimilationist leaders had attained positions on the Krakow city council and represented the Jewish community to the Polish public. If the Zionists were to replace them as the leaders of the Jewish community, they would first need to distinguish themselves from the community's acknowledged leaders.

The pre-war assimilationist leaders had presented themselves as the only intermediaries between Jews and Poles. According to the editors and writers of Nowy Dziennik, the assimilationists had not been successful because they did not respect the commitment of the Jewish masses to a separate Jewish identity. The Jewish nationalists of Nowy Dziennik considered assimilation a fiction. The fact that the Jewish "masses" led a separate life, that they felt Jewish and thought Jewish, according to one writer in Nowy Dziennik, indicated that they were not Polish culturally or nationally. The Jewish nationalists of Nowy Dziennik were the most appropriate group to appeal to the Jewish masses. Educated in both Polish and Jewish culture, they were able to reach out to the Jewish masses in ways that the assimilationist leaders did not. The conception of a civic identity, tied to the newly established, independent Polish government, allowed the Jews to be Poles. It also allowed for the expression of a Jewish nationalism that could work toward the betterment of the political, social, and economic conditions of the Jews in Poland as well as in Palestine.

57 "Legenda asymilacyi." Nowy Dziennik, 1 September 1919. 1.
The writers of *Nowy Dziennik* exploited the categories of "nationalist" and "assimilationist" in their effort to define themselves against the older, entrenched leadership of the Krakow Jewish community. One writer described a form of assimilation he termed "cosmetic." or assimilation applied literally as make-up. He used this term to depict a group of Jews in Krakow whom he labeled as "indifferent." This group had assimilated cosmically -- they would neither accept nor deny a Jewish identity. Similarly, they would neither accept nor deny a Polish identity. In humanitarian, philanthropic, professional, and social institutions, the indifferent Jews would claim to be better Jews than the best Zionists but would remain silent when asked about belonging to the Jewish nation.\(^{58}\) When asked if they belonged to the Polish nation, they would also remain silent. The author urged. "Take off your mask! For Palestine or against it! With the nation -- or against it! Clearly, openly. With a manly confession of faith. On this or on that side of the great effort of the history of our nation! One should have the courage to be partisan."\(^{59}\)

Unfortunately, this "party of the indifferent" was particularly strong in our beloved Krakow, the author wrote. The appeal to the Jewish community here is to identify themselves as Jews: the target audience for this article is precisely those Jews who. the

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\(^{58}\)Unfortunately, the author does not identify precisely who was included in this group. The author distinguished between those Jews who accepted assimilation as a desired political alternative, the group of the "indifferent." and the Zionists.

article asserted, were "indifferent." A significant part of the Jewish population, in between those completely assimilated to Polish identity and the Zionists of *Nowy Dziennik*, did not respond to Jewish nationalist appeals. The writers of *Nowy Dziennik* tried to speak for all of the groups within the Jewish community, but they continually railed against those they termed politically "indifferent" and the more assimilated (or less nationalist) they were so decidedly against. Indifference, according to this author, was even worse than real assimilation, which was at least a clear enemy one could fight against.60 The widespread phenomenon of indifference was naturally threatening to the Zionists. Zionism was a political expression of commitment to the Jewish people, while *bezpartyjność* (the lack of affiliation) threatened the political success of the Jewish community. Jewish life in Poland was in a struggle for its very existence. there was "no time or place for a womanly, cowardly, sentimental neutrality in light of the most essential problems of Jewish life. With a thousand voices we call: Everybody to the front!"61

A lack of politicization leading to indifference could not solve the problems of the Jewish community as the Zionists perceived them. The Zionists saw themselves in a fight for the support of the Jewish "masses" and the assimilated and "indifferent" intellectual leaders only hindered Zionist success. The gendered language throughout this article suggests that the author equated a strong Jewish nation with common notions of

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masculinity. The author used the gendered language to insult the indifferent enemy as "womanly" and to call Jews to battle, literally. Articles such as this one in Nowy Dziennik were tools in the Zionist battle for political dominance in Krakow and throughout Poland, part of how the Zionists hoped to gain support for their cause.

An early article on the state of Jewish education in Poland made clear the editors' stance on traditional Jewish learning, highlighting the newspaper's fight for the support of the masses. The author of this article stated clearly the position that the Jewish school must get "out of the darkness" and end its "withdrawal" from society. According to the author, any defender of the traditional kheyder is "medieval." The author realized the necessity of Jewish education but argued that the current system of Jewish education needed to be radically transformed. Advocacy of Jewish education did not mean that Jewish education should remain the same: the editors of Nowy Dziennik clearly supported the development of Jewish schools that utilized modern pedagogical methods.

This emphasis on modern Jewish schools entailed a cooperation with Polish authorities that would, necessarily, qualify Jewish control of private Jewish schools. Furthermore, Jewish education was needed for the making of citizens. Polish citizens (uobywatele). Improvements in Jewish education were vital for the success of the newspaper's "program." the defense of the weak and injured and the improvement of the material conditions of Polish Jewry: "As nationalist Jews, as Polish citizens, as people of progress and culture, we aim for the development of Jewish schools, without which the

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making of Jews into citizens will never take place!" In their refusal to assimilate according to the Western model and in their realization that change was necessary in order to educate Jews in proper Polish citizenship, the writers of Nowy Dziennik were transforming Jewish national identity in Poland. The efforts of Krakow's Jewish leaders demonstrate that they were working to become a part of the Polish political state without sacrificing their desire to be a part of the Jewish nation.

Conclusion

Given the lack of other Jewish political alternatives in Krakow, the influence of Nowy Dziennik among the city's Jewish elite is difficult to overestimate. Its influence on the Jewish "masses" the writers of Nowy Dziennik hoped to win to their cause is much more problematic to determine. No other group in Krakow, including the Bund, had a comparable daily newspaper to rival the Zionists. Nowy Dziennik was the leading voice of the Krakow Jewish community. This is precisely why the efforts of its editors and writers to bring about a conception of Jewish national identity that included elements of Polish culture are so significant. The Zionists of Nowy Dziennik represent the acculturation of the Jewish community in Krakow. This was an acculturation qualified by the development of an active Jewish national (not simply ethnic) identity. Those writers gathered around Nowy Dziennik wanted to belong to both the Jewish and Polish nations, to be both Jews and Poles.

63"O szkole zydowska." Nowy Dziennik, 24 July 1919, 1.
Others in the Jewish community, however, did not always support the secular nationalist ideas expressed in *Nowy Dziennik*. While those writing and reading *Nowy Dziennik* were an influential segment of the Jewish community, they were outnumbered by the Jewish "masses." The group of writers and intellectuals gathered around *Nowy Dziennik* did not represent the Jewish community in all its social and economic diversity. Other voices in the Jewish community also contributed to the fight against assimilation and for a separate Jewish national culture. These voices were in Yiddish and they reveal the continuing importance of religious tradition within the Jewish community and the emergence of a Yiddish cultural politics in polonized Krakow.
CHAPTER 4

THE YIDDISHIST REACTION TO ASSIMILATION:
RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL RESPONSES

Like Nowy Dziennik, the Yiddish papers were founded with their individual missions, as responses to what their publishers saw as the tragic circumstances of modern Polish Jewry. The most important Yiddish periodicals reflected a concern with the self-definition of the Jewish community, the editors declaring these publications tribunes for one or another kind of specific Jewish communal identity. For Dos yidishe vort and Dos likht, the concern was to guard Jewish tradition at a time of immense change; for Der reflektor and Di post, the issue was the development of a modern Yiddish culture in a city whose Jewish population was becoming increasingly polonized, at least in terms of language. The emphasis on guarding the traditions of the community, whether religious or linguistic, is not surprising given the real changes Polish and Jewish society experienced after World War I. While Polish-language Jewish writers advocated Jewish participation in the Polish state, Yiddish-language Jewish writers were likely to care more about traditional Jewish religious Orthodoxy or the Yiddish theater.
Each of the Yiddish newspapers made claims to being the "only" Yiddish newspaper or the "first" Yiddish newspaper in twenty years. All the Yiddish papers denied existence of the other Yiddish titles, which may indicate that they circulated in very different segments of the community. In fact, the Yiddish word had not been silent in Krakow in the previous two decades, despite the claims of Moyshe Blekher when he first published Der reflektor in 1935. Samuel Probst's Dos yidishe vort had been in publication since 1925. That Moyshe Blekher did not recognize Dos yidishe vort as a Yiddish newspaper illustrates Blekher's disdain for other Yiddish cultural efforts, a central theme in both Der reflektor and its successor, Di post.

The Yiddish-speaking community encompassed more than those Jews who were traditionally religious and those oriented toward high Yiddish culture. While Dos likht appealed to those Jews who strongly identified with Jewish religious tradition and Der reflektor and Di post served as the standard bearers of Yiddish secular culture in Krakow, Dos yidishe vort combined religious Judaism with secular Zionism. In addition, Di naye tsayt (published briefly in 1928), like Nowy Dziennik, was an effort to reach out to a large part of the community that may not have defined themselves as either exclusively religious or exclusively secular. Di naye tsayt (The New Time) reads like a Yiddish version of Nowy Dziennik and includes articles by some of the same writers. The articles in Di naye tsayt focused on the conflict between the Zionists and Agudes yisroel (the modern political party of the Orthodox) and praised Ozjasz Thon, one of the most important contributors to Nowy Dziennik and, arguably, Krakow's most important Jewish

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political leader.

The most important Yiddish newspapers, however, were either expressions of a traditional religious identity forced to confront modernity or a Yiddish cultural politics that sought to create a high Yiddish culture. *Dos yidishe vort* was the only Yiddish newspaper that published regularly in Krakow in the late twenties and early thirties. After 1935, it appeared irregularly. The other most important Yiddish title of the interwar period, *Di post*, appeared only from 1937 to 1939, but, as discussed below, was very different in orientation from *Dos yidishe vort*. Examining the various Yiddish titles of the Jewish press reveals how groups within the Jewish population expressed an affiliation with the Jewish community. While polonized intellectuals founded *Nowy Dziennik* to express their desire to integrate with Poles yet remain apart as well, others reasserted their connection to the Jewish religion or the Yiddish language.

*The Persistence of Religious Tradition*

*Dos yidishe vort* served as the city's only Yiddish voice until the publication in the 1930s of *Dos likht. Der reflektor.* and *Di post*. Czeslaw Brzoza has noted that, as listed in government registers, *Dos yidishe vort* appeared until 1939, but only issues until 1935 are extant: thus, it is difficult to determine the regularity with which the newspaper appeared from 1935 to 1939. According to police registers, its circulation was
significantly lower than that of *Nowy Dziennik*. 500-700 copies as opposed to several thousand. Thus, *Nowy Dziennik* was the leading newspaper among Jewish readers and one cannot make any direct comparisons between *Nowy Dziennik* and other Jewish newspapers in terms of influence. Still, *Dos yidishe vort* endured for many years and, in spite of its low circulation, was Krakow's longest-lasting Yiddish newspaper. It is a significant indicator of the presence of a more religious, traditional Jewry in Krakow.

Though it could not compete in circulation with *Nowy Dziennik*, *Dos yidishe vort* found its place in the city's Jewish press as a local newspaper. In political orientation, *Dos yidishe vort* was the newspaper of the religious Zionists, or Mizrakhi. In general, though, it was much more insular than *Nowy Dziennik*, echoing the concerns of the Krakow community by focusing on Jewish issues of local importance (such as complaints from members of the community about the desecration of the Sabbath) more often than on issues of international significance. Samuel Probst, the editor of *Dos yidishe vort*, was more likely to sponsor a survey asking readers to identify the five most popular Jewish figures in Krakow than to ponder the intricacies of international Zionist politics or the meaning of Yiddish poetry. In addition, Probst reported regular meetings of the kahal in great detail. The section of news briefs did much more than announce times and places of current lectures, theater performances, or films. Short notices described the activities of different Jewish organizations and reported, sometimes amusingly, sometimes angrily, on ongoing projects of the Jewish community, such as the building of the Jewish hospital or conflicts over the appointment of rabbis in nearby towns.

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Samuel Probst first published *Dos yidishe vort* in 1925, well after the end of World War I. Unlike *Nowy Dziennik*, it was not founded as an immediate response to the war and the subsequent peace, but rather as an answer to a perceived and very real need of the Jewish community in Krakow and western Galicia for a Yiddish newspaper. Probst founded *Dos yidishe vort*, the only Yiddish weekly in western Galicia, "to guard Jewish tradition and the interests of Jewish merchants and craftsmen." According to Probst, the Jews experienced a period of demoralization during and after the war and were just beginning once again to address the needs of their community. Previously, due to the conditions of war as well as the ongoing modernization of the Jewish community, the synagogues were empty, the khadorim had been closed, and children were being raised almost as "goyim." according to the paper.

At the last moment (apparently some time before the first issue of the paper in March 1925), however, Jews began to return to the Jewish community, a movement of which *Dos yidishe vort* saw itself as a part. Probst wrote in his first editorial:

> It seems that today we have a full-blown repentance movement (*tshuve-bavegung*). The Jewish people have returned at the last moment to the old *yidishkayt* (*yudishkayt*), finding it as the past generation tended it for us. The movement is not limited only to the Orthodox Jews or the older generation. No, it encompasses all groups, young and old, *folk* and *intelligentsia*. East and West, all feeling that they are too isolated, distanced from the source, from the ... way of earlier generations. They have attracted everyone's attention with their cries to halt this distancing from our fathers, in order not to reach the extreme point from which there is no way back.

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3."Tsu unzer leser!" *Dos yidishe vort*, 13 March 1925, 1.


Probst defines the response to the crisis within the Jewish community as unified. He does not explicitly define who is taking the leading role in this repentance movement, but the implication is that a new generation of Jewish leaders emerged in postwar Poland that rejuvenated the Jewish community. His editorial optimistically pointed out that, six years after the war, the synagogues were no longer empty, more and more students began studying in yeshivas, and students of all kinds, young and old, could learn Hebrew in different courses offered in all the larger cities. At the same time, it is likely that Probst overestimated the different groups he identified. Just as Nowy Dziennik claimed to speak for all Jews, so Probst assumed an emerging united front of the Jewish community.

The politics expressed in Dos yidishe vort may account for its relative success. While a newspaper of and for the Orthodox community, Probst was a Zionist, and his views indicate a sympathy with secular Jewish political movements. Probst often supported the work of Jewish organizations that were more secular and Zionist in nature, such as the Hebrew gymnasium. The paper was fairly conservative in its orientation, expressing traditional goals that had little to do with political concerns or the ongoing struggle between Zionism and Bundism. Probst did not associate the paper with Yiddishist ideology, such as the championing of Yiddish as the national language of the Jews or an advocacy of the working class. His efforts to straddle the border between Orthodoxy and Zionism, the challenge of the Mizrakhi party, likely struck a popular chord within a still traditional community undergoing rapid change. The content of the
paper demonstrates that the editors were more concerned with questions of maintaining Jewish tradition in Krakow than with politics.

Evidence of the traditionalist position of *Dos yidishe vort* can be found throughout the paper. For example, Probst published an open letter in Hebrew regarding the Talmud Torah in Krakow, the religious school sponsored by the official Jewish community. In an editorial on the Talmud Torah school, Probst argued that the old traditions (*minhagim*) were vital for modern Jewish life and therefore, the Talmud Torah should receive more support. At the same time, however, he recognized the importance of the *landesshprakhe* (the language of the land, or Polish) and encouraged Jewish children to learn a non-Jewish language in order to be able to function within the larger community. Probst's willingness to admit that Jewish children needed to learn Polish was an important concession to the new political realities of interwar Poland. Probst did not imagine that learning Polish precluded some form of Jewish identity. Many in Krakow's Jewish community had assimilated linguistically as early as the late nineteenth century. Probst simply wanted to strengthen and maintain Jewish identity: he would not let use of a non-Jewish language keep him from his goal.

Probst continually advocated private Jewish education, expressing a fear of sending Jewish children to public schools and openly supporting the Zionist Hebrew gymnasium. A Yiddish newspaper supporting a Hebrew gymnasium would have been unlikely in the context of the Jewish history of Warsaw or Lodz (where the language

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"Dos yidishe vort. 26 June 1925. 1."
battle was much more fierce). Probst's support of the Hebrew gymnasium was an expression of the Mizrakhi position between the anti-Zionist Orthodox and anti-Orthodox Zionists. Part of the Yiddish speaking community in Krakow (in fact, the only active Yiddish-speaking part of the community, at least until the late 1930s) not only supported the Hebrew gymnasium but criticized it in an effort to encourage improvement so that it would better meet the needs of the Jewish community.

Probst, in line with the religious orientation of Dos yidishe vort, accused the school of not being traditional enough.\(^8\) He wrote that the Hebrew gymnasium "took the Torah out of the phrase 'People of the Torah'."\(^9\) He repeatedly complained about the high tuition and the complicated system of identification cards which singled out students who were not able to pay on time.\(^10\) Fearing that the gymnasium would simply be a school where, for the price of fifty zlotys, a Jewish child could get a matura without learning Hebrew. Probst challenged the school to live up to its ideals of helping Jewish children.\(^11\) He argued sarcastically that the gymnasium should not act simply as a guest house for its students.\(^12\) His argument highlights the class distinctions within the Jewish community.

\(^7\) "A shturmisher farzamlung vegen a t"t." Dos yidishe vort. 31 July 1925.

\(^8\) "A por verter tsulib der bafarshtehender general farzamlung inem beyt seyfer ivri." Dos yidishe vort. 1 January 1926.

\(^9\) "Di farzamlung in der hebreisher shule." Dos yidishe vort. 8 January 1926.

\(^10\) "Di farzamlung in der hebreisher shule." Dos yidishe vort. 8 January 1926.

\(^11\) "Di general-farzamlung in der hebreisher shule." Dos yidishe vort. 12 February 1926: "Vi azoy kenen mir unzere kinder far yuden makhn?" Dos yidishe vort. 26 February 1926.
Private Jewish education was available only to those who could afford it; most Jewish children attended the public schools.

Probst recognized the dilemma that faced Jewish educators. Now that Jewish society had greater and greater contact with the rest of European civilization, Jewish educators had to rethink how to raise the children, of both rich and poor, as Jews.\textsuperscript{13} Complaining about the lack of Jewish tradition in the Hebrew gymnasium, without condemning the gymnasium's work, illustrates how Probst upheld Jewish tradition without dividing the Jewish community even further.\textsuperscript{14} If Probst was concerned about poor Jewish children not being able to receive a Jewish education in the Hebrew gymnasium, he nonetheless recognized that the youth attending the gymnasium would likely be future leaders of the Jewish community. In short, the editor of \textit{Dos yidishe vort} legitimately cared more about the general welfare of the community than about any specific political or cultural debate. Like Wilhelm Berkelhammer of \textit{Nowy Dziennik}, Probst placed more emphasis on attaining real progress for the Jewish community than on ideological debate.

\textit{Dos likht}, published for the first and last time in 1931, was clearly of a more religious character than \textit{Dos yidishe vort}. Like the political party of the Orthodox Agudes yisroel, \textit{Dos likht} represents the entrance of traditional Jewry into a modern

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\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{13}"Vi azoy kenen mir unzere kinder far yuden makhn?" \textit{Dos yidishe vort}, 26 February 1926.
  \item \textsuperscript{14}"A por verter tsulib der fafarshtehender general-farzamlung inem "beyt sefer ivri." 108
\end{itemize}
society that relied increasingly on an active press and political participation to attain its goals. Recognizing the success of secular Jewish political movements, traditionally Orthodox Jews responded by establishing a newspaper and entering the dialogue about Jewish identity that had arisen as a result of tremendous change from within the Jewish community and from without. That Orthodox Jews made up the majority of the Jewish population in Poland is not in dispute. Nevertheless, they were unable to affect the larger Jewish community to the same extent as the Zionists in London, Berlin, or Krakow.

More than Samuel Probst, Wolf Leib Urbach, the editor of *Dos likht*, emphasized his desire for his paper to become the voice of the Orthodox Jews in Western Galicia. Deploiring the fact that other minority Jewish groups that did not represent the majority of Polish Jewry published their own newspapers, the editors in the first issue pronounced their goal "to defend Jewish honor." Sounding similar to Probst in *Dos yidishe vort*, an editor (presumably Urbach) wrote, "Jewish holy places have been desecrated, violations of the Sabbath are spreading like an epidemic and threaten to infest the heart of Jewish Krakow — Kazimierz — and there is no Jewish newspaper to awaken us...." In publishing *Dos likht*, Urbach recognized the need of the Galician Orthodox to participate in a rapidly changing, modern society. The publication of the paper, like the election campaigning of Agudes yisroel, was a recognition that Jewish identity could no longer rely solely on the synagogue and *kheyder* for the transmission of Jewish culture. Like the

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*Dos yidishe vort*. 1 January 1926.

15 "A vendung tsu di lezer!" *Dos likht*. 16 January 1931. 1. *Nowy Dziennik* and *Dos yidishe vort* were in publication at this time, but apparently they were not sufficient to "awaken" Krakow Jewry.

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editors of the other Jewish newspapers. Urbach saw himself as a leader in a fight to define the Jewish community, to make the Jewish community what he felt it should be.

Urbach admitted that the Orthodox themselves were split because of arguments over *pirukh halavkhot* (the crushing of the laws); once again, the divisions within the Jewish community hindered any attempt at Jewish unity.

The editors recognized that the internal splits "weakened the strength of the Jewish community" while giving support to the community's opponents. To counter this division, Urbach established *Dos likht* in an effort to create an independent newspaper for all religious groups. "to create a united, strong, effective force...We hope that all Jews, without exception, all who have an interest in the strengthening of religious Judaism (*Judentum*), who do not want their youth to go to foreign groups will help us in our important work...." Further, we hope that "all Jewish Jews without distinction will support us in our fight for *yidishkayt*." By calling on all "Jewish Jews" to support the cause, the editor perhaps intentionally evoked the possibility of "non-Jewish," presumably non-observant, Jews who would likely not support the cause of *Dos likht*. While this group is not defined at all in the editorial, the terminology employed here implies that within the Jewish community, there was a range of religious observance that threatened the unity of the Jewish community. While the efforts of *Dos likht* to unite some of the Jewish community are well-intentioned, one wonders how successful Urbach thought he was going to be. The secularization of the Jewish community had already begun well before the war, particularly in Krakow.

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many religious Jews may have been reluctant to accept secular Jews as legitimate members of the community. Examining the position of Dos likht and those surrounding it provides a look at another, more religious segment of the Jewish community.

Dos likht focused on crime within the Jewish community as particularly threatening to the fabric of Jewish life. While many of the incidents described in the paper did not take place in Krakow itself, their publication in Dos likht attests that they resonated within the Krakow Jewish community. According to Dos likht, an increased level of crime, with Jews as both perpetrators and victims, was one of the results of the secularization of the Jewish community. One writer asked the question. "When one considers our current spiritual situation in light of the simple daily chronicle of our lives, one must wonder and ask how it has happened that we have come so far, but in such a short time have fallen so hard?" The question itself is an admission that the modernization of the Jewish community had costs as well as benefits.

For example, a notice about a seventeen-year-old boy who had broken a window in a gymnasium in a town outside of Krakow became the focus of a longer article in which the unnamed author condemned the decline in the morality of the community and cited other chilling examples that help us to understand more precisely what provoked the Orthodox reaction. One tragic incident occurred in a Galician shtetl, where a Jewish student in a gymnasium killed himself after being exposed to the antisemitism of a Polish

17 "A vendung tsu di lezer!" Dos likht. 16 January 1931. 1.

instructor. In addition, the unnamed author was especially concerned with the crimes of Jews who victimized other Jews. In Zdunska Wola, a Jewish hooligan attacked an Orthodox member of the kahal council, a candidate in upcoming kahal elections, knocking him unconscious with an iron. In Warsaw, within the space of one week, two separate murders had been committed where both the murderers and victims were Jews. A Jewish murder victim had also been pulled out of the water in Bedzin (Bendin) and was alleged to have been killed by four other Jews.

This increase in violence within the Jewish community, as viewed by Dos likht, was particularly troubling because the writer viewed it as a violation of the higher morals of the Jewish community. The author wrote, "for us, the belief in our chosenness was in no way chauvinistic. we never demanded any kind of payment for our chosenness - a higher position among the peoples, more rights, etc. But we demonstrated our chosenness with our higher morality (lebens-moral)." In the view of Dos likht, this was no longer the case: the incidents cited in this article point to an increasingly troubled community. Dos likht itself suggests that the "fundamentalist" position of the Orthodox religious Jews was far from disappearing. The author wrote, "the boys raised in the 'dark' khadorim have always been strong in spirit. In the most difficult circumstances they have demonstrated that they are able to maintain the equilibrium to conquer the suffering." Dos likht supported traditional Jewish education, disagreeing with the characterization of


the *khadorim* as *finstere*, or dark. The paper defended the *kheyder* as a way to stem the decline in traditional values. For the writers of *Dos likht*, this decline was evident in the recent spate of violence within the Jewish community. The appearance of *Dos likht* points to the existence of a segment of the community ill at ease in the increasingly modern, and secular, Jewish community. The author concluded with a world weary lament about the violence, "*Gevalt!* How can it get worse? It can not be believed that this is only one page of the week's chronicle of Jewish events."22

While the response to these incidents tells us that there was a strong conservative element within Krakow Jewry, there is also some indication that Krakow's conservative Jewry was itself changing, if slowly. With an article beginning, "It has already been a long time since the Jewish community in Krakow was limited to the Jewish quarter of Kazimierz (*Kuzmark).*" *Dos likht* announced that a new Orthodox synagogue, *Bayt Yosef*, had been built in a non-Jewish part of town (on Plac Kossaka, Nr. 4). The location of the Orthodox synagogue in a non-Jewish part of town indicates the movement of Orthodox Jews outside the Jewish quarter of Kazimierz and beyond the city center.23

While *Dos yidishe vort* was a newspaper of the Orthodox as well, it represented a secular political culture not present in *Dos likht*. The attitudes expressed toward Jewish education suggest the philosophical differences between these two papers. Probst was

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22"*A bisele yidishe kronik un vos vayter?*" *Dos likht*. Vol. 1. Nr. 9. 2: "*Gevald! Vi halten mir es ergits in der velt? S'vil zikh gornisht gloybn az ot dos iz a bletel yudishe kronik fun a knape vokh.*"

23"*Reb Yosef Borukh Laks shenkt a sefer toyre.*" *Dos likht*. Nr. 9. 5.
willing to support the Zionist Hebrew gymnasium, but Urbach was more firmly a supporter of the *khadorim*. Both *Dos likht* and *Dos yidishe vort* represented groups within Krakow Jewry very different from the polonized intellectuals reading *Nowy Dziennik* and the secularized Yiddish-speaking intellectuals of *Di post*. Yet even the more religious groups of Krakow Jewry were becoming increasingly modern. Probst supported secular Jewish initiatives and the teaching of Polish among Jews; Urbach noted that Orthodox Jews were beginning to move outside the Jewish neighborhood. Such changes within the more Orthodox population confirm the transformation *Nowy Dziennik* represents -- the Jewish community of interwar Krakow was acculturating and taking a step toward assimilation. Recognizing this, Jewish community leaders fought vigorously to maintain both traditional and secular notions of a separate Jewish identity. While Probst and Urbach protected Jewish religion and tradition, others defended the most widely spoken Jewish language of the time, Yiddish.

*Yiddish in Krakow: Der reflektor and Di post*

Moyshe Blekher, the editor of *Der reflektor* and, later, *Di post*, took a strong stand against the linguistic assimilation exhibited by the journalists of *Nowy Dziennik*. The editors of *Nowy Dziennik* could not argue vehemently against polonization and write in Polish at the same time. Writing in Yiddish, Blekher was freer to criticize what he saw as the assimilationist trend within the city. The publication of *Der reflektor* in 1935 proves
that while the Jewish community of Krakow was unique in being more acculturated than other Polish Jewish communities there were enough Yiddish-speaking intellectuals to merit the publication of a Yiddish cultural periodical. It was also a turn toward cultivating Yiddish-speaking intellectuals and an attempt to persuade them not to use Polish.

Blekher saw *Der reflektor* as a bastion of Yiddish culture in an assimilated city. In contrast, Probst never described *Dos yidishe vort* in such terms. *Dos yidishe vort* and *Dos likht* aimed to reach a much different, more religious audience than did Blekher. Blekher did not use *Der reflektor* as an institution which could work with other Jewish organizations in the city. Although it appeared that he wished to unite the community under the banner of Yiddish culture, he had little tolerance for those who did not share his own views. That Yiddish cultural institutions did not cooperate with each other demonstrates the range of Jewish opinion regarding Jewish social and political issues. None of the Yiddish publications attempted to bridge the divide between the religious and the secular; instead, Probst, Urbach, and Blekher simply presented their views, seemingly assuming that they represented an imagined majority of the Jewish community.

Blekher's goal in *Der reflektor* was to develop an artistic center (*kinstler-tsenter*). to gather Yiddish writers, specifically writers who would support a progressive, socialist politics, around the tribune of the journal. Blekher did not define progressive, though articles calling for the proletarianization of Yiddish literature make it appear that progressive meant generally leftist. Blekher wanted to attract Yiddish writers who
wished to use their work to create a new type of Jew, a new type of man. He proposed nothing less than the creation of a new type of identity, rooted in a secular, intellectual, cultural viewpoint. Blekher saw literature and art as a way to respond to the difficult problems of contemporary Jewish life. He wished to "use the pages of our tribune -- with an eye turned toward the lives of the Jewish people, to the Jewish worker with his sufferings and joys, struggles and hopes -- to reflect in word and picture the difficult, troublesome path of the Jew and provide an optimistic, hopeful view in better times." His journalistic activity may be seen as a response to the continuing, and increasing, antisemitism in Poland. His conception of a separate linguistic identity for the Jews would have assured a high level of ethnic cohesiveness, necessary to resist the political and cultural dominance of the majority and even violent attacks of individual Poles, such as those occurring at Polish universities in the late 1930s.

Blekher's goals were laudable, but the absence of any real efforts to organize Yiddish cultural life in Krakow before Der reflektor indicate that his task cannot have been an easy one. In addition, Blekher ignored issues important to the readers of Dos yidishe vort and Dos likht (such as Zionist politics or an increase in crime), just as he ignored the very presence of another Yiddish newspaper in the city. Further, Blekher's insistence on his Yiddishist views was not combined with an awareness of local issues as in Dos yidishe vort or in Nowy Dziennik. Each of these newspapers reflect the presence

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24"Tsum dershaynen fun ershtn numer "Reflektor." Der reflektor. 1 June 1935. 1.

25"Tsum dershaynen fun ershtn numer "Reflektor." Der reflektor. 1.

26"Tsum dershaynen fun ershtn numer "Reflektor." Der reflektor. 1.
in Krakow of different Jewish subcultures, different groups of Jews expressing their Jewish identity in very different ways. Nowy Dziennik spoke in more communal terms than either Der reflektor or Dos yidishe vort, wishing to renew the Jewish community by educating both Jews and non-Jews and instilling Zionist ideals among the Jews. Blekher, too, wished to convert as many as possible to his idea of Jewish identity, but he did not have the institutional backing Nowy Dziennik received from prominent Zionists and Zionist institutions. The publication of Der reflektor was his effort to introduce Yiddish culture to Krakow, just as Dos yidishe vort was Probst's effort to revitalize religious tradition within the city.

Commenting on the lack of Yiddish cultural activity in Krakow, Blekher wrote, "One shouldn't wonder [about the lack of Yiddish culture] when Krakow, for example, doesn't have and doesn't want a Yiddish newspaper, or any kind of position within the Yiddish cultural community."27 Fighting for the cultural position of Yiddish creativity in Krakow was the goal of Der reflektor, an example of "the rapid development of Yiddish towards a high-status language" in Eastern Europe.28 Blekher feared a day when Yiddish culture would no longer be an integral part of Jewish life. Even allowing for exaggeration, Blekher's fears should at least be taken seriously as a warning against what he felt were the dangers of linguistic assimilation. While Berkelhammer and the other founders of Nowy Dziennik were comfortable expressing Jewish content in non-Jewish


form as early as 1918. Blekher used a Jewish language to mark his involvement in the Jewish community.

As editor, Blekher focused on general Yiddish cultural issues. The first issue of *Der reflektor* included a reprint of an article previously published in Yiddish newspapers in Lwow and Warsaw. "We and the Yiddish Language," by Moyshe Nadir. Blekher reprinted the article because Nadir took a "healthy, proletarian approach" to Yiddish that was similar to his own and because it was especially "timely and instructive for Krakow which is the center of polonization and the assimilationist plague." Nadir's attitude toward the use of Yiddish was very practical, arguing against excessively grammatical approaches to the standardization of the language and advocating that writers write in the speech of the workers who speak the language. Nadir wrote, "We renounce the 'dizn-dozn' tendency [referring to ideas of Yiddish grammatical purity] to defer to the dominant language, as has been done by the assimilators of the different bourgeois newspapers. We allow Yiddish its freedoms, which arise out of an intimacy with others, out of living under one roof." Significantly, Nadir admits that in accepting the use of foreign words in Yiddish, he is accepting the influence of non-Jewish cultures on the Jews. He even compares this acceptance to the publication of Jewish newspapers (by "assimilators." *asimilatorn* in the original) in non-Jewish languages. Blekher's approach to Yiddish culture as exemplified in Nadir's article did not exclude Polish influences.

While Blekher's editorial policy led him to publish articles expressing the opinions of proletarian writers, Blekher did not express working class politics in his
newspaper. He did not advocate the promotion of Jewish working class interests in the same way as activists in the socialist Zionist Poale Zion Yiddish publications. More cultural than political. Blekher appealed to Jewish readers interested in Yiddish culture.

*Der reflektor* ceased publication the same year it began. More than a year passed after its demise before Blekher tried again to establish a successful Yiddish weekly newspaper in Krakow. Like *Der reflektor*. *Di post*, which was first published in 1937, included more serious literary articles than *Dos yidishe vort*, and is of much greater cultural significance. In *Di post*, Blekher published the work of Yiddish writers such as Joseph Hillel Levy and addressed questions of Yiddish literary politics in much more depth than *Dos yidishe vort*. At the same time, it did not publish as many items of local interest. Like the editors of other Jewish newspapers in the cities of Poland, Blekher wanted *Di post* to become the representative voice of Krakow Jewry.30

In the first issue of *Di post*, Blekher stated forthrightly that the lack of a Yiddish newspaper in Krakow was shameful for a city with such a long Jewish past. Noting that other, smaller cities and towns with smaller populations had Yiddish newspapers, Blekher asked, "Is this situation not shameful for such a large Jewish community as Krakow?"31 His goals for *Di post* were very clear, and similar to those for the failed *Der reflektor*: he wrote that *Di post* would "stand watch for the national honor of the Jews of Krakow and

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30 "Tsum dershaynen fun ershten numer!" *Di Post*. 3 September 1937. 1.

fight courageously against the plague of assimilation in all of its forms."32

Blekher's voice in Krakow is an important one. It differs from that of other Yiddish cultural activists, most notably that of Mojzesz Kanfer. Kanfer's work to establish a residential Yiddish theater troupe in the city was the only other comparable effort to establish some form of institutional Yiddish culture in Krakow. Blekher clearly stated that Di post would protect the national honor of the Jewish community, while Kanfer attempted to build a Yiddish theater that would rival the city's established Polish theater. Blekher assured the continuation of high Yiddish culture during a period of rapid linguistic assimilation toward the majority language in which Kanfer wrote. While Nowy Dziennik was already a much more established and successful enterprise when Blekher first published Der reflektor, Di post did manage to achieve some success. Its two years of continuous publication were only cut short by the beginning of World War II.

That Blekher and Kanfer did not cooperate with each other in building a vibrant Yiddish cultural community in the city is not surprising given Blekher's attitude toward the "so-called intelligentsia" of the city.33 Blekher was often outspoken in his condemnation of the city's Jewish intelligentsia, even insulting. His comments allow us to clarify the different groups within Krakow Jewry. Blekher argued that the problem of the titled (titulirter) intellectuals of the city, such as doctors, engineers, lawyers, and those with academic degrees, was that they did not feel at home either among Jews or among

32"Tsum dershaynen fun ershtn numer!" 3 September 1937. Di post. 1.

33"Vi iz unzer azoygerufene ‘inteligents’?" Di post. 12 November 1937. 6.
These intellectuals paid for seats in the city's progressive Tempel once a year on Yom Kippur to hear the kazania (Blekher pejoratively uses the Polish word for sermon in his Yiddish article). Blekher wrote, "Our intellectual with his academic titles sees Yiddish theater, the Yiddish book, all of Yiddish culture, through the prism of his...Tempel seat." The city's Jewish intellectuals attended Jewish artistic events, such as the theater, but, according to Blekher, only in the last month of the performance to show their support. Blekher compared this behavior to a retired person picking up his pension. He described the tsdoke (charity) cans as one of the symbols of the intelligentsia, "in which the intelligentsia throw in kapore-groshn [literally, money for the scapegoat] for their national sins -- and think that this frees them from their national obligations regarding our culture and literature, theater and art." Referring to the support of the city's "so-called" Jewish intelligentsia for various Jewish causes, Blekher wrote further, "Their national pride, their national uniqueness, culture, literature, art, politics -- is enclosed in tin cans and other symbols in which we futilely look for their soul." That these intellectuals attended fremde imprezes (non-Jewish gatherings, receptions) shocked and offended him. Blekher ominously asked, "Which decrees still need to be born in the

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34 "Vi iz unzer azoygerufene 'inteligents'?" *Di post.* 12 November 1937. 6.

35 "Vi iz unzer azoygerufene 'inteligents'?" *Di Post.* 12 November 1937. 6.

36 "Vi iz unzer azoygerufene 'inteligents'?" *Di Post.* 12 November 1937. 6.

37 "Vi iz unzer azoygerufene 'inteligents'?" *Di Post.* 12 November 1937. 6. Blekher's reference to tin cans used to collect money for charity, or tsdoke, is meant to insult those Jews who would support Jewish causes financially but never commit on a deeper level (such as by speaking Yiddish or emigrating to Palestine).
excited minds of modern Hamans so that our titled intelligentsia will finally understand that they are going down a slippery path?"\(^38\)

Blekher reserved his sharpest criticism for the activities of the Krakow Yiddish Theater Society.\(^39\) In an article signed under the pseudonym T. Atral, Blekher admitted that the Yiddish theater was the only real expression of Yiddish culture in the city. But he lamented the low number of Yiddish cultural activists, writing "one can weigh the number of Yiddish [emphasis his] activists in Krakow on a drugstore scale and count them on the primitive abacus of a child."\(^40\) Simply presenting Yiddish culture in Krakow did not suffice for Blekher. He reproached Kanfer and the Yiddish Theater Society on at least two grounds. First, because many in the society were not involved with the theater on any professional basis. And, second, because the language in which the members of the Theater Society conducted their meetings, discussions, and lectures was Polish, not Yiddish.\(^41\) Similarly, when Yiddish actors came to the "assimilated city" of Krakow to present a Yiddish play, he described them as polonizators, or polonizers, because these same actors advertised their performances in Polish and traded on their reputations as

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\(^{38}\)"Vi iz unzer azoygerufene 'intelignets'?' Di Post. 12 November 1937. 6.

\(^{39}\)Discussed at length in Chapter 7. "Organizing the Jewish Street: Jewish Cultural Life in Interwar Krakow."

\(^{40}\)"On a maske (der emes vegn der higer teater-gezelshaft)." Di Post. 19 November 1937. 6.

\(^{41}\)"On a maske (der emes vegn der higer teater-gezelsha)." Di Post. 26 November 1937. 3. Also signed T. Atral. 122
stars in the Polish theater in order to attract an audience to their Yiddish performances.\textsuperscript{42} Posters only or primarily in Polish advertising the Yiddish theater offended Blekher because, in his opinion, they did not do enough to spread Yiddish culture. Blekher did not tolerate the compromises made by the Polish-speaking Jewish intellectuals to promote Yiddish. When the Krakow Yiddish Theater Society announced its intentions to build a new theater building, Blekher expressed his disbelief that the proposed building would ever be used for its intended purposes.\textsuperscript{43} He described the Yiddish Theater Society, rather unkindly, as unlucky or unfortunate, literally, \textit{shlimazldikn}.\textsuperscript{44}

A letter to the editor supported Blekher's position on the Yiddish theater. Moyshe Buksboym remarked that the efforts of the Krakow Yiddish Theater Society would be twice as difficult because of Krakow's less than hospitable atmosphere for Yiddish culture. Further, Buksboym complained that the director of the Yiddish theater would not lower ticket prices, which drove audiences and actors to the Polish theater where, he continues, they have the added benefit of not having to "deal with the poverty of their own cultural world."\textsuperscript{45}

Blekher's criticism of the other Yiddish cultural institutions in Krakow can be taken in part as a manifestation of his disappointment that they were not more successful.

\textsuperscript{42}Moyshe Blekher. "Lomir zogn dem emes vegn yidisn aktiorn (a bintl faktn. proyekten un sakhlakhlen)...Aktior un aktriese als polonizatorn." \textit{Di Post}. 14 August 1938. 3.

\textsuperscript{43}"Unzer teater-ankiete." \textit{Di Post}. 12 November 1937. 6.

But it was also part of his charges against the polonized Jewish intellectuals of *Nowy Dziennik*. As the publication of *Di post* attests. Blekher's own commitment to Yiddish culture was strong. It is not known which language he used on a daily basis. But from his articles in *Di post* we know that he would settle for nothing less than the exclusive use of Yiddish by Krakow's most important Jewish intellectuals. Blekher's rhetoric is equivalent to that in *Nowy Dziennik* which judges other Jews as somehow less Jewish because of the positions taken on certain issues. The Jewish writers and community leaders who established these newspapers were promoting distinct types of Jewish identity and Jewish culture. They competed with each other in what was more or less a free market.

As the letters column of *Di post* indicates, there was a need for a Yiddish periodical in Krakow to counteract the Polish-language Jewish press. A letter to the editor published in *Di post* provides much information about the position of Yiddish culture in the city.⁴⁶ The author signed the letter "*a poylishe yid*" (a Polish Jew) and described him or herself as a "*yid fun a gants yor*." or an everyday kind of Jew. The writer could simply not believe that something like *Di post* could come out of Krakow. After seeing the first issue of *Di post*, the author wrote. "I do not possess the necessary amount of faith in the Krakow Jews of the Kazimierz district regarding something that comes out in Yiddish."⁴⁷ After seeing the second issue, the writer was ready to change

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⁴⁵"Fraye tribune (shmuesn tsvishn leyener un redaktor)." *Di post*. 1 October 1937. 6.

⁴⁶"Fraye tribune (brif fun leyener tsum redaktsie)." *Di Post*. 17 September 1937. 7.

⁴⁷"Fraye tribune (brif fun leyener tsum redaktsie)." *Di Post*. 17 September 1937. 7. The
his harsh opinion of Krakow's Jewish community for the better. Further, the writer maintained that Jews possessed three Jerusalems outside of the sacred city, namely Vilna, the Jerusalem of Lithuania; Varshe (Yiddish for Warsaw), the Jerusalem of Poland; and Kroke (Yiddish for Krakow), the Jerusalem of Galicia. The author conceded that Lemberg (Yiddish for Lwow) perhaps deserves the title more than Krakow, while the first two had earned the honor in the fullest sense. His remarks about the three Jerusalems in Poland are particularly apt. That Lemberg, or Lwow, rivalled Krakow in the letter writer's mind for the title of the "Jerusalem of Galicia" says much about the extent of the latter's polonization. In spite of the many Jewish cultural organizations established during the interwar period, Krakow, long an important city in Jewish history, was to this writer becoming less important as a center of Jewish culture.

Growing tired of waiting for some form of Yiddish culture to appear in the city, the poylishe yid had nearly given in to despair, as Krakow had been left behind by Vilna and Varshe (Warsaw). For this writer, it was not too late. The poylishe yid addressed the Jews of Krakow: "Do you not know that your grandparents blessed their dearest and most beloved children and grandchildren before the Kol Nidre of Yom Kippur only in Yiddish?!") The letter writer represents a very different attitude toward Yiddish than that expressed in the pages of Nowy Dziennik. If one accepts the letter writer's comments as a fair representation of reality, the Jews of interwar Krakow had changed radically.

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48 "Fraye tribune (brif fun leyener tsum redaktsie)." Di Post. 17 September 1937. 7.
49 "Fraye tribune (brif fun leyener tsum redaktsie)." Di Post. 17 September 1937. 7.
from the days of their parents and grandparents. Such transformations, in the opinion of the letter writer, were negative and reason to lament the future fate of Krakow Jewry. The memoir literature confirms the changes of the younger generations. Henryk Vogler describes a grandfather who had the somewhat strange habit (at least to Vogler) of attending the synagogue, and Leopold Infeld went from the kheyder to the university and fully adopted Polish culture.\textsuperscript{50} The memoirs of Halina Nelken and Natan Gross also attest to the community's linguistic assimilation.\textsuperscript{51}

Like Blekher himself, the poylisher yid advocated the Yiddish cause much more militantly than the editors of Nowy Dziennik, who founded a Yiddish theater society and published articles on Yiddish writers but did not express equal dismay at the decline of the mame-loshn (Yiddish). With the exception of Mojzesz Kanfer, the leading Jewish writers of Krakow encouraged the development of Jewish identity in a non-Jewish language. The author of this letter states that he waited a long time for the publication of a Yiddish periodical in Krakow that was worthy of the name.

Blekher's reaction to the linguistic assimilation he saw in Krakow was particularly active. But the publication of his periodicals do not attest so much to the strength of Yiddish culture in the city as to its weakness. Blekher's defensive posture indicates that Nowy Dziennik and the city's "so-called" Jewish intelligentsia were more

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\textsuperscript{51}Natan Gross, \textit{Kim pan jest, panie Grymek?} (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1991) and Halina Nelken, \textit{And Yet I am Here!} (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts
prominent within the community. His unwillingness to cooperate with other Yiddish
cultural activists in Krakow such as Kanfer no doubt hampered the development of
Yiddish creativity in the city. *Der reflektor* and *Di post* did briefly provide a Yiddish
alternative to the readers of Krakow's Jewish press, but Blekher's argument for a return to
Yiddish language and literature came too late for many. Moreover, Polish culture was not
effectively absent from the pages of Blekher's periodicals. He published Yiddish translations
of the well-known Polish poets Leopold Staff and Boleslaw Lesmian, for example. And
Blekher's harsh criticism of Kanfer's Yiddish Theater Society did not prevent him from
participating in a literary evening with Irma Kanfer, a Polish-language poet and the wife
of Mojzesz Kanfer.

The Polish culture present in Blekher's publications pales, however, against the
Polish patriotism expressed in *Nowy Dziennik* and the frank acknowledgment of the
editor of *Dos yidishe vort* that Jews should learn Polish. Moreover, Blekher's goal -- to
transform Krakow into a cultural center for Yiddish artists -- was limited only to a certain
part of the Jewish population. His concern for Jewish workers is notable but his
emphasis on art and culture meant that he did not provide practical political solutions to
the problems faced by Krakow Jewry. To that extent, the development of Yiddish culture
in Krakow posed no threat to the local government or Polish state, or even to Jewish
activists, like those associated with *Nowy Dziennik*, who were much more pragmatic in
suggesting ways to maintain Jewish identity in a changing world. Blekher's firm stance
against the polonization of Krakow was perhaps understandable because that polonization

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Press, 1999).
was already so far advanced. Nowy Dziennik represented a response to assimilation that combined Jewish national identity with elements of Polish culture, most importantly language. It was this concession toward the Polish language that so agitated Blekher and made plain the need, in his view, for a Yiddish-language newspaper in the city. The adoption of Polish by leaders of the Jewish community signalled that some boundaries between the majority and minority in Krakow were breaking down: Blekher's attempt to make Yiddish a language of high culture in the city was an effort to maintain the wall that had divided the communities. Blekher, however, was in some ways similar to the polonized Jewish intellectuals he so often scorned. For example, he was no less secular than the Polish-language Jewish intellectuals he chastised so harshly. In fact, he was interested in many of the same issues, such as the development of a Jewish literature in Yiddish and Hebrew and the presentation of Polish culture to the Jewish population. Like the intellectuals of Nowy Dziennik, he did not claim to speak for religious Jewry. This task was left to others in the city who established newspapers that Blekher and other Jewish writers, including those of Nowy Dziennik, often overlooked. Blekher, rather, defended Yiddish, a language increasingly threatened by linguistic and cultural assimilation.
Conclusion

Various groups within the Krakow Jewish community espoused different types of identity based on cultural expression in Jewish and non-Jewish languages or on traditional belief in the religious tenets of Judaism. These different approaches were reflected in the community's newspapers. Some of these newspapers were more successful than others, with a greater circulation or a more established presence in the city, having been founded as early as 1918 (Nowy Dziennik) or 1925 (Dos yidishe vort). Others (Dos likht, Der reflektor, and Di post) presented views of the community that were not always included in the city's largest Jewish newspaper. For all their apparent differences, the publications discussed here do share one striking similarity. Responding to a crisis within the Jewish community, each of the editors -- Berkelhammer, Probst, Urbach, and Blekher -- intended to strengthen Jews' identification with Jewishness. The responses to this crisis, perceived differently by each, necessitated new methods of reaching the Jewish population, such as the use of Polish in Nowy Dziennik, the promotion and development of a high Yiddish culture and Yiddish theater, or the establishment of a newspaper by Orthodox Jews. Dos yidishe vort and Der reflektor are of special significance as Orthodox responses to modern political culture. Certainly none of the methods employed by the editors were meant to alienate their potential audiences, though some of them, such as the decision to publish Nowy Dziennik in Polish, were
controversial within the community. The development of the different newspapers points
to the varying needs of groups within the community and the abilities of those groups to
meet those needs. The disparate groupings reflected in the city's Jewish press can also be
seen in the city's Jewish educational institutions. More importantly, educational trends
within Poland and the Jewish community point to the same phenomenon observed in the
study of the press, namely, increasing linguistic and cultural assimilation that nonetheless
allowed for the expression of a unique ethnic identity.
CHAPTER 5

MAKING JEWS POLISH:
THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC EDUCATION OF JEWISH CHILDREN

First among the tasks of the postwar Polish state was the development of an educational system that unified the different educational traditions of the partitioning powers and that met the needs of a very diverse population. Complicating matters was the fact that each of Poland's minorities was, collectively, in a different stage of national development. The multiethnic nature of Poland's population made it extremely difficult for the state to impose any level of cultural uniformity while at the same time providing an education for its national minorities. The need of the state to cultivate productive, loyal citizens did not coincide with the need of the national minorities to establish their own educational network with their own goals. An evaluation of the kinds of education Jewish children received from the state as well as from the Jewish community shows how the Jews of Krakow responded to a recognition of these conflicting needs. The study of the education of Jewish children in Krakow is evidence of Jewish acculturation to Polish culture as well as of a significant effort on the part of many in the community to preserve
Jewish identity.

Minority Education and the Polish State

Examining the experiences of Jews in public and private schools can reveal to some extent the exposure of Jewish children to Polish language and culture and the effects of the Polish policies. Much source material on the history of schools in Krakow has been lost, but that which remains can provide a survey, however incomplete, of the different types of educational institutions in which Jewish children were placed. These included public schools, private Polish schools, and private Jewish schools. Unfortunately, we have the least information for the public schools, which a majority of Jewish children attended. Public and private schools were regulated locally by the Kuratorium Okreg Szolny Krakowski (Trustees of the Krakow Area School District, or KOSK). Periodically, officials of this school agency visited each school for general inspections.\(^1\) Officials visited both private and public Polish schools and private Jewish schools, including the Talmud Torah schools and khadorim. These inspection reports, along with the archival material and memoirs, allow for a study of the different types of schools and the children's experiences.

The question of state regulation of education is especially important as scholars of national movements have noted the relative importance of both primary schools and

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\(^1\)Because the records of KOSK are fragmentary at best, I do not have a set of complete inspection reports for any school in interwar Krakow. Considering the origin of these sources, they seem remarkably evenhanded.
secondary and higher education in developing a national consciousness. Schools were a significant part of the modernization process of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and were used to transmit culture within a political unit. The Minorities Protection Treaty signed at Versailles in June of 1919 gave religious and national minorities in Poland the right to establish their own social and religious institutions at their own expense (that is, without any monetary support from the government) along with the right to use their own language and practice their religion. It also required the government to finance minority public education in some areas. The contradictory and confusing nature of its language, however, left it open to abuse. In addition, guarantees incorporated into the constitutions of 1921 and 1935 were not always fulfilled. Significantly, the assurances in the Minorities Treaty and constitutions only required the state to support minority education in those situations where the "minority" was in fact a majority. Most importantly, while the private schools of the national minorities were subject to state regulations, they did not receive any monetary support, even nominally, from the state.

Poland's educational policy during the interwar period has been described as a policy of assimilation, though to what extent the Polish government forced assimilation is a matter of some debate. In addressing issues of minority education, the interwar

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successor states essentially had two options -- to aim for assimilation or to develop more liberal policies allowing some degree of cultural autonomy. The policies of the Habsburgs had allowed for freer use of minority languages and religions and the study of a minority's national past in Austrian Galicia, but these policies backfired by unintentionally encouraging an increase in nationalist activity.\textsuperscript{3} As a state with a politically liberal constitution, Poland was bound to provide equal opportunities for its national minorities, a very difficult task for a fledgling democratic republic attempting to unite different regions and different peoples. The newly independent state of Poland accepted responsibility for unifying the different educational systems of the three partitioning powers, as well as a diverse society containing significant national minorities.

The regulations of the Polish state and at least theoretical constitutional guarantees that promised greater equality of opportunity transformed Jewish education in Poland after World War I. While Polish would be the obligatory language of instruction in public schools, minorities had the right to education in their own language where there was "a considerable proportion" of non-Poles. The relevant provisions of the Minorities Protection Treaty were as follows:

Article 2:

The government of Poland undertakes to grant to all its inhabitants without regard to place of birth, nationality, language, race or religion, full and complete protection of life and liberty.

All inhabitants of Poland will have the right to exercise, in public and in private, the practice of their religion and beliefs, to the extent that these do not conflict with public order and good mores.

Part of Article 7:

There shall be no limitation on the free use by any citizen of Poland of any language, in private, in commerce, in religious matters, in the press and in publications of all kinds, as well as in public assembly.

Part of Article 9:

In towns and districts where there reside considerable proportions of citizens speaking a language other than Polish, the Government of Poland will facilitate the public instruction for children of Polish citizens in their mother tongue. This will not hinder the Polish Government from making mandatory the teaching of the Polish language in these schools.

In localities and districts inhabited by a considerable population of Polish citizens belonging to ethnic, religious or language minorities, these minorities will be assured their rightful part in benefits and allocations from funds which the state, commune or other public body grants for educational, religious or charitable purposes.

Article 10:

School committees, appointed locally by the Jewish community, will assure, under the overall control of the state, the appropriate distribution of public funds for the benefit of Jewish schools, as specified in Article 9. The Committees will also oversee the organization and administration of these schools.\(^4\)

According to the treaty, minorities were also to receive "a fair share" of state and municipal grants.\(^5\)


Though inconsistent, and existing alongside the educational initiatives of the national minorities, state guidelines provided a framework within which the national minorities were required to work. How Polish educators formed a new national educational system directly affected the experiences of Poland's ethnic groups, determining which types of schools were legal, which languages could be used for instruction, how many hours to devote to specific subjects, and other similar issues. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Pilsudski and his associates promoted the idea of "education for state citizenship" (wychowanie obywatelsko panstwowe). The wording of the school reforms of 1932 stressed that education for state citizenship (panstwowe wychowanie) did not contradict "national education or the creation of humanitarian feeling" (wychowaniu narodowemu ani kształtowaniu uczuc humanitarnych). Thus, in the official view of the government, state education could coexist with national education; minority goals could coexist alongside the educational objectives of the majority. The 1932 reforms stressed respect for each part of society and advocated tolerance, but they did not clear up the ambiguities of the definitions of "nation" or "national education."

Education for state citizenship was an important goal, but not without difficulties. Three of the four largest minorities in interwar Poland -- the Jews, Germans, and

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6 Ruta. Szkolnictwo powszechne w okregu szkolnym krakowskim w latach 1918-1939. 158.

7 Ruta wrote that after 1936 there was an evolution of wychowanie panstwowe (state education) in the direction of wychowanie obywatelskiego (citizenship education). Given the instability of interwar Polish politics, it is risky to speak of a uniform policy in any one area. Ruta's assertion points to a government that changed over time, but without a clear definition of "national education." It is difficult to determine if there was any real change in attitudes toward minority education in 1932 and in 1936.
Ukrainians — presented particular problems for the government in that they developed their own educational agendas. Complicating matters for the Polish government was its unequal treatment of its different minorities. Zygmunt Ruta, a historian of Polish education, has asserted that there was no single policy regarding the national minorities: rather each minority was treated differently. For example, the Lemkos, another ethnic minority group in southeast Poland, were the victims of a policy which aimed toward national assimilation (asymilacja narodowa), while the government allowed Germans much more scope for the development of German language and culture. Clearly, the Polish authorities were aware of the limitations the Minorities Treaty, in practice, imposed upon them. They knew that, for example, Germans would complain about any seemingly unfair treatment.

In addition to distinctions between nations, Polish society was also divided along religious lines. Tellingly, there was no apparent disagreement over the issue of whether or not religious instruction should be provided in school. It was provided as a matter of course to both majority and minorities, though minority children had to make concessions in terms of scheduling. Public schools, perhaps unintentionally, reinforced national differences among students by stressing religious distinctions.

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9 Attesting to the importance of the religious distinctions, a student's religion was duly noted in the school register, allowing the researcher to determine the ethnic background and other individual characteristics of each student.
Educational policies favoring assimilation had their effects. Whether in public or private schools, Jewish children during the interwar period were raised in a significantly different educational environment than their parents. Public, and to some extent private, education after 1918 stressed instruction in the Polish language and Polish history as well as the citizen's duties toward the Polish state. While this was certainly expected in public schools, private schools were also regulated by the state and conformed to state guidelines regarding the number of hours of instruction in Polish subjects. This conformity involved more than simple compliance with state regulations. Rather, it was the first step in accepting Polish national rule and in fitting into a new environment, a theoretically liberal state which offered the Jews the opportunity to develop their own national institutions as well as to become liberal citizens. The acculturation of Jewish life in Krakow was the result of the necessary accommodations to the Polish state as well as a natural desire to succeed economically and socially within Polish society. For many Jews, acculturation was qualified by an active involvement in both new and established Jewish national organizations. It is this space between the accommodation necessary to succeed economically and socially in a Polish context and the desire to maintain a distinct national identity that was a new feature of Jewish identity in interwar Poland.
If Polish public schools were to some extent the instruments of both Polish nationalism and governmental necessity, Jewish children in these schools received a minimal Jewish religious education along with a Polish national education. More importantly, Jewish children in private Jewish schools did not escape education for state citizenship as government regulations insured that they received a minimum level of instruction in Polish subjects. Religious and national differences were honored while, at the same time, state laws were imposed. Minority children were learning how to function in two different, overlapping national environments.

As for the Jewish population, the Polish government did establish bilingual schools where necessary and allowed certain schools with a majority of Jewish children to not hold classes on Saturday (the szabasowki). Polish school authorities did not always provide for instruction in Yiddish or assure that Jewish educators' concerns about the religious instruction of Jewish children were addressed. Lack of a consistent policy toward the national minorities in turn contributed to the minorities' unequal status. The Polish government's tendency to regard the Jews as a religious rather than as a national minority complicated the issue as well. To be sure, the distinction between confession (wyznania) and nation (narod) also divided the Jewish community.

Before elementary school attendance was made mandatory by the state in 1919, khadorim (Jewish schools, plural of the Yiddish kheyder, from the Hebrew hader, or room) had been the primary form of Jewish education in Poland. In essence, these were private Jewish schools, which were not always known for their high or even adequate
standards. They were meant to provide Jewish children with a religious Jewish education. But Jewish education in "Poland" before 1918 depended to a great extent on the partitioning powers. In the German area of occupation, Jews attended local German public schools, and Jewish education was the responsibility of communal and synagogal authorities. Under the Russians, Jewish children attended khadorim which at different times in the nineteenth century were the target of Tsarist reforms. In Austrian Galicia, the situation was quite different. Ordinances of 1885 and 1889, according to the Jewish educator Shimon Frost, "classified the hadarim as strictly religious institutions which did not exempt Jewish children from attending local public schools. The heder thus became a supplementary after-school educational institution." In Galicia, Jews experienced public education well before the establishment of an independent Poland.

A governmental decree of February 1919 led to significant change in Jewish education. The 1919 decree obligated Jewish children to go to secular schools, thus changing the function of the khadorim. In effect, this meant that the traditional schools that provided Jewish children with a religious education would supplement public elementary school education, unless of course Jewish parents could afford to send their children to private Jewish schools. As this was already the case in Galicia, this reform primarily affected the Jewish children in the former Russian empire. But the reforms of the Polish Ministry of Education (or the Ministerstwo Wyznan Religijnych i Osviecenia

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Publicznego. Ministry of Religious Faiths and Public Enlightenment) also affected the
khadorim and other Jewish schools developed later in Krakow. The reforms required the
khadorim to have 12 hours of secular instruction along with 27-37 hours of religious
instruction.\textsuperscript{12} Drawing conclusions from an inspection of schools in the city, a school
inspector confirmed the general attitude that the khadorim symbolized a withdrawal from
society. He wrote that the khadorim were more or less medieval in their educational
outlook.\textsuperscript{13}

Jewish educators recognized early on the difficulties of educating a minority
population in a theoretically liberal multiethnic state. In an article in \textit{Nowy Dziennik},
Maks Bienenstock, a Jewish educator and Zionist senator in the Sejm, wrote that
establishing a Jewish school in Palestine would be "normal." but that here in Poland a
good Jew should be a citizen of Poland who recognized his obligations as a result of the
rights imparted to him.\textsuperscript{14} Thus, Bienenstock recognized that the Polish Jew, because he
or she lived in Poland, had to meet certain obligations to receive the benefits of the state,
namely, civil rights. This was the dilemma faced by Jews in interwar Poland -- how to
fulfill the obligations of a liberal citizen while maintaining their ethnic identity.

While unable to wield any significant influence over the school system, Polish
Jews nonetheless established their own schools which were meant to instill Jewish
national consciousness in Jewish children and, more generally, to preserve the

\textsuperscript{12}Wozniak. "Zydowskie szkoly." 97.
\textsuperscript{13}Wozniak. "Zydowskie szkoly." 97.
\textsuperscript{14}Maks Bienenstock. "Problem szkoły zyddowskiej." \textit{Nowy Dziennik}. 6 June 1921. 4.
distinctiveness of the Jewish community. There were at least two reasons for the founding of separate Jewish schools: the growth of antisemitism and Jewish national rebirth. In 1936, the Jewish educator Henryka Fromowicz-Stillerowa outlined the need for Jewish education by describing the problems Jewish children encountered in public schools. Jewish children were often taunted by students and teachers and faced dilemmas about what to do for the Jewish holidays. Recommending that Jewish parents of children in public schools set up committees to deal with these issues, Fromowicz-Stillerowa argued passionately for Jewish education for Jewish children. The best situation for a Jewish child, according to her, was in a Jewish school. According to Fromowicz-Stillerowa, teachers in public schools simply did not know how to treat Jewish children. Private Jewish schools could not, however, hope to reach all Jewish children. The problem Jewish educators faced was how to integrate their own efforts with the Polish campaign to modernize the state. This tension between Polish goals and Jewish national aspirations was evident not only in public schools, but in private Jewish schools as well.

Jewish educational leaders could not always agree on what types of schools to


16"Problemy narodowe i religijne w wychowaniu dziecka zydowskiego." Nasza Opinja. 7 June 1936. 8.

17Halina Nelken describes this most eloquently in her diary and memoir, Pamietnik z getta w Krakowie (Toronto: Polski Fundusz Wydawniczy w Kanadzie, 1987). Published in English as And Yet, I am Here! (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999). The antisemitism Nelken experienced is discussed further below.
establish. Some favored religious education: others promoted secular training. Still
others supported schools founded to advance the ideals of Zionism or socialism. Some
endorsed schools with instruction only in Hebrew, or Yiddish, or Polish. Like the various
elements of the Jewish press, the different schools represented a range of options for
Jewish parents. If parents were financially able and so desired, they could place their
children in schools that promoted secular Zionism or religious orthodoxy. As one of the
components of national identity, language became an important issue in debates on the
education of national minorities and was especially important for Jews. In one debate, M.
Braude, a Zionist senator in the Sejm and the leader of the Union of Social Associations
for the Maintenance of Jewish Secondary Schools in Poland, a national network of Jewish
schools, took issue with the statement of another Zionist senator, Yakov Wygodzki.¹⁸
Wygodski claimed that Jewish schools with Polish as the language of instruction were
Polish schools, not Jewish schools. Braude disagreed, supporting the use of Polish
among Jewish elementary and secondary school students. Noting that eighty per cent of
Jewish children spoke Polish and had not had the benefit of a Jewish education, Braude
affirmed the Jewish ethnic identity of these students in spite of their use of a non-Jewish
language. He was an important national voice legitimizing the use of Polish among Jews.

For Braude, language was not necessarily the determining factor of ethnic
distinctiveness or national identity. Braude still recognized the need to establish private
Jewish schools. He did not dismiss Polish-speaking Jewish children as the offspring of

¹⁸Markus Braude. "Jezyk wykladowy. a narodowy charakter szkoły zydowskiej." Nowy
Dziennik. 15 February 1926. 9.
assimilationists; rather, he aimed to provide them with a Jewish education. These schools were an important indicator of the growth of Jewish national identity and the success of Jewish efforts to maintain a high level of ethnic cohesion. Jews in Poland were beginning to found institutions that used the non-Jewish majority language but were clearly a part of the Jewish community. Linguistic assimilation did not necessarily hinder the growth of Jewish ethnic and national identity, even on an institutional level.

Divisions among the private Jewish schools went along lines other than language as well. Writing in Polish in 1919, Bienenstock distinguished between two different types of Jewish schools, confessional (wyznaniowy) schools and national (narodowy) schools. According to Bienenstock, confessional schools separated Jews from everyone else, like the Great Wall of China. National schools did not. Further, in Bienenstock's view, national schools promoted a new conception of education and did not have anything in common with confessional schools, which taught the precepts of the Jewish religion. For Bienenstock, national identity did not separate. He anticipated that some Jewish leaders would be concerned that Jewish national schools would raise another Chinese wall. He declared that national schools (for Jews) placed them on an equal footing with non-Jews and fostered an entirely different kind of relationship between Jews and non-Jews. Just as Poles, Germans, or Ukrainians promoted their own brand of national identity, so did the Jews.

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19 Bienenstock, "Pierwiastek narodowy w zydowskiej szkole sredniej." Nowy Dziennik. 12 November 1919. 3.

20 Bienenstock, "Pierwiastek narodowy w zydowskiej szkole sredniej." Nowy Dziennik. 12 November 1919. 3.
Bienenstock declared that this national education would not lead to further separation between Jews and non-Jews. In short, according to Bienenstock, separate schools of a national minority could coexist alongside the schools of the majority without any damage to the relationship between Jews and non-Jews. He dismissed any possible effects of segregation. Private Jewish schools, by inventing and reinforcing a Jewish national identity, would produce students who would have a different relationship with the majority culture because of their extensive Jewish education in Polish. Further, as the Polish government insisted that private schools adhere to state curriculum guidelines, these students would have a different conception of Polishness as well. Consequently, separate Jewish schools would not yield a Jewish population that would identify solely with Jewish national life. Bienenstock argues, realistically, that given the situation of minority education, separate schools would not lead to further separation but simply to a changed relationship between the minority and majority. Implicitly, this would change the minority community itself as well.

Writing almost twenty years later, Fromowicz-Stillerowa again made clear the need for separate Jewish education. Bienenstock had asserted that private Jewish schools were necessary to sustain a high level of ethnic cohesiveness and protect Jews from antisemitism. but he also suggested that separate Jewish education would also change for the better the relationship of Jews to Poles. By the time Fromowicz-Stillerowa wrote in 1936, she must have concluded that that was impossible. Bienenstock's work helped the Jewish community to maintain a minimum level of cohesiveness within a majority
population. Fromowicz-Stillerowa continued this work as increasing antisemitism in Krakow in the mid to late 1930s threatened Jews in the city's public schools and university.

In addition to the debate over the types of schools to be established, the Jewish educator Alexander Koller noted further difficulties the Jews faced in developing Jewish education. According to Koller, even Jewish teachers in Jewish schools were assimilated or uninvolved in the Jewish community. For Koller, the efforts of Krakow's Jewish nationalists to provide a Jewish education for Jewish children were not enough. While Koller's complaints about the level of Jewish identification of Jewish teachers may have been justified, each Jewish organization defined this level differently. Each Jewish school taught students Jewishness in different ways, placing varying amounts of emphasis on secular learning, religious tradition, and the teaching of Jewish languages.

Understandably, Koller explains, the private Jewish schools scrambled after Polish public rights, or the government accreditation allowing the school's students access to the next educational level. A school with full public rights satisfied all the various educational requirements of the government. Only private schools granted full public rights could offer the necessary *matura*, or university entrance examination, to Jewish students. To solve what he viewed as the problem of accommodation to the Polish state, Koller suggested a solution that lay in a *synthesis* between Jewish schools.

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education, and new pedagogical ideas.\textsuperscript{22} It is unclear how new pedagogical ideas would appease Polish officials looking for some guarantee that its citizens would be educated for membership in the state. His suggestion shows that the conflict between governmental priorities and minority goals was a significant problem for the Jewish community and had to be addressed if Jewish children were to function within both Polish and Jewish cultures. Koller's suggested synthesis aimed to modernize Jewish education at a moment when Jews were increasingly aware of the advantages of participation in the majority culture.

As a minority community in interwar Poland, the Jews did change their educational patterns, both religious and secular. Forced by the state to conform to newly promulgated laws, the community responded by complying with the regulations and providing their own educational alternatives. Just as community leaders founded different types of newspapers to reflect their own ideological perspectives, so, too, they founded schools with precisely defined goals. The education Jewish children received in private and public schools of all kinds had lasting consequences, often affecting the development of their ethnic identity. Exposed to two cultures, Jewish children managed often conflicting demands by making individual choices about their school activities, religious beliefs, and national identity.

Admittedly, Krakow cannot serve as a representative city for the purposes of examining Jewish education in Poland, but it can be used to point to some issues faced by

\textsuperscript{22} Alexander Koller. "O zdrowa podstawe szkoły ydowskiej. Nowy Dziennik, 20 February 1921, 4.
both Jewish educators and children, most notably the conflict between Polish and Jewish educational goals. While Jewish children in Krakow had the opportunity to attend either public (Polish) or private Jewish schools, private Jewish schools were either Zionist (with Hebrew rather than Yiddish as the language of instruction) or religious/orthodox in nature. There was no Yiddish school in Krakow, perhaps due to the relatively early linguistic acculturation among the Jewish community. Jewish parents nonetheless had some options for their children, including public and private trade schools developed in the late twenties and early thirties. Each of the private schools confronted the conflicting demands of teaching the required Polish "state education" as well as the desired Jewish studies and specialized curriculum. How Jewish educators faced these challenges, how they maneuvered between their own ideals and those of the Polish state, is a significant part of the story of the transformation of Jewish national identity.

*Jewish Participation in Polish Public Schools*

An examination of Jewish participation in the public school system in Poland reveals the extent to which Polish Jews were integrated into the educational life of the nation. Jews were finding their place within a multiethnic state that, while promising equality and civic rights, was also intent on erasing the boundaries between the different nations within the multiethnic state. While it is widely recognized that the majority of

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23 For an excellent discussion of the demands of liberal citizenship in multiethnic states.
Jewish students in interwar Poland attended public schools, there has been little research on this topic. Ruta states that 82.2% of Jewish children in Poland attended public schools, while the percentage of Jewish children in private schools was only 17.8% (this, in comparison to the significantly smaller percentage of non-Jewish children in private schools, 2.7%). Roughly a third of the students in the public school system in Krakow were Jewish, with a slightly higher number of Jewish girls than Jewish boys, perhaps reflecting the tendency among Jews to provide sons with a religious education and daughters with a secular education. Ruta's study of the Kielce and Krakow districts also confirms that the majority of private Jewish elementary schools were in the Kielce district and not the Krakow district, which data tentatively suggests the greater degree of acculturation in the Krakow district. Jewish students made up a significant proportion of some public schools, especially in or around Kazimierz. They participated in the celebration of Polish national holidays along with Polish students and were involved in extracurricular activities that

see Jeff Spinner. The Boundaries of Citizenship.

The lack of sources has made this one of the more difficult topics to research, and any conclusions about Jews and public education in Krakow are based on a very limited source base. The information here can only be based on the records of three public schools operating in Kazimierz before, during, and after the interwar period, the archives of KOSK, the local governing authority for education, and the limited amount of memoir material that addresses this issue. Unfortunately, the files of the Ministry of Education did not prove to be especially helpful when it came to local education.

Ruta. Szkolnictwo powszechne w okręgu szkolnym krakowskim w latach 1918-1939. 90.

"Szkolnictwo powszechne w Krakowie." Nowy Dziennik. 28 May 1924. 6.

Ruta. Szkolnictwo powszechne. 114-115.
involved Polish children, such as the School Theater program. The ministry's "policy of assimilation" reached far into the country's Jewish neighborhoods. None of the public schools I examined were entirely Jewish, nor do they seem to have met the "considerable portion" criterion necessary to receive instruction in a minority language, in spite of the numbers that show that often a third to a half of the students were Jewish. Jewish children were quickly being integrated into a Polish system.

During the interwar period, there were roughly 55-60 public elementary schools and 10 private elementary schools in Krakow, employing around 630 teachers, the majority of whom were women. In her unpublished collected materials at the Muzeum Miasto Krakowa Stara Synagoga, Zofia Wordliczek noted that Jews attended both public and private schools and listed the following public schools Jewish children attended:

Kazimierz Wielki School Nr. 5: J. I. Kraszewski School Nr. 8: Mikolaj Rej School Nr. 14: Klementyna Tanski Hoffmanowa School Nr. 15: and Jan Dlugosz School Nr. 22. Other schools not on Wordliczek's list also enrolled Jewish children, notably the following: Stanislaw Konarski Elementary School Nr. 9: Jan Sniadecki Elementary School Number 16; and Jozef Dietl Elementary School Number 11.

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30 The registers of these schools' archives confirm the attendance of Jewish children.
of these schools in and around Kazimierz helps to determine the level of participation of Jews in Polish public schools.\textsuperscript{31} Interestingly, the national or religious identification of the students is listed in the school registers. From the registers one can determine the number of Jewish students in one class at any given time, student grades, student status upon entering the class for a given year, as well as the addresses of the students and the professions of the fathers. The registers prove that Polish and Jewish children attended the same schools, that they had similar experiences, and were exposed to the same curriculum by the same teachers except for religious instruction.

Stanislaw Konarski Elementary School Number 9, a public girls' school on ulica Bernardynska, was established in 1877. In 1900/1901, the proportion of Jewish girls in the school was approximately fifty per cent. As the school's register is undated, there is no way to confirm this percentage for the interwar period, but it is likely many Jewish children from the Stradom neighborhood attended this school. Class size in this school was very small, around twenty students in each class.\textsuperscript{32} Directly across from the royal castle Wawel, the school was located very near the playing field used by the Makabi

These three schools are discussed in greater detail below.

\textsuperscript{31} At least one of the public schools in or near Kazimierz, Number 14, in the heart of Krakow's Jewish neighborhood on ulica Waska, had no surviving records from the period. Only fragmentary material remained from the other schools, but fortunately this material provides some evidence of Jewish participation in these schools. Very little has been written about the experiences of minorities in the Polish educational system that extends beyond the statistics. Information was taken from the listings of class members, or class registers, (\textit{katalog klasowy}), and the \textit{Kronika} (yearbook) of the school, if it existed.

\textsuperscript{32} Estimates taken from \textit{Ksiega Wizytacyjna}, Szkola Podstawowa Nr 9 im. Stanisława Konarskiego.
sports teams. In an account of her wartime experiences, Anna Zoga, a non-Jewish Pole, indicates she certainly knew of this sports field for the Jews during her years at the school, so there must have been some contact between Poles and Jews in the school. A written history of the elementary school indicates that it offered a wide range of activities to its students, including participation in the city-wide School Theater (Teatr Szkolny) program and involvement in the commemorations of national holidays and the funerals of Juliusz Slowacki and Karol Szymanowski. The students also participated in different activities such as theater presentations and concerts to raise funds for a summer colony for poor students and the maintenance of the school. The efforts of the school were highly respected and the school was often used as a model for visiting representatives from teachers' seminaries in other cities.

Jan Sniadecki Elementary School Number 16 (Srednio-klasowa Publiczna Szkoła Powszechnego meska im. Jana Sniadeckiego) was a boys' school established in 1892 and located on ulica Dietla, a large thoroughfare separating the neighborhood of Kazimierz from the city center. In a newsletter of Krakow's first district (Dzielnica Pierwsza), the school librarian Teresa Anderle-Bilinska indicates that a significant number of students at school during the interwar period were Jewish. This is borne out by the school's

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32 Anna Zoga, Wspomnienia. unpublished material in the archives of Szkola Podstawowa Nr 9 im. Stanisława Konarskiego.


registers, which show that Jews made up approximately fifty per cent of the school's population.\textsuperscript{36}

Some inconsistencies in the registers of School Number 16 may be of even greater significance. In 1929-1930, the fourth grade was twice as large as any other class and divided along religious lines. One section of the grade was Roman Catholic, the other Jewish. There was, however, a small number of Catholics in the Jewish group and a small number of Jews in the Catholic group.\textsuperscript{37} This segregation does not seem to have had any antisemitic motivation, as Jews and Catholics were in equal numbers in the other classes. Rather, it seems this may have been to make arrangements for religious instruction more convenient. As Teresa Anderle-Bilinska has related, in 1924, School Number 16 was designated to be for Jews and School Number 11 (on the corner of ulica Starowislna and ulica Miodowa) for Catholics for unexplained financial reasons. In addition, in the early 1930s, there seems to have been a noticeable decline in the number of Jewish students in the lower grades of School Number 16. Similar low levels in the higher grades in the later 1930s confirm this decline. As Jews were still accepted in significant numbers and the class was not segregated in the following years, there does not seem to be a seemingly obvious explanation, such as antisemitism, for the admission of a lesser number of Jewish students. More research is required to understand the different patterns in the admission and segregation of students in the public schools, but

\textsuperscript{36} Katalog klasowy. 1919-1940. Szkola Podstawowa Nr 16.

\textsuperscript{37} Katalog Klasowy. Rok szkolny 1929/1930. Szkola Podstawowa Nr 16.
what does seem clear is the tendency to divide students along religious lines. Most likely, such seemingly inexplicable changes in enrollment may simply reflect the chaos accompanying the organizing of the school system in the early years after the war and then again in the early 1930s, during the period of educational reform. In the absence of similar evidence of segregation for other schools, it is difficult to draw any conclusions. What must be determined are the reasons for such segregation, whether out of antisemitism, financial reasons, or concerns regarding religious instruction.

Many Jewish children attended Jozef Dietl Elementary School Number 11 (Szkola Podstawowa Nr 11 im. Jozefa Dietla) on the corner of ulica Starowislna and ulica Miodowa, very near the oldest synagogues of Krakow and the Jewish cemetery. Many graduates of the school would later become prominent leaders, including an Israeli government minister in the early 1990s and film director Roman Polanski. Unfortunately, the yearbooks (kroniki) from 1890 to 1939 perished during the war, though some registers of the school still exist. This seven-class boys' school offered scouting, field trips, and the usual commemorations for the name days of Polish officials.\(^\text{38}\) In general, Jewish children made up fifty per cent of each class in the 1930s (excepting the years 1932-1934), though there are a few classes where there are only one or two Jews. This school was one of the two affected by the decision to segregate the students in 1924.

Evidence from one other public elementary school indicates further the extent of

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Jewish participation in Polish public schools. A unique document preserved in the archives of the Jewish Historical Institute, something like a *kronika*, tells of children's experiences in the public school Klementyna Tanski Hoffmanowa School Number 15 for a period of several years. The children wrote about their school life, which included participating in the celebrations for national holidays, meeting Polish officials at the school, and taking trips to Las Wolski, a park and forest on the outskirts of Krakow. There is not much text but there are many pictures of Pilsudski and of the May 3rd Constitution Day celebrations. The students also corresponded with children in a school from Podlesie, a distant region to the east. This document confirms the range of experiences of Jewish children in public schools. One cannot conclude that these children considered themselves Poles from this slim evidence. Still, the document confirms that public education exposed Jewish children to Polish patriotic ideals and insured their participation in activities with Polish children.

The memoirs of Jews from Krakow can tell us much about how individual children experienced the schools during the interwar period. Writing about her mother's family, the art historian from Krakow Halina Nelken relates that her aunts went to the private Saint Scholastica School. Nelken herself was educated in public and private Polish schools. She first went to the public Dabrowki Elementary School and then to the public Adam Mickiewicz Gymnasium on ulica Starowislna, located rather far from her home in Podgorze. She then transferred to the private Kollataj Gymnasium. Nelken

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39 Zydowski Instytut Historyczne. Pamiętniki Żydow Sygn. 302/293.
40 Nelken. *Pamietnik*. 63-64.
was well aware of the reason for the change in schools. An antisemitic incident had occurred at the Mickiewicz Gymnasium which led her parents to move their daughter to another school. As Nelken describes this incident, three Jewish girls discovered that Stars of David had been etched into the newly purchased coats of the required school uniforms. Though Nelken herself had not been singled out, her father withdrew from participation in the parents' committee of this school after confronting the school principal about this incident and informing her of his plans to transfer his daughter to another school. During her years at the private Kollataj Gymnasium, Nelken was educated in Polish culture, taking part in local celebrations and dressing in traditional Polish costumes. Also at that time she began a diary that she would continue in hiding during the war. Years later, after the war, Nelken returned to the Mickiewicz Gymnasium, where the antisemitic incident had occurred. There she met the principal who remembered Nelken's father's good work on the parents' committee and expressed her appreciation. Nonetheless, this woman had done nothing to protect the Jewish students in her school at the time of the incident. Ironically, even tragically, Nelken finished her education at the Mickiewicz Gymnasium after the war.

Nelken's reminiscences reveal an aspect of Polish Jewish life historians do not often recognize. Though Jewish, Nelken was educated in Polish culture and her background and professional career reflect that. As a child and teenager, Nelken was aware of her Jewishness, but she would have identified her family as Polacy wyznania mojzeszowego (Poles of the Mosaic faith).¹¹ She did not receive the same education as

Jewish students in private Jewish schools. In the first year of the war, Nelken attended the Hebrew gymnasium when Jews were not allowed by the Germans to go to public school. She writes that she felt "foreign" there.\textsuperscript{42} In short, Nelken and others like her, more than other Jews who received exclusively Jewish educations, straddled two worlds and identified with two different cultures. As the antisemitic incident at the Mickiewicz gymnasium indicates, this could be painful. Her Jewish identity did not preclude her from receiving a Polish education.

The example of Frydka, a young Jewish girl writing in 	extit{Ceirim} (Youth, the title of the publication of the Zionist youth organization Akiba: ceirim is the Polish transliteration of the Hebrew for youth) in 1935 shows that Jews in public schools did not necessarily forsake identification with the Jewish nation for a Polish identity.\textsuperscript{43} Sitting in class in a Polish school, the young girl listened to her geography teacher's lecture on the nationalities of Poland. The teacher said there were three million Jews in Poland according to the last census, but only twenty-five per cent of them were Jews by nationality, as seventy-five per cent of the Jews declared a nationality other than Jewish (presumably Polish).\textsuperscript{44} Frydka describes a great sense of shame at learning that three-

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Nelken. 83.
\item "Czy tak by\a powinno." 	extit{Ceirim}, 1 January 1935. 48.
\item Whatever the exact numbers were, the teacher was wrong. The 1931 census did not ask about nationality, only mother tongue. Most Jews then either identified a Jewish language, Yiddish or Hebrew, reflecting their linguistic reality or an ideological position. According to the 1931 census, 41.3 per cent of Krakow Jews gave Yiddish as their mother tongue, while 39.8 per cent gave Hebrew. The high number for Hebrew reflects the success of a campaign led by 	extit{Nowy Dziennik}. The newspaper encouraged its Jewish readers to identify Hebrew as their mother tongue rather than another language (such as Polish) in an effort to
\end{enumerate}
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fourths of the Jewish population would not admit to Jewish nationality. She was not able to conceive how this could have been possible and simply expresses the hope that some day these Jews would "return to their nation" and "accept the magic of the Jewish street."

The effect of the lecture was to increase her identification with the Jewish people. Though the numbers the geography teacher gave were exaggerated. Frydka understood that other Jews were readily admitting a national affiliation with another group. While this in itself is not particularly surprising for a stateless minority, it does show that there was an additional affiliation that, for those like Nelken, was being strengthened not least by attendance in Polish schools. Frydka, however, reacted differently than Nelken. explicitly taking pride in her Jewish identity by taking an active role in a youth Zionist movement. The experiences of both young women illustrate the changes occurring simultaneously among Polish Jewry, namely an increase in national awareness along with greater integration into the majority community.

The Jewish community kept close track of the number of Jewish pupils in the public schools (though the records are at best fragmentary), as they were very concerned with providing Jewish religious education to these children. Religious distinctions still played a tremendous role, not necessarily because of discrimination but simply because both Poles and Jews desired religious instruction in the schools. This had to be organized


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efficiently to accommodate the needs of both Jewish and non-Jewish children. Records from the official Jewish community of Krakow indicate the number, roughly ten to twelve, of Jewish religious instructors in Polish schools (and, by extrapolation, the number of students). Each teacher, during the course of a week, would visit as many as four different schools. Instruction varied from a half an hour to an hour for each class; instructors often complained that they needed more time because students did not remember lessons from the previous year. Such efforts were not the Jewish community's preferred method of educating young Jews, but the lessons nonetheless kept alive the religious and national distinctions between the minority and majority peoples.

M. Jakob, a censor and translator for the Austrians, developed a curriculum for Jewish religious instruction in the public schools. Jakob himself was one of these religious instructors. This curriculum was very detailed, including a presentation of the material in Hebrew and in Polish translation. Lessons focused on Jewish history and literature, religion, and ethics. The goals of the curriculum included improving the reading of Hebrew, mastering short blessings, morning prayers, and imparting a general knowledge of scripture and the holidays and rituals. In the first three classes of secondary school (szkola srednia), students were expected to be fluent in reading with Sephardic pronunciation. The next five classes of the secondary school introduced the students to post-Biblical literature.

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45 ZIH GWZK 747.

46 ZIH GWZK 750.

47 ZIH GWZK 756 Sekcja naukowa.
It is difficult to tell how much the weekly religious instruction contributed to a student's sense of Jewish ethnic identity. Memoirs of Jews schooled in interwar Krakow say little about the religious instruction.\textsuperscript{48} While the part time Jewish teachers worked to instill a knowledge of Jewish tradition, Polish authorities ruled that a lack of knowledge of Hebrew on the part of a student could not be used to keep that student from progressing to the next class.\textsuperscript{49} Polish authorities provided for Jewish religious instruction in the public schools, but they also worked to keep that instruction from being academically meaningful for the student. The government's refusal to enforce standards in Jewish religious instruction demonstrated that the subject was unimportant to the state. Nonetheless, the efforts made by the Jewish community to reach those Jews most in danger of leaving the community, that is, those Jewish children in Polish public schools, helped insure that they would maintain some sense of ethnic identity.

The leaders of the \textit{kahal} saw Jewish religious education in the public schools as a community priority and expressed different concerns about state regulations and the level of instruction. Krakow's Jewish leaders objected to the regulation that required teachers of the Catholic religion in the public schools to be approved by the ecclesiastical authorities, because this implied that teachers of other religions did not have to be

\textsuperscript{48}The religious instruction and memoir literature will be discussed further below.

\textsuperscript{49}ZIH GWZK 749 \textit{Sekcja naukowa II}: According to Dziennik Urzedowy. Kuratorium Okreg Szkolny Krakowskie (hereafter KOSK). 16 March 1931: "...nie należy wymagać obowiązujący znajomość języka hebr., a brak tej znajomości nie może pociągnąć za sobą ujemnych następstw w ocenie postępów ucznia."
approved by that group's authorities. In 1923, the kahal formed a commission to examine Hebrew language teachers that was made up of both orthodox and more progressive members of the kahal. The community also handled requests to evaluate teachers of Jewish subjects in public schools for their knowledge of Hebrew. Regarding another issue brought to the attention of the kahal, one letter found in the community archives concerned a request to the military that teachers of Jewish religion in the army be treated the same as priests, yet another example of the importance of religious distinctions. The writer's request merited a brief, vague response from a government official indicating that qualification for Jewish religious teachers had already been normalized in Polish law.

Employment records and correspondence in the community archives indicate that the part-time religion teachers were often highly educated, had university degrees, and even doctorates. The religion teachers worked part-time, around twenty to thirty hours per week. The compensation the kahal offered them did not match their education level, however. At a meeting on April 17, 1919, religion teachers in the public elementary schools decided they wanted more money because of inflation and were hoping for some kind of subvention. Another letter indicates that teachers in Podgorze received 100 zlotys

50 ZIH 748 Sekcja Naukowa. This in a letter to the Sejm from Sejm delegate Rabbi Aron Lewin, handwritten draft.

51 ZIH GWZK 584. 1911-1928.

52 ZIH GWZK 750 Sekcja naukowa II Sprawy szkolne.

53 ZIH GWZK 753.
less than teachers on the other side of the river for doing the same job.\textsuperscript{54} Thus, community leaders addressed many different aspects of religious education in the public schools and made this one of the priorities of the kahal. With nearly 90 percent of Jewish children in Krakow in public schools (though surely many of these received some form of private Jewish education as well), it is even somewhat surprising that there were not more teachers or greater involvement on the part of the official Jewish community in the public schools.

The presence of Jewish religious instruction in Polish public schools, along with the experiences of Nelken and Frydka, suggests that Jewish students in Polish public schools could form a type of Jewish identity, however vague this might have been. But Nelken's unequivocal description of herself as a Pole in her memoir also proves the influence of Polish education among Jews. Nelken lived in the middle of a Polish Jewish community. Only later during the war did she encounter "a real Jewish community" for the first time. After entering Belz during her initial flight from Krakow in November 1939, Nelken wrote in her diary, "For the first time, I came in contact with a real Jewish community, quite different from Kazimierz in Krakow."\textsuperscript{55} Still, in transferring her to a private school, Nelken's father made certain she would become aware of her Jewish identity and of the responsibility of solidarity to other Jews. This may also have been an attempt to insure that her Jewish awareness would be positive and not a result of antisemitism. Not all Jewish youth accepted identification with the majority society so

\textsuperscript{54}ZIH GWZK 747 Sekcja naukowe 1919-1922 r.

\textsuperscript{55}Nelken, \textit{And Yet I Am Here!}. 54.
easily. However, Frydka experienced a strong Jewish identity as a result of her public school experiences. Certainly each individual Jewish student left the Polish public school system with distinct impressions, many of which most likely involved the antisemitism expressed by other pupils and teachers. But as the examples of Nelken and Frydka relate, attendance at a Polish public school was no certain indicator of later ethnic identification.

*Jewish Participation in Private Polish Schools*

A preliminary study of Krakow private schools shows that Jewish children did, in some cases, make up as much as fifty per cent of a non-Jewish private school’s population. Private Jewish alternatives (other than the khadorim) did not exist before the 1920s. Thus, Jewish leaders may have felt acutely the need for future Jewish leaders to receive a Jewish education. In the view of Jewish educational leaders such as Fromowicz-Stillerowa, Jewish attendance at private Polish schools placed the Jewish community at risk, because an education in Polish culture distanced Jews from a Jewish culture that was still primarily religious. Still, private Polish schools were not as great a threat as the public education system which enrolled many more Jewish students. But private Polish schools did provide an alternative that challenged the Jewish community to find its own ways to educate Jewish children.

To take only one example, 28 percent of the students attending the Queen Jadwiga
Private Gymnasium for Girls in 1937. were Jewish. In the school year 1922-1923, thirty-five of fifty-nine students in the second grade were Jewish; twenty-one of thirty-one students in the seventh grade were Jewish; and ten of twenty-two students in the eighth grade. Similar ratios hold for all the classes throughout the 1920s and into the late 1930s.

Located right on the main market square, the Jadwiga gymnasium enjoyed an exceptionally good reputation by any standards. The faculty employed modern teaching methods that promoted independent learning and offered many extracurricular classes in dictation, singing, drawing, stenography, and foreign languages. In addition, the school presented a theater performance in the Slowacki Theater, and students even received a stipend for summer vacation. The school did not seem to have any real financial problems, paid close attention to students, and provided a lively intellectual environment.

Jewish students in this school were clearly being educated in a non-Jewish environment, indicating some breakdown of the separation between the Polish and Jewish communities. The school was not in Kazimierz, but in the literal center of the city. It was not an unknown school, but an impressive educational institution that educated many of Poland's most prominent women, including Wanda Wasilewska, the writer and later Communist leader and daughter of Leon Wasilewski. Jewish participation in such an institution indicates a degree of assimilation. Nearly thirty percent of the children at the Jadwiga gymnasium in the late 1930s were Jewish, at a time when other private

alternatives existed. At the very least, such participation suggests the necessity of a Polish education for professional success in the modern world.

While the subsequent careers of the Jewish girls who attended this school are not known, not all of them abandoned the organized Jewish community. Nella Thon, the daughter of Ozjasz Thon, was a graduate of this school. Significantly, Thon went on to become perhaps the foremost advocate of Jewish education in Krakow throughout the late thirties, though she herself received her formal education in Polish. Thon used this education in a Polish private school to make private Jewish education an alternative for Jewish families (at least for those who could afford it). Like Frydka, the young Jewish girl in the public school who was encouraged to become more involved in her Jewish identity because of education within a non-Jewish environment. Nella Thon functioned both within Polish and Jewish culture. Just as her father's participation in parliamentary politics indicated the entry of the Jews onto the modern political scene in ways to which Orthodox Jews violently objected, her own education at Queen Jadwiga indicates an assimilation toward modern ideas of education. Perhaps Nella Thon's active involvement in Jewish life is not so surprising given her father's position in Jewish religious life and politics. Having attained an education under the auspices of educators from another nation, Nella Thon worked to improve Jewish education.

Unfortunately, Nella Thon's published writings are limited to memories of her father. Her views on public and private education would offer a unique perspective that would greatly enhance a further study of private Jewish education. For her assessment of her father's life and work, see her self-published memoir of her father (published originally in English, no translator given), Jehoshua Thon: Preacher, Thinker, Politician (Montevideo, 1966).
The memoir of Henryk Ritterman-Abir provides one of the finest sources of information regarding Jewish students in Polish private schools. He attended one of the most prestigious private gymnasiuums in the city, the Jan Sobieski Private School (Prywatna Szkoła im. Jana Sobieskiego). Ritterman-Abir (he adopted the name Abir after moving to Israel) came from a relatively prosperous Jewish family that had the means to send him to school in Vienna during the years of World War I. Before he left for Vienna, he went to a school on Dietla (most likely School Number 70), but upon his return he went to Sobieski because of the school's justified reputation for academic excellence.

Ritterman-Abir provides an interesting description of how the Jewish community's religious instructors taught Hebrew in the city's private Polish schools. According to Ritterman-Abir, David Rosenmann, his Hebrew teacher, was rather ineffective. Apparently, he focused too heavily on Hebrew grammar. When Ritterman-Abir went to Israel after the war he found that he could speak other foreign languages much better than he could Hebrew. This very well may not have been Rosenmann's fault, as it is logical to assume that Ritterman-Abir had more instruction in foreign languages other than Hebrew. Ritterman-Abir is simply making the assumption that, as a Polish-speaking Jewish child, Hebrew should have been his best second language, though this was clearly not the case. Ritterman-Abir's memoir attests to the fact that Hebrew was taught to Jewish children in Polish private schools, and that other languages were

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often better taught or better learned, no doubt for all kinds of reasons. In short.
Ritterman-Abir was learning as much or more about Polish and other European cultures
as he was about Jewish culture and Jewish life. Again, like Frydka, Nelken, and Thon.
Ritterman-Abir was learning how to function in a society that encompassed much more
than Jewish tradition. While the khadorim prepared Jewish children for a traditional
Jewish life, more modern public and private schools trained young Jews for the secular
world.

Ritterman-Abir's love for the theater, imparted to him during his years as a student
at Sobieski, illustrates further the effects of a Polish education. As a student at Sobieski,
Ritterman-Abir had the opportunity to participate in school drama productions. He even
had a small part in an Eduard Rostand play at the Slowacki Theater, and this involvement
began his lifelong interest in the theater. When the well-known Yiddish-speaking theater
troupe from Vilna, the Trupa Wilenska, came to perform at the Yiddish theater on ulica
Bochenska, Ritterman-Abir attended the production and was impressed with the actors'
performances. The troupe had been denied the right to perform in the larger Bagatela
theater nearer the city center, and Ritterman-Abir, in a youthful attempt to make up for
this discrimination by adults, decided to invite these artists to his own performance at the
Slowacki Theater. In a private conference, the school principal reprimanded Ritterman-
Abir for inviting Jews to the theater. To his credit, Ritterman-Abir pointed out the
obvious to the principal -- that he himself, and many other students in the school were

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59 The exact date is unclear in Ritterman-Abir's memoir, but it is most likely in the mid
1920s.
Jewish. Ritterman-Abir simply stated that he did not know how this could be a problem. Faced with his student's apparent naivete, the principal dropped the matter.  

This example of direct conflict with the school authorities illustrates the difficulties Ritterman-Abir faced as a minority student in the private Polish schools. In inviting the Trupa Wilenska to his performance at Teatr Slowackiego, Ritterman-Abir was attempting to integrate two different aspects of his life that came together in his interest in the theater. As the incident with the principal suggests, such integration was not looked upon favorably. The principal made a distinction between Ritterman-Abir and the Yiddish-speaking actors of Trupa Wilenska, a distinction that Ritterman-Abir himself did not make. Ritterman-Abir was, however, aware of the distinction between himself and his principal. That Ritterman-Abir thought he could invite the Jewish actors to the Slowacki Theater suggests the school's antisemitism was not obvious, but the principal's reaction led him to recognize that he did live in two different worlds. He himself was bringing these separate worlds closer together. Ritterman-Abir challenged the principal to acknowledge the differences among the school's students.

Ritterman-Abir describes the teachers at the gymnasium in great detail, and his anecdotes are revealing. His memoir is especially useful because he points out who was and who was not Jewish in his world. Writing of his teacher Franciszek Fuchs, he regrets that this teacher was not Jewish -- he liked him so much he wanted to claim him as Jewish. Ritterman-Abir's experiences affirm that there was participation in the majority

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60 Ritterman-Abir. *Nie od razu Krakow zapomniano*. 80-81.

61 Ritterman-Abir's anecdotes also reveal the difficulties of making assumptions about
society by the minorities. He recalled with some disdain how another teacher, Dr. Wladyslaw Bogatynski (Reicher), though Jewish, celebrated all the Polish national holidays more enthusiastically than anyone else, presumably in an effort to prove his loyalty to Poland and the Polish state. For Ritterman-Abir, Bogatynski's actions were clearly a charade.

The Jewish students and teachers in Sobieski lived in two different worlds, with two separate identities, and with two different cultures. It was perhaps the confidence gained in these elite Polish schools that gave some of these more acculturated Jews the resources to challenge societal restrictions limiting movement between different communities. The very presence of Jewish students and teachers in the most elite of private Polish schools indicates a degree of success in adapting to the majority culture, while Ritterman-Abir's invitation to the Yiddish actors points to emerging efforts to transform Jewish culture from a newly gained perspective.

whether or not people are antisemitic. For example, Ritterman-Abir tells the story of his Latin teacher, Rozmerynowicz. Rozmerynowicz (Ritterman-Abir does not describe him as Jewish) made a sarcastic remark about Ritterman-Abir's older brother. Ritterman-Abir wondered if this comment stemmed from antisemitism. Years later, practicing as a lawyer in Krakow, Ritterman-Abir encountered Dr. Boleslaw Rozmerynowicz, his former teacher's brother, in the courtroom, assuming him to be antisemitic because of his links with the Chadejca, the Christian Democratic movement. Fifteen years later, Ritterman-Abir learns that both Rozmerynowicz brothers had saved Jews during the war. Ritterman-Abir. *Nie od razu Krakow zapomniano.* 49-51. 169
Conclusions

Public and private education in Polish, even in the most elite of the city's schools, did not prevent an awareness, and at times even an acceptance, of Jewish identity. The weekly religious instruction maintained the difference between Jewish students and those of other faiths, and Jewish children were also able to participate in Jewish activities outside of the public schools, in the types of cultural organizations discussed in Chapter 7. Nonetheless, the public schools hastened the linguistic assimilation of the community and assured that more Jewish children would be able to enter the majority society. Private schools trained students in an educational atmosphere that was much superior to the public schools. While Jewish students in the private Polish schools were trained to enter elite Polish society, they were still aware of their Jewish origins. Nella Thon, as the daughter of a public figure, is perhaps too exceptional to serve as an example of this. But Ritterman-Abir's memoir confirms that the Jewish student in the elite private Polish school did not necessarily abandon organized Jewish culture in favor of Polish. Private Polish schools, like the public schools, did not make an identification with the Jewish community an impossibility. They did, however, assure an identification with the larger Polish community.

While public and private Polish schools did not efface Jewish identity, they did not offer the Jewish education many parents wanted for their children. In private Jewish schools, Jewish community leaders offered an extensive Jewish education that included
much more than the weekly Jewish religious instruction in the public and private Jewish schools. Though only a small percentage of Jewish children in Krakow attended the private Jewish schools, examining these schools will reveal how Jewish educational leaders maintained and nurtured a separate ethnic identity.
If public and private Polish schools were deemed threatening to the Jewish community by certain Jewish leaders, then private Jewish schools were the way Jews could insure that their children received a Jewish education and remained a vital part of the community. The establishment of private Jewish schools in interwar Krakow marked the beginning of a more self-conscious Jewish national identity in the city, a period when the Jews themselves were assessing and reconceiving their educational needs. Mandatory laws obligating public school attendance resulted in even greater contact with the non-Jewish community. Private Jewish schools were perhaps the most important way that Jews reinforced their separate identity. At the same time, private Jewish schools in Krakow reflected the different ideological and religious viewpoints of different sectors of the community. An examination of the private Jewish schools of the city reveals the type of education the potential future leaders of the community received, but it also shows that
even here there was no escaping the influence of the majority culture. The accommodations Jewish leaders made to the government of the majority introduced Jewish children to the Polish language. Polish culture, and the responsibilities and demands (though not necessarily the benefits) of Polish citizenship. Jewish education itself had to adapt to the requirements of life in the Second Republic and provide an education necessary for the modern world.

The leaders of organizations formed to establish private Jewish schools faced great obstacles. One fundamental issue was the question of organization. The writer of an article in *Nowy Dziennik* in 1921 pointed out that organizers of Jewish schools had to contend with the apathy of the Jews themselves. In addition, the writer felt the organizers would have a better chance of success if they stayed away from religious matters, which alone indicates that religious education was a divisive issue in the community. The implication is also that the new private Jewish schools established after the war were of a much different character than the *khadorim*. On top of these organizational obstacles, the Jewish leaders were also in dire need of direct financial help.¹ Another issue to be considered when examining the private Jewish schools in Krakow is their accessibility to the average Jew. Tuition for private schools, whether Polish or Jewish, was high and often parents made great sacrifices on behalf of their children. *Dos yidishe vort*, for example, criticized the high fees of the Hebrew gymnasium whenever the cost of tuition was raised. Not all Jewish parents were able to send their children to private Jewish

¹"O zorganizowanie szkol zawodowych." *Nowy Dziennik*. 8 October 1921. 4-5.
The schools themselves, as well as other charitable organizations, provided whatever financial support they could, but private Jewish education was still only possible for a small number within the Jewish community.²

Determining the number of Jewish students in private Jewish schools is particularly important since it gives an indication of the number of Jewish youth who received a secondary education and who were likely to remain involved within the Jewish community. A. Wolfowicz, a leader of the Professional Union of Secondary School Teachers in Poland, cites a relatively high number of Jewish children attending private Polish schools. According to this article, 50% of Jewish youth attended private Polish schools in Poland, much higher than Ruta's nationwide estimation of 17.8.³ The concern expressed in this article was that the "better" Jewish society, that is, wealthier, were sending their children to Polish schools instead of Jewish ones. Such an attitude toward private Jewish schools was termed "snobizm." Given the latter comment, it is

²A graduate of the gymnasium, Rafael F. Scharf, has written that the Hebrew gymnasium was accessible to all, even the poorest students. He describes his father's shock when he learns that the son of a local beggar had applied for admission and requested exemption from fees. Scharf himself was proud of what he saw as his school's assistance to poor children. According to Scharf, the school gave tuition assistance to more than 2000 students during the years of its operation. *Poland, What Have I to Do with Thee...Essays without Prejudice* (London: Vallentine Mitchell. 1998), 24. 69. Originally published in 1996 in a joint Polish-English edition by Fundacja Judaica, Krakow as *Co Mnie I Tobie Polsko...Eseje bez uprzedzen*. For an extended discussion on the intersection between class and educational options for Jews, see Celia Heller, *On the Edge of Destruction: Jews of Poland Between The Two World Wars* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press. 1994), 215. 225-232.

likely that the figure of fifty per cent is artificially high in order to support Wolfowicz's point. Nonetheless, Wolfowicz's view most likely reflects an opinion that was expressed by other Jews as well, and more research must be done to examine how economic class affected private Jewish education in Poland and in Krakow more specifically. Not insignificantly, nearly a third of the students at the private Queen Jadwiga Gymnasium as late as the late 1930s were Jewish: private Polish schools had not lost their attraction in spite of significant development in the private Jewish school sector. 4

The Talmud Torah schools, khadorim, and the more modern secondary schools represent the wide range of private Jewish education. Each one of the private Jewish schools during the interwar years experienced a period of remarkable growth, especially the Hebrew gymnasium and Sore Shenirer's Beys Yakov schools. While Polish schools also went through a transformative experience after the regaining of Polish independence, the Jewish schools, in most cases, began from nothing. In the Hebrew gymnasium, enrollment grew from only fifteen students in 1918 to nearly 750 students in the 1930s. In the early 1930s, the school authorities opened additional schools for the special needs of the community. Sore Shenirer's Beys Yakov school for Orthodox girls grew into a large network of schools worldwide. This growth is indicative of an increasingly active, self-aware, able Jewish community focusing on its own goals and needs. These and other schools should be examined for what they tell us about how Jews perceived their goals and needs and, most significantly, how they accommodated these to the demands of the

4 Katalog glowny, 1920-1938, Gimnazjum zenskiej Krolowej Jadwigi. WAPKr. 175
Polish state.

In the absence of schools in Krakow sponsored by Yiddishist organizations like the Bund or the Central Yiddish School Organization (Tsisho, according to its Yiddish acronym). Zionists dominated the Jewish education of the city's youth. Whatever conclusions one might draw about the extent of Yiddish culture in the Polonized Jewish community of Krakow, it was clear that Jewish education was moving toward greater use of Hebrew as a national language of the community, at the expense of the cultural acceptance of Yiddish. While the association to support the Hebrew gymnasium was attached to a more political Zionist perspective and was the leader among the private Jewish schools, the more religious schools were also an important factor of Jewish life in the city. Yiddish was used as an instructional language in the more religious schools (discussed below), but the languages of instruction in the Hebrew gymnasium were Hebrew and Polish. Even without Yiddish schools, Jewish education in the city was diverse: schools targeted parents and students with specific interests and needs.

Krakow's progressive Jewish community leaders had contended with the Orthodox over the issue of education since the 1860s. Progressive leaders supported the city's Polish public schools and supported the polonization of Jewish children. Largely because of their greater financial resources, they were able to assure that a Jewish school sponsored by the kahal held instruction in Polish. Moreover, progressive leaders were

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5 Andrzej Zbikowski. *Zydzi krakowscy.* 241-243. Zbikowski does not identify this school as public or private, and it is unclear precisely what role the school played within the Jewish community.

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opposed to the traditional *khadorim*. Already by the 1870s, both Jewish and Polish community leaders regarded the *khadorim* in Krakow as "symbolic of the universally held view that the Jewish masses are withdrawn" from the rest of society. In 1885, there were 22 *khadorim* in Krakow, with 482 boys and 118 girls. In 1885, there were a total of 1808 boys and 1816 girls of school age in Krakow. Of these, 719 boys and 1816 girls went to public schools; 482 boys and 118 girls went to *khadorim*. Thus, even as early as 1885, a majority of Jewish children in the city were attending public schools. Efforts to provide secular Jewish education did not begin until the early years of the 1900s and were not successful until the interwar period.

An undated file in the Krakow collection of the Jewish Historical Institute lists the addresses of students, number of students, status of the teachers, number of girls in the *khadorim*, if any, the rate of the students' participation in public schools, the age of students, and the number of assistants. A total of forty *khadorim* are listed. The *khadorim* provided only religious instruction until the government's educational reforms. The total number of students in these *khadorim* was 1141; approximately 500 attended public schools as well (necessitating afternoon instruction in Jewish subjects for these

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8 ZIH GWZK 755. *Statystyka chajderow w Krakowie*. No date given, *rok*? (year?) written in pencil in a corner of the front page. Unfortunately, it is not clear who prepared the questionnaire, whether the city, state, or Jewish community. Given its position among other files, the document is most likely from the early years of the interwar period.
The numbers must be approximate because for some schools the exact
number is not given (only an adjective like "majority" or "a few"). Interestingly, the
questionnaire asked about the number of girls in the schools and whether or not girls and
boys studied together, but there were no girls in any of the schools.

Some of the larger khadorim had three or four rooms: most just had one or two.
Most of the responses state that the rooms were reserved for the exclusive use of the
kheyder. Most, perhaps even all, of the directors of the khadorim stated that they were
not otherwise employed, and most had one assistant, unless they were very small.

Khadorim with 50 or 60 students had 3 or 4 assistants. Boys in these khadorim ranged in
age from 3 to 15. Students usually received six hours of instruction in the morning and
afternoon. (The times of instruction were usually from around nine to twelve in the
morning and three to six in the afternoon, with some variation.) Subjects taught included
the reading of Hebrew and translation of Torah, the Bible, Talmud, and the ksiagi
prorokow (the prophets). More importantly, though, it should be recognized that many,
perhaps even most, students in the khadorim attended public schools in the morning and
early afternoon as well, even if this was only in deference to state law. Given that nearly
ninety per cent of Jewish children in Krakow attended public schools, the khadorim no
longer served as the only way to educate Jewish children. Rather, they served as, often.

It is not clear why the others did not attend public school: either their parents
were in violation of the civil law, or, more likely, they were simply underage for the
public schools.

This is a change from the 1885 statistics showing that 118 girls attended the
the only way for children to receive a Jewish education that was completely in the hands of Jews. The statistics make it clear that education in the public schools had superseded a traditional kheyder education. To date I have not found any information indicating the number of kheyder students who went on to private Jewish education. though it is likely that at least some of them continued in the Cheder Iwri (Hebrew School) schools. the more traditional private Jewish school alternative. while others may well have continued in other less traditional secondary schools. including trade schools.¹¹

The government's reforms of the khadorim were a part of Polish attempts to modernize the newly independent Polish state. The 1919 reform was overwhelmingly successful. By 1929, 82% of Jewish children across Poland attended Polish public schools. The percentage in Krakow was slightly higher. 89.9%.¹² The Polish educational reforms. Polish antisemitism. the national ideals of the Jewish community itself. and the fact that a majority of Jewish children attended Polish public schools all combined to make real the need for private Jewish schools. Private Jewish schools such as those established in Krakow during the interwar period aimed to train Jews to live within Jewish and Polish culture. the latter if only as a necessity for an economically successful life. Such schools by definition represented a response of the Jewish community to modernization. which not only had made school attendance mandatory but also

khadorim. The file does not offer any explanation.

¹¹The Cheder Iwri schools are discussed further below.

¹²"Powszechne nauczanie wsirod ludnosci zydowskiej w Polsce w swietle cyfr." Sprawy narodowosciowe 2 (1929), 297.
increasingly valued a secondary education.

An official school inspection report for one of Krakow's Talmud Torah schools in 1938 reveals a school in dire need of major improvements to meet contemporary educational standards. The Talmud Torah school, for children of preschool age, was located in a building with two floors on ulica Estery. The courtyard (oficyny) was connected to a house of prayer (dom modlitwy). The building itself was described as virtually destroyed (zniszczone), without any kind of renovation or preservation. Approximately 1200 boys attended this one school in 1937-1938. In the eyes of the Polish school inspectors, remodeling was the most important priority and the list of improvements needed gives some idea of the desperate conditions young Jews found themselves in. These included damaged concrete steps and floors, problems with plumbing and iron stoves, and puddles of water on wooden steps. Books and old rags were found on the same shelves in old cabinets. Bathroom sinks lacked soap and towels.

In general, the conditions were unhygienic. This same report urged the immediate correction of the lack of signs for the bathrooms in Polish. The inspector was also concerned that the general public passing by on ulica Estery also used the toilets and this contributed to the primitive conditions of the facilities in general. The courtyard (podwórko) and building were dirty (brudne) and poorly maintained. In addition, sweets

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14 KOSK 70. Protokol.
and other foods were sold to the children in the narrow hallways. The inspectors
described the lack of electricity and the signs on the restroom doors as problems that the
school should resolve "without delay, not later than the thirtieth of August, 1938,
under the penalty of the closing of the cheder if found not in compliance."\(^{15}\)

Classes were overcrowded; the benches were not suited for the size of the
students; and the students themselves, their clothes, their notebooks, were also dirty. The
teachers taught as they liked, and many were not prepared for their lessons. There were
too few hours of study for certain subjects, and no drawing, music, or physical education
were offered. The report also singled out the afternoon study period, when students were
tired from the day's earlier classes, as the cause of the poor student results. City school
authorities recommended in 1938 that the entire school be cleaned, teaching methods be
improved, with greater attention paid to the level of writing and pronunciation, more
hours of instruction in general, including field trips. Significantly, the report also
recommended that the school purchase new portraits of Polish leaders and Polish state
seals for the school hallways.

Inspectors also criticized another Jewish elementary school, the Jesodej Hatora
(The Basics of the Torah) school. 243 students attended this school in 1938, all listed as
of Polish nationality but Mosaic confession.\(^{16}\) The inspector criticized the elderly director
of the school, Henryk Teufel, a retired teacher, for leading an inefficient (marny) staff and

\(^{15}\)KOSK 70. Protokol. There is no later inspection report that confirms the
compliance with these recommendations or the closing of the school.

\(^{16}\)KOSK 70. L. 233/38. Sprawa: przyznanie praw szkol publicznych szkole
for not taking the initiative necessary to make needed changes. According to the report, teachers obviously did not clean their classrooms and did not work very hard. Students worked for twelve hours without a break, from six in the morning to six in the evening, with Jewish subjects in the first part of the day. A 1936 report stated that there was only one square meter of space for each of the 226 students.\(^{17}\) The inspector wrote, "In these conditions, it is difficult to speak about education -- it simply does not exist."\(^{18}\) Perhaps the real issue was the fact that "state education" (wychowanie panstwowe) was "barely evident" (malo widoczne), and then only during official inspections and that a sort of Jewish nationalism was felt "at every step."\(^{19}\) The report also criticized the school for holding only 120 hours of instruction in secular subjects rather than the required 172. At the same time, the school devoted 184 hours of instruction to Jewish subjects. In comparison with public schools, this school just did not fulfill its task, and Polish school authorities refused accreditation for this school which would have allowed students unhindered access to secondary education. Students who attended elementary and secondary schools with public rights were more easily admitted to the next educational
level and so the issue of public rights was important to parents.

One of the reports for Jesodej Hatora indicates more specifically the nature of the school's educational efforts in Polish language and culture.²⁰ Curriculum guides [*spis pomocy naukowych*] included many educational objectives for Polish language and Polish history, notably the telling of common fairy tales in Polish, such as "Jas i Malgosia" (similar to Hansel and Gretel) and "Kopciuszek" (Cinderella) and the royal history of Poland, including accounts of the battle at Grunwald, the events depicted in Jan Matejko's historical paintings, and, of course, the exploits of Jozef Pilsudski. Indicating the extent to which these Jewish educators mollified official Polish authorities, the curriculum guide lists the pictures the school hung on the wall — images of *gorale*, fishermen, traditional dress from the Krakow region, modern Polish industry and trains, in addition to the usual illustrations of plants and animals, health and hygiene, and symbols for math and geometry. Interestingly, students in the fifth, sixth, and seventh grades of this school could participate in science classes with Public School Number 5 in Kazimierz. The pictures of Polish industry may have been mere decoration in a school in which Jewish religious education was the primary goal. Nonetheless, the cooperation with Public School Number 5 suggests accommodation to a multiethnic environment, a way in which students in a private Jewish school encountered Polish students and secular learning.

The most important private Jewish school in the city was the Hebrew gymnasium. A forerunner of the gymnasium had been founded before the outbreak of the First World

²⁰KOSK 70. *Spis pomocy naukowych. znajdujących sie w pryw. ortodoks. zyd. szk. powsz. Nr. 57. "Jesodej Hatora" w Krakowie.*
War, thanks to the efforts of Shlomo Leser, the leader of the school in its early years. The
original intent of Leser and other early leaders of the gymnasium was to teach young Jews
Hebrew in preparation for emigration to Palestine. The school opened in 1908 and later
became a gymnasium, eventually receiving full accreditation from the Polish government
in 1924, enabling its students to take the matura and enter the university. In the 1930s a
trade school was established in cooperation with the gymnasium. The Hebrew
gymnasium (its full name: Zydowskie Gimnazjum Koedukacyjnego, Jewish Coeducational
Gymnasium) arose out of the efforts of the Association of the Jewish Elementary and
Middle School (Towarzystwa Żydowskiej Szkoły Ludowej i Sredniej), founded by Jewish
leaders in 1902 to form a private Jewish school. By the late 1930s, the efforts of the
society had resulted in three different schools addressing the educational needs of the
Jewish community. An elementary school opened in 1908-1909 and grew to over one
hundred students by 1912. The gymnasium was founded in 1918 with only fifteen
students. A coeducational institution, it had more than 750 students already in 1937.
Because of this tremendous growth, a third school grew out of the gymnasium, a lyceum
with three departments: humanities, mathematics-physics, and natural sciences
(przyrodniczy). In 1933-1934, the Association opened a three-year trade school which
graduated its first apprentices in 1936. This was certainly an important achievement of
the Jewish community. Private Jewish education could no longer merely be associated
with the khadorim: it had adopted modern pedagogical ideas and educational success.

Inspection reports of the school address some minor areas for improvement, but
are in general rather positive. The detailed nature of these reports, including comments on the placement of chairs next to the radiators, lends credence to the criticisms and overall positive evaluation. The students in the school came from the professional intelligentsia and merchant families, and a rather high number of parents, around seventy to eighty percent, took part in the parents' organization. Attesting to the popularity of the school and this type of education, the younger grades often had more than fifty students in each class, as more students than normal were accepted year after year. The inspector expressed concern at the increased class size. The school employed thirty-three teachers, some of whom worked in the public schools as well. The inspector suggested that the teaching of Polish history and knowledge of Poland should apply greater emphasis to contemporary issues and problem solving. The minor criticisms (bolaczki) included an admonition to the students to take better care of their uniforms. The report also criticized the organization of laboratories as not demanding enough of the students and encouraged the development of a geography lab.

Regarding the general atmosphere at the school, the inspector wrote. "The academic level of the students is high. They are interested in their lessons, they are lively, gladly participate in class discussions, and conduct independent work. Written work in Polish is at the normal level. All the teachers pay close attention to the written work. to

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making corrections as well as to the students' notebooks." Overall, though, the reports of the level of the students were very good, and the inspector was pleased with the degree of student involvement in the learning process. The report was highly favorable.

The inspectors noted that the school trained its students in the "Jewish national spirit" as well, indicating the dual task faced by Jewish educators in Poland. "Along with the education of the youth as citizens of the state, work in the national (Jewish) spirit is conducted in all sincerity and also without agitation." An earlier report from 1935 described the leaders of the school as Zionists, but not particularly vocal. The inspector wrote. "The Jewish Coeducational Gymnasium in Krakow is led by a Jewish society composed of Zionists. The same can be said of the director and the teachers of the school: none of these persons, though, are particularly vocal, which means that they take every opportunity to stress the citizen's relationship to Poland. The teaching of Polish language, history, and geography is at a proper level from the moment students will benefit from an education in citizenship." The inspector's remarks were perhaps the

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24 KOSK 33. File 17. Sprawozdanie z wizytacji. odbytej w dniach 4, 5 i 6 grudnia 1935 r. w Krakowie.

25 KOSK 33. File 17. Sprawozdanie z wizytacji. odbytej w dniach 4, 5 i 6 grudnia 1935 r. w Krakowie. Gross attributes the high level of Polish language teaching to Juliusz Feldhorn, a well known critic and novelist in the Polish language. Feldhorn is an extremely interesting example of a Jewish intellectual active in Polish. He published one of his novels, Cienia nad kołyską, under the pseudonym of Jan Las. The antisemitic National Democratic press reviewed the novel favorably, not knowing Feldhorn was the real author. Feldhorn planned but presumably never published two later volumes of this.
highest compliments the inspector could have given the school. The Hebrew gymnasium had been successful in integrating a program geared toward developing Jewish national identity into a rigorous school curriculum that met the requirements set forth by the Polish educational authorities.

That Jews could study alongside other Jews in an environment free of antisemitism was the most unique factor of the school, and the importance of such an experience should not be underestimated. This was perhaps the reason so many were attracted to the school. Certainly the excellent education and shared Jewish national ideals were also factors. Discussing the background of the student body, Natan Gross, a student at the school, divided it into three categories -- students like himself who were more assimilated (zasymilowany), the more religious students who came to the gymnasium after some initial study at the Tachkemoni school (another secondary school in the city, discussed further below), and the students who described themselves politically as Zionist Revisionists (followers of the militant Zionism of Vladmir Jabotinsky). Gross's categorization reflects the distinctions within the Jewish community. All the groups, seemingly so different in outlook, nonetheless came together for a uniquely Jewish experience.

Gross asserts that Polish was the language that dominated (opanowal) the school: Hebrew was used only in classes dealing with Jewish subjects. He explains.

novel, which was to trace the story of a young man who found out he was Jewish. Natan Gross. *Kim pan jest, panie Grymek?* (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1991). 112-120.
How was a Hebrew school different than a Polish school? In a Polish school the Jew had to be a good student, perhaps even better than others, but a Hebrew school allowed one to be a bad student, to neglect lessons and disregard teachers, to misbehave as much as the spirit wished, to cut school. This was an oasis, an island isolated from the Polish reality, though Poland and Polishness in all its manifestations was here in our Hebrew school, represented and transmitted better than Jewishness....

Gross clarified the issue of language use in the school:

Yiddish was not heard in the hallways. It is true, too, that one did not hear Hebrew either, unless a student spoke with a teacher of one of the Hebrew subjects. Because at our school -- not like in the schools of the Tarbut network, where the language of instruction was Hebrew and mathematics, biology, history, etc. were also taught in the sacred language -- only four subjects were taught in the language of our ancestors: Hebrew (language and literature), Bible, religion, and Jewish history. All others -- in Polish.

Gross describes a school where Hebrew held the most important position among foreign languages, implying, of course, that Hebrew was taught only as a foreign language and that Polish was the de facto language of the school. Gross himself wrote that he was not happy with his Hebrew teachers. "Did it come to me easily?" he writes. "Well, not Hebrew, which I regret to this day... But perhaps this was not so much me, as it was the teachers." According to Gross, they knew Hebrew, but they were poor teachers. Like Ritterman-Abir, Gross considered Hebrew the weakest of his foreign languages when he found himself in Israel after the war. Gross himself is convinced that he could have been

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a good Hebraist, had he only had better instruction in the Hebrew gymnasium.

Whatever the merits of Gross' criticisms, Jewish leaders in Krakow did address the difficulties of learning Hebrew. As early as 1921, the society that founded the Hebrew gymnasium was already undertaking efforts to expose teachers of Hebrew to new pedagogical ideas.³⁹ The cultural section of the central Hebrew school commission, part of the Zionist organization in Krakow, sponsored a course on pedagogy held in the Hebrew gymnasium. Krakow was one of the last large cities in Poland where such courses were established. Teachers of Hebrew learned new pedagogical methods. The writer Felicja Infeld-Stendigowa pointed out that mothers faced great difficulty as their children learned much more about Jewish national culture and Hebrew than they knew themselves.³⁰ Stendigowa called for special Hebrew courses for Jewish women so they could cooperate more fully with the Jewish national school in their children's education. In one case, a grandfather took advantage of the opportunity to learn Hebrew along with his granddaughter, indicating that the family had acculturated to the Polish language from Yiddish a generation earlier.³¹

As the Hebrew gymnasium grew, it even attracted the attention of parents who had already moved beyond the Jewish neighborhood of Kazimerz, leaving their Jewish

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³⁹"Otwarcie hebrajskich kursow nauczycielskich w Krakowie." Nowy Dziennik. 25 July 1921. 4-5.


³¹Infeld-Stendigowa. "Czy matka zydwksa spelnia swe zadanie wychowawcze?"
heritage behind. In 1936, L. Kahanowa wrote in a short description of the gymnasium in
Ogniwa:

Parents who not long ago would have cringed at the thought of sending their children to school "in Kazimierz" now try diligently to get their children accepted to the school of this society, quickly teaching them Hebrew, as acceptance is dependent upon this. We are witnesses to an interesting phenomenon. These children from nearly completely assimilated families are bringing national feeling, an attachment to Jewish tradition and a deep love of Palestine, which they absorb in school, into their homes and families. What a wonderful thing.32

This is rather startling evidence, most interesting because it is one of the few indications that there was an almost completely assimilated sphere of Jewish families that would not think of being associated with Kazimierz. Further, it is evidence that the efforts of the founders of the association were paying off in reaching parts of the Jewish community that one might have thought lost to assimilation. At least some Jewish parents were choosing the Hebrew gymnasium over private Polish schools. In short, the Jewish nationalists of Krakow were extending their influence within the Jewish community. Thus, those Jews who reconsidered their decision not to send their children to school in Kazimierz became more, rather than less, affiliated with the Jewish community during the interwar period. One can assume that this reverse assimilation went only so far: it is not likely that these families stopped identifying with Polish culture once they had found a way to identify with Jewish culture that was comfortable to them. It is more likely that they maintained their ties to the Polish community while nurturing a newly intensified

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Ogniwa. 8.

connection to the Jewish community. Thus, education not only provided a path to accommodation with the Polish majority but also a path for assimilated Jews back to Jewish culture.

The local Jewish community and parents' organizations supported the Hebrew gymnasium and trade school as much as possible. The community in general supported this type of Jewish education which emphasized Hebrew language and literature but which also recognized the need for its students to be trained to enter the university: this entailed a thorough education in Polish culture as well. *Dos yidishe vort* simultaneously praised the efforts of the gymnasium while also criticizing it in an effort to encourage it to provide the best traditional education for its students. More concerned about the religious education the students received. *Dos yidishe vort* was consistently more critical of the school than *Nowy Dziennik*. Still, the Yiddish paper enthusiastically championed the efforts of the educators who founded the Hebrew gymnasium and offered suggestions for improvement. That such different groups came together in at least one Jewish institution indicates that some Jewish community leaders appealed successfully to the larger community.

While the school's efforts to resurrect Hebrew as a spoken language met with some success, however limited, the original goal, to prepare students for emigration to Palestine, was not met. Jewish students at the gymnasium did receive a solid education in Hebrew language and culture (along with Polish, as required by the state), but students
did not go to Palestine upon graduation in record numbers. They remained largely in Poland, and it is important to ask why they stayed and how these students, trained in a more Jewish environment than their peers, affected Jewish and Polish community life. As war intervened, the students who survived did make significant contributions to the Jewish community, but in Israel rather than in Poland. When Chaim Hilfstein, the last director of the Hebrew gymnasium, arrived in Israel in 1946 after surviving the Holocaust, former faculty and students of the gymnasium already there welcomed him warmly. Shortly thereafter, the graduates of the gymnasium formed an Association of Former Students of the Hebrew Gymnasium in Krakow. Many of its members came to prominence in politics, the arts, or academia. The organization included two Knesset members and government ministers, Elimelech Rimalt and Chaim Landau. Natan Gross became a prominent journalist writing in Hebrew and in Polish, and Miriam Akavia wrote novels in Hebrew, some of which she based on her family's experiences in Krakow. Like Gross, the poet and historian Meir Bosak wrote for the Israeli press in both Hebrew and Polish. Moshe Landau and Emanuel Meltzer became historians of the Jewish experience in Poland and developed the study of East European Jewish history in Israeli universities.

Not all former faculty and alumni of the gymnasium lived in Israel after the war.

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however. Seeing little chance of pursuing his chosen field of law because of antisemitism. and fearing for his future in Poland. Rafael F. Scharf left for London in 1938. where he was a correspondent for Nowy Dziennik. He later became an important voice in Jewish journalism with his work on the Jewish Quarterly. published in London. His recent collection of writings attests to a deeply felt connection to the city of his birth. Others remained active in Polish culture. notably faculty members Chaim Low. Maksymilian Boruchowicz. and Artur Sandauer. Low. who taught Polish language and literature at the gymnasium. was known before the war for his translations into Yiddish of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey. After surviving the war in the Soviet Union. he returned to Poland and. under the name Leon Przemski. became a prolific writer of historical novels. biographies. and popular works on linguistics. Maksymilian Boruchowicz. writing under the name Michal Borwicz. published memoirs of his time at the university in Krakow and edited a Polish-language anthology of literature from the concentration camps. Sandauer became one of the country's most important literary critics. The continued affiliation with Poland of these former Hebrew gymnasium students and faculty suggests that attending or working for the Hebrew gymnasium did not guarantee

35 Rafael F. Scharf. Poland. What Have I to Do with Thee...Essays Without Prejudice. 29-30.

36 "Nauczyciele pisza." To byla hebrajska szkola. 41.


38 For biographical information about Artur Sandauer. see "Snil mi sie Artur Sandauer" Rozmowy i wspomnienia. ed. Jozef Baran (Krakow: Centrum Kultury
that the student or faculty member would always privilege his or her Jewish identity.

The Hebrew gymnasium was successful in educating students who, in terms of their intellectual abilities and cultural interests, were comfortable in both Polish and Jewish culture. Not all private Jewish education aimed at such a well-rounded secular experience. Another approach to private Jewish primary and secondary education was taken by the founders of Cheder Iwri, whose leaders said the school was founded from "the thought that it was possible to combine Jewish learning in a strictly religious and traditional sense with the secular education according to the program of the government schools in the same educational establishment."^39 Cheder Iwri was founded in 1921 as a three-class elementary school but grew to the extent that the addition of a gymnasium, the later Tachkemoni school, was necessary in 1931. A new three-floor building was erected at Miodowa 26 which held both the Cheder Iwri elementary school and Tachkemoni, the boys' gymnasium. Wordliczek asserts that the Tachkemoni gymnasium was the only one of its type in Poland, combining general knowledge with Jewish subjects.^40 In 1936/1937, the Cheder Iwri Association expanded its activities even further, establishing


^39 ZIH GWZK 753. Letter of 12/16/25 to presidium of gmina from Cheder Iwri school official.

^40 Zofia Wordliczek. "Szkolnictwo Żydowskie na terenie miasta Krakowa w okresie II Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej." 1. Unpublished material. Muzeum miasta Krakowa, Stara Synagoga. Wordliczek writes. "There was only one boys' middle school in Poland combining general knowledge and a modern state education with Jewish studies in spiritual belief and tradition." This claim seems somewhat overstated, but inspection reports confirm the school's efforts to combine a strong religious training with secular studies.
a one-year vocational school (Szkola Przysposobienia Kupieckiego) for 13-18-year-old boys who had already completed an elementary school education. This school combined instruction in general subjects with both a professional and Judaic education.

The Cheder Iwri organization clearly did not have the same extensive resources as the Hebrew gymnasium. Still, when parents did not have the money for tuition, the Association granted discounts and allowed many students to attend for free. Established in 1921-22 with only three classes, the Cheder Iwri elementary school grew to seven grades in 1925 with 193 students and fifteen teachers (seven instructing in Hebrew, eight in Polish). In the first four grades, the majority of time was spent on Jewish subjects. In the first grade, eighteen hours of weekly classroom instruction went to Jewish subjects and twelve to secular subjects. The second grade increased the number of hours spent studying Jewish subjects to twenty-four while secular studies still were the focus of twelve hours of instruction. In the third and fourth grades, students spent the same amount of time on Jewish studies, but increased their hours in secular studies to eighteen. In the sixth and seventh grades, they continued this level of secular study, while increasing the hours spent in Jewish subjects to 30.

In the words of an official school inspector, the Cheder Iwri schools served their purpose. Orthodox parents would be unlikely to send their kids to any public school (szkola srednia ogolno-ksztalcaje) if it were not Orthodox in character. The inspector wrote: "In this way youth receive a general education and are educated not only in a religious spirit, but also in a spirit of state citizenship (obywatelsko-panstwowym)."
Moreover, the school will not hinder its students on their road to eventual higher
studies." At the very least, from the inspector's point of view, the children received
some type of education and this was, if not sufficient, at least acceptable. Most
importantly from the point of view of the state, the school did not hinder its students from
going further in their education. In other words, the school did no harm and, in providing
an education in citizenship, did some real good. Rather than viewing such schools
negatively, the Polish authorities liked the idea of these private schools because they
assured that the law regarding public education would be obeyed and they gave the state
yet another venue to promote its version of civic education. The school authorities also
expressed the desire for Jews to continue their education as far as possible. Both Poles
and Jews still viewed education as the best solution to the poverty of their societies.
While the Polish government appreciated the opportunity to educate its citizens in the
apparent virtues of the Polish state. Jews maintained their identity by educating their own
people in their own way. Yet, at the same time. Orthodox Jewish educational leaders and
teachers adapted to the reality of Polish government.

Next to the Hebrew gymnasium, the Tachkemoni school in Krakow was one of
the most important private Jewish secondary schools. Developed from courses that had
already begun in 1926/1927 with classes sponsored by the Cheder Iwri Association
(Stowarzyszenia Cheder Iwri), the gymnasium itself was founded in 1931. The

41KOSK 33, Nr. 19, Prywatne Gimnazjum Meskie "Tachkemoni" w Krakowie,
sprawozdanie z wizytacji odbytej dnia 26 lutego 1937 r.
Tachkemoni gymnasium was not nearly as sophisticated pedagogically as the Hebrew gymnasium. In an official report, the inspector recommended that teaching methods be developed and applied. In spite of relatively poor pedagogical standards, the gymnasium sponsored many different academic organizations for its students covering all kinds of interests. The students nonetheless participated in musical radio auditions and the city-wide school theater program. According to the inspector, they came from conservative religious and orthodox families, or middle class (srednia zamozny) artisan and merchant families from Krakow and neighboring communities.\textsuperscript{43} Forty-seven parents, roughly half, participated in the school's parents' organization. Inspectors' recommendations for the school centered on enlarging the physical facilities, the labs, and getting its own gym. In the late thirties, the school usually employed eight to nine teachers for around 65 to 80 students. A majority of the teachers were fully qualified, with state certification and a university degree. About ten of the students lived at the school.

Inspection reports from the school from 1935 and 1936 identified its educational objectives as "specifically orthodox-religious" and "preparing students for the rabbinate."\textsuperscript{44} A year later, in 1937, these objectives were expressed differently. The orientation of the school had changed to one where, according to school officials, the goal


\textsuperscript{43}KOSK 33. Nr 19. Odpis.

\textsuperscript{44}KOSK 33. Nr 19. Odpis.
was to produce a "Zyd wierny. obywatel Polski." or "faithful Jew. citizen of Poland." Here school officials stated their dual task, to turn out individuals who were faithful, loyal Jews but who were also citizens of Poland. This may have been due to fear of government officials or the pressure to meet state guidelines which required a minimal level of Polish education in the schools. Even so, this shift in stated educational objectives is itself an accommodation to Polish culture. The 1937 report on the school in the Almanach Szkolnictwa Zydowskiego further illustrates how the school stood on both sides of the fence, between humanism and the Torah, science and faith, belief in the self and belief in humanity, wierni sobie i wierni ludzkości. The educator Meir Korzennik describes how the school's philosophy fostered both religious and secular learning:

> Often in Polish language lessons one encounters words from the Bible and the Prophets. Study from the Talmud facilitates learning in the hard sciences. History or biology lessons not only illustrate examples of citizenship or general humanity but also call forth praise in the honor of God....Science through belief....belief through science! This is the way one may formulate the essence, and actual scientific and educational results, of this Jewish middle school, the only one of its type in Poland.\(^46\)

The leaders of this school were willing to see themselves as Polish citizens as long as they were able to remain faithful Jews. Admittedly, they had no real choice, but nonetheless they did conform to the standard of Polish citizenship that was expected of


The Private Coeducational Gymnasium of the Jewish Social School Association
(*Prywatne Gimnazjum Koedukacyjne Towarzystwo Zydowskiej Szkoły Spolecznej*)
opened in 1937, and took yet another approach to Jewish education.\(^{48}\) The school was
not located in Kazimierz or the nearby neighborhood of Podgorze, but directly on the
market square, at Rynek Glowny 17.\(^{49}\) Children aged twelve to sixteen attended this
four-class, coeducational school where the language of instruction was Polish. A KOSK
inspector's report of the facilities is generally fair, though the inspector notes there is no
gym or biology lab, largely because there were so few students.\(^{50}\) More importantly, the
inspector remarked that the teachers were qualified but uninterested, that the school
needed some pedagogical platform, and that the classes still had to be structured
according to a real curriculum. The inspector recommended some course improvements
for the fall if and when enrollment grew. A later inspection from November 1938
repeated some of the same criticisms, but recommended that the school look for a new

\(^{47}\) Meir Korzennik. "Gimnazjum meskie "Tachkemoni"." *Almanach szkolnictwo
104.

\(^{48}\) KOSK 33, Nr 17. Odpis. Sprawozdanie z wizytacji Prywatnego Gimnazjum
Koedukacyjnego Towarzystwa Zydowskiej Szkoły Spolecznej w Krakowie.

\(^{49}\) KOSK 88. Statut prywatnego gimnazjum koedukacyjnego Towarzystwa
Zydowskiej Szkoły Spolecznej w Krakowie.

\(^{50}\) KOSK 33, Nr 17. Sprawozdanie z wizytacji Prywatnego Gimnazjum
Koedukacyjnego Towarzystwa Zydowskiej Szkoły Spolecznej w Krakowie.
location in which it could develop further. While the inspector's report was critical in some ways, it also made helpful recommendations. This school was neither explicitly religious nor nationalist; moreover, its location on the main market square (rather than in Kazimierz) suggests that it may have tried to serve a segment of the Jewish population that was not satisfied with either the Hebrew gymnasium or the Cheder Iwri and Tachkemoni schools. Its founding in 1937 suggests that it may have been a reaction to the increased antisemitism of the late 1930s. It is certainly evidence of a community providing for its own educational needs until the very outbreak of war.

*The Education of Jewish Girls*

Some Jewish girls did attend *khadorim* even before the interwar period. It is unclear what type of education they received there; generally speaking, traditional religious education was closed to Jewish girls. A fact which accounts for the high number of Jewish girls in secular schools in Eastern Europe. During the interwar period, the distinction between the education of Jewish boys and girls was blurring, as both Jewish boys and girls attended the secular public schools in overwhelming numbers. Still, though, the Cheder Iwri and Tachkemoni schools, for example, only enrolled Jewish boys, and girls had fewer private Jewish alternatives.

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51 KOSK 33. Nr 17. Sprawozdanie z wizyty dokonanej w dniach 28 i 29 listopada 1938r. w Prywatnym Gimnazjum Koedukacyjnym Towarzystwa Żydowskiej Szkoły Społecznej w Krakowie.
Perhaps the most influential educational trend to emerge from Jewish Krakow was begun by Sore Shenirer, who, in November 1917, began to realize her dream of providing a religious education for Jewish girls by opening a small one-room school on ulica Katarzyny. After the war, Agudes yisroel and the Jewish Senator to the Polish Sejm from Krakow, Mojzesz Deutscher, supported Shenirer's efforts, which led to the development of the Beys Yakov schools for girls. Such schools were founded all across Poland and the educational movement had spread to many foreign countries by the 1930s. Beys Yakov schools comprised many different types of educational facilities, including an elementary school, trade schools, and religious courses, which were afterschool religious classes for Jewish girls who attended public school. Most important, a teachers' college to train teachers for the Beys Yakov schools was founded in Krakow. 120 young women participated in this school in 1937.

By the time of Shenirer's death in 1935, over 200 Beys Yakov schools had been founded worldwide with over 20,000 students. Shenirer's efforts to teach Jewish girls the basics of their religion no doubt transformed Jewish society in ways that may not yet be recognized. Shenirer serves as an example of the importance of Jewish orthodoxy to the Jews of Krakow, despite its more acculturated character. Shenirer was born in Krakow into a Hasidic family in 1883. Attracted to religious study, she found herself in a

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53 B. Frydman."Wyzsze kursy nauczycielskie "Bajs Jakow" (seminarium) w Krakowie," Almanach Szkolnictwa Zydowskiego, 140.
nontraditional position for a religious Jewish woman. Seeking an outlet, Shenirer even attended at least one meeting of Christian women, but because of the strictures of religious orthodoxy, she was not able to fulfill her dreams of a higher religious education for herself. Instead she worked as a seamstress and dreamt of providing "spiritual raiment" for the same girls for whom she was making clothing.\(^{54}\) It was in Vienna during World War I that she came under the influence of Rabbi Dr. Flesch, whose lectures on the history of the Jews and Jewish orthodoxy in the Stumpfergasse synagogue inspired her to realize her dream of starting a Jewish school for girls.\(^{55}\)

For Shenirer, according to the Yiddish scholar Irena Klepfisz's reading of Shenirer's *Gezamlte Shriftn* (Collected Writings), "language was the dress of the soul." Klepfisz argues that Shenirer was something of an activist on behalf of Yiddish, desiring that her girls learn and speak in Yiddish. Some concessions were made however, as the *Bejs Yakov zhurnal* in its initial issues was in both Polish and Yiddish. Many of Shenirer's young students made the argument that they could live fully Jewish lives in Polish as well as in Yiddish, but she disagreed, promoting the language politics of the Yiddish linguist Shloyme Birnboym and calling for signs to be put up around the schools saying, "Speak only in Yiddish." These anecdotes demonstrate that linguistic assimilation had already taken place, even among the Orthodox, supporters of Agudes


yisroel, who would have been most likely to send their Jewish daughters to Shenirer's network of schools. In short, it seems that the fight for the survival of Yiddish had begun.

This does not imply that Yiddish was dying but it does show that individual Jewish students made conscious choices about which language to speak -- and they did not always choose a Jewish language. The students' view that they could live Jewish lives in Polish as well as in Yiddish confirms that Jewish identity, even for a more religious population in Krakow, was changing, and suggests the girls' belief that their Jewish identity could withstand a degree of linguistic assimilation. It is ironic that this opinion came from the students at one of the more traditional Jewish schools in Krakow because it is so similar to Irena Klepfisz's formulation of Jewish secular identity in the late twentieth century.56

Language use in this school was a particularly difficult issue. While Yiddish was the preferred language of instruction in the Beys Yakov schools, it seems that the faculty had difficulty suppressing the use of Polish among the students.57 From an excerpt from a Beys Yakov publication, we learn that Shenirer had to advocate the use of Yiddish by her students. Shenirer recognized that the faculty and students in the Beys Yakov schools were using Polish more often than Yiddish. At a nationwide conference, the school director J. L. Orlean had called on the faculty, the educational leaders themselves, to speak only Yiddish for a period of three months, so that they would learn to use Yiddish

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56 Irena Klepfisz. "Di mames, Dos loshn/The mothers, the Language: Feminism. Yidishkayt. and the Politics of Memory."

out of habit. Shenirer called on the students as well to speak Yiddish and explicitly rejected the attitude that Polish could be spoken as long as Yiddish was spoken at other times. Orlean's appeal to the faculty and Shenirer's remarks suggest that there was a significant degree of linguistic assimilation even among those attracted to private Jewish education. While this is impossible to quantify, it is important to note that Orlean and Shenirer recognized the necessity to make such comments in defense of Yiddish.

Shenirer's influence remains today as can be seen in the work of Beys Yakov schools in the United States and the many publications of Orthodox groups. Shenirer was an important figure in the history of Jewish women as well as in the history of Jewish education. The scholar Deborah Weissman places Shenirer in a line of feminist developments in Jewish religious life because Shenirer's efforts succeeded in getting women outside of the home by providing them with more education. Shenirer herself seems to have faded somewhat into the background once Agudes yisroel took over her school and used it as the model for its women's educational program.

By the late 1930s, secular education exclusively for Jewish girls was growing as well. Bronia Infeld founded *Our School* or *Nasza Szkola*, located very near the main market square, in 1937. The founding of a secular school for Jewish girls was likely a response to both the increased antisemitism of the late 1930s and the need for a different type of Jewish education not found in the Hebrew gymnasium, the Cheder Iwri and

(Original citation provided at the bottom of the page.)

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Tachkemoni schools, or the Beys Yakov schools. *Nasza Szkoła* serviced a population whose needs were not addressed by the religious school and perhaps not emphasized enough by the Hebrew gymnasium.

Leopold Infeld, the theoretical physicist and Bronia's brother, wrote about his sister's educational activities in his memoir *Szkice z przeszłości* (Sketches from the Past). According to her brother, Bronia Infeld established *Nasza Szkoła* as a progressive alternative to the Hebrew gymnasium, which he described as "rather reactionary" (raczej reakcyjne). The school was established as a cooperative; those who wanted to teach in the school were to invest in it one thousand zlotys. According to Leopold Infeld, the school did provide some competition for the Hebrew gymnasium. As the school was not founded until 1937, it is impossible to say whether or not it would have grown into a larger school that would have rivalled the Hebrew gymnasium. Its founding, though, is evidence that a part of the city's Jewish intelligentsia did not look favorably on the Hebrew gymnasium. Significantly, this also suggests the stratification of the Jewish community. The Hebrew gymnasium was explicitly Zionist, and this position concerned Infeld and those with whom she established the school. Bronia Infeld established a private Jewish school because she recognized the need for separate Jewish education. Infeld's effort is also notable because it occurred so late during the interwar period. More

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than anything, educational efforts such as Infeld's indicate the tenacity of Jewish community leaders.

The establishment of the school was most likely the expression of a need for another form of Jewish education and a response to antisemitism. Celia Heller has documented how increasing antisemitism affected the number of Jewish students in private Polish and Jewish schools over the course of the interwar period. She notes a drop of 28% in the number of Jewish students in private Polish schools from 1925 to 1935.\(^6\) Heller attributes this decline to antisemitism. Infeld's *Nasza Szkoła* shows that Polish Jews realized they needed a protected environment to educate their children but also that they were committed to improving their community and educating their children for their future as Polish citizens. The school was a refuge as well as an institution of cultural development. Jewish parents could have sent their children to the Jewish schools already established. The education provided in *Nasza Szkoła* was in Polish and the school represents a perhaps naïve faith in Polish citizenship despite growing antisemitism. Infeld's task was a challenging one – to form a secular Jewish identity for people who may well have already assumed that a separate Jewish identity could not be sustained in a liberal Polish state.

The school opened in June 1937, and city inspectors visited the school for the first time on October 29, 1937.\(^6\) *Nasza Szkoła* was located on the third floor in a rented

\(^{60}\) Heller, *On the Edge of Destruction*, 230. My own numbers for the private Queen Jadwiga Gymnasium do not seem to indicate such a drastic decline.

\(^{61}\) KOSK 33. Nr 17. Odpis. Prywatne Zydowskie Gimnazjum Zenskie 206
building in the center of town, on ulica Starowislna Nr. 1. It had 13 rooms, a biology lab, two sewing machines, a recreational hall, as well as rooms for teachers and administration. In the first year of its existence, the school was still developing its curriculum and raising money. By the second year, sixty students attended the school, twenty in the first grade, forty in the second. Students came from the homes of the intelligentsia and, according to inspectors, "spoke a correct and pure Polish." The school's objectives "set forth plans oriented toward both education in state citizenship and religious morals."  

The remarks of the official inspectors indicate that the school was making considerable (poważnie) progress in its first year. This was perhaps due in part to parental involvement. Parents were actively engaged in the life of the school, organizing a summer colony in Rabka and donating a piano to the school. In addition, the school organized its own musical auditions. Parent education was also an important aspect of the school's life, and, as in other private Jewish schools, the administration sponsored talks on different aspects of education.

Secular education exclusively for Jewish women, such as Bronia Infeld advocated, lagged far behind the developments of Shenirer's Beys Yakov schools. As Jewish girls

Towarzystwa Oświatowego "Nasza Szkola" w Krakowie. Rok szkolny 1937/38. Sprawozdanie z wizytacji odbytej dnia 18 lutego 1938 r. Inspekcja odbyła się dnia 29 października 1937 r.


had already been attending public and private Polish schools since the nineteenth century. This is perhaps not so surprising. Parents who accepted a secular education for their girls could simply send them to public or private Polish schools: they had several alternatives. In a school that placed little emphasis on religion, Infeld faced the task of making a secular education Jewish, while Shenirer aimed to provide a traditional religious education for a population she felt was in danger of assimilation. The education of Jewish girls in Krakow illustrates the diversity of the institutions Jews founded to develop their community. Whether single-sex, religious or secular, the private schools met specific needs of different parts of the population.

*Jewish Vocational Education*

While educational leaders recognized the need for Jewish vocational education, Jews interested in a more practical education for their people faced two obstacles: the tendency of Jews to prefer a more traditional academic education, and once the schools were founded, how to integrate Jewish content into the vocational curriculum. The goal of the Private Jewish Coeducational Middle School for Trade of the Association of Jewish Graduates of the Higher Trade School in Krakow (Prywatna Zydowska Koedukacyjna Srednia Szkola Handlowa of the Stow. Zyd. Abs. W. S. H. w Krakowie) was to provide another alternative for Jewish children. The founders of this school

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65 J. Z., "Prywatna Zydowska Koedukacyjna Srednia Szkola Handlowa of the Stow. Zyd. 208
recognized that the education of Jewish students in either religious or secular topics with the sole intent of advanced study only served a minority group in the community. In their view, equally, if not more, important was the opportunity to obtain practical skills, a trade, necessary if Jews wished to make a living in the increasingly difficult economic times of the 1930s. They understood that even parents who realized their children would be working in a trade preferred an educational program that concentrated on academic studies, but they established the school out of the need for practical training.

Samuel Stendig, the director of the school, opened the Middle School for Trade in August 1933. With slightly over a hundred students in three grades, the school grew to four hundred students in less than four years. The school's curriculum aimed to provide a traditional education in the humanities with an emphasis on practical skills and trade courses. Languages of instruction included Polish and Hebrew but also English and German. The curriculum guide does not suggest that the goal of the school was to prepare its students to go to Palestine, but there was a special course on Palestine and the Near East. This course focused especially on economic aspects of the Near East and economic relations between Poland and Palestine. It was most likely the presence of this course in the curriculum that led one newspaper writer to praise the special emphasis.

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that the school placed on both civic education and Judaic subjects.\textsuperscript{68}

The curriculum guide provides further evidence of the type of education the children in this school received. The school also offered arithmetic, bookkeeping, economics, geography, typing, and two hours of religion and two hours of history and social studies (nauka o panstwie, "knowledge of the state"). In addition, the third grade had a one-hour class on contemporary Poland. This course included such topics as ethnic relations. Course descriptions for the language classes suggest that more attention was paid to the teaching of Polish than Hebrew. A high knowledge of Hebrew was the instructional aim, but the curriculum tasks simply prepared students for correspondence in Hebrew. In contrast, the guidelines for the Polish language classes included an additional emphasis on Polish literature.\textsuperscript{69} Students in the school also participated in a range of different activities, including literary evenings, visits to the theater, museums, and exhibitions.

Additional courses were held in the school building of the Middle School for Trade for girls over 17 and boys over 18 who had finished elementary school.\textsuperscript{70} and were

\textsuperscript{68}"W zydowskiej sredniej szkole handlowej w Krakowie." \textit{Nasza Opinia} 20 September 1936, 5.

\textsuperscript{69}KOSK 113. Program Nauczania for the Prywatnej Zydowskiej koedukacyjnej Sredniej Szkoły Handlowej Stow. Zydowskich Absolwentow Wyzszego Studium Handlowego w Krakowie.

\textsuperscript{70}KOSK 113. Statut Prywatnych Koedukacyjnych Kursow Handlowych Stow. Zydowskich Absolwentow Wyzszego Studium Handlowego w Krakowie.
intended for those "of the Jewish faith, of Polish and Jewish nationality." The wording here is noteworthy. Even if one assumes that the phrase "of the Jewish faith" or "Jewish confession" was used merely to placate the Polish authorities who would be reading the statute, the organizers of the school who wrote the statute still described their prospective students as of both Polish and Jewish nationality. Private educational efforts entailed a degree of participation in the majority culture, even if this meant simply submitting such statutes, that they simply could not avoid. Further, the wording indicates that Jews themselves adopted a form of Polish nationality, recognizing the reality of their minority status.

Another Jewish vocational school in Krakow was the Private Jewish Coeducational Gymnasium of Krakow Merchants, owned by the Society of Merchants in Krakow. This three-year course for children aged thirteen to seventeen years was meant to prepare students for economic life through practical training. Students were to have finished a six-class elementary school or a two-class general interest gymnasium. The leaders of this school saw a real need to train Jews to be able to conduct trade between Poland and Palestine and the Near East, while also stressing knowledge of Jewish subjects.

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71 KOSK 113. Program nauczania: "Kursy przeznaczone są dla płci męskiej i żeńskiej wyznania mojżeszowego, narodowości polskiej i żydowskiej."

72 Statut prywatnego Żydowskiego Koedukacyjnego Gimnazjum kupieckiego krakowskiego stowarzyszenie kupców w Krakowie.

73 KOSK 113. Program nauczania: "Indywidualny kierunek szkoły polega na przysposobieniu młodzieży do handlu Polski z Palestyń i Bliskim Wschodem. z czym
Specialized private Jewish schools did not only focus on vocational education. A Music School was founded by the Jewish Music Society in Krakow in 1932. Though little is known about the school, 150 students attended the school in 1935-1936. Roza Arnoldowna directed the school, located at ulica Zyblikiewicza 5. The curriculum included both Jewish folk and art music as well as the work of famous Jewish composers. Addressing different levels of musical education, the school conducted the only kurs mistrzowski (maestro course) in the city as well as an exemplary preschool. Henryk Apte, the music critic for Nowy Dziennik, was the president of the Jewish Music Society for many years, and it is most likely he was directly involved in the efforts of the music school. This topic requires more research into direct questions about musical life in interwar Krakow and later.\footnote{L. Kahanowa. Ogniwa. October 1936. 4.}

\footnote{Wordliczek also mentions a couple of other schools for which I have no other documentation, including some specialized schools: Prywatne Seminarium dla Dziewczat z programem religijno-gospodarczym przy ul. Paulinskiej (Private Seminary for Girls with a religious and economic program on Paulinska Street). Prywatna Szkoła Rytmiki i Plastyki prowadzona przez P. Berger i L. Plater (Private School of Music and Sculpture led by P. Berger and L. Plater). and Szkoła Specjalna dla umysłowo uposzczolonych przy ul. Waskiej 7 (Special School for the Blind on 7 Waska Street). Wordliczek. "Szkolnictwo Żydowskie na terenie miasta Krakowa w okresie II Rzeczypospolitej..."}
The innovative educational efforts of Juliusz Osterwa, the director of the Slowacki Theater in Krakow in the 1930s enriched the cultural life of all Krakow school children. His program deserves special mention since it affected children in both private Jewish and public Polish schools. Osterwa developed a Teatr Szkolny (School Theater) for Krakow school children, which presented plays, usually dress rehearsals of full-scale productions at the Slowacki Theater, for student audiences during school hours.

According to a collection of articles about the program published in 1936, the School Theater was established in 1932 and had performed 25 plays a year for approximately 7,000 school children each year. National and local school officials supported the program because the plays performed were the most important in Polish literature and expressed ideals particularly worthy of presentation to children.

All Polish and Jewish school age children, whether in private or public schools, participated in this program. This includes the overwhelming majority of Jewish children in the Polish public schools as well as Jewish children in private Jewish schools such as the Hebrew gymnasium, the Szkola Handlowa (Middle School for Trade) and Ognisko Pracy, a vocational school for orphaned Jewish girls. Thus, even private Jewish schools were not completely isolated from the Polish educational institutional culture. Further, young Jews often defended the School Theater program from charges that the performances were poor. M. Bornstein wrote that Jewish students appreciated the special Polskiej." 4. 213
theater productions for school audiences more than parents, since student audiences recognized the performances as "real art" with first-rate actors. Because the students attended only the rehearsals, the well-known essayist Zygmunt Nowakowski contended that the students did not see the actors in their top form during the evening performances. Still, Manuel Boner enthusiastically defended the School Theater, arguing that younger audiences demanded truer portrayals of characters on stage and that they would be less likely than adult audiences to accept artistic mediocrity. Not only does this point to possible involvement between private Jewish schools and public schools in Poland, but it is further evidence of how Polish culture was presented to Jewish youth. It simply could not be avoided, even by those in private Jewish schools.

Conclusion

Jewish community leaders established private Jewish schools of all types. These included separate institutions for secular or religious instruction, for boys and girls, and for special interests of all kinds. This level of activity was a response to the predominance of the majority culture, to growing antisemitism, the increasingly influential ideas of Jewish nationalism, and the new freedoms of the interwar period. The many different private schools reflect the urgent need for private Jewish education.

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76 M. Bornstein. "O teatrze szkolnym." Opinja. 5 August 1933. 9.

77 Manuel Boner. "Zamiast kroniki krakowskiej Teatr na czczo, czy po kolacji?"
Hilfstein, Shenirer, Teufel, Infeld and other educational leaders founded these schools to promote their own versions of Jewish religious, national, or secular identity. Nevertheless, none of these schools, not even the most traditional, were immune from the influence of the larger Polish community. Each school confronted this influence in its own way. Just as the members of the Jewish community founded various newspapers to serve a diverse community, so, too, educators provided the community with many options in which to express Jewish identity in Krakow's multiethnic environment. Some schools, like Sore Shenirer's Beys Yakov schools, fought Polish influence in an effort to stem acculturation. Others, like the Hebrew gymnasium and Infeld's *Nasza Szkoła*, furthered the education of Jews in Polish while providing a separate Jewish "sphere." Acculturated leaders of Jewish organizations besides schools did the same. They provided a number of ways Jews could participate in a larger Jewish community. None of these, from sports clubs to theater societies, were isolated from participation in the majority culture around them.
In his writings on the Yiddish theater, Sholem Freund noted in 1927 that the "Jewishness" of Krakow changed in 1904 with Jewish immigration to Krakow from Eastern Galicia. Freund wrote, "It was these immigrants who taught us about the other side of the border." where Galician Jews pursued all kinds of specifically Jewish political and cultural activities. These immigrants "opened new perspectives and horizons" by introducing the Jews of Krakow to "new sources of Jewishness."1 Freund does not define these "new sources of Jewishness." but it is clear he is referring to higher levels of specifically Jewish cultural activity. Freund suggests waves of Jewish immigration changed the nature of Jewish life in Krakow, just as they did in other Central European cities, most notably Berlin and Vienna. This change contributed to the Jewish political.

social, and cultural life of Krakow, enriching it by increasing the need for a variety of 
organizations to serve an increasingly diverse population. The Krakow Jewish 
community underwent further change when the devastation of World War I resulted in 
the founding of organizations and schools established to meet the needs of orphaned 
children and youth. Before the interwar period, the Jewish community had been 
dominated politically by Jews who declared themselves assimilated and independent. 
After 1918, a growing number of Jews were increasingly inclined to favor Zionism and 
socialism. Jews in interwar Krakow increasingly participated in secular organizations 
that promoted a Jewish cultural identity without necessarily requiring them to forfeit 
participation in Polish cultural life.

A study of the most important Jewish cultural organizations in Krakow, besides 
the press and the schools, can help to determine the concerns of the community and the 
relative importance of different forms of culture in its daily life. Examining the range of 
Jewish organizational life will not only help to establish the activities Jews participated in 
and their reasons for greater involvement with the Jewish community, but it will also 
illustrate how, after the development of many of these organizations, the Jews of Krakow 
could no longer simply be divided into the "assimilated" and the "Orthodox." Indeed, by 
the 1930s, the Zionist presence in Krakow was keenly felt in all areas of Jewish life. In 
addition, Jewish cultural institutions such as the Krakow Yiddish Theater Society and the 
Association of Jewish Artists illustrate that in between traditional Jewish religious life 
and complete assimilation into Polish society lay an alternative, a way for Jews to be
involved in Jewish life without having to subscribe to religious ideals or melt into Polish culture. Participation in these organizations tied the Jews of Krakow even further to life in the Diaspora, allowing them different ways to express their Jewish identity while remaining citizens of the country in which they lived.

By establishing separate cultural institutions of all kinds, Krakow Jews exhibited the same phenomenon observed in the development of Jewish education. Jews participating in public and private schooling, as well as in other cultural institutions, expressed a strong desire to remain a separate ethnic group while participating in the majority Polish culture. Jewish organizations were dedicated to raising the general cultural level of their members but at times focused on more specific goals. The institutions discussed in this chapter include sports teams, reading rooms, organizations of Jewish artists, and the Yiddish theater. Strictly political organizations have been omitted, though many of these cultural organizations were explicitly political as well. and it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate their political goals from their cultural aspirations. Interwar Jews engaged in a truly impressive range of activities. Separate Jewish organizations existed for almost any kind of professional and personal interest, and many organizations combined both. Many of the separate organizations were formed to meet the needs of specific subgroups of the Jewish community, such as socialist

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2In addition, I have omitted an analysis of Jewish religious and charitable organizations, primarily because they deserve separate treatment. A study of Jewish social work in interwar Poland would be especially useful as it is likely to yield important insights into the activities of Jewish women who were more active in social work than in political or cultural activities. It would also help us to better understand the consequences of the dire economic circumstances faced by both Jews and Poles.
Zionists, Zionist youth, or sports fans. Some of the organizations were quite large, with over a hundred members. Others were much smaller.

In unpublished material from the Museum of the City of Krakow, Zofia Wordliczek lists a total of 305 different Jewish organizations during the interwar period, from political and religious organizations to social clubs and reading rooms, to sports organizations and charitable groups, serving the varied interests of a population of sixty-five thousand. Each of these was required to register with the police and to report on changes in the status of the organization's officers and policies. Many of them only existed for brief periods, a year or less, but others lasted for nearly the entire interwar period. New organizations formed to meet the changing needs of Jews: some of these lasted, others faded quickly. Twenty-nine of the 305 organizations, according to Wordliczek's count, were charitable organizations that worked on behalf of Krakow's Jewish children. Presumably, many had both male and female members. Nine of the 305 were exclusively women's organizations: four of these were dedicated to charitable goals, two were devoted to the support of working women, and three were specifically nationalist in orientation. The many others were prayer houses and political and cultural organizations. Some organizations sponsored lectures, readings, concerts, plays, and libraries: each provided a specific avenue to participation in a larger Jewish community.

Jewish leaders established these organizations for a variety of reasons. Both

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4 Wordliczek. "Wystawa."
antisemitism and a desire for a separate Jewish culture played a role. Jews excluded from participation on Polish soccer teams, for example, were able to play on Jewish teams. Those who founded the Jewish theater societies, however, were motivated more by the desire to improve the Jews' cultural level than by any specific antisemitic incident. The impetus for the creation of a Yiddish Theater Society in Krakow came not from any prohibition against the participation of Jews in the Polish theater but from the desire to create a Yiddish cultural institution comparable to the best Polish theaters. Some of the organizations described below formed to promote a specific ideology, such as the reading rooms of the socialist Zionists. These ideologies were at least in part a response to the antisemitism within Polish society. Still others, like the Association of Jewish Artists, hoped to advance multicultural notions of art while providing opportunities for Jewish artists to exhibit their work. These various motivations reflect the diversity of the different groups within the Jewish community.

Participation in these different organizations could lead to stronger affiliations with either Jewish or Polish culture. This involvement is difficult to quantify, while the ways in which these organizations affected the identity formation of individual Jews is still harder to assess. In some cases, the contemporary press or memoir literature allows some insight into how the actual activities affected Jewish individuals. We do know, however, the types of activities these organizations sponsored, the kinds of meetings and lectures they held, the games they played, the dramas they performed. The organizations discussed here may have had ties to specific political ideals or cultural orientations, but
this certainly does not mean that all who participated in these organizations adhered to them. Those who cheered for the Makkabi sports team may also have gone to the lectures of the more acculturated Social Reading Room: those who attended the Yiddish theater most likely went regularly to the Polish theater as well. These organizations did not necessarily create a Jewish or a Polish identity for those who participated in their activities. They did, however, offer opportunities for Jews to encounter specifically Jewish forms of cultural life. Moreover, these opportunities, in settings free of Polish chauvinism, often served as an introduction to Polish cultural life as well. They provided a setting in which Jews would be able to claim an affinity to it. unthreatened by Polish chauvinism.

The Promotion of Jewish Culture

The goals of many separate Krakow Jewish organizations often coincided, though their names reveal a wide range of ideological values and religious beliefs. Some organizations did not promote a specific variant of Jewish culture but rather sought to advance Jewish culture more generally. These organizations defined their goals rather vaguely and sponsored a variety of events attracting different audiences. Some of these organizations, such as the Social Club (Klub Towarzyski), which sponsored libraries, reading rooms, evening readings, parties, gatherings of an apolitical nature, and amateur theatricals (wokalno-deklamacje), were apparently very small and were disbanded
because of a lack of members. Some others, such as "Szir," the Jewish Singing Society, the Union of Hebrew Journalists, or the Radio Social Club, catered to more specific interests. In general, little is known about these organizations' activities, but that does not necessarily mean that they were not important in the lives of some of Krakow's Jews. For example, the influential music critic and lawyer Henryk Apte led "Szir," an organization named after the Hebrew word for song and that numbered, at one point, 53 members. Taken together, these smaller organizations, including the general cultural organizations mentioned above, reached out to large numbers of people.

One of the larger organizations was the Jewish Society of People's Education (Zydowska Towarszystwa Osviatty Ludowej). Members of this organization were Bundists and partisans of a united workers' front. The Society featured lectures on topics as diverse as the poetry of the Hebrew writer Chaim Bialik, the plays of Poland's Stanislaw Wyspianski, biology, politics, trade, medicine, economics, and Roman history. This was not an insignificant organization. A police report from March 1935 indicates that 200 people attended a lecture to hear Zofja Dubnow-Erlich speak about Soviet literature. During the same month, 80 people attended the society's Yiddish poetry

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5Wojewodzkie Archiwum Panstwowe w Krakowie, Starostwo Grodzkie Krakowie (WAPKr. StGKr) 241 Klub Towarzyski w Krakowie 1932-1939.

6StGKr 249 Zyd. Tow. Spiewane "Szir" 1920 1923-1928: StGKr 139 Zrzeszenie literatow i dziennikarzy hebrajskich w Polsce Oddzial w Krakowie; StGKr 241 Radio Klub Towarzyski w Krakowie 1924-1938.

7StGKr 249 Zydowski Tow. Osviatty Ludowej (1913-1918) 1920-1939.
reading held in the Yiddish theater building.  

The leaders of a similar organization, the Jewish Society for Professional Culture (Zydowska Towarzystw Osviatty Zawodowej), stated in 1937 that its goal was the "broadening of culture among working Jewish youth, the creation in it of general professional and Jewish knowledge in the spirit of state citizenship. Jewish nationalism. and religious tradition." These goals were thus both secular and religious and suggested a level of Polish patriotism and Jewish national feeling. That Jewish organizations could espouse such apparently conflicting aims shows that Jews, as they had done since the processes of modernization had begun in the nineteenth century, were building their own home, defining their own ethnic identity, with reference to both Jewish and non-Jewish culture.

Activities of the "Toynbe [sic] Hala" organization (Towarsztwo dla szerzenia oswiatty wsrz Zydow w Malopolsce, Association for the Development of Culture among the Jews of Malopolska), presumably part of the Toynbee Hall social settlement in London, included trips, publishing activities, contests (konkursy), readings, and "the popularization of knowledge in all areas of culture." This organization was located in the heart of Kazimierz near the Hebrew gymnasium (on the first floor of Podbrzezie 6). It appears to have been a very active Jewish cultural organization. A large poster in Polish

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8StGKr 139. March 1935.
9StGKr 249 Zyd. Tow. Oswiatty Zawodowej 1937.
10StGKr 246 "Toynbe Hala" Towarzystwo dla szerzenia oswiatty wsrz Zydow w Malopolsce 1904-1917 1920-1935.
and Yiddish listed activities for two months. December 1918 and January 1919. Every Sunday afternoon there was a session especially for children. zabawy dla dzieci. Topics of other lectures included Jewish history and culture, the Jewish national fund, and Jewish emigration. Scholars often made presentations on the lives and works of both Jewish and non-Jewish writers, including Peretz and Mendele among the former, and Wyspianski, Ibsen, and Rostand, among the latter. Influential leaders within the Jewish community participated in these events, including the rabbi and political leader Ozjasz Thon. Dr. Henryk Apte, the music critic for Nowy Dziennik, gave a piano concert the notice for which was in Polish and Yiddish, and the well known Jewish educator Dr. Dawid Bulwa also gave a talk. The poster for Bulwa's talk was in Polish and Yiddish, while the stamp of the organization was in Polish and Hebrew, suggesting an awareness that Polish and Yiddish were the daily languages of the community at the same time recognizing Hebrew as a Jewish language as well. Toynbe Hall tried to be inclusive in its programming and its advertising to the Jewish community. While we can never be certain how many people participated in these types of organizations, the extensive schedule of events and lectures sponsored by Toynbee Hall indicates the organizers believed there was an audience for such events. Even if one assumes that twenty people or fewer attended each of the lectures sponsored by Toynbee Hall (a low estimate), this is still a significant number of people involved in the events of only one of many organizations.

11 The police file indicates that the organization lasted until 1935, but this is the only record of its activity located in the file.
In addressing important social, educational, and political problems, these organizations provided answers for the perpetual question of how Jews fit within the larger society. They offered opportunities to learn about being Jewish that were not solely from a religious perspective. Polish was often used as an administrative language in the organizations' records, but this should not obscure the extent to which these organizations promoted Jewish, whether Yiddish or Hebrew, culture. Cultural organizations existed especially to promote the development of Jewish culture in Hebrew and Yiddish, demonstrating the support of the Jewish community for cultural development in these languages as well as highlighting the fact that these Jewish languages needed support to attain cultural legitimacy within the Jewish community.

Yiddish culture remained an important element in Krakow Jewish life and the place of Hebrew in the city's Jewish cultural life (as well as the strength of Zionism) only increased during the interwar period with the efforts of the private Jewish schools, as well as many separate Jewish organizations. Though the presence of Yiddish culture in Krakow was minimal compared to other Polish cities, there was still a secular Jewish culture in the city, one that was expressed in the Jews' three languages.

None of these organizations ignored Hebrew or Yiddish literature. The organizations discussed above and below, the Jewish Society for People's Culture, the Jewish Society for Professional Culture, and Toynbe Hala, sponsored meetings and lectures in Yiddish. Indeed, many of them sponsored evenings devoted to specific

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12 The notable exception is the Czytelnia Towarzyska (Social Reading Room), discussed further below.

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Hebrew or Yiddish writers, honoring their creative work on their birthdays or the dates of their death. Some organizations even specifically promoted Hebrew or Yiddish literature. Some groups sponsored meetings on topics such as the Yiddish theater, Sholem Aleynhem, I. L. Peretz, H. Leivik, the decline of religion as a way of life, and the family and the national idea. The police often noted the political affiliations of members of those organizations which were specifically organized for workers and regulated any interest in and manifestation of Yiddish. They did not, in the end, ban the general use of Yiddish, though they did occasionally cancel meetings or other activities of Yiddish cultural organizations. Still, police monitored Jewish organizations closely because of the fear that they were simply a front for illegal communist activity.

Tarbut, an important interwar Jewish organization in Eastern Europe that took its name from the Hebrew word for culture, encouraged the use of Hebrew in the city. The group sponsored lectures in Hebrew as well as lectures on the need for Jewish youth to learn Hebrew. A 1922 report on a lecture by Mojzesz Gordon noted that Hebrew should be the language of Jewish youth because this was a language that the English, French, and Polish Jew could all use to communicate: "the Hebrew language is presently indispensable for creating Jewish youth and for the raising of a Jewish spirit." Other lecture topics sponsored by Tarbut included Jewish prophets, Hebrew poetry, Jewish art, Polish literature and its influence on certain Hebrew poets. Thus, while Krakow Jews did not use Hebrew daily, the language did have a presence in the cultural life of the city.

The leaders of Tarbut, however, were not able to ignore the fact of the Diaspora: the organization also sponsored talks on Polish literature and published its own reports in Polish.

Jewish participation in general Polish and European culture can be seen in other specifically Jewish organizations to be discussed below, including Jewish sports organizations, associations of artists, and the Yiddish theater. Polish culture was present among some Jewish organizations which presented lectures on Polish writers or Polish literary movements as well as on specifically Jewish topics. Linguistically, the community was undergoing a period of transformation, as both Polish schools and Jewish organizations introduced Polish and Polish culture to even greater numbers of Jews, especially youth.

All three cultures of Poland's Jews were represented in Krakow's Jewish cultural life, though to varying extents. Krakow's Jews did not entirely abandon Yiddish or Hebrew in favor of Polish or reject Polish for the exclusive use of Yiddish or Hebrew. They could participate in cultural activities in any and all of the three languages. While it is clear that the Jewish nationalists and Zionists of Krakow privileged the use of Hebrew and that the Polish state naturally privileged Polish in its educational and social policies, the lack of any Polish governmental support for Yiddish did not necessarily hinder the development of Yiddish culture in Poland. With the exceptions of the acceptance of Polish citizenship and social pressure to conform to Jewish religious strictures, the Jews of Krakow were not forced to define themselves exclusively in terms of one nationality or
culture whether Polish or Jewish. By looking at the different types of organizations that developed to serve their needs, we can better understand how Jews moved between Polish school and Zionist youth organization, synagogue and theater. Hebrew lessons and soccer games.

Sport

Sport played an important role in Jewish life in interwar Kraków. Jewish youth, both boys and girls, were often involved in their own sports clubs which competed with Polish ones. and, like young fans everywhere, followed both Polish and Jewish sports enthusiastically. Some of the Jewish sports clubs had a neighborhood character such as those in Zwierzyniecki and Podgorze, while other clubs were specifically for the working class. Some, like the Jutrzenka and Makkabi sports organizations, were specifically for Krakow's Jews. The first was a sports organization founded by socialists and more assimilated Jews, while the second was a part of the international Jewish sports federation and overtly Zionist in orientation.

In his memoir Mosaic Confessions (Wyznanie mojzeszowe), Henryk Vogler describes the deep animosity and rivalry between two Jewish soccer teams. Following his family's example, young Vogler was an ardent fan of Jutrzenka. Both sports organizations sponsored other sports as well, including tennis, swimming, track and field.

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and water polo. Jutrzenka declined toward the end of the interwar period, the result of having been taken over by partisans of the Bund. Jews became involved in socialism, whether as part of the Bund or another, perhaps non-Jewish, socialist party, as a response to the evident class divisions in society: this political activity affected non-political life as well. According to Vogler, the politicization of the Jutrzenka organization resulted in catastrophe as the new leaders occupied themselves with political propaganda and neglected sport. In a short time, the sports complex developed earlier by Jutrzenka had become nothing more than an empty field and some of the group's best athletes joined Makkabi in an effort to continue their activities. It appears that the Bundist version of socialism conflicted with that of the other members of the group, who would have been more inclined to the socialism of the Polish Socialist Party. Such divisions were ultimately disastrous for the group. The dissolution of Jutrzenka left the Zionist Makkabi sports organization the primary alternative for Jewish athletes. What is most significant about the rivalry between these two groups is that it existed at all and along such ideological lines. In Krakow, the internal politics of Jewish leftists benefitted the city's Zionists. Different alternatives existed for Jewish youth, though these were almost always connected to some larger ideological position which may or may not have interested the youth. Sport was one of the ways community leaders introduced young Jews to different ideologies such as nationalism and socialism.

By contrast, the Krakow branch of the Makkabis grew significantly during the interwar period. From a membership of 400 in 1930, the group more than doubled by
Krakow's Jewish elite was very active in this organization as well, with Fryderyk Freund, later one of the leaders of the Yiddish Theater Society, as its president, and Wilhelm Berkelhammer, the editor of Nowy Dziennik, as one of its members. The Makkabi sports field was in Kazimierz, but its offices were found much closer to the city center. The organization comprised fifteen different sections, including rowing, fencing, horseback riding, and chess, among others.

While Makkabi and Jutrzenka were the two most important Jewish sports clubs in interwar Krakow, there were several others, with names such as Amatorzy (Polish, Fans), Bar-Kochba, Dror, Hagibor (Hebrew, The Hero), Kadima (Hebrew, Forward), and Sila (Polish, Strength). These less popular sports organizations still had approximately 50 to 100 members each. Sila was one of the larger of them, with over 100 members. The police monitored these sports organizations carefully. They suspected some members and officers of the sports club Gwiazda (Star) of membership in the Poale Zion Left (a socialist Zionist organization) and, according to the police reports, considered all


members of *Gwiazda* as sympathizers of the Communist Party. In 1936, police officials banned *Gwiazda* because it did not fill a social need: the police claimed there were already enough Jewish sports organizations in the city. The Poale Zion Right (also socialist Zionist) also sponsored its own sports club in the late 1930s. "Hapoel." The political and ideological divisions of Jewish Krakow manifested themselves in its sports clubs.

In his memoir, Vogler writes enthusiastically about his early years as a soccer fan in interwar Poland, weaving together the Polish and Jewish strands of his own life and of Krakow. Vogler was a spectator, not a participant. From an acculturated family living on ulica Florianska in the center of Krakow, Vogler did not participate in Jewish cultural or sports activities, but he was aware of his Jewish origins and he did follow the Jewish soccer teams. Even such incidental involvement in the Jewish community was important for a young man like Vogler. Vogler recalled a meeting with Leon Sperling, a Jewish soccer player on a non-Jewish soccer team, Cracovia. The Cracovia team was not a specifically Jewish team but among Jews supporting the left in Krakow, it enjoyed a special sympathy for its courage in fielding players without regard to nationality or religion. Vogler met Sperling in the Kupa synagogue in Kazimierz, where Vogler's parents had worshipped.

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19 StGKr 249 Zyd. Robotniczy Klub Sportowy "Gwiazda" 1927-1938.


22 Vogler, *Wyznania mojzeszowe*. 11. Cracovia's rival, Wisla, did not enjoy such a
grandfather took him infrequently. During prayer one morning, Sperling was forced to leave the synagogue early as he was late for a match. Vogler, whose uncle had also played soccer, was privileged to go with Sperling to the match and observe how Sperling transformed himself \textit{(Przeistoczenia)} -- from a Jew at prayer into a soccer player.\textsuperscript{23} It is easy to see how this transfiguration could affect a young boy so powerfully. Vogler received an early lesson in how an adult Jew could manage a private Jewish life with the more public persona of a soccer player.

As a more acculturated Jew, Vogler was from the outset less interested in this kind of private Jewish life, which he participated in only with his grandfather. Nonetheless, Sperling and the other Jewish soccer players on the Cracovia team served as positive role models for Vogler and other young Jews in Krakow. Still, their presence on Polish teams was an exception and Vogler makes it clear that Jewish fans rewarded Cracovia with their loyalty because it had the courage to accept Jews. Jewish teams were still needed to satisfy the interests of Jews in sport, and Jewish players on non-Jewish teams still won the attention of Jewish fans for breaking a barrier between Polish and Jewish society.

Separate Jewish sports organizations flourished in interwar Krakow, but groups based on ethnicity did not necessarily separate Jews from Polish culture. Krakow's Jews also tried to participate more directly in the Polish institutions. The best example of this reputation, at least partly due to an antisemitic remark made by one of Wisla's players about a Jewish referee. Jewish soccer fans of interwar Krakow rewarded the more tolerant Polish soccer team, Cracovia, with their enthusiasm and loyalty.

\textsuperscript{23}Vogler, \textit{Wyznanie mojzeszowe}. 9-10.
is a conflict over the YMCA building in Krakow. The writers of *Nowy Dziennik* protested against the exclusion of Jews from the newly built local YMCA in 1931 on the grounds that the building had been paid for at least partially with the money of Jews who had responded positively to the YMCA’s appeal for funds. This protest arose on the occasion of the building of a new YMCA building in Warsaw. The writer appealed to the Jewish community to withhold support from the Warsaw YMCA because there was no guarantee that Jews would have access to the building’s facilities (of most concern was the swimming pool), even if they helped to pay for it. Once the building of the YMCA in Krakow was finished, the YMCA authorities asserted that as representatives of a private organization they could exclude whomever they wanted from their facilities. The YMCA simply betrayed the Jewish community’s trust: it allowed Jews to donate money for their building which they then refused them the right to use. One Polish organization, however, did take the side of the Jews. The board of the Polish Swimmers’ Union adopted a resolution that stated they would not hold any local, regional, national, or international swim meets at the YMCA in Krakow, because of the Krakow YMCA’s exclusion of the general public, specifically Jews. This was certainly a success within the community of Jewish sports, but it still did not open the YMCA pool in Krakow to Jews.

That Jews were willing to contribute to the building of the YMCA demonstrates

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25 This, according to the article of Dr. J. H., "Antysemityzm krakowskiej YMCA, a zydowskie pieniadze." 24 March 1931, 6. No date is given for the resolution.
their willingness to participate in institutions that could serve the city as a whole. In addition, the resolution of the Polish Swimmers' Union shows that there was some real, positive cooperation between the two groups. Poles and Jews, throughout the entire interwar period, were still negotiating ways to live together. This included figuring out how the minority population could (and would) participate in institutions of the majority. Privileges to use community swimming pools is just one example of specific conflict. The experiences of Jews in Polish public or private schools are others. Not surprisingly, antisemitism made the existence of separate Jewish organizations both necessary and desirable. Still, there was the possibility of participating in the institutions of the larger community, of which the Jews considered themselves a part. Sperling's presence on the Cracovia team. Vogler's enthusiasm for integrated non-Jewish teams. and Jewish participation in fundraising campaigns of the YMCA suggest that the Jewish population did not reject the possibility of cooperation and mutual participation.

*Libraries and Reading Rooms*

More accessible to the average Jew than the high cultural pursuits of the theater or visual arts were the libraries and reading rooms sponsored by many different Jewish (and Polish) organizations. A number of reading rooms and community libraries existed in interwar Krakow specifically for Jews. These were mostly small lending libraries or reading rooms, affiliated with a range of Jewish groups, from the official Jewish
community to socialist and socialist Zionist political parties. Reading rooms supplemented the education of many Jews (as non-Jewish reading rooms no doubt did for the non-Jewish populations), serving as a way for individuals to educate themselves independently and informally. Some of the reading rooms played a greater cultural role in the city than a public library might. In some of the reports of these organizations, one can learn how many people participated in the reading room's activities, how many books were held by the reading room, which languages they were in, and how many books were checked out and by how many people. This does not necessarily indicate the political tendencies of the borrowers, but it does show a popular level of cultural activity that, like the Jewish sports clubs, reflected the political and ideological divisions of the Jewish community.

The kahal sponsored a public reading room for Jews located in its administrative building in Kazimierz. The Public Reading Room and Library "Ezra" was founded just at the start of World War I. During the war, the actual building in which the Ezra reading room was located was used for storage of potatoes or grain, but the kahal reopened it after the war. The president of the kahal, Rafal Landau was a member of its board. The reading room had a membership of 200; thus, while it was an official organization of the kahal, it did not necessarily serve as the primary reading room for the entire Jewish community.

The People's Reading Room "Unity" (Czytelnia Ludowa Jednosc/Folkslezehale Aynhayt) had around 220 members and was located in Kazimierz. The specific goal of

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26StGKr 239 Biblioteka i Czytelnia Publiczna "Ezra" w Krakowie 1930. 1938.
this reading room was similar to that of the more general Jewish cultural organizations mentioned above, to "raise the cultural level" of its members. The organizers of this reading room reached out to the Jewish working class of Krakow, combining socialist and Zionist ideology. From the police records, we know that all of the members of this reading room also had ties to the Poale Zion Left (one hundred per cent. according to the report). The reading room was in existence from 1926 to 1938. Though the reasons for its decline in 1938 are unclear, it is significant that this socialist Zionist organization existed as late as the late 1930s.\textsuperscript{27} It is likely that it closed as a result of the continual police harassment of those suspected of leftist activity, but there is no record in the police files that this was so or that it was officially suppressed. Its membership was roughly equal to that of "Ezra," indicating the success of the organization as well as the attraction of its ideology.

The I. L. Peretz Jewish People's Library was in existence from 1928 to 1939.\textsuperscript{28} The reading room, named after one of the most important Yiddish writers, had 110 members. The People's Library, located in Kazimierz, first on ulica Miodowa and then on ulica Dietlowska, held amateur performances, maintained a library, and organized readings. The reading room statutes do not suggest any political tendency, but it is likely that the leaders of this organization were closely linked to Yiddish culture and socialist ideology. The Krakow police closely watched this organization. At least one of the

\textsuperscript{27}StGKr 239 Czytelnia Ludowa "Jednosc" w Krakowie 1926-1938; Folkslezechale "Aynhayt" in Kroke.

\textsuperscript{28}StGKr 248 Zydowska Biblioteka Ludowa im. J. L. Peretza 1928-1939.
members, the treasurer Stefanja Schenker, was "politically suspect" ("jako polityczne podejrzani"). The police noted previous arrests of the organization's officers as well as their membership in the Anarchist Federation of Poland (Anarchistyczna Federacja Polski). Further notes on the members show that all of them were members of Poale Zion Left and members of "Antifa," an "enemy of the Polish state." An additional note in the police files terms the locale of the organization as a "rendezvous and meeting place for persons suspected of communist activity." The organization was still relatively active in 1937, when a general meeting drew 62 members and the number of readers using the library was 440. The library at that time held 3,370 books. An inventory of its library indicated that it contained 1,805 books in Yiddish, 1,046 in Polish and 300 in German, demonstrating the organization's commitment to Yiddish as well as secular culture. Most interestingly, this is the only organization (besides the Yiddish Theater Society) that seems to have placed more emphasis on Yiddish culture than Polish or Hebrew.

Not all of the reading rooms for Jews were located in Kazimierz. One of the most important in interwar Krakow was an organization of the Jewish intelligentsia, called the Social Reading Room (Czytelnia Towarzyska) and located on Rynek Glowny (the main market square). This reading room is noted as a Jewish organization but there was

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30StGKr 239 Czytelnia Towarzyska w Krakowie /1917/ 1918-1925-1939. This file includes the Sprawozdania za rok zawiadawczy 1932. See also in the WAPKr archive on ul. Sienna. Syg. 2475 Sprawozdanie Wydziału Czytelni Towarzyskiej w Krakowie z czynności za (I) rok zawiadawczy 1912/13 (Krakow: Drukarnia Ludowa, 1913) and 20 lat Czytelni Towarzyskiej w Krakowie Sprawozdania roczne 1932 (Krakow: Nakładem Czytelni, 1932).
nothing specifically Jewish about its activities. Non-Jewish memoirists occasionally note the programs the Social Reading Room sponsored. The Social Reading Room was one of the most important intellectual associations, whether Poli in the city, whether Polish or Jewish. Non-Jewish memoirs make no mention of this organization's Jewish origins, however, and the only reference found to the Jewish origins of this reading room is in Henryk Vogler's memoir. Vogler writes that the Collegium of Scientific Lectures (Kolegium Wykładow Naukowych), part of the reading room's official activities, was very much like other Krakow organizations of this type but that it was an organization of the Jewish intelligentsia. Vogler writes.

On Rynek Glowny [the main market square] from ulica Florianska to ulica Sławkowska and Szczepeńska...on the first floor of apartment building number 39 was found the home of a cultural and educational institution, similar to many Krakow organizations of this type, only that this one was an organization of the Jewish intelligentsia. But this institution did not dedicate its attention to Jewish problems; rather, it avoided them. This society was always in general culturally and educationally ambitious, and it constantly tried to place itself in the avant-garde. Antoni Slonimski stressed this in his malicious travesty of Slowacki, writing: 'Let the Jews not lose hope, let them carry education, not a lamp, before the nation...'\(^{31}\)

The reading room owned a rich library as well as a large collection of the current

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\(^{31}\) Slonimski was very cleverly playing with Slowacki's words. The original quote from Slowacki comes from his poem. "Testament moj":

Lecz zaklinam - niech żywi nie traca nadziei
I przed narodem niosa oswiaty kaganiec;
A kiedy trzeba - na śmierć ida po kolei.
Jak kamienie przez Boga rzucane na szaniec!...

"Kaganiec" is a word no longer used in contemporary Polish. "Kaganek" is a small source of light, like a candle (a kind of oil lamp). The word "oswiata" (education) derives from świeci. oswiecac (to shine. turn on the light).
press from around the country and from abroad. Here met, for bridge and for
chess, young sons of lawyers, doctors, bankers, rich merchants, the second
generation of the new intelligentsia born in the Krakow atmosphere of Young
Poland...newcomers from the depths of the ghettos of Eastern Galicia...all became
the bards of the city's literature, celebrating it with enthusiasm and the fervent
love of the neophyte.32

Membership in the Social Reading Room was already over 300 in 1913, including
such important Jewish political and cultural figures in Krakow as Adolf Gross, Rafal
Taubenschlag, the Landau families, the Tilles family, and Henryka Fromowicz-
Stillerowa.33 By 1919, the Social Reading Room had become one of the most important
cultural organizations in interwar Krakow, sponsoring literary and other evenings
featuring the very best of Polish writers and intellectuals. The Social Reading Room held
weekly classes in English, Esperanto, French, and Italian and sponsored chess, sports,
music, and other activities. The organization subscribed to many newspapers, including
the Krakow newspapers Czas, Glos Narodu, Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny, Nowy
Dziennik, and Robotnik as well as the English New Era and Times Literary Supplement,
the Esperanto periodical Verda Stelo, the French L'Illustration, and the German Berliner
Tageblatt, and the Viennese Neue Freie Presse.

The activities of this reading room went well beyond lending books and often
reflected a strong attachment to Polish culture. Members organized lectures, literary, and
theatrical evenings that were often well attended and whose topics included the works of
Jan Kocahanowski, Juliusz Slowacki, Ignacy Krasinski, Adam Mickiewicz, and Lucjan

32Vogler. Wyznanie mojzeszowe, 90-91.

33WAPKr. Syg. 2475 Sprawozdanie Wydzialu Czytelni Towarzyskiej w Krakowie z
czynnosci za (l) rok zawiadawczy 1912/13 (Krakow: Drukarnia Ludowa, 1913).
Rydel, the future of Polish poetry, and the philosophy of Kant. Additional activities throughout the years included a lecture by the poet Julian Tuwim, an evening dedicated to the Polish military, and a vaudeville production by Stanislaw Mandelbaum with the music of Jozef Frist, the work of the drama group (kolko deklamacyjno-dramatyczne). Further indicating the organization's attachment to Polish culture, the Reading Room purchased a brick (cegielka) to be placed at Wawel, Krakow's royal castle, commemorating the organization's first ten years. The year after its tenth anniversary, the organization had grown to 864 members. In over ten years of existence (including the years of the First World War and the difficult postwar period), there were a total of over 1700 lectures and readings. The Polish community took note of the reading room's extraordinary growth, as a subvention of the Ministry of Art and Culture attests. In 1924-1925, the organization received a subsidy from the Krakow city council, and in the next year it bought a new aparat kinematograficzny (movie projector) in order to show pictures for art and natural sciences lectures.

The Collegium did not limit itself to the presentation of academic lectures, however. It also sponsored the cabaret Bury Melonik, which became known thanks to the efforts of Bruno Hoffmann and Adam Polewka as well as the actor Jasiu Ulreich. The work presented in this cabaret was primarily szmonces, or linguistic jokes based on the Polish-language skills of Jews. This type of humor, satirizing the Jewish use of Polish.

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34 For a complete listing of the events sponsored, see 20 lat Czytelni Towarzyskiej w Krakowie Sprawozdania roczne 1932 (Nakładem Czytelni, 1932).

35 Vogler, Wyznania mojzeszowe, 93.
was especially popular in the cabarets of Warsaw, Lwow, and Krakow. Tuwim himself wrote szmonces. These played well to interwar cabaret audiences, which, according to Vogler and many other memoirists, were predominantly Jewish. Vogler described Bury Melonik as a worthy successor to the prewar Zielony Balonik (Little Green Balloon) cabaret held in the Jama Michalika cafe on Florianska.

The Social Reading Room on Rynek Glowny may have been one of the most influential reading rooms in the city, but, in catering to the acculturated Jewish intelligentsia, it did not serve the needs of the larger Jewish community. The precise size of this intelligentsia is difficult to determine: the 864 members of the Social Reading Room provides some clue, but it is possible that at least some of this number were Poles. It did, however, succeed in providing a space for the Jewish intelligentsia to pursue cultural endeavors they may have not been able to pursue in non-Jewish settings. At the same time, they served as an organization that might bring acculturated/assimilated Jews closer to Polish culture and to Poles who were interested in similar intellectual pursuits. From press reviews and memoir literature, we know that the Polish intelligentsia knew of and participated in the activities of the Collegium, but it is difficult to assess the effect the Collegium might have had on Polish-Jewish relations in the city. The Collegium did not speak specifically of increasing mutual understanding between the two peoples or

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36 The most well-known writer of szmonces in Krakow was Dr. Alfred Winterstein, or Alwin. Alwin's work appeared in interwar Polish Jewish newspapers as well, especially Chwila. Alwin even had his own small theater in Krakow in the Sala Bolonska in the Palac Spiski on Rynek Glowny.

37 Vogler, Wyznania mojzeszowe, 40, 94.

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working in specific ways toward improving Polish-Jewish relations. Rather, it simply pursued its cultural goals which assumed familiarity with the highest level of Polish culture. Groups like the Association of Jewish Artists (discussed further below) worked toward improving the Jewish community while attempting to gain some understanding of the Polish community. In contrast, the founders of the Collegium took their legacy of Polish culture for granted. This in itself indicates the level of acculturation that had already taken place. The Collegium founders did not identify themselves as Jews in any of their published materials or press announcements and their Jewish identity was not relevant for their goal of "spreading" culture. This alone makes them unique among Jewish organizations in Krakow.

The Social Reading Room clearly neglected Jewish culture in favor of Polish. One might argue that the Polish Jews who founded the Social Reading Room had already achieved a level of mutual understanding by adopting the content and forms of Polish culture as their own. The price for this, however, was a neglect of their Jewish identity and of Jewish culture. While this may not have been an outright denial of Jewish identity on the part of the Collegium founders, it was a privileging of one culture over the other. Some of the Jewish community who were members of the Social Reading Room, however, were also actively involved in Jewish community life. Adolf Gross and Samuel Tilles were leaders in the kahal and Fromowicz-Stillerowa established a children's magazine for Jewish children, Okienko na swiat. Still, important questions remain unanswered. Why were these Jewish community leaders, so actively involved in Jewish
causes. members of an organization that has been described by a reliable source (Henryk Vogler) as having avoided Jewish culture? Leaders such as Gross, Tilles, and Fromowicz-Stillerowa apparently did not wish to remain separate from either Polish or Jewish culture. Still, the categorization of the Social Reading Room as Jewish and Vogler's assertion that the reading room was an organization of the Jewish intelligentsia suggests the limits of acculturation short of conversion. This segment of Krakow Jewry deserves more study, not least because the cosmopolitan nature of the reading room suggests similarities to the Jewish intellectual tradition of Vienna.

Both Polish and Yiddish culture were highlighted in the activities of the different reading rooms for Jews. The reading rooms formed to serve different subpopulations within the Jewish community, assimilated Jews, women, or those of the Yiddish-speaking left. The division of the Jewish community into these different groups is not as important as the idea that these reading rooms, in spite of their individual characteristics, represented the collective efforts of the Jewish community to raise its own cultural level. Such informal educational efforts take on even greater importance when one remembers that most Jewish children received their education in Polish and only the most rudimentary Jewish religious instruction in public schools. With the notable exception of the Social Reading Room, these separate cultural activities ensured a commitment to Jewish ethnicity and promoted an attachment to Jewish nationalism without compromising the development of Polish patriotism.
Jewish Artists

Just as Jewish sports organizations and reading rooms furthered the development of a secular Jewish culture in Krakow, Jewish visual artists began to organize themselves into associations which furthered their art in secular contexts. The goal of the Jewish Society for the Spreading of the Fine Arts 1929-1930 (Zyd. Tow. Krzewienie Sztuk Pieknych) was, simply, the development of the fine arts among Jews.\(^{38}\) Artists in the Association of Artists "Union" (Stow. Artystow Plastykow "Zjednoczenie" 1933-1937), including Leon Lewkowicz, Szymon Muller, and Jakob Pfefferberg, defined their goal as the "spreading of a love for art through lectures and the exhibitions of paintings and sculptures of our members."\(^{39}\) During the interwar period, Jewish leaders organized cultural life along specifically Jewish lines, taking advantage of an opportunity that had not presented itself during the final years of the Habsburg empire.\(^{40}\)

That such organizations focused almost solely on the "spreading" (the Polish

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\(^{39}\)StGKr 241 Stow. Artystow Plastykow "Zjednoczenie" 1933-1937.

\(^{40}\)The Jewish artists discussed here were those active within the Jewish community. Other artists of Jewish origin from Krakow were more active in the Polish art world: their careers await further study. The most important of these artists, Jonasz Sztern, survived the Holocaust and included Jewish themes in his later work. Sztern was a part of Grupa Krakowska (Krakow Group), which attracted other artists of Jewish origin as well. Art historians have focused attention on the group's art but have not examined it as an interethnic artistic circle. This remains an important topic of study for those interested in relations between Jews and Poles. See Helena Blum. Jonasz Stern (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1978); Leopold Lewicki i Grupa Krakowska w latach 1932-1937 (Krakow: Stowarzyszenia Artystycznego, Grupa Krakowska, 1991); Erna Rosenstein (Krakow: Stowarzyszenia Artystycznego Grupa Krakowska, 1992).
words most often used include *krzewienie, rozpowszechnienie, rozszerzenie,* and *szerzenie* of "culture" or, sometimes more specifically, "Jewish culture." indicates a growing recognition on the part of the Jewish cultural leaders that significant segments of the Jewish community were excluded from participation in any kind of formal cultural life. Unlike the acculturated Jewish elite who founded the Social Reading room, the Union of Jewish Artists confirmed its own Jewish identity and expressed a willingness to "spread culture" among Jews. Their organizing into an association of artists demonstrates the need for Jewish leadership and the development of a specifically Jewish secular culture, especially given the more acculturated Jewish elite's abandonment of Jewish identity and specifically Jewish cultural goals. In an effort to reach out to a larger segment of the Jewish community, the artists' efforts aimed to improve the number and kinds of opportunities afforded Jewish artists as well as those offered to Jewish audiences. The two goals were intertwined in the statements of the organizations themselves, suggesting that Jewish cultural leaders understood the need to cultivate Jewish audiences to support their work.

Further, Jewish artists expressed hope that the relationship between artist and audience could lead to greater mutual understanding within Poland. In the journal *Sztuka i Zycie Wspolczesne* (Art and Contemporary Life), published in February 1934 in Krakow, a group of Jewish artists proclaimed their hope that art could overcome the hatred unleashed in Europe in recent years. This periodical was the work of the

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41 "Od redakcji," *Sztuka i Zycie Wspolczesne* (Czasopismo Zrzeszenia Zyd. Art. Malarzy i Rzezbiorzy w Krakowie) 1 (February 1934): 2. (Art and Contemporary Life. Journal of the Association of Jewish Artists, Painters, and Sculptors in Krakow) This was
Association of Jewish Artists. Painters, and Sculptors. Founded in 1933, the Association grew to a not insignificant membership of 171. The Association included the participation of Wilhelm Berkelhammer, the editor of Nowy Dziennik, Henryk Apte, the music critic for Nowy Dziennik, as well as the artists Leo Schoenker, Norbert Nadel, Ignacy Muller, and Leon Lewkowicz. In Sztuka i Zycie Wspolczesne, these artists called for greater cooperation between the artist and the audience, a cooperation that should not be limited to one national group but that should serve the greatest number of people possible. Moreover, they expressed hope that this would lead to a greater level of understanding between Poles and Jews. As the articles of the journal show, the artists were interested in both local Jewish art, working to establish a Jewish Museum in Krakow and in areas of art as diverse as French impressionism and Soviet film.

The writers in Sztuka i Zycie Wspolczesne exemplify how the educated Jews of Krakow also worked on behalf of the community. Engaged in current debates regarding contemporary art, cosmopolitan in orientation, and significantly less traditional than the typical Jew of Kazimierz, the artists of the Association for Jewish Artists were nonetheless involved in local affairs, as their concern for a museum proposed by the kahal attests. Understanding the efforts and ideas of those artists involved in this organization will help to show how Jewish artists, like other Jewish intellectuals, turned to separate Jewish organizations to maintain their ethnic identity without abandoning the first issue and the only issue I have been able to locate.

\[42\text{WAPKr. StGKr 247 Zrzeszenie Zyd. Artystow Malarzy i Rzezbiarzy 1933, 1938. Also involved were Norbert Nadel, Emil Schinagel, Leon Fiszlowitz, Abraham Neuman, Erna Zollmanowa, and Helena Grabschriftowna.}\]
majority culture. Rather, they promoted what we would call today greater multicultural understanding amid the realities of cultural diversity. They promoted different kinds of art equally, and they worked to advance local causes such as the kahal museum.

One of the most important and more ideologically oriented articles in Sztuka i Zycie Wspolczesne came from Leon Chwistek. a non-Jewish Polish intellectual from Lwow. His article, "Questions of the Artistic Environment." pointed out that the idea of "national art" had still not been overcome. Chwistek saw his era as one of great prejudices. He was clearly against "national art." that is, art that would somehow privilege one nation, one community, over another. Taking his ideas even further, Chwistek asserted that chauvinism was connected with crime (szrodnia) and would always act as a brake on the development of spiritual culture (kultura duchowej). Tolerance, in contrast, always leads to the blossoming of culture and a higher cultural level. As proof, Chwistek compared the Poland of Casimir the Great and the Jagiellonians to fifteenth century Spain and the Inquisition. Chwistek noted that it was the artists from foreign countries that made Paris the center of the art world in the interwar period. In fact, the further the origins of these artists from Paris. the stronger the proof that Paris was the center of the art world.

Chwistek acknowledged that great art could exist even in the Carpathian mountains, but he felt that without the support of a great center it would drown. There was a spark for great art in Poland, according to Chwistek, but it disappeared quickly.

Advocates of "averageness" (przecietnosc) asserted that artistic innovations were, by definition, foreign, specifically Jewish, and therefore should be liquidated. Chwistek felt that Poles had never understood that they were destined for the great task of the working people (lud roboczy). He thought Poles could solve their problems by promoting the cause of social justice for all nations. Evidently, this task involved tolerance for other nations and other types of art. Then and only then would Poles not have to go abroad to look for examples of great art because all races/nations would feel drawn to Poland as an artistic center.44

The Jewish artist Henryk Weber also discussed this question of nationalism and national characteristics in art. In a review of an exhibition sponsored by the Association of Jewish Artists, Painters, and Sculptors in Krakow,45 Weber asked the recurring question about Jews and art -- were they Jewish artists or artists who happened to be Jewish? Weber did not give a definitive answer to this question, but he did state that national categories did not help artists. Taking Chagall as an example, Weber suggested that what was important for an artist was to be rooted in his environment, concluding that many different characteristics could define an artist, none of them necessarily dependent

44 For a fuller discussion of different types of Polish nationalism, see Jerzy Jedlicki, "Polish Concepts of Native Culture," in National Character and National Ideology in Interwar Eastern Europe, edited by Ivo Banac and Katharine Verdery (New Haven: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1995). 1-22. Jedlicki discusses the romanticized, more inclusive nationalism harking back to the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth as well as a "folk-oriented" nationalism that writers and artists developed in their work. Also see Brian Porter's When Nationalism Began to Hate, where Porter discusses the intellectual changes of the nineteenth century that made possible an exclusive and intolerant Polish nationalism.

45 Nowy Dziennik. 28 November 1931. 5-6.
on nationality.

Both Chwistek and Weber espoused an inclusive philosophy of art that transcended national distinctions. This philosophy allowed for Jews to be included in the art world, to be exhibited alongside other artists, to be viewed objectively, to not be discriminated against as Jews, and to appeal openly to non-Jewish audiences. According to Chwistek and Weber, art could not be limited by national boundaries and national characteristics could not and should not determine the nature of an individual's art. These artistic values were of great importance to a minority community that could simply not take any other position. The call for greater multicultural understanding among artists was the most effective way for Jews to insure that they would be taken seriously as artists. Not surprisingly, they advocated the work of artists of other nationalities as well, writing about Soviet film or French impressionism. Advocating the organization of artists' groups along ethnic lines, this association of Jewish artists also reached out to artists from other ethnic groups, declaring their solidarity while separating themselves from them at the same time.

The Yiddish Theater in Interwar Krakow

In terms of innovation, the most significant Jewish cultural institution during the interwar period was the Krakow Yiddish Theater Society, established as a formal organization in 1926. This group was formed largely thanks to the efforts of Mojzesz
Kanfer, who was appointed literary editor and theater critic of Nowy Dziennik in 1923. The Yiddish Theater Society went through difficult periods during the twenties and thirties, even ceasing to exist for several years. Kanfer's effort to establish a standing professional Yiddish theater troupe in Krakow is notable for several reasons, not least of which is the fact that it was led by a journalist writing in Polish. It is also notable for the determination of its leadership and for its ultimate lack of success. Kanfer and his society thought the current level of Yiddish theater in Krakow to be shamefully low and they continually tried to improve its artistic quality. Kanfer faced a difficult battle, though, as he did not have the support of the city's Jewish intelligentsia, who, according to Kanfer and the memoir literature, attended the Polish theater with much more regularity. Nor did the society enjoy the unquestioned support of other Yiddish cultural institutions in the city. The society was thus charged with the task of developing and maintaining a Yiddish-speaking audience as well as getting the support of the predominantly Polish-speaking Jewish intelligentsia, who had already abandoned Yiddish as a daily language.

Yiddish productions had taken place in Krakow as early as the 1880s. Tracing the history of Yiddish theater in Krakow, Rachel Holcer noted the formation of the Jewish "Szopka" Satirical Puppet Theater (Satyryczny Teatr Lalek "Szopka Zydowska") in 1919. The director of the puppet theater was Mojzesz Jacob, a former censor under Habsburg rule who after the end of World War I received a government concession to present Yiddish plays. The Puppet Theater was held on the Planty in the "Royal"

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kawiarnia (coffee shop) and attracted the attention of Kanfer. Wilhelm Fallek, and other Jewish intellectuals who described it as political satire of the highest order.

According to Freund, the efforts to form the Yiddish Theater Society had begun as early as 1924, but the organization formed then, the Society of Friends of Jewish Art (Towarzystwo Przyjaciol Sztuki Zydowskiej/Farajn fun libhober fun jidiszer kunst), did not receive the necessary concession from the government. This organization, with Freund as president and Kanfer and Mordecai Gebirtig on the board, sponsored a series of lectures in 1925 by such prominent Jewish cultural figures as the writers Meylekh Ravitch. Sholem Asch. H. Leyvik. and J. Opatoshu. The efforts of those involved in the Yiddish Theater Society in Krakow were tireless, and, judging from the well known list of authors invited to lecture in 1925, not entirely unsuccessful. The Polish director Antoni Piekarski attributed the early achievements of the Yiddish theater in Krakow to the strength of Jewish solidarity. But Kanfer, more than anyone, recognized that when it came to organizing a Yiddish theater, there was no Jewish unity that could be relied on for support. In fact, Kanfer was a pioneer in the development of the Yiddish theater, and he faced many difficulties, even from within the Jewish community. Thus, the society's initial efforts focused on lectures as well as bringing in visiting Yiddish theater troupes.

In writing about the history of the Krakow Yiddish Theater Society, Freund reported that the society received its concession from the government because it promised

47 Freund. "Pierwszy społeczny teatr Zydowski w Polsce (Krakowski Teatr Zydowski)." in Teatr Zydowski w Krakowie.

48 Freund. "Pierwszy Społeczny teatr Zydowski w Polsce (Krakowski Teatr Zydowski)." in Teatr Zydowski w Krakowie, 163.
not to interfere with the _Teatr Miejski_ (City Theater). Most importantly, Freund argued that the Yiddish Theater Society benefitted Polish culture as well.\(^{49}\) It seems unlikely, but it appears the city was concerned about any competition the City Theater might face from another theater in the city. Kalman Stein, a Jewish delegate to the Krakow city council, asserted in 1939 that the Yiddish Theater Society was a valuable cultural institution for the city of Krakow as well as for the Jewish population.\(^{50}\) Stein argued forcefully against the well-known Polish academic and city leader, Stanislaw Pigon, who had suggested dropping the subvention for the Krakow Yiddish Theater Society from the city's cultural budget. Stein asserted that Krakow was the cultural center of Poland and argued further that Jewish culture in Krakow, like Polish culture, should be on the highest level possible. Stein even quoted Pope Pius XII's affirmation of the dignity of the individual, which, according to Stein, could only be respected if the individual had equal rights in culture and education. The budget for culture was approved to the displeasure of the representatives of the Polish right, who walked out of the council meeting. Like Freund, Stein asserted that the development of Jewish culture would somehow improve Polish culture. Neither defined precisely how this benefit for Polish culture would be realized: they simply asserted that any improvement in Jewish life would at least bring some

\(^{49}\) Freund, "Pierwszy Spoleczny teatr Zydowski w Polsce (Krakowski Teatr Zydowski)." in _Teatr Zydowski w Krakowie_, 167. Freund wrote, "Musiano zatem przekonać opiekunów Teatu Miejskiego, że jest dokładnie odwrotne, że istnienie stałej sceny żydowskiej leży właśnie w interesie polskiego teatru. Dopiero wtedy otrzymano zgodę władz na stałą koncesję jest ona jeszcze dlatego ważna, ponieważ daje szczególny przywilej: nie pozwala grać w Krakowie innemu zespołowi, póki istnieje Krakowski Teatr Zydowski."

recognition to the city.

The city's subvention did not solve Kanfer's problems within the Jewish community, however. His daughter, Irene Kanfer, helps to explain the difficulties her father faced. Kanfer, in his columns in Nowy Dziennik, repeatedly encouraged the more assimilated Jewish intelligentsia of Krakow to attend the Yiddish theater, usually to no avail, perhaps because of his critical tone. Recalling his description of the Jewish theater-going audience, Irene Kanfer writes, "my father spoke about the Jewish theater public of Krakow with sarcasm: assimilated snobs for whom the Jewish language was a type of jargon and for whom real theater is -- Polish theater."51

Kanfer's writings suggest that part of his goal was the preservation of a Yiddish and Jewish culture that many assimilated Jews were in danger of leaving behind completely. He wrote in 1931, "Even the assimilated Jewish intellectual, who preserved in his soul the cult of the traditional cholent, delighting in Jewish fish and growing mystical at the sound of the shofar, even this assimilated Jewish intellectual senses a nostalgic recognition that Jewish culture is not dead, that Sholem Alejchem, Peretz, Asch, Leyvik, and Anski speak to him from the stage."52 Kanfer's activities were an


institutional affirmation of the city's Yiddish culture, a culture the city's Jewish elite did not acknowledge in any other official way.

Kanfer not only had to win over the more assimilated, but he also had to court the Orthodox if he wished his theater society to succeed. He wrote, "...we find ourselves in the tragic situation that an important segment of Jewish society takes a decidedly hostile position to Jewish theater." His daughter recalled of her father, "He also frankly characterized the fanaticism of the Orthodox Jews, for whom, as for all Puritans, any theater was sinful -- they did not allow their own children to participate in theatrical productions." Kanfer was presented with a gap between two different segments of Jewish society, the Orthodox more likely to use Yiddish but opposed to the theater, and the more assimilated Jewry who were open to the theater but found Yiddish to be marginal to their cultural identity. In establishing a modern Yiddish theater, Kanfer self-consciously developed a middle ground between these different groups. In Kanfer's mind, his efforts to build a theater society occupied a place in Krakow Jewish society between the assimilated and the Orthodox, providing a Jewish institution in which other Jews, who may have moved outside of the strictly Orthodox world but who were not completely assimilated, could take part, learning something about Jewish culture. Not


Kanfer wrote for *Nowy Dziennik*, itself a Jewish institution that, as a Polish-language Zionist newspaper, bridged two different cultures. Rachel Holcer confirms this balancing act of Kanfer in her memoirs, writing that the Yiddish theater in Krakow "became the basis of a constant cultural center in a stronghold of assimilation and orthodoxy."55

Sometimes Orthodox Jews crossed the boundaries dividing traditional Jewish life from Kanfer's society. In spite of the many public failures of the society, this was perhaps its most important success. Irene Kanfer noted how some children of Orthodox Jews attended performances in violation of their parents' religious beliefs, and one, her friend, attended the actors' studio without telling her parents. Kanfer introduced at least some traditional Jews to secular culture. Though in Yiddish and part of Yiddish culture, the Krakow Yiddish Theater Society was not an example of a traditional Jewish institution. Rather, it was clearly part of modern artistic movements, expressing in Yiddish the works of different literary movements in different European languages and developing its own artistic preferences and forms. Moreover, it was part of a cultural and national movement of the Jews, led by the literary critic of a Polish-language Zionist newspaper. The theater society did not reflect the hopes and dreams of the Yiddish-speaking Orthodox majority but rather the goals and education of a Jewish intelligentsia that was in the process of transforming traditional Jewish life. In disobeying her parents, Irene Kanfer's friend introduced herself to a larger world that, while still linguistically distinct from the culture of the majority, was not a part of her parents' experience.

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Attracting large audiences was a problem that plagued Kanfer throughout the interwar period. Kanfer's tendency to blame this on the fact that Krakow's more acculturated Jews attended the Polish theater was to some extent justified. Writing on the Yiddish theater, the critic N. Wejnig argued that the problem of reforming the Yiddish theater was not dependent on the audience's supposed dislike of classical theater -- proof of this lay in the fact that Jews attended the "theater of other nations to satisfy their aesthetic hunger." The Jews of Krakow did not see the Yiddish theater as their only cultural option. Some of the most important memoirs of interwar Krakow Jews mention the Yiddish theater, but only fleetingly. Henryk Vogler and Henryk Ritterman-Abir attended the Polish theater, not the Yiddish. Vogler writes that he never knew the Yiddish theater when he was growing up in interwar Krakow. According to Vogler, attendance at the theater (at least the Polish theater) was not for the proletariat and surrounding peasantry for many reasons, not least of which was financial. Rather, the theater depended on students and the richer urban bourgeoisie for its audiences. In the early 1920s, Vogler's parents subscribed to loge seats in the Slowacki theater, and, like Ritterman-Abir, he grew up knowing the pleasures of the theater, but in Polish. Ritterman-Abir notes that he did have some contact with the Yiddish theater, seeing Ida Kaminska's troupe perform in the theater on ul. Bochenska and getting to know some of the Yiddish actors. Still, Ritterman-Abir's experiences in the theater grew out of his time as a student at the Sobieski gymnasium. In addition, the Teatr Szkolny program of Juliusz

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56 N. Wejnig. "Medytacje o teatrze zydowskim." Nowy Dziennik. 6 September 1918. 3-4.

57 Vogler. Wyznanie mojzieszowe. 40.
Ostervwa introduced Jewish children all over Krakow to Polish theater. Polish educational and cultural authorities could use the Polish schools and administrative system for their own goals, which included introducing young Polish citizens to the high culture of Polish theater. Yiddish cultural leaders did not enjoy the advantages of a centralized school administration. Thus, the efforts of the theater societies in interwar Krakow were all the more necessary to develop and sustain a vibrant theatrical life among Krakow's Jews.

The Yiddish Theater Society did not limit itself to presentations of Yiddish plays. Presenting non-Yiddish plays in Yiddish was a sign of the maturity of Yiddish theater, an indication that it was interested in introducing its audience to other playwrights and other cultures using one Jewish vernacular. The Yiddish Theater Society performed two plays of Stanislaw Wyspianksi in 1927 and later in 1932. One of these, Daniel, an opera libretto written by Wyspianksi in 1893 on the Biblical themes in the Book of Daniel, was performed in Yiddish for the first time in 1927. Sedziowie (The Judges), a story based on a contemporary trial in Poland and written in 1907, received its first production, in any language, in Yiddish, in 1927. Daniel is an allegory concerning a nation divided by foreign powers and subject to slavery, important for both Polish and Jewish national thought. One Polish reviewer wrote about the staging of Daniel. "What was for us an allegory, the Zionists take today as their own national reality."\(^5^8\) Both plays presented significant challenges for the theater society. The director of Daniel, Antoni Piekarski, barely understood Yiddish. Daniel required an elaborate staging that necessitated the use

of the gallery space by the actors. and Sedziowie contained Jewish characters that had been labelled antisemitic by another Yiddish theater director, Michal Weichert.59

While Kanfer and the Yiddish Theater Society were still interested in the majority culture around them. Polish theater critics were unaware of the Jewish cultural efforts going on in Kazimierz until they attended these first Yiddish productions of Polish plays. Upon attending the Yiddish Theater on ulica Bochenska in Kazimierz, two Polish theater critics described their trip to the theater as entering another world. Both claimed they had never heard of this street name before, in spite of being longtime residents of Krakow.60 The Polish reviews of the two plays were generally favorable, in spite of the Polish reviewers' startling ignorance of the Jewish community in their city. The translations of the Zionist activist D. Leibl were uniformly praised.

Thus, the theater society acted as an organization that introduced Polish culture to its Yiddish-speaking audience (also part Polish-speaking, of course), even including Polish national art in its own repertory. While certainly a Jewish organization, the Yiddish theater did not serve to isolate its audience. It produced plays originally written in German and English as well, acting as an intermediary between the Yiddish-speaking public and the larger society. A reviewer for Ilustrowany Kurier Codzieny commented on the importance of the stagings of the Wyspianski plays for the Jewish audience:


60Marian Szyjkowski. "Misterium Zydowskie." Ilustrowany Kurier Codzieny. Nr. 146. 1921. 2 (reprinted in Teatr Zydowski w Krakowie. 156); Ludwik Szczepanski. "'Szojlik syn Todresa.' Krotka wyprawa w nieznanym swiet." Ilustrowany Kurier Codzieny. Nr. 80. 1922. 3 (reprinted in Teatr Zydowski w Krakowie. 158).
"These presentations are a most effective attempt to popularize Polish national poetry among the Jewish masses for which the theater under the direction of J. Turkow deserves sincere recognition." It is quite possible that the Wyspianiski plays reached a different audience than some of the more traditional plays performed by the Krakow troupe. Interestingly, in his writings on the Yiddish theater, Szalom Freund noted that the performances of Wyspianiski's plays "in truth were more successful among the Polish and Jewish-Polish audiences than among the Jewish." To be fair, this was in part Kanfer's goal -- to expand the range of Yiddish theater, both in repertory and audience. By presenting a Polish play in Yiddish, Kanfer reached out to both audiences, the Polish and the Jewish, introducing each to the other.

Kanfer's efforts never ceased during the interwar period. He continually looked for ways to keep the society active even during difficult times. In 1930, after the relative failures of the 1927-1928 season, Kanfer called for a national conference on Yiddish theater, recognizing that Krakow alone could not support a permanent residential troupe in Yiddish. In addition to the theater on Bochenska, the Yiddish Theater Society also sponsored evenings of theater and cabaret in a smaller space on ulica Szpitalna in the center of the city (in the building that is today the U.S. Consulate). These evenings were intended to be smaller events, attracting a higher class of audience than the performances

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62 Szalom Freund. "Pierwszy Społeczny teatr Zydowski w Polsce (Krakowski Teatr Zydowski)." in Teatr Zydowski w Krakowie. 163.

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on Bochenska. Mordkhe Gebirtig, the Yiddish composer, participated in these evenings, proof that the presentation of Yiddish culture was not limited to Kazimierz. In his 1937 report on the theatrical activities on Bochenska and Szpitalna, Kanfer admitted difficulties, but claimed that he had developed a permanent residential Yiddish theater in Krakow. The theater still had not grown to its full potential and still needed the support of the broadest part of the Jewish intelligentsia. The theater had been inactive for much of the thirties because of the economic crisis, and Kanfer expressed hope that it would become active again and even hoped to build a new theater building. Until then, guest performances by visiting theater troupes would be held at the theater on Bochenska. Kanfer encouraged everyone to support Yiddish theater even during hard economic times.

Kanfer himself was the first to admit the difficulties in organizing the society and in presenting Yiddish plays to Jewish audiences. He wrote in 1931, the period late twentieth century scholars of Yiddish culture might regard as the heyday of Yiddish drama, that Yiddish theater in Poland is dying away and declining from day to day" ("Teatr zydowski w Polsce kona i upada z dnia na dzien"). Kanfer was not satisfied. At the same time, he was one of very few Jewish intellectuals in Krakow who worked

64 "Z dzialalnosci Tow. 'Krakowski Teatr Zydowski'." Gazeta Gminna. 10 February 1938. 10.
diligently on behalf of Yiddish culture. That he was not entirely successful should not diminish the importance of his efforts. While theater troupes in Vilna, Warsaw, and even Lodz may have been more active during the interwar period, Kanfer's efforts to establish a permanent residential theater troupe made the Krakow society unique. Yiddish culture in Krakow did not happen without effort. The formation of the society itself implied that Yiddish culture needed such organization; its failures demonstrate that the necessary effort to make it successful was indeed quite significant.

That the Yiddish press did not uncritically support the Yiddish theater also did not help Kanfer attract Jewish theater-goers. Moyshe Blekher, the editor of the Yiddish periodicals Der reflektor and Di post, often criticized Kanfer's use of Polish in organizing the Yiddish theater society, deriding the Yiddish Theater Society as the product of assimilationists. Blekher did not acknowledge the difficulties Kanfer encountered in establishing an important Yiddish cultural institution, nor did he offer real support. In a sharply critical article about Kanfer's theater society in the Yiddish press, one writer (in an unsigned article, most likely Blekher) noted that "the theater society has already fallen apart seven times and been reorganized ten times." In all their years of its existence, the unnamed author wrote, the theater society had failed to do anything substantial, either for the audience or for the actors. Many members of the theater society had left the group as a protest against its leaders, leaving the society in a very poor position. And, according to

66 The Polish-language Jewish press was, of course, favorable to the cause of the Yiddish theater, as Kanfer was the literary editor of Nowy Dziennik.

the article. Neither Freund nor Kanfer protested when the Theater Society brought in "hungry actors to play in shund and pornographic musical theater pieces for a bite of bread." This was precisely what Kanfer wanted to change about the Yiddish theater. He wanted to provide actors and audience the opportunity to create and enjoy theater of the highest order, a goal which, in spite of the criticism, he achieved, if only partially. The article further criticized Kanfer and his theater society for being "dilettantish," a quality apparent in the then current production of H. Leyvik's "Shop." According to the article, this was not the level of the plays of Michal Weichert or Marek Arnshtayn in Warsaw.

The writer disparaged Kanfer's effort to develop an actors' studio as well. According to the author, a studio implied a school for experimentation and training for actors, not acting students. The writer granted that those in the studio were good candidates for training but argued that they were being exploited in order for the theater to receive the concession to present Yiddish plays. The formation of studios, even if they were short-lived, implies that artistic innovation and improvement were the goals of those involved in Krakow's Yiddish theater. Professional art was taken seriously by the Yiddish artists and cultural activists. The writer in Der reflektor, however, claimed that

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the problems of the Theater Society could not be solved by the formation of a studio. but
that better directors were needed for the actors. Only then would the Yiddish Theater
Society assume an "important cultural position in our assimilated city."70

Polish-language posters of the theater society advertising productions in Yiddish
were also subject to criticism. The writer of an article in *Der reflektor*, most likely
Blekher again, claimed that such posters were "foreign" (*fremd*) to the goals of the society
because they were in Polish. The Yiddish Theater Society was, in theory, the *kultur-
treger* of Yiddish language and drama in the city. so such a poster did seem odd to the
Yiddish writers of *Der reflektor*. But the Polish poster also reflected an
acknowledgement of reality on the part of the theater society. While there is no doubt
that the theater society could have advertised in Yiddish (as many other Jewish
organizations did), advertising in Polish reached a Jewish audience that may have been
interested in Yiddish culture even if they had given up Yiddish as a daily language.

Blekher did not hide his disdain for Kanfer and the other leaders of the theater
society in *Di post*, the Yiddish periodical he founded two years after the demise of *Der
reflektor*. Here too Blekher criticized these cultural leaders severely for such things as
not using Yiddish in their private lives and, like *Der reflektor*, advertising for the Yiddish
theater in Polish. Admitting that a Yiddish theater in town did highlight Yiddish culture
in an assimilated city like Krakow. Blekher nonetheless reproached Yiddish actors and
actresses who behaved like "stars" by appearing in Polish posters. Reporting on a
meeting of the theater society. Blekher termed Kanfer, Freund, and the other leaders of

the theater society. "cultural martyrs" (kultur-martirn), a term they may have taken positively. Blekher, however, used it ironically, implying that their commitment to Polish-language culture outweighed their involvement with Yiddish. Blekher did not believe that Kanfer and the others were sincerely interested in Yiddish culture. For Blekher, the Yiddish culture presented by Kanfer's society was not representative of the Yiddish culture of Krakow because it was presented by a Jewish intelligentsia that, in his view, had only a tangential relationship to Jewish life.

Clearly, those in the city involved and interested in Yiddish culture did not always work together, and Kanfer found greater cooperation among those Jews who promoted a Polish-language Jewish culture, such as the writers of Nowy Dziennik. Further, the conflict between Der reflektor and Di post and the theater society indicates that, for many, a Yiddish kultur-treger in the city was both a desired and a necessary goal. There was no obvious candidate among the Jewish institutions of the city for such a title, a sign of the weakness of Yiddish culture. The theater society was often inactive and Der reflektor only lasted for a couple of issues. To be fair, Di post began publishing in 1937 and was still publishing full issues in August 1939. Blekher's was the only voice in the city that called for a more assertive Yiddish culture in Yiddish for a Yiddish-speaking population. Der reflektor failed; Di post did achieve some success and remained in print until the outbreak of the war. Kanfer and Blekher promoted Yiddish culture each in his own way. Unlike Blekher, Kanfer aimed to link the very different Polish and Yiddish cultures. The absence of a true Yiddish kultur-treger in Krakow highlights how the city's
Jews were creating Jewish cultures with different agendas. Blekher's strong Yiddishist views contrast with Kanfer's attempt to create a Jewish culture that was neither entirely Polish nor entirely Jewish, focused on neither Hebrew nor Yiddish, neither assimilationist nor separatist.

At least two other organizations in interwar Krakow were concerned with the theater. The Jewish Stage (Scena Zydowska or Idysze Bine), like the Yiddish Theater Society, was formed in 1926. There is no indication that this organization was involved with the Yiddish Theater Society, however. The leaders of the organization included Juljusz Witkower, a university student, and Roza Holzer-Rymphowa. The goals of the organization did not specify Jewish art or a Jewish audience, but were stated simply as "the spreading and deepening among its members of art and culture in the general sense, but especially the theatrical." Clearly, Kanfer's Yiddish Theater Society did not serve all of the Jews of Krakow. Even within the relatively small community of 60,000, there was room for more than one theatrical society.

The Jewish Amateur Scene Club, established in 1922, also stated its goals in a particularly unusual way. The founder of this organization was the owner of a box factory and, given the addresses of its officers, was based in Podgorze rather than Kazimierz. Its goal was to "bring the Jewish masses not yet having a good command of proper Polish closer to culture, to instruct the masses intellectually, to develop and spread

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71 WAPKr. StGKr 241 Scena Zydowska (Idysze Bine) 1926.
72 WAPKr. StGKr 241 Scena Zydowska (Idysze Bine) 1926.
73 WAPKr. StGKr 248 Zydowski Amatorski Klub Sceniczny w Krakowie 1922-1929.
the idea of the beauty of the fine arts by organizing in Yiddish and Polish amateur presentations, readings and lectures and maintaining a periodical and library in Polish and Yiddish." This statement suggests the level of linguistic assimilation much more reliably than census statistics. For the Jewish founders of this organization, the general Jewish population did not speak Polish as well as the founders thought they should. Therefore, an organization was established to help them master the Polish language and introduce them to Polish culture. While others, most notably Sore Shenirer, were concerned that Jews were turning to Polish in ever greater numbers, this Jewish organization specifically included an improvement of Polish in its goals. The founders' statement also indicates the Yiddish-speaking nature of Krakow's Jewish population. Krakow's Jews had begun a process of changing linguistically but had not yet completely switched languages.

The various dramatic societies had somewhat different goals. The two smaller organizations which did not share the high profile of Kanfer's Yiddish theater society had somewhat lesser (yet perhaps more realistic) objectives in mind. They were concerned with "spreading culture" among the general population and aimed to be more instructional in their activities than artistic. Kanfer, the literary critic, on the other hand, would settle for nothing less than a permanent residential Yiddish theater troupe in Krakow. one that

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74 WAPKr. StGKr 248 Zydowski Amatorski Klub Sceniczny w Krakowie 1922-1929. According to the statutes in the file: "Celem Tow. jest zbliżyc mase zydowska nie władająca jeszcze należycie językiem polskim do kultury. kształcic ja umysłowo, rozwijac i krzewic wśród niej idee sztuk pieknych, urządzając w tym celu w języku zydowskim i polskim przedstawienia amatorskie, odczyty, wykłady, utrzymując pisma i biblioteki w językach polskim i zydowskim."
would perform on a consistently high artistic level. As the literary critic of *Nowy Dziennik*, Kanfer had the high profile within the Jewish community necessary to undertake the ambitious goal of starting a Yiddish theater.

None of these drama societies, with their emphasis on Yiddish culture, served to separate the Jewish community from the Polish majority. For all his advocacy of the Yiddish theater, Kanfer wrote in Polish and, as a theater critic, was involved in Polish theatrical life as well, consistently reviewing the plays performed in the Slowacki Theater and other venues in Krakow. The goal of establishing a separate Yiddish theater was meant to promote Yiddish culture, and to establish a Jewish cultural organization that would have been on an equal artistic level with the Polish theater. Kanfer was not abandoning the Polish theater in favor of Yiddish; he clearly wanted to be a part of both. He simply recognized that more work was necessary before Yiddish theater in Krakow could meet his exacting artistic standards, and he was willing and generous enough to take this work on himself. On another level, the two smaller organizations did not exclude Polish culture from their consideration at all. In fact, they were less exclusively Yiddish oriented than Kanfer's theater society. One of the two specifically included Polish culture, recognizing that a mastery of the Polish language and culture was a priority for Krakow's Jews and the other did not specify Yiddish culture in its goals.

None of the organizations would have completely isolated its members or audiences from the majority culture. Rather, it is likely their members and those involved in the organizations' activities participated in both Polish and Jewish culture to a greater extent.
precisely because of their involvement in a specifically Jewish cultural organization.

The efforts of Kanfer and the leaders of the other smaller societies should be viewed in the larger context of Jewish life in Krakow: they faced tremendous obstacles in their attempts to develop a Jewish theatrical culture in the city, including increasing linguistic assimilation and a more influential Polish theater that attracted a Jewish audience. Nonetheless, their efforts assured that the trilingual culture of Polish Jewry in Krakow continued to be alive and well. Thanks to Kanfer and the other Yiddish cultural leaders, Krakow's Jews could participate in a secular Jewish culture without abandoning their Jewish identity.

Conclusion

Taking a kawiarnia as his vantage point from which to survey Jewish culture in Krakow, the young writer M. Bomstein expressed his hope that Jewish culture in the city would continue to grow. Bomstein praised the performances of the Yiddish theater and the lectures and art exhibitions so many groups sponsored. But such expressions of Jewish participation in a Jewish culture were not enough for Bomstein, who made known his dismay that there was no established Jewish literary magazine in the city. At the time Bomstein was writing, Di post had been publishing for a couple of weeks, but, according to Bomstein, had failed to attract older or younger readers. Bomstein's assessment of Jewish cultural life in Krakow reflects many of the difficulties Krakow's Jewish cultural
leaders faced. Bornstein concluded his survey of Jewish culture in Krakow by writing, "at least there's a nice bar" ("Jest natomiast mila knajpa"), referring to the Szmatka kawiarnia. For Bornstein, this informal gathering of Jewish artists and intellectuals was just as important as any formal cultural organization. More significantly, though, it was an important feature of Jewish cultural life in a city whose Jewish population still was learning to appreciate different forms of Jewish cultural expression.

That the cultural organizations discussed above did not yet satisfy writers like Bornstein should not diminish their importance and influence within the Jewish community. This review of Jewish cultural organizations in interwar Krakow considered only a few of the 305 organizations on Wordliczek's list. Those organizations examined here contributed to the cultural diversity of the city and the Jewish community, working toward the development of a secular Jewish culture that was one of the goals of writers like Bornstein.

Taking part in the activities of the organizations mentioned in this chapter indicates, at least to some extent, a self-identification with Jewish life. This is especially important for more acculturated Jews who did not participate in religious observances. Ethnic identity can be expressed by participation in a separate ethnic organization, whether that means simply attending lectures infrequently or taking a leadership role. Simple participation in an ethnic organization does not, of course, always signify lasting ethnic allegiance. But as this survey of the various associations Jewish community leaders established demonstrates, Jews in Krakow had the opportunity to participate in all
kinds of separate Jewish activities, from soccer teams to theatrical productions. Jewish children attending private Polish schools could go to soccer matches where exclusively Jewish teams such as Makkabi and Jutrzenka would play. The establishment of the private Jewish organizations discussed in this chapter ensured that the Jews of Krakow would have the opportunity to play, to read, to paint, to act as Jews.

At least two different important Jewish cultural organizations had substantial connections to Polish culture, the Association of Jewish Artists and the Krakow Yiddish Theater Society. Other organizations, such as the private Jewish sports clubs, did not preclude participation in and cooperation with Polish sports organizations. Just as private Jewish schools served as a bridge to Polish culture (as well as an introduction to Jewish culture) for many Jews, so cultural organizations meant exclusively for Jews were not entirely separated from Polish culture. All of the organizations discussed in this chapter aimed to improve the cultural level of Jews, culturally, intellectually or physically. Their achievements can be measured in different ways, according to the number of events they sponsored, the number of individuals who participated, or the profile of the organization within the Jewish and non-Jewish communities. Paul Brass has argued that an ethnic group "establishes" itself as a nationality if it achieves "recognized group rights in the political system." The Jews of Krakow used their limited political rights to develop their own, often separate, community structures. By establishing such a broad network of social and cultural organizations, the Jews of Krakow were defining themselves as

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something other than merely "Poles of the Mosaic faith." Though they were not able to
define themselves as a political nation, the Jews of Krakow, especially those active in the
organizations discussed in this chapter, did aspire to a separate cultural identity as Polish
Jews.
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Although the Jews of Krakow established separate cultural institutions during the interwar period, they also began a process of integration that the outbreak of World War II interrupted. The processes discussed throughout this study -- the development of a Zionist press in Polish, the education of Jews in a non-Jewish culture, and the participation of new generations of Jews in separate cultural organizations -- combined to change the way Jews thought of themselves as Jews and as Poles. The emergence of Polish Jewish subcultures in Krakow allowed Jews to attend a public school but play soccer with other Jews; or to attend one of the most exclusive private schools in the city but go to the Yiddish theater; or to edit a Polish-language Jewish newspaper but work for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

The combination of a newly modernizing state and a trilingual Jewish culture meant that Jews would identify as Jews in different ways, at different times, and in different languages. Writing and speaking and teaching in Polish, the Jewish nationalists
themselves did not deny their experience of the majority culture. In showing how the Jewish nationalists of *Nowy Dziennik* and the Hebrew gymnasium developed a rhetoric that allowed both for the growth of Jewish nationalism and for an identification with Polish culture. I have demonstrated how Krakow's Jews hoped to remain both Jewish and Polish. The Jews of Krakow were taking the first step toward developing a multicultural society in which all groups were respected. Acknowledging their difference from the Poles, the Jews of Krakow defined and asserted their own unique ethnic identity. Jewish community leaders recognized the necessity to integrate into Polish culture and to remain Jews at the same time.

The establishment of private Jewish institutions such as newspapers, schools, or theater societies is the best example of how Jews hoped to achieve this goal. The institutions are evidence of a burgeoning civil society. Before the 1990s, the twenty years of Poland's Second Republic was the one period in twentieth century Polish history when Poles, Jews, and the nation's other minorities had the opportunity to found institutions of civil society that would serve the peoples of a liberal democratic state. After the founding of an independent Polish state, Jewish community leaders identified a real need for a separate press, educational system, and network of cultural organizations. Whether their goals were to maintain tradition or to teach Jews Polish, these institutions provided the private space to express a separate ethnic identity. This expression of a separate identity.
however, did not negate the affiliation with the majority Polish community. As this work shows, it often strengthened that affiliation.

The need for private Jewish institutions arose partly from the exclusive aspects of Polish nationalism and from Polish antisemitism. Antisemitism was one of the major factors in the establishment of most of the private Jewish organizations discussed. It spurred the establishment of *Nowy Dziennik*, the founding of private Jewish schools, and the development of private Jewish sports clubs. Private Jewish institutions were a way in which Jews could express their own specific goals and protect themselves from an often hostile majority, even as the activities in those institutions prepared them to function in that majority culture. The number and range of Jewish institutions founded in interwar Krakow testifies to the vibrancy and hopes of the community as well as to the need for a separate, protected public space where Jews could feel safe. As late as 1937, Jewish leaders established private Jewish schools with Polish as the language of instruction precisely because they envisioned a Polish future in which the Jews would play an active role.

The Zionists of *Nowy Dziennik* founded a paper whose goal was at least in part to bridge the gulf between Jews and Poles. With their own forum to raise important Jewish issues, the Zionists could fight against antisemitism in a language both minority and majority could understand. The editors of *Nowy Dziennik* set themselves apart from
earlier assimilationist leaders by championing a Jewish national identity. In fashioning this identity, they were careful to include an aspect as loyal citizens of Poland. Making the distinction between loyalty to the Jewish nation and allegiance to the Polish state, the Zionists integrated the two different cultures in which they participated. The views of the intellectuals gathered around Nowy Dziennik on national identification and assimilation were positions of integrity, of literally, wholeness. However one may evaluate their Zionist ideology or assimilationist stance, they compensated for their minority status by participating in the majority culture and for their linguistic assimilation by asserting a unique ethnic and national identity. Unwilling to compromise their Jewish or Polish identities, they created a Polish Jewish subculture.

The Zionists of Nowy Dziennik are not representative of the entire Jewish press in Krakow. Yiddish-language publications stood apart from the majority and expressed different priorities for different audiences. Dos yidishe vort and Dos likht aimed to reach the city's Orthodox. They stood for the maintenance of Jewish tradition in Krakow; they qualify the Polish nature of the Krakow Jewish community. Still, it is possible to see evidence of change among Krakow's Orthodox in these newspapers as well. Dos yidishe vort advocated Jewish education of any sort, in any language; Dos likht took note of Orthodox Jews moving outside of Kazimierz. Der reflektor and Di post represent yet another variant of Jewish culture in Krakow, one that advocated Yiddish as the representative language of the Jewish community. The Yiddish cultural politics expressed in these newspapers fought the linguistic and cultural assimilation Nowy
While the editors and writers of *Nowy Dziennik* and *Di post* made considered decisions about their use of language. Jewish children in public schools had no such choice. The required weekly religious instruction was the only institutional allowance for the expression of a Jewish identity. The overwhelming majority of Jewish children attended public schools, but this did not necessarily threaten the future development of private Jewish institutions. Attendance at a public, private Polish, or private Jewish school was not a certain indicator of a Jewish child's future ethnic identity. Jewish children in public schools were not unaware of their Jewish identity and, during the interwar period, had the opportunity to participate in a wide range of separate Jewish cultural initiatives. Such extensive minority participation in public education does indicate that the Jewish community in Krakow was likely to complete the process of linguistic assimilation begun in the nineteenth century, unless steps were taken to stop this through political action or the development of cultural institutions. Private Jewish schools provided a check on the process, insuring that the Jewish community would in some way remain apart from the majority even as they integrated into the majority society.

The establishment of private Jewish schools tells us that many Jewish parents wanted more than weekly religious instruction for their children, even as they realized that an education in Polish was essential for their children's economic success. The founding of the Hebrew gymnasium, the *Cheder Iwri* schools, and the Jewish trade
schools demonstrates the variety of ways Jewish parents provided for their children. The private schools Jews founded served to train Jews in Zionist ideals, maintain religious tradition, or to provide Jews with practical skills for employment in Poland or future emigration to Palestine. The growth of the different types of schools suggests the need for private Jewish education was felt throughout the community. The schools provided a safe atmosphere where Jewish students could be free from antisemitic taunts as well as the pressure to perform academically in an effort to compensate for their minority status.

Along with the Jewish press and schools, the many smaller Jewish cultural organizations also helped to check further assimilation. The sports clubs, reading rooms, and theater societies discussed here were only the beginnings of a civil society that promised many opportunities for Jews of all ages to affiliate with other Jews and Jewish issues. The goals of many of these organizations, like Nowy Dziennik, hoped to integrate Jews into the majority culture as well. These were not organizations that promoted resistance against the government or threatened political destabilization, even though the continued police surveillance speaks eloquently to the government's suspicions. They were groups that sought to offer Jews the chance to swim in a new swimming pool, learn a language, or attend a lecture on Jewish politics. Remaining in some way apart from the majority community, these cultural organizations assured the separateness of the Jewish community even as Jewish schoolchildren entered the larger society on a daily basis. For a community whose children and adults could not avoid the influence of Polish culture, the Jewish organizations were the private space for the development of a Jewish identity.
The emerging Polish Jewish subcultures of interwar Krakow suggest that contact between Jews and Poles was at times neutral and not entirely negative. While the state required Jewish educational leaders to include Polish subjects in their curriculum, they were not forced to publish Jewish children's literature in Polish. Polish school inspectors monitored Jewish schools to insure that teachers were following the state curriculum but also to encourage the repair of inadequate facilities.

This work has concerned the institutions the Jews themselves founded to address, in part, the needs of the community. The founding of separate Jewish newspapers, schools, sports clubs, and reading rooms still brought Jews into contact with Poles. This contact was in part voluntary, such as at a soccer match, and in part required, as Polish inspectors entered Jewish schools. In either case, the development of a Jewish civil society in interwar Krakow did not signify an escape from the majority culture.

At least one scholar has already noted that the linguistic assimilation occurring in Poland resembles the linguistic assimilation among Jews in the United States.¹ This important similarity to the American Jewish community also made Krakow stand somewhat apart from other Jewish communities in Poland. More acculturated and linguistically assimilated than the Jews of Warsaw, Vilna, or Lodz, the Jews of Krakow built an ethnic and national community that recognized the importance of the majority culture. The Jews of Krakow represented an alternative solution to the "Jewish question" – integration into the majority community without any loss of ethnic or national integrity.


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This attempt to reconcile Jewish identity with Polish citizenship was a valiant effort of a national minority community to maintain, and even develop, itself in the face of changing political structures and the growth of a Polish antisemitic nationalist movement. The effort shows both the success that can be achieved and the limits a minority community confronts. Able to found the institutions that would teach their children Polish or Hebrew, the Jews nonetheless could not control the attitudes of the majority community. As Polish nationalists of the right challenged Jewish citizenship and sought to forbid traditional Jewish practices in the late 1930s, it became clear that internal efforts of the Jewish community were even more necessary to support and defend Jewish culture.

So did these efforts to integrate fail? The antisemitism of the late 1930s suggests that the answer may be yes, but this would contradict the testimonies of the Jews from Krakow who attest to their connection to Poland and Polish culture even after experiencing the horrors of World War II and the Holocaust. Krakow’s Jewish press educated its readers in the ways of Polish citizenship and Jewish national identity: the private Jewish schools succeeded in teaching students to be both Jews and Poles; and the cultural organizations provided a space for Jews to be Jewish even as they assimilated linguistically. The cultural initiatives discussed here enabled Krakow’s Jews to live as Jews and as Poles. Changing the prevailing attitudes of antisemitism both inside and outside of Poland was only a part of their goal: that they failed to do this should not diminish our estimation of the success of institutions such as Nowy Dziennik or the
Hebrew gymnasium.

With the press, schools, and cultural organizations that acted as their institutional homes, Krakow's Jews built a national community that could exist in a multicultural state. Ethnic minority groups in Eastern Europe and elsewhere still confront the same predicament as the Jews of interwar Krakow — how to build a national community amid hostility because of marked religious, linguistic, and cultural difference. This study shows that the minority can be successful in organizing the community to remain cohesive in spite of its own diversity, the tendency to assimilate toward the majority culture, and the hostile attitudes among the majority. Such efforts as the cultural initiatives of the Jews of interwar Krakow could not, however, protect the Jews from the hostility of outsiders. The cultural history of the Jews of interwar Krakow provides a lesson to other minority communities struggling to adapt to a majority culture in a multicultural state. The home one builds in a multiethnic society can stand, but support from the majority community is vital to strengthen the foundation and protect it from outside violence.

The Holocaust would change Jewish identity in Poland in ways that could not have been anticipated. The trauma of the Holocaust challenged both traditional religious belief and a secular identification with a persecuted minority community. The history of the Nazi persecution of the Jews in Krakow has received its share of attention. Most familiar is the story of Oskar Schindler, thanks largely to Thomas Kenneally and Steven Spielberg. Schindler's rescue efforts should not overshadow the stories of the Jews
themselves, though; these deserve their telling as well. Many survivors from Krakow have written of their experiences during the war in the Krakow ghetto, established by the Nazis in 1941. They have also detailed their time in Plaszow, the labor camp on the city's outskirts and in subsequent concentration camps. Though the war and its effects on Krakow's Jews are not the focus of this study, these memoirs deserve mention, in part because they often address Jewish life and culture in pre-war Poland but also because they commemorate those Jews who made possible the creation of vibrant Polish Jewish subcultures.

These subcultures -- the intellectuals of Nowy Dziennik, the Orthodox of Dos yidishe vort and Dos likht, the Yiddishists of Di post, the reading rooms and sports teams of varying political orientations -- coexisted with each other and with the majority community. They allowed Jews to be Jews at a time when Jewish identity was not threatened by genocide but rather by linguistic and cultural assimilation. Divided in their interests, social backgrounds, and political ideologies, Jews founded private Jewish cultural organizations of all kinds, insuring the maintenance of various versions of a separate ethnic and, for some, explicitly national identity. Living in Krakow, the Jews also embraced Polishness, accepting their minority status but working

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to improve the material, social, and cultural conditions of their people. The Jewish
cultural identity evident in Krakow before the outbreak of war made possible an
affiliation with more than one nation.

Before he was murdered on the street not far from his home, Mordecai Gebirtig
bade farewell to his city in the anthem. "Blayb gezunt, mayn kroke" (literally. "stay well.
my Krakow"). Gebirtig's Krakow was not simply his hometown but a Jewish community
in the forefront of developing a fragile multicultural society. The Jews of Krakow were
not a people apart, but a nation trying both to maintain its own sense of identity and enter
into the larger Polish community. For a time, they succeeded.
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