

## **The Political Identity of Jews in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries as Reflected in the History, Heritage, and Cultural Identity of Częstochowa Jews** **Jerzy Mizgalski**

### Introduction

Jews have been living in Poland for about a millennium. In search of a safe place to stay, they started to move eastwards in considerable numbers when driven away from Western Europe by persecutions and expulsions in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. In Poland they found favorable conditions to settle, live their way of life and develop their communities.

Regardless of the reasons underlying the expulsions and consequent migrations of Jews from Western countries to Eastern and Middle Europe, their cultural identity, including political identity, was specifically related to the political identity of Western societies within which the Jews had lived before, and to the political identity of the new host societies into which they moved. Therefore, the mechanisms of individual, group, and mass displacement were obviously activated, along with the processes of promotion and degradation, of transformation, with various modes of cultural interaction, social movements, and subordination to law regulations.

The issues suggested in the title of the present paper have their regional or local perspective, yet any reconstruction of the history of this ethnic group cannot do without the cultural context of eighteenth century Europe, of Poland's loss of independent statehood, Polish nation's oppression under the foreign rule of three partitioning powers, and of Jewish life in Diaspora, all of which determined Jewish history, tradition, and awareness of cultural identity, including its political aspect.

Socially and politically the nineteenth century followed the ideals of the French revolution: liberty, equality, and fraternity. A new approach to the past and a cult of history rose, while the spirit of enterprise spread and dominated the public consciousness. This involved the development of trade as another, beside manufacture and banking, element of economic life.

The twentieth century inherited from its predecessor problems with balance of trade and payments, with the international trade policies, with extensive confrontations of diverse political and social standpoints, with workers versus capitalist employers conflicts on a social and political plane, with new political and social theories opposed to liberalism and capitalism, but also to socialism, and with the growth of nationalism and cosmopolitanism. Nationalist ideologies found their special embodiment in imperial and fascist doctrines of the twentieth c.

Lastly, I need to explain my choice of the political identities of Częstochowa Jews in nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a subject of study. Hence, analyzing Jewish political awareness brings into focus the complexity of the mechanisms of its formation and transformations, shows its conditioning by history, tradition and cultural identity of Jews. It thus points to a plausible method of explaining the Jewish political identity in terms of its continuity and change. Life in the Diaspora, dispersed among other nations, e.g, Polish, made for the specific complexity of Jewish political identity on both individual and community scale. To quote Waldemar Paruch, a political scientist's duty is to describe and explain any political thought by means of the entire accessible knowledge, so that this thought is understandable in different historical conditions, often in a different cultural and social context. Political thought involves four contexts: a) pragmatic (in that it can, as an element of consciousness, influence political processes by projecting specific actions and by evaluating the decisions); b) cultural, since this thought

is a reflection of a culture (including its political aspect) prevailing at a given time and society; c) philosophical, which involves passing specific concepts onto next generations; and d) sociological, because political thought reflects the structure and visions of a society. For Paruch political thought is any form of reflection on political reality, regardless of the degree of refinement, coherence nor systematization of this thought, whether abstract or concrete. It is a product of political thinking, while the latter eventuates also in the formation of ideas.<sup>1</sup>

I believe that political thought permeates political identity (whether individual or communal), thus it possesses the contexts listed by Paruch. It is worth noting that the pragmatic, philosophical, and sociological contexts have their own cultural context, or belong to that context, as I hope to demonstrate later.

The present paper deals with four related issues, namely: 1) the political identity of Jews in the context of their 2) cultural identity, and within their 3) cultural tradition, as set in 4) the history of nineteenth and twentieth century Częstochowa. It cannot, however, disregard three major problems: a) an accepted concept of culture, b) boundaries of the subject of study, and c) methodology of research. Exploration of the cultural identity, in particular political identity, of Jewish inhabitants of Częstochowa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries requires exact theoretical basis, namely the choice of a definite concept of culture. There are plenty to choose from. Some scholars have estimated their number at several hundred. I have decided to base my speculations on the socio-regulative theory of culture.

If a reflection on political reality is refined, systematized, and has some theoretical aspect – Paruch concludes – it can develop in three stages, that of ideology, of conception, and of a program.<sup>2</sup> The ideological level of political thought includes political views of the most general kind, namely: inspirations, paradigms, and style of political thinking. The paradigm consists of the system of values and beliefs, and of political identity. Ideological premises stipulate conceptions relating to the public sphere. Political conception is a systematized set of ideas, determined by political ideology and perceptions. It is defined in time and space, thus it pertains to a specific reality.<sup>3</sup> In this way ideology indirectly affects politics, and, consequently, political reality.<sup>4</sup>

Paruch suggested that it is much easier to define political thought by means of the concept of “political reality”. In this case only the question what reality and what thought are considered political remains to be solved in the definition process. The answer points to political reality as facts and sets of facts marked by political quality, namely events resulting from a conflict or provoking such a conflict. Such a state eventuates from a difference of opinions or of actions (implied or effected).<sup>5</sup> Various objects can get a political aspect in a given period of time. Scope and range of such politization are determined, e.g., by cultural and social context, and by a political system. Any political system, emerging in a course of history, is best characterized by: the impact of state administration on social life, by public opinions about this impact, by the level of state repressiveness, by the demarcation line between the public and private spheres as delimited by the state.

According to the theoretical framework, culture is a set of certain systematically arranged beliefs, and these beliefs – consciously approved or just passively recognized by individuals grouped in this particular community – generally regulate ways of launching

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<sup>1</sup> W. Paruch: „Między wyobrażeniami a działaniami. Wybrane aspekty przedmiotowe badań politologicznych nad myślą polityczną”; in: *Polityka i Społeczeństwo*, 2004, nr. 1, pp.16, 21-22.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem, p.24.

<sup>3</sup> Z.J.Pietras, *Podstawy teorii stosunków międzynarodowych*. Lublin 1986, p.154.

<sup>4</sup> F. Ryszka, *Nauka o polityce. Rozważania metodologiczne*. Warszawa 1984, p.102

<sup>5</sup> W. Paruch: *Między wyobrażeniami a działaniami...* p.19.

an extensive class of actions within this given community. The sum of these actions is referred to as a social practice. Because of the social nature of ideas and practice this conception is named a socio-regulative theory of culture. The term “symbolic culture” that I use presently, however, corresponds in many ways to what was once called and sometimes cited as the “spiritual” culture.<sup>6</sup>

The set of all those beliefs, which are generally accepted in a given community and functionally determined by the demands of its practice, is what we call social consciousness. Any type of social practice is regulated subjectively on a social scale by a certain set of beliefs generally accepted in a given community and belonging to its social consciousness. These beliefs, which make socio-subjective regulators of specific types of social practice, are of two kinds. The first are normative beliefs, defining values/goals to be aimed at. The other variety are directive beliefs (directives), defining actions to be undertaken in a given situation to achieve a goal, that is a fixed value (set up beforehand by the normative beliefs). The social practice in its entirety again comprises several types: basic (“material”) practice, speech practice, political/legal practice, institutional pedagogic practice (educational), religious practice, scientific/research practice and others. Any normative or directive regulating factor of a given type of social practice is called a form of social consciousness. Thus the number of types of social consciousness equals the number of types of social practice.

To elucidate these ideas I drew a diagram (figure nr.1) showing connections between social scholarly practice (methodology) and other types of social practice with their characteristic regulators (cultural rules of normative or directive variety, or forms of consciousness).

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<sup>6</sup> Grzegorz Banaszak, Jerzy Kmita: *Spoleczno-regulacyjna teoria kultury*. Warszawa 1991, p.5.

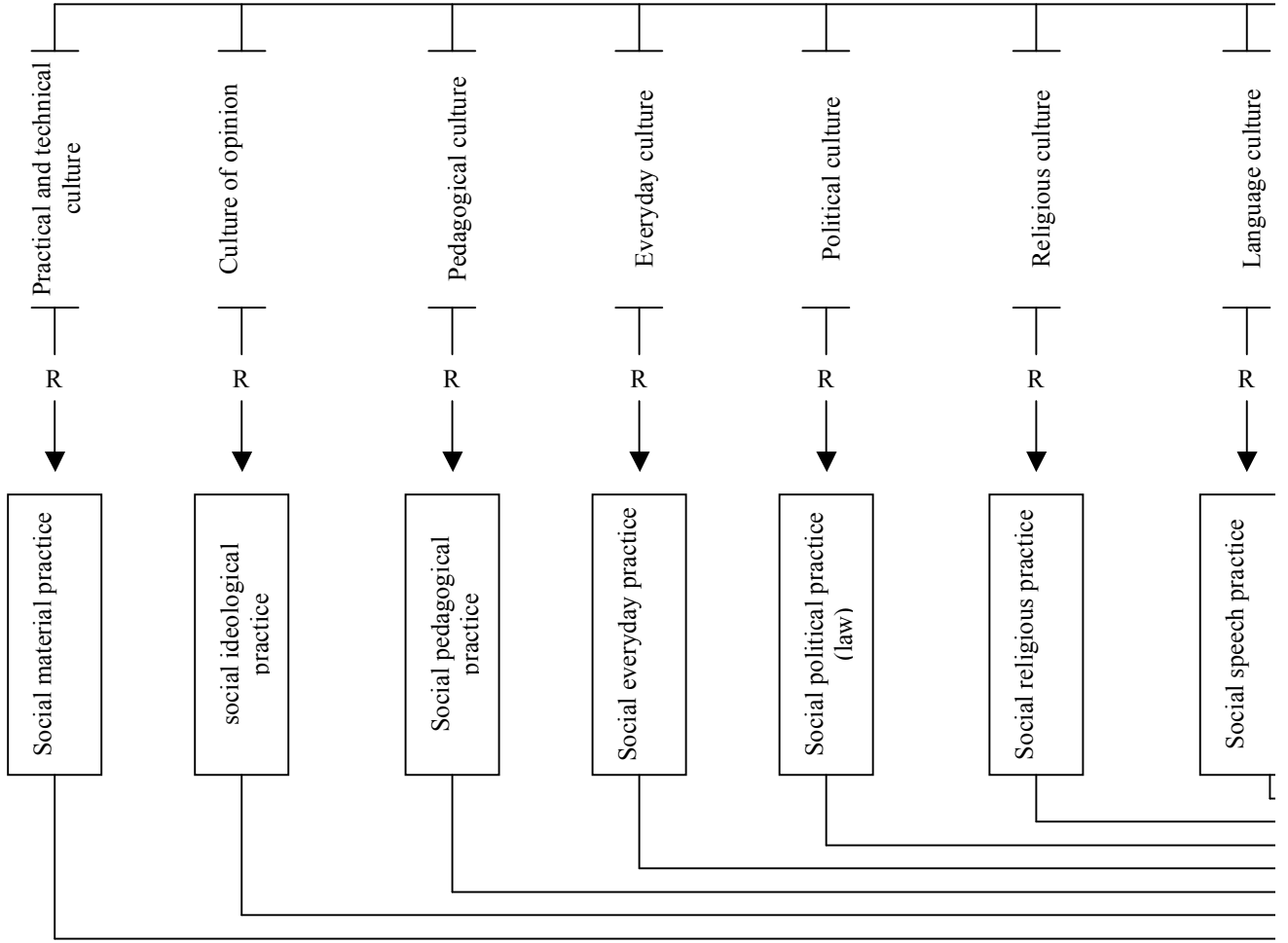


Fig.1: Culture as a set of forms of social consciousness and regulator of the entire social practice (source: modified: Jan Pawlowski: *W poszukiwaniu modelu historii teoretycznej*. Lublin 1984, p.138)

It is worth noting, though, that the sum total of forms of social consciousness does not exhaust the entire realm of this consciousness. Beside beliefs of normative and directive varieties, directly regulating specific types of social practice, social consciousness includes also beliefs, which are generally accepted, but act only indirectly as regulators at particular areas of social practice. For example, religious beliefs, even though generally accepted, do not automatically belong to a specific form of social consciousness, unless they consist of corresponding normative and directive beliefs, which regulate religious practice.

As for “a form of social consciousness”, the proposed understanding of the term differs from the traditional one, since we assume that any type of social practice involves a form of social consciousness, whereas the traditional view holds that only some types of social practice involve some forms of social consciousness (produced by this practice). In the traditional understanding a given form of consciousness is made up of beliefs produced by a corresponding “belief-generating” type of social practice, whereas in our understanding, such a form is constituted by beliefs, which are a socio-subjective regulator of a corresponding type of social practice, thus not the beliefs “produced, but beliefs being socio-subjective norms and directives, which regulate this “production”. Still, these two interpretations of the forms of social consciousness are related, because in both cases the forms consist of beliefs requisited by a society as socio-subjective premises of social practice<sup>7</sup>. What should be stressed here is the fact that the communicative function of speech is always subordinate to functions of all types of social practice, since no other type of social practice can be pursued without informative-communicative contact.

Professor Topolski, some of whose opinions are presented here<sup>8</sup>, believes that a vital factor of any effective collective action is the functioning of common motivation structures. He does not imply that individual motivation structures are identical. The essential part is the concensus as to a general goal, which does not clash nor interfere with individual ones (including group sets of values and of reality perceptions). It is obvious that if a national consciousness does not conform with a state consciousness and the conditions do not allow them to achieve such conformity, a conflict is imminent between the formulated goals and motivating powerbase of the expected activity. The intensity of the conflict varies depending on at what moment in the rise of national and state consciousness did the process of attuning the two take place.

Every nation shares common historical knowledge, and is aware of the common past. For the time being common past and historical knowledge (often distorted, laden with myths, susceptible to various laws of remembering or disremembering) unite communities despite any differentiating factors. Crucial to the process of uniting a people into a community is its ideology. The ideology of a nation is its vision of the future, shared by the members of a nation.

What also matters is the message contained in the historical, and, consequently, national consciousness. Not only the message but the structure of the knowledge in question is involved. Historical knowledge is being shaped chiefly by two factors – characteristics of historical tradition and by historical education in the broad sense of the word. Historical tradition emerges in the course of social spontaneous remembering and disremembering. It is pervaded with evaluations, with the images of the past which are far removed from objectivity. Historical education, which in

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<sup>7</sup> Jerzy Kmita, *O kulturze symbolicznej*. Warszawa 1982, pp.63-66.

<sup>8</sup> Jerzy Topolski, *Historia i życie*. Lublin 1988, pp.94-101.

various ways involves historic traditions, should deliberately aim at developing historical insight and judgment. Historical education results in the historical consciousness of a society.

This consciousness is significantly affected by cultural, social, and individual identities, including their national or ethnic varieties. They also include a political identity. In terms of culture understood as socio-regulative concept, a cultural identity of a community refers to common beliefs, consciously approved or just passively recognized by individuals grouped in this particular community. These beliefs imply sets of certain intertwined cultural properties presumed typical for a given community and distinguishing it against other communities. A cultural identity of an individual, on the other hand, is a set of properties considered by this particular individual as his/her own distinctive characteristics as compared to other individuals of his/her own community or to individuals belonging to other communities.

Thus a cultural political identity of a given community would hold general political beliefs, consciously approved or just passively recognized by individuals grouped in a particular community, beliefs implying sets of certain intertwined cultural political properties presumed characteristic for this community and distinguishing it against other communities. A political identity of an individual, on the other hand, is a set of characteristics considered by this particular individual as his/her own distinctive cultural political features as compared to other individuals of his/her own community or to individuals belonging to other communities, with whom this individual may or may not identify him/herself. These political characteristics include ultimate goals and core tenets of community life, notions concerning the society structure and system, the system of rule, namely actions and decisions of the leadership designed to achieve particular objectives by deliberately chosen means.<sup>9</sup> These are basic political categories, i.e., processes, political actions, social and political relationships, political subjectivity, determining factors of political life (ideologies, economy, law, moral code), political administration, political decisions, the role of state within a political system, approved or recognized political doctrines etc.

The discussion of identity usually involves its two aspects. The first is self-identification, namely how an individual perceives himself or herself. This is a personal, private identity. The other aspect is how an individual is perceived and categorized by others. The latter situates an individual within a society. A private identity is secondary to the social one. As Barbara Szacka put it: "Social identity of an individual is a consequence of his/her belonging to various social groups and categories."<sup>10</sup> It is also determined by social roles performed by an individual. The phenomenon of identity is closely related to memory, to the past, and history. In Zbigniew Bokszanski's opinion, all interpretations of individual identity found in the scholarly literature, except maybe for the choices on the level of rudimentary dimensions, are also defined to a considerable extent by the scholar's methodological preferences, by his/her affiliation to a particular theoretical orientation in his/her field of study. Hence, the multitude of identity interpretation theories.<sup>11</sup>

The discussion of identity often embraces the question of "the identity of the Other (Stranger)"<sup>12</sup>, especially the problem of understanding the attitudes of people cultivating a foreign culture. The ensuing questions can be outlined at three levels of analysis:

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<sup>9</sup> M.Chmaj, M. Zmigrodzki (eds), *Wprowadzenie do teorii polityki*. Lublin 2001, p.20.

<sup>10</sup> B. Szacka, *Wprowadzenie do socjologii*. Warszawa 2005, p.150.

<sup>11</sup> Z. Bokszanski, „Tożsamość jednostki”, *Kultura i Społeczeństwo* 1988 nr.2, pp.8-14.

<sup>12</sup> W.J.Burszta, *Różnorodność i tożsamość. Antropologia jako kulturowa refleksyjność*. Poznań 2004, p.27; M.Buchowski, *Zrozumieć Innego. Antropologia racjonalności*. Kraków 2004. UJ, p.101.

axiological one (opinions), praxeological (theory of effective actions), and epistemological one (degree of cognitive comprehension of the Other's identity).

Jurgen Habermas' theory of ego-identity seems to deserve a special mention in the multitude of identity theories. He argues that the ego-identity consists in the ability to find balance between self autonomy and the superior social demands. His theory refers extensively to specific philosophical, sociological, and psychological issues. He also draws on other fields of study for conceptual tools to formulate his conception. According to Habermas any individual identity is legitimate only if subordinate to "the totality of a higher level subject".<sup>13</sup> Habermas' interpretation of identity in his theory of communicative action is worth mentioning here. In his writings Habermas described three models of science-politics relations (technocratic, pragmatist, and decisionist), and dwelt on the problem of applying scientific expertise to politics, namely the relation of scientific knowledge to political practice, in a continuation of T. Hobbes' ideas. The problem involves the consciousness of politically active people, the political consciousness of politically active people, and the political consciousness of people active in non-political way.

One of the most momentous issues in Habermas' thought is his criticism of various political ideologies, existing in the cognitive sphere of capitalist societies of Europe and America. In his theory of social evolution Habermas propounded a number of conceptions of political ideologies. One of his propositions depicts a political ideology as a set of convictions representing economic, political, or social interests of a defined social group or groups.

The interpretation of the term "politics" varies. Bernard Crick defines politics as "the activity by which differing interests within a given unit of rule are conciliated by giving them a share in power in proportion to their importance to the welfare and survival of the whole community". Political system, on the other hand, is a system of rule "ensuing reasonable stability and order"<sup>14</sup> by means of politics. Crick stressed that "Advocates of any political doctrine should not question a context, in which their doctrines can function according to the laws of politics".<sup>15</sup>

In our perspective "politics" is a form of social consciousness defined as political consciousness, or as a political domain of culture, being a normative-directival set of beliefs (or else: a regulator), which regulates a social type of political practice. A major role in social political consciousness is played by political doctrines. Any political doctrine involves social, economic, cultural, educational and other doctrines. State political doctrine is formulated in the constitution of a state. The constitution is a political and judicial base for various law codes: of civil law, guardianship regulations, etc. To preserve its identity any community, be it national, ethnic, religious, or local, works out its own methods and means of education of its members. Any educational formula is determined by definite doctrinal assertions.

Still it needs stressing that in this perspective politics is a subject of social practice of academic research (in the field of political science), regulated by methodologic consciousness of scholars<sup>16</sup> (see fig.1).

So far, inextensive studies indicate that conditions favouring Jewish settlement arose in Częstochowa early in the eighteenth century.<sup>17</sup> The conditions included

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<sup>13</sup> J. Habermas, *Theory and Practice*.... pp... ; J.Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol.1....; A.M.Kaniowski, *Wokół pojęcia tożsamości w koncepcji Habermasa* in: L.Witkowski (ed), *Dyskursy rozumu: między przemocą a emancypacją: z recepcji J. Habermasa w Polsce*. Toruń 1990, pp.247-249; L.Witkowski, *Tożsamość i zmiana*; Witkowski, *Rozwój i tożsamość w cyklu życia*. Toruń 1989.

<sup>14</sup> B. Crick, *In Defense of Politics*...

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem, p....

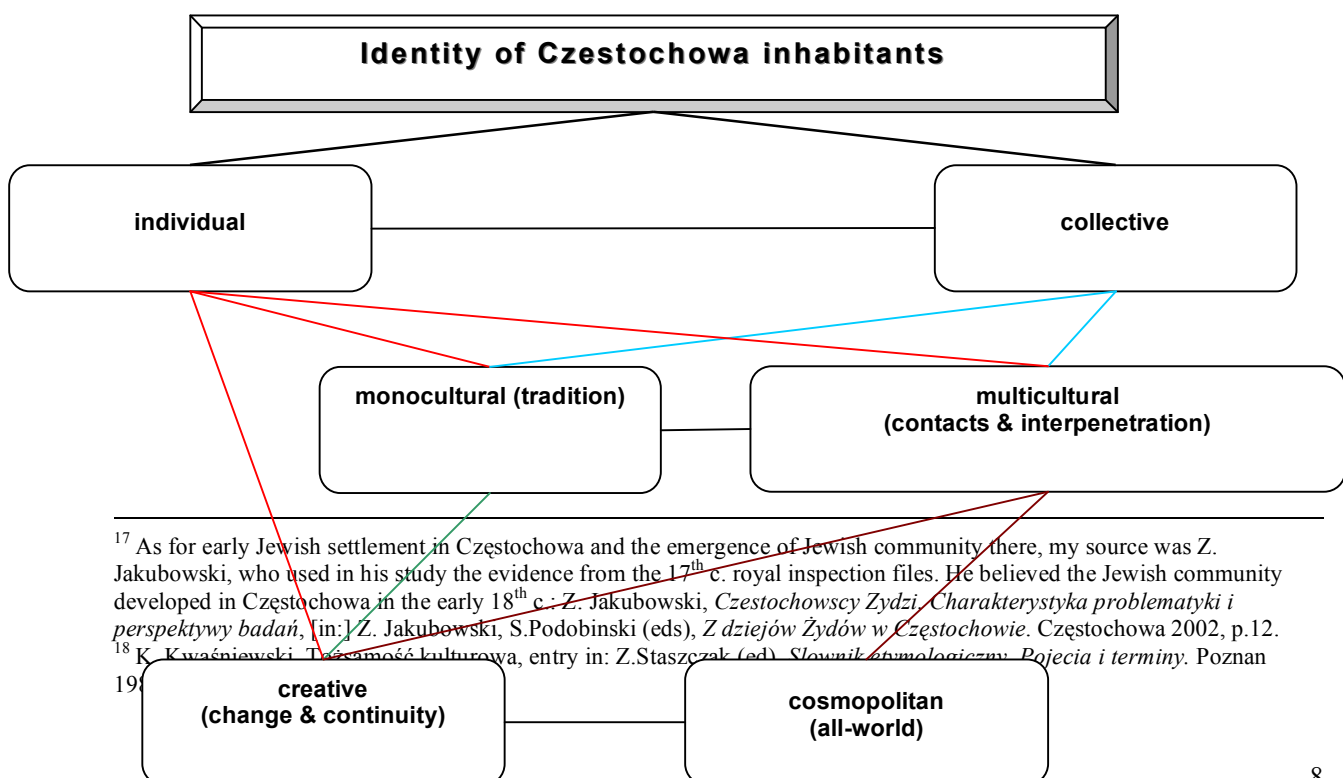
<sup>16</sup> Compare M.Chmaj, M.Żmigrodzki, *Wprowadzenie do teorii polityki*. Lublin 1998, pp.23-26.

economic opportunities. Yet, the cultural identity of Jewish or Polish inhabitants of Częstochowa must be distinguished from the cultural identity of the town as a whole. The cultural identity of the town developed in between the individual and the collective, between the inside and the outside, between taking roots and migrating, between assimilating and being discriminated against.<sup>18</sup> Thus it contributed to the integration of these opposites. Objectively this integration, or rather communal feeling, was founded upon the continuity of changing material and spiritual qualities developed by the body of inhabitants.

The above introductory remarks provide premises pointing to Częstochowa being, since the eighteenth century through to late 1930s, a multicultural place, and a scene of chiefly harmonious social coexistence of Polish and Jewish townspeople, who lived in a town having its own distinct cultural identity and, in case of Jews, had their own specific complex political identity.

**Cultural identity** (of a city, town, community, ethnic or national group etc.) is, as we see it, the most significant kind of collective identity which involves historically inculcated cultural manner of preserving the life and continuity of the species by a given human collective, and their biopsychological balance. This manner consists of: a) elements of tradition; b) types and proportions of various constituents of a given culture; and c) outside context of other cultures.

The coexistence of Polish and Jewish inhabitants of Częstochowa in the plane of the above mentioned integration was effecting a specific principle of counterbalancing numerous types of human cultural identity, namely: a) individual one to collective and vice versa; b) monocultural (inherited with the national or ethnic tradition and usually rather homogenous) to multicultural (acquired by contacts, diverse and multiethnic) and vice versa; c) local to global; d) patriotic to cosmopolitan; e) conservative to progressive etc.



<sup>17</sup> As for early Jewish settlement in Częstochowa and the emergence of Jewish community there, my source was Z. Jakubowski, who used in his study the evidence from the 17<sup>th</sup> c. royal inspection files. He believed the Jewish community developed in Częstochowa in the early 18<sup>th</sup> c.: Z. Jakubowski, *Częstochowscy Żydzi. Charakterystyka problematyki i perspektywy badań*, [in:] Z. Jakubowski, S. Podobinski (eds), *Z dziejów Żydów w Częstochowie*. Częstochowa 2002, p.12.

<sup>18</sup> K. Kwaśniewski, *Tętnożycie kulturalne*, entry in: Z. Staszczak (ed), *Słownik etymologiczny. Pojęcia i terminy*. Poznań 1997, p. 100.



Fig. 2. Types of cultural identity of Częstochowa inhabitants

Having distinguished the above types of cultural identity one finds it easier to analyze the process of emergence of specifically complex political identity of Częstochowa Jews in the 19-twentieth centuries.

This identity is definitely related to the types of cultural identity of Częstochowa inhabitants. It means that the formation and transformations of political identity of Jews, its counterpoise to the identity of other groups within or outside Jewish community, was taking place in the context of: a) “inside” relations between the types of cultural identity; b) relations between these types of cultural identity and political identity, and c) relations between political identity and participation in political activity (participation in the political type of social practice), and d) relations between political identity and extrapolitical activity (non-political type of social practice). A simplified version of these interrelations is shown in a form of a list and diagram (fig.3)

# Culture

(cultural context)

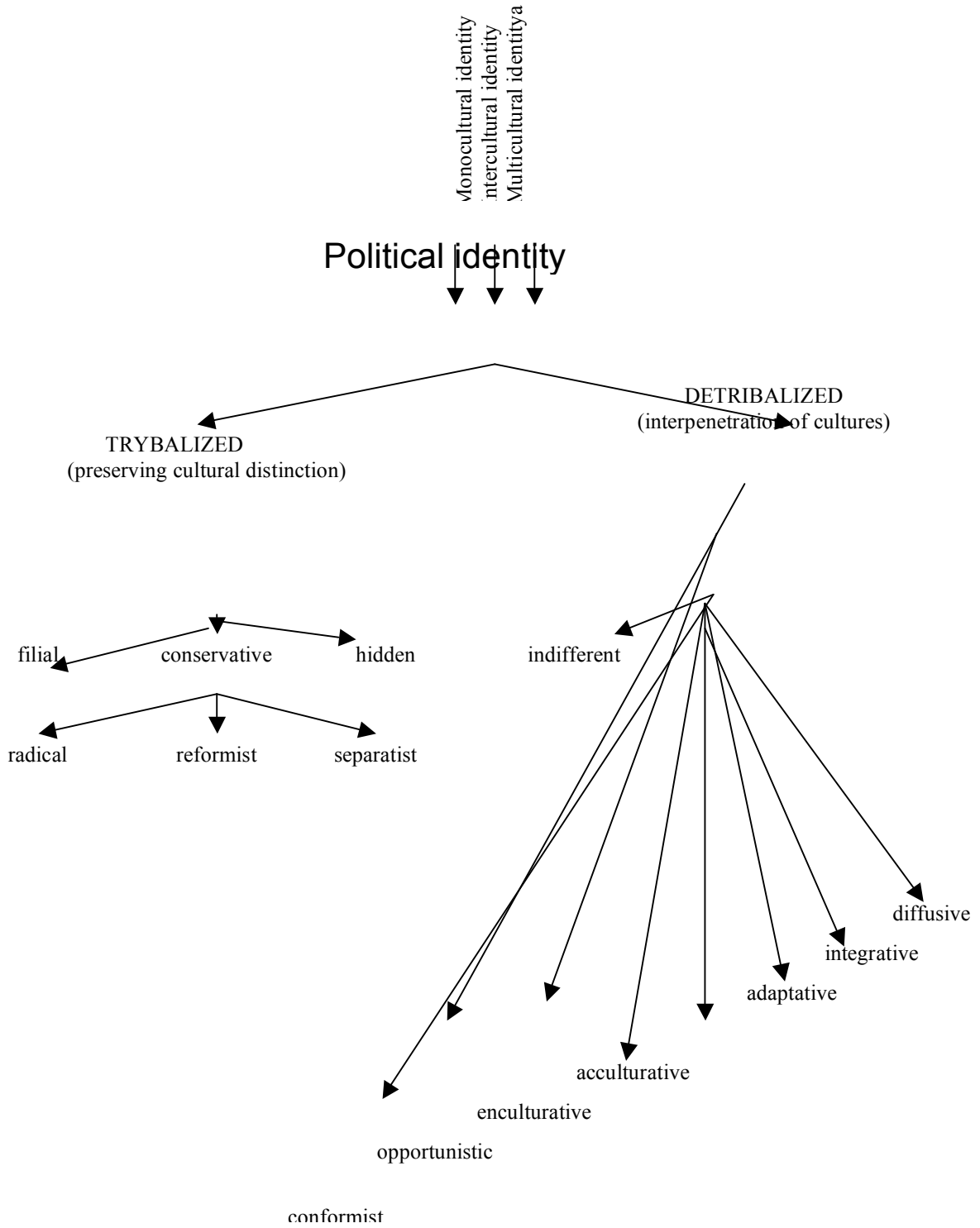


Fig.3

Interrelation of cultural identity and political identity in the course of formation and transformations of political identity; context of political identity

Both the formation and transformation of political identity of a human individual, group or a community occurs under the influence of various social and cultural processes. To characterize them we assumed two basic trends in the development and modification of political identity. The first is conservative, deriving its strength from inherited ethnic cultural identity and aimed at preserving the tradition of political identity often referred to as "tribalized". The other, "detrIALIZED" type, consists in the emergence of a flexible political identity, based on contacts between cultures or on multicultural environment, and implicates more or less intense interpenetrating of cultures.

Such a perspective allows for two major kinds of political identity to be distinguished, i.e., tribalized and detrIALIZED, with several minor variations in case of Częstochowa Jews. The exact meaning of the term tribalism (from Latin *tribus*) concerns the tendency to preserve pre-national tribal distinctions. It is, however, also used in political sense. It can refer to traditional tribal communities, ethnic structures characterized by adherence to traditional forms and by their cultural distinction.<sup>19</sup> In our perspective the term applies to such forms of society organization whose principal foundation is an ethnic group or a part of it, characterized by four categories: a) of origin (in biological sense) and of belonging to a community as defined by: b) religion c) ethnicity and language, and d) culture. Here the term refers mainly to Jewish families (groups of descent) and to local Jewish communities. Such terminology seems adequate to render quite precisely the situation of Jews in the Diaspora and complies with four basic criteria of Jewish identity. It also allows for sufficiently valid elucidation of the emergence, functioning, and transformations of Jewish political identity, especially as far as the assimilation processes of Częstochowa Jews of the 19-twentieth century were concerned.<sup>20</sup>

There are several aspects to be discerned in the tribalized political identity (see fig.3), such as: a) affiliative political identity (actually family instilled through natural bonds between children and their parents), b) conservative (with strong attachment to

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<sup>19</sup> Compare Z. Staszczak (ed) *Słownik etnologiczny. Terminy ogólne*. Warszawa-Poznan 1982; entry: "trybalizm", „detrybalizacja” p.360; „grupa domowa”, „grupa etniczna”, „grupa korporacyjna”, „grupa krewnicza” „grupa lokalna”, „grupa pochodzeniowa”, „plemień” „grupa wieku” pp. 143 - 154.

<sup>20</sup> Comp. Alan Unterman, *Jews: Their Religious Beliefs Life and Practices*. Boston 1981, pp. 20-26.

continuity, to mere preserving, to the reality grounded in the absolute and inherited from the ancestors, with focus on the safekeeping of the existing order and passing it on to succeeding generations)<sup>21</sup>, c) separationist (extremely conservative identity), d) reformist (mitigating the process of the decline of traditional order in the face of new social issues), e) radical (aimed at becoming impervious to any new tendencies), f) secret (inner or penitral, from Latin *penitralis*, e.i. consciously accepted and respected, but concealed, not manifested publicly conservative identity).

The paradox of conservative political identity lies in the fact that changing reality used to force people ardently opposed to any change to become radical rebels in defense of traditional ideals and values of the lost order they were devoted to. The traditional order was idolized.<sup>22</sup> Reciprocal interpenetration of cultures must have resulted in detribalization and, in due course, restructuring of elements constituting any culture involved, whether Jewish or the coexistent dominant Polish culture. Consequently, the character of the detribalized political identity of Częstochowa Jews was varied depending on the relation of cultural identity to political identity in the process of formation and transformation of their political identity, and also on the scope, intensity, and course of the assimilation process. These factors were reflected in the below variations of detribalized political identity, namely: a) indifferent political identity; b) diffusive (emerging out of direct or indirect diffusion of the two cultures through personal interchange between people belonging to different cultures); c) adaptative (through modification of one's cultural identity so to make coexistence with members of other cultures in individual or group contacts easier); d) acculturative (effected by cultural changes involving adoption of certain alien ideas into one's own culture and/or elimination of certain elements of the native culture; e) integrative (involving such relationships between the characteristics of culture which form distinct entities, e.i. relationships and connections between all or some elements of both or more cultures); f) enculturative (resulting from the process of acquiring cultural competence – of learning a culture, or settling in the culture of Częstochowa society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries); g) confluent (effected by the amalgamation of political identity of two distinct cultural identities); h) conformist (adapted to the political identity dominant in a society); i) opportunistic (according to a current political situation). The variations of detribalization as mentioned usually follow the rules of liberalism and tolerance.

In the course of effective functioning of political identity there is another rule actualized, and that is the rule of counterbalancing the distinctiveness of the cultures of human individuals and collectives involved. This counterbalancing is attained in various ways, either by regarding (liberal approach) or by disregarding (conservative!) the identity of the other person or the identity of a particular community.

The above formulated thesis requires answering several important questions, such as:

- 1) Since when was Częstochowa multicultural?
- 2) What underlay the multicultural character of the town?
- 3) How did this character emerge?
- 4) What phenomena determined it?
- 5) What types of inhabitant's personal identity prevailed in multicultural Częstochowa, and what impact did they have upon the political identity of Jewish inhabitants?

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<sup>21</sup> Compare: Ryszard Skarzynski, *Konserwatyzm. Zarys dziejów filozofii politycznej*. Warszawa 1998. Wyd. Naukowe „Scholar”, pp.18 - 38.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem* p.31.

- 6) What factors encouraged Jewish settlement and life in Częstochowa?
- 7) What part did the Europeanism, Polishness, and Jewishness, seen as categories of communal values of the transmission of cultural heritage, play in the formation of the multiculturalism of Częstochowa and, hence, in the formation of political identity of its inhabitants?

These questions imply quite a number of problems in urgent need of scholarly research. To answer them, even in the most concise manner, one would have to go far beyond the scope of the present study. Therefore I would focus on the following issues pertaining to my principal thesis:

1. Political identity of early Jewish settlers in Częstochowa in the context of their individual and collective cultural identity;
2. Position of the Częstochowa Jewish community and its self-government administration in the formation of ethnic (inherited) identity of its members and their related political identity;
3. Role of language, religion, and custom in the preservation of the inherited ethnic identity, in profiling Jewish political identity and in the process of cultural assimilation;
4. Significance of rabbis in the forming of ethnic and political identities of Częstochowa Jews in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries;
5. Determinants of the institutional Jewish education as far as the shaping of dynamically flexible ethnic identity and political identity of the young were concerned;
6. Positive and negative manifestations of the ideological political identity of the Częstochowa Jews and Poles in the anti-Semitic and anti-Polish context;
7. Heritage of creative ethnic-cultural identity and of creative political identity in the Częstochowa economy;
8. Polish, Jewish, and European contribution into the common bulk of multicultural values of Częstochowa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
9. Political identity of Częstochowa Jews as confronted with the enslavement and annihilation and the revival of their ethnic and cultural identities in the face of the Shoah.

Undoubtedly living in a society either individually or collectively oriented determines type of identity of its inhabitants, the focus and message of this identity, the degree of their self-identification and, consequently, identity integration. One of its demonstrations on the part of Jews was the decision to settle in Częstochowa. Let us then begin with the conditions that encouraged Jews to make this decision.

## 1. Political identity of early Jewish settlers in Częstochowa in the context of their individual and collective cultural identity

As the title of the present chapter implies, the questions about the identity of Jews first arriving in Częstochowa, identity of Jews establishing their first community there (already as an ethnic group), and their identity afterwards, with the considerable growth of their number until their destruction and hereafter, to the end of the twentieth c.

The beginnings of the Jewish community in Częstochowa date back to 1808, when the Kalisz Department gave permission to have it established in Stara Częstochowa. Since the number of Jews in Częstochowa in various periods somewhat affected the structure of cultural context and, consequently, the character of Jewish political identity, I decided to start with the proportion of Jews to the entire population of the town, and then to proceed to social and cultural relations, including political ones, in the early period of Jewish settlement.

Miscellaneous references to Jews in the royal inspection files of 1620 and 1631, examined by Z. Jakubowski<sup>23</sup>, and other documents analyzed by K. Redzinski<sup>24</sup> and S. Szymanski<sup>25</sup>, suggest that as early as in the beginning of eighteenth century there were conditions favoring Jewish settlement in Częstochowa. The evidence include a loan, contracted by the Mayor and Council of the H.M. Town of Częstochowa, from Mosiek, a Jew, in order to pay a contribution enforced by the Swedish army in 1705; in return for the loan Mosiek with his family was allowed to live in Stara Częstochowa as long as the debt was settled.

A significant fact is that there was no Jewish habitation in Nowa Częstochowa, nicknamed Czestochówka, before 1826 when both parts of the town, Stara and Nowa Częstochowa, melted into one municipality.<sup>26</sup> The Jasna Góra Monastery neighborhood was purely Catholic, whereas Stara (Old) Częstochowa had already had some Jewish inhabitants. It is worth noting here, that the Mayor of Stara Częstochowa in reply to the rescripts of June 16, 1818, from the Voivodship Commissar Delegated to Wielun District, concerning "separation of Jews from Christians", wrote: "In the city here Jews outnumber the Christians"<sup>27</sup> and as early as that the most expensive houses by the market square and main streets were owned by Jews. In a letter to his superiors at the voivodship administration the Mayor observed that "Jews possessed houses by inheritance or by acquisitive prescription, and many a lot they acquired as conflagration sites", after various extensive fires, plaguing the town, as the one of May 11, 1809, set by the Austrian army. The considerable number of Jewish inhabitants often impeded the Mayor in following the instructions issued by the voivodship authorities.

Therefore he volunteered another solution concerning the territory in his competence. His suggestion to the Voivodship Commissar was that the Jews, who would consent to be "civilised", could live among the Christians. Mayor's point was that "...

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<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, p.12-14; it is possible that following Jakub Lejbowicz Frank's confinement at the Jasna Gora fortress, a family or families of his followers settled in Częstochowa or vicinity; Frank's double life as a Catholic and Sabbataist resulted in a heresy case being brought up against him; he was sentenced to a jail at the Jasna Gora Monastery in Częstochowa, where he spent 13 years posing as a suffering Messiah, to be released when the Tzarist army captured Częstochowa; he left the town together with his followers to go to Brno, and in 1786 settled at the Offenbach castle by Frankfurt. Hypothetic staying on of Frankist families in Częstochowa is difficult to prove, all the more so as Frank's death in 1791 put an end to the movement and in Poland baptized Frankists gradually assimilated with the Christian society.

<sup>24</sup> K.Redzinski *Początki żydowskiej gminy wyznaniowej w Częstochowie (1808–1862)*, in: Z. Jakubowski, S. Podobinski (eds), *Z dziejów Żydów w Częstochowie*, Częstochowa 2002 p. 128

<sup>25</sup> S. Szymański, „Do dziejów Żydów w Częstochowie w okresie konstytucyjnym Królestwa”, *Biuletyn ŻIH* 1961, Nr 39.

<sup>26</sup> Waclaw Ostrowski, *Święte karty z dziejów planowania w Polsce 1815 – 1830*, Warszawa 1949.

<sup>27</sup> A P Cz., Akta m.Cz – wy sygn. 31., z. 1.

almost all located by the Market Square declare readiness to join the civilization”<sup>28</sup>. Towards the rest of Jews, who would not meet the requirement, he decided to have them “...detached from the Christians into the most suitable location in the street by the river, whereupon they have their house of God situated. The aforementioned street is big enough and, moreover, connected to the square [...], thus all the Jews must not fail to move there”<sup>29</sup>.

The decision validated the earlier policy of Jewish settlement in Częstochowa. Market Square (Rynek), later called Old (Stary) Market Square, and its neighborhood, including Nadrzeczna Street (by the river), were prevalingly Jewish. Mayor tried to justify his lack of eagerness in replying to the superiors letters and reminders concerning “separation of Jews from the Christians”: “...Without adequate knowledge of the number of the Christians and number of Jews in the town I intended to postpone the matter till the new census, because this knowledge is hard to attain from the old census”<sup>30</sup>.

One cannot ignore the consequences of the mayor’s decision for the shaping of individual and collective cultural identity of the Jews on one hand, and for reinforcing the dominant Catholic identity of Poles on the other. The official division of Częstochowa inhabitants into Catholics and Jews, endorsed in official documents, including the mayor’s letters, was a legal validation of the existing national and religious identity of Jews. This validation was based on the territorial counterbalancing Jewish identity with the religious and national cultural identity of Poles.

It certainly situated Polish and Jewish political identities with the correlation of their ethnic and religious identities and such correlation somewhat furthered the interests of the Russian rule. “Somewhat”, since the territorial (divisional) formula of counterbalancing religious cultural identities of Polish population (Catholic identity) against Jewish (Judaist identity) was complemented by the strengthening social bonds. These bonds were developed in the course of interpersonal contacts between Jewish and Polish inhabitants of Częstochowa in their physical, mental, and social world. The physical setting of the contacts of Catholics and Jews (hasidim or Orthodox Jews) such as stores or market places with Jews selling and Poles buying promoted perception of their concerns (mental connection). Physical and mental connections evolved into the social bond, since such meetings involved exchange of values, whether courtesies or merchandise, situations which had some importance or meaning for both parties – Jews and Polish Catholics. This is an example of the depicted process of the purchase of goods: physical proximity of Jews and Poles; perceptions that Jews have goods which are interesting for Poles and, consequently, that Jews are interested in Polish buyers, resulting in the social connection: purchase of goods. The connection is grounded in some value, in some interaction concerning the value. Continuous interaction effected permanent social bond.

According to J. Szczepanski “social relation is a certain permanent system involving two partners (individuals or groups) – a connective, that is an object, business, disposition, common value – on which this relation is grounded, and a certain set of duties, that is normalized activities that the partners are obliged to perform towards each other. In other words, social relation is a system of normalized interactions between two partners on some defined common ground”<sup>31</sup>. Częstochowa inhabitants provided for the permanence of social relations by a specific system of regulating mechanisms. A major role in the system was played by institutions, that were groups of people appointed to

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<sup>28</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>31</sup> J. Szczepański, *Elementarne pojęcia socjologii*. Warszawa 1965, p.105

attend to matters that were crucial to the life of the town, people who performed public functions, in order to provide the population with the opportunity to satisfy their various needs, to regulate inhabitants' actions within the realm of social relations, to secure continuity of social life, and to integrate efforts, actions, and relations concerning the integration of the community. An institution (Jewish religious community or the Church) had its own goal (functions), range of activity, fixed social roles and means of attaining them (material, symbolic or ideal objects), as well as sanctions to control people engaged in institutionalized activity.

Quantity, diversity, and scope of institutions' activity were determined by the size of Jewish and Polish population.

Given the then mayor's of Częstochowa problems with calculating the number of inhabitants, the task seems all the more difficult now. It can be presumed that faced with an almost impossible dilemma the town authorities tried to find some way to circumvent it. They declined any police measures to enforce "the separation of Jews from the Christians". Mayor's suggestion to his voivodship superiors was to sanction the de facto situation of Jewish habitation in town. It cunningly referred to the legislator's intentions by pointing that "it would be a great incentive for the Jews to join civilisation"<sup>32</sup>. Thus the intentions were almost met and the unworkable problem deferred without infringing the law. The argument over the "Jewish sector" emerged again in the years 1828-33 and by 1860, often politically prompted.

Reliable publications and source materials from the State Archives in Częstochowa allow for the following chart illustrating the proportion of Jewish inhabitants to the entire population of the town (table 1).

The data included in Table 1 point to as much as 34 per cent of Częstochowa population being Jewish in 1857, 31,8% in 1912, and 31% in 1914; these numbers are a meaningful starting point for discussion of factors that determined Jewish settlement and life in Częstochowa.

Table 1  
Number of Jews in proportion to the entire population of Częstochowa<sup>33</sup>

Year	Total	Jews	%
1765		75	
1808	3 349	495	14,8
1827	6 168	1 141	18,5
1914	8 637	2 976	34,5

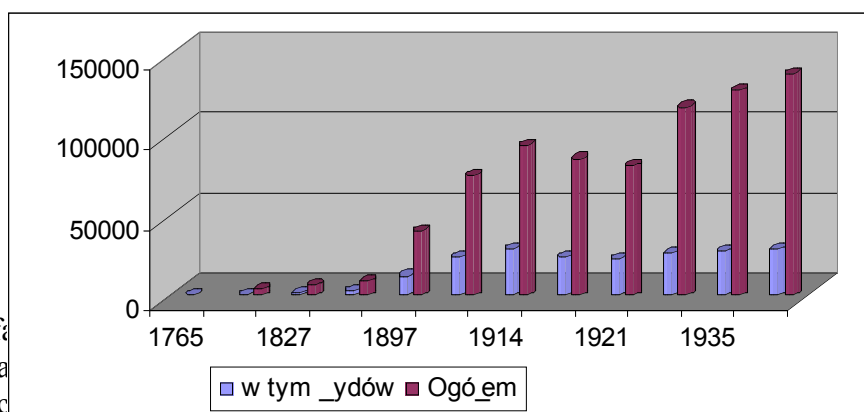
<sup>32</sup> A P Cz., Akta m.Cz – wy sygn. 31., z. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Information on the census in 19th and early 20<sup>th</sup> c. come from: *Evreyskaya entsiklopedia*, vol. XV, Moscow 1991 (reprint, Cyrillic), p. 848., *Encyklopaedia Judaica*, vol. 5, Jerusalem 1971, p. 1212, from B. Wasutyński's, *Ludność żydowska w Polsce w wiekach XIX i XX*, Warszawa 1930r., p. 24, documents in State Archives in Częstochowa, Mag. sygn. 6632 – *Statystyczne wiadomości* 1922, and from the interwar statistical yearbooks, such as *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny 1938 r.*, Warszawa 1938 r., p. 39.



85 7			
1	39 863	11 764	29,5
89 7			
1	74 855	23 790	31,8
91 2			
1	92 975	28 748	31
91 4			
1	84 847	23 766	28
91 5			
1	80 473	22 663	28,2
92 1			
1	117 200	25 588	21,8
93 1			
1	127 504	27 162	21,3
93 5			
1	137 623	28 486	21
93 9			

Source: J. Mizgalski.



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time, namely Russia, Austria, and Prussia, a multilingual crowd of native Poles, Russian newcomers (soldiers and officers stationed at the local garrison, state officials and their families), Germans, and Jews, was a common sight. In the 1860s Jews proved their eager support of Polish strivings for independence by organizing and participating in patriotic demonstrations.<sup>34</sup>

Factors motivating Jewish settlement in Częstochowa included also affability of the natives, open to newcomers, including strangers coming to visit or to settle in

<sup>34</sup> Z. Jakubowski, *Częstochowscy Żydzi, Charakterystyka problematyki i perspektywy badań*, in: *Żydzi w dziejach Częstochowy*, Częstochowa 1991, p.12-13.

Częstochowa. Ready to adapt fast to new laws and environment Jews found it easy to become a part of the social life and economy of the town.

Multicultural society of Częstochowa emerged in the circumstances of social demand for specific services. The demand was followed by the awareness and approval – by other groups of Częstochowa inhabitants – of social usefulness of strangers, both individuals and collectives, such as they were – with their foreign culture and distinctiveness. Hence the respect for the their identity (including political identity) and the counterbalancing of identities of human individuals and their groups. Mosiek the Jew became needed by the Mayor and Town Council. He was noticed as a financial disposer, who by accomodating them with a loan not only satisfied their needs, but also confirmed the value of his inherited ethnic culture and his own distinctiveness. The interaction, cooperation, and contract were based on honoring culturally integrated individual identity of Mosiek the Jew by the town authorities. Consequently, the identities of both parties were counterbalanced. It seems warranted to think of Częstochowa in general as a multicultural town as early as the eighteenth century, due to the growing immigration tendencies, movements and peregrinations economically, existentially, cognitively, and politically motivated.

It is worth mentioning here that the Jewish community of Częstochowa was obviously split between the families descending from early settlers and the newcomers, such as Jewish immigrants arriving massively from Russia, nicknamed Litvaks. The latter were so fixed on the Russian political and cultural ways that they could not grasp the local scene and were often at odds with both Częstochowa based Jews and Poles. Conflicts and divisions were also often caused by the differences in the established political identities of Jews and Poles.

So far, our information on the social bonds and relations between the two collectives of Częstochowa inhabitants, Jewish and Polish, indicate that the two were interested in such characteristics of the other which could be “utilized” by one party (Polish) to satisfy some of its needs, or else were interested in things and values the other were in possession of and also “utilized” by both parties (Jewish and Polish).

Thus having arrived at some data about the number of Jewish inhabitants and some illustrations of the social bond emerging between Jewish and Polish inhabitants of Częstochowa, we can now try to define political identity of the early Jewish settlers in town. Diversity of social bonds added to inhabitants’ experiencing various cultures as equal, and their values us counterbalanced, and resulted in the transition from one-dimensional to multi-dimensional, multi-faceted identity (enriching the bonds, extinguishing the conflicts, and generating integration). These were the issues involved in the organization and functioning of the Jewish community in Częstochowa.

## **2. Functions of the Jewish community and self-government in Częstochowa in the formation of ethnic identity (inherited) of its members and their ensuing political identity**

The nineteenth century saw further development of the Jewish community, parallel to the development of Częstochowa itself. The community idea lies at the heart of Jewish style of life both on a microscale as on macroscale. The role of the community has been repeatedly emphasized in the debate on the phenomenon of continuity of religion and identity of the nation devoid of its own state. Wherever a group of Jews settled and the political situation allowed, be it laws or social acts, wherever no violent ethnic or religious conflicts occurred, a new community would be founded with its house of

prayer, cemetery, ritual bath, and school, to represent Jewish collective towards the state and local administration.

The first Jewish arrivals into Częstochowa did not manifest, nor openly declared their political identity, especially their conservative political identity. It was eventually disclosed in very specific situations, involving religious affinity or connection with the cultural community. In case of such disclosure it was the situation that determined political identity, which could take a separationist, reformist, or even radical form. In the interaction with Poles it would most often remain secret (hidden).

It was different in case of more liberal political identities, imbued with specific assimilationist tendencies. This observation concerns mainly those Jews, who chose to settle in Częstochowa and to enter into social bonds with its inhabitants, as, e.g., the before mentioned Mosiek the Jew, who accommodated the town authorities with a loan, with an intent of doing business there in the future. In order to decide which of the detribalized political identities Mosiek represented (whether indifferent, adaptative, acculturalistic, opportunistic, or conformist) we need to investigate thoroughly his doings in Częstochowa, looking for facts and traces of his own identity. His previous membership in a community before coming to Częstochowa would also be relevant, as well as his attitude to political restrictions at the time of the decline of the Polish Commonwealth.

The status of Jewish community was regulated by the state legislation. In Częstochowa at the time of rapid growth of the Jewish population, this status was dictated by Russia, one of the partitioning powers under whose rule Poland remained for the entire nineteenth c.<sup>35</sup> According to another 1821 edict of Tsar Alexander I, for instance, kahals were threatened with heavy penalties if they failed to register all Polish Jews under their names and surnames.<sup>36</sup>

In October 1830 “On Behalf of His Majesty Nicholas I, Emperor of Russia, King of Poland etc. etc. etc., Administrative Council of the Polish Kingdom” resolved to sanction the tasks performed by rabbis towards the state and towards Jewish community. In every “Borough under Synagogal Board, a Rabbi or his deputy will be appointed by the State Commission of Religions and Public Education, to become a member of the aforesaid Board”. Duties of spiritual leaders included religious services, rituals such as at circumcision, naming a newborn baby, “upon wedding couples entering the Marriage and upon decease of any Jews regardless of sex or age”.<sup>37</sup> The Tsar’s edict had political impact, thus it concerned political identity of Jews.

In the course of WWI German armies replaced the Russians in Częstochowa. German authorities sanctioned the decision of the Administrative Council of Polish Kingdom of 1830 concerning register books with records of marriages, births, and deaths. On August 26, 1916, the Municipality of Częstochowa addressed a letter to Rabbi Asz,

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<sup>35</sup> In Polish Kingdom Jewish kehillahs (kahals) were abolished by an edict of the Russian Tsar Alexander I on January 1, 1822 (according to Russian Orthodox calendar on December 20, 1821) to be replaced, as decreed by the Governor of Polish Kingdom on February 20, 1822, by Jewish communities, initially named “parishes”, and then – “synagogal boroughs” (Dozory bóżnicze) supervised by the synagogal boards.

<sup>36</sup> „It is a duty of the so-called kahals’ superiors to attend to it that every Jew declares his surname in a prescribed time and receives a certificate to that effect. It is done so that in case of any future misdemeanour resulting from the lack of such certificate not only the transgressor but also his kahal would be held responsible.” *Dziennik Praw* Nr 28, Vol. 7, p. 138.

<sup>37</sup> Beside religious duties Rabbi was obligated to keep ledgers of the Synagogal Board funds and Registry Files. The latter had to be written in Polish including „religious acts after each ritual”, date, name nad surname of any newborn baby, names and surnames of its parents, age of the deceased, names and surnames of newlyweds, date and place of banns. Such files were to be revealed to the registrars with periodic reports and explanations. Couples entering marriage had to possess identity certificates issued by the registrar. Upon the birth of a baby its father was obligated to report not later than on 8<sup>th</sup> day at the rabbi’s office and at the registrar’s with two witnesses to register the baby. Upon the death in a family its representative should report with witnesses at the rabbi’s office to register the fact, and then with the rabbi and witnesses – to the registrar. *Dziennik Praw*, Nr 51, vol. 13, p. 149.

complaining that “among the citizens of Jewish origin there are numerous marriages which were not officially reported at the registrar.”<sup>38</sup> Rabbi was admonished that such conduct was contrary to the law in force and obligated to issue appropriate orders to the effect that all couples ritually married in the Jewish community register their marriages at the registrar’s “to secure appropriate certificate”, while any new marriage must be reported at the registrar’s on penalty of high fines.<sup>39</sup>

On November 3, 1915, German civilian administration of the city of Częstochowa addressed an ordinance to the Board of Jewish Community to the effect that notices of births should be passed to the rabbi not later than on eighth day, while marriages and deaths had to be reported at two days notice. On his part, Rabbi was obligated to register such facts with the municipality without delay and also report in writing in case a father of the family failed to do so. The ordinance was substantiated with the results of inspections which proved that “majority of births was not reported by Jewish inhabitants.”<sup>40</sup>

In reborn Poland the decree of February 7, 1919, issued by the Head of the State, actually sanctioned religious character of Jewish communities. According to new regulations Jews of Poland formed the Religious Association of public and legitimate character, consisting of communities and governed by the Religious Board, which was never called into being.<sup>41</sup> Legal regulations concerning religious life, but actually political, interacted with political identity of Jews.

The exact date of the establishment of Jewish community in Częstochowa is still unsettled. It was not entered even on a 1929 registration card issued by the community board and preserved with Częstochowa Starosty files, although 1799 was recorded there as the date of its official recognition by the state authorities.<sup>42</sup> The Częstochowa Synagogal Borough included the town and nearby villages<sup>43</sup>. Its possessions, coming from members’ contributions, were multiplied with time, as the number of Jews and their prosperity grew with their businesses thriving to satisfy the needs of Częstochowa inhabitants.

Hundred years prior to the outbreak of WWII, and to the greatest disaster in Jewish modern history, the Częstochowa Synagogal Board drew up the 1839 Inventory of Real Property and Utensils owned by the City of Częstochowa Kahal.<sup>44</sup> Detailed lists of these

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<sup>38</sup> A.P.Cz, Akta m. Częstochowy, zespół I sygn. 4895.

<sup>39</sup> It was reminded that the regulations concern also reporting „...births and deaths, since these are often never or with many a month lapse reported at the registrar’s.” Frequent inspections were indicated to compare records in the rabbi’s books to those at the registrar’s. The latter was ordered to proceed with the inspection every two weeks very painstakingly, whereas “any transgression immediately reported”. Rabbi was obligated to show his books whenever the registrar demanded it. Rabbi was advised that “any transgression either of the regulations in force or the present ordinance will be fined.” A.P.Cz, Akta m. Częstochowy, zespół I sygn. 4895.

<sup>40</sup> A.P.Cz, Akta m. Częstochowy, zespół I sygn. 4895.

<sup>41</sup> Dz. Urzęd. Min. W.R.i O.P. N. 5 of 1919 r. poz. 5, issued as „Dekret o zmianach w organizacji gmin wyznaniowych żydowskich na terenie b. Królestwa Kongresowego”, [Decree on reorganization of Jewish religious communities in the territory of former Congress Kingdom] of February 7, 1919 ( Dz. Pr. 1919 r. N. 14 poz.175 ) and „Regulamin wyborczy dla gmin wyznaniowych żydowskich na terenie b. Królestwa Kongresowego” of February 25, 1921. *Monitor Polski* N. 52-53 of March 5 and 7, 1921, poz. 91; Dz. Urzęd. Min. W.R. i O.P. N 4 (ogóln. Zbioru N. 47 of May 17, 1921.

<sup>42</sup> A.P.Cz., Starostwo Pow. Cz-wskie, sygn. 366.

<sup>43</sup> Thus in 1841 the competence of the Synagogal Borough included, beside Częstochowa, Jews of the Mstow town, and villages Rędziny, Łojki, Lochynia, Grabówka, Lubojenka, Wyczerpy, Radostków, Lubojnia, Kiedrzyn, Kościelec, B’leszno, Konin, Wikłów, Wierchowisko, Kamienica Polska, Nowa wieś, Kazimierz./Files in A.P.Cz. Akta miasta Częstochowy, z I sygn. 450/; in 1923 the Częstochowa Jewish community included nearby Grabówka with its villages of Aniołów, Gnaszyn, part of Wyczerpy; Huta Stara with villages: Brzeziny Wielkie, Raków; Dźbów and its villages: Blachownia, Ostrowy, Bleszno; Rędziny with its villages: Mirów, part of Wyczerpy, Nowa Wieś; Poczesna with Rększowice and Hutki, Kamienica Polska, Kiedrzyn. According to the 1929 registration file the number of Jewish members of the community amounted to 30,000. /A. P. Cz. Starostwo Pow. Cz-wskie sygn. 366/

<sup>44</sup> It concerned utensils at the „Synagogue of stone consisting of men and women’s sections, Public School of stone, Bath, Hospital, Cemetery within enclosure walls, vaulted Archive”./ A.P. Cz., Akta miasta Częstochowy, sygn. 443.

utensils at each of the institutions covered by the inventory testify to their significance in preserving the continuity of religion based tradition. Reverence for the past was indicated by a large number of religious books (e.g., the school inventory included many commentaries and treatises), by the synagogue equipment, and also by the care of the cemetery (enclosed by a wall for security) and the archives, where both the official Statutes and “Synagogal Files” were kept.

By 1923 the community assets were much bigger than in 1839.<sup>45</sup> They served religious, cultural, educational, and welfare identity of its Jewish members.<sup>46</sup>

The 30,000 people strong Częstochowa Jewish community included many people distanced from or even critical of observing strictly Orthodox rules in everyday life. The number of the then Jewish non-believers is difficult to assess. The popularity of the radical leftist and Bundist options fluctuated with the changing situation and political unrest in the early decades of the twentieth c.

The Częstochowa Jewish community was also a scene of various assimilation processes. Diverse approach to assimilation resulted from diverse types of Jewish political identity, as varied were the types of detribalized political identity of Jewish members of Częstochowa community (compare fig.3). As far as moderate assimilation was concerned, the political identity of Orthodox Jews differed from that of the Hatzefira Jews, not to mention political identity of Poles of Mosaic religion, as they were called, e.i. Jews involved in the most radical assimilation, along the yiddishkeit assimilation lines, or of Jewish socialists.

### **3. Role of language, religion, and custom in preserving inherited ethnic identity, in shaping Jewish political identity, and in the course of cultural assimilation**

The essential role in preserving ethnic (inherited) identity was played by Jewish family and its relationships. It was within its circle that the views of a young person were formed and the knowledge of his/her origin, nation, religion, laws and duties first passed on. The specific aura of everyday life on weekdays and holidays was developed in a family circle. It was hard to conceive Jews deeply embedded in religious and philosophical culture, Orthodox or Hasids in particular, without their everyday prayers, from the morning *Shachrit*, through afternoon *Mincha*, to evening *Arvit* or *Maariv*. Children of religious families attended heder schools and yeshivas, to be ready to lead a life of religious observance. In those families religion and tradition were one.

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<sup>45</sup> In 1923 they included: ritual bath building fully equipped whose value was estimated at 232,600. zlotys, Crafts School at a brick building (100,000 zlotys with tools and implements estimated at 175,000), Gardening School at Aniolow (200,000), Synagogue of stone built in 1805, expanded in 1876-1879 by a joint effort of community members (value estimated at 83,000), Bet Hamidrash at 32, Nadrzeczna Str. in a 1822 brick building in need of overall renovation in 1929 (30,000 zlotys), cemetery (not evaluated); the assets included also various mortgage legacies, whose joint value was estimated at 25,400 zlotys. Real properties include the synagogue, bethamidrash, poultry slaughterhouse, ritual bath, crafts schools, gardening farm, and cemetery. The synagogue, bethamidrash, and poultry slaughterhouse were situated at a lot by Mirowska and Nadrzeczna streets crossing, whereas the bath was at 18, Garibaldiogo Str., Crafts Schools at 6/8 Garncarskia Str. , whereas 24 acres of the gardening farm (whose major founder was Henryk Markusfeld) were located by Rolnicza Str. in the Kule quarter. In the 1930s the farm was run by the Hechaluc Pionier organization. Annual community budget of 1929 (both income and expenditure) amounted to 509,290.09. zlotys. / A. P. Cz, Starostwo Pow. Cz – wskie sygn. 366.

<sup>46</sup> In 1916 the budget of Israeli Częstochowa Community included salaries of religious officials: a rabbi, junior rabbi, three assistants, community office clerks (two secretaries and a sequestrator recording the membership fees), a cantor and shames at the old synagogue, treasurer and two keepers, maintenance subsidies of the New Synagogue, wages of two gravediggers and a keeper at the cemetery, maintenance costs – lighting and heating of the synagogue, stationeris, renovations, rent of flats for rabbis and clerks, school costs: general and conservative Talmud Torah schools subsidies, Crafts School and Gardening Farm subsidies, subsidies protection / A P Cz. Akta m. Częstochowy, z I sygn. 450. /

An interesting instance of family relationships and care in emergency is illustrated in the Tempels case documents of 1832: the proceedings of the Family Council and inventory of the deceased Tempel couple possessions.<sup>47</sup> The Tempels were an affluent Cześćochowa family trading in various tailoring materials and other things at their stall. They had eight children, three of whom were under age (10, 12, and 14) at the time of their parents' death and could not decide on their own in questions concerning property. The Family Council consisting of relatives on the mother's and on the father's side met several times in the presence of the community officials to make arrangements for the children and to divide the inheritance. The council appointed a guardian and a deputy guardian for the children and each of them received a part of the parents' property. A detailed inventory of Tempels' possessions with assessed values was drawn up. The recorded items indicate that the family was religious and abided by the rules of Jewish religion.<sup>48</sup>

Jewish intelligentsia had a major part in developing ethnic identity, too. Intellectuals contributed to and encouraged amateur theater groups, singers' ensembles, music societies, libraries, etc.

Early in the twentieth century the Lira Literary and Musical Society attracted many assimilated intelligentsia Jews. Polish was dominating at the Society meetings for some time. Under the leadership of the cantor Abraham Ber Birnbojm, however, the program was modified to include Hebrew songs along Polish ones. The chorus conducted by Birnbojm at the so called German synagogue used to perform Yiddish and Hebrew folk songs.

It was typical of any Jewish community to invite famous cantors who would attract a larger congregation and make their place popular. In 1893 Henryk Markusfeld, the then chairman of the Jewish community, employed Abraham Ber Birnbojm as a new cantor at the New Synagogue. Despite his young age, as he was only 28 at the time, Birnbojm's beautiful voice and musical talent had already won him some renown. In 1906 he founded the first secular school for cantors. He also used to compose music, teach, do research on the synagogal singing. He studied Jewish folk music. In 1913 he left Cześćochowa for Lodz, where he lived till his death in 1923.

Musical scene was very eventful and artistic in that period. Famous singers and musicians with large ensembles were often invited to perform in town. A major figure in the Cześćochowa musical life was Bronislaw Huberman. He was born in 1882 into a family of a Jewish school teacher. His musical talent showed early in his childhood, as he gave public performances at the age of eight. As a twelve-year-old he appeared at the Cześćochowa theater and his career of a world-famous violonist started with his 1895 Vienna performance. The great virtuoso was later to initiate a symphonic orchestra in Palestine.

Cultural life of the city and of the Jewish community inspired artistic activity of local amateur troupes. Prior to WWI the Lira non-religious Jewish quartet emerged out of the Bundist circles. The outbreak of the great war put an end to its performances. Many rising stars of the Cześćochowa amateur scenes did not have a chance to pursue their careers, but perished instead in the Holocaust.

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<sup>47</sup> APCz, Akta miasta Cz-wy, sygn. 76, z. 1.

<sup>48</sup> The inventory included: a menorah, copper pan for meat, 10 seder plates, 2 matzvors, matzah stamp, silver spice box, fur with silk lining, *kapoteh* coat. The „possessions” included also: „bench nr 7 in the Synagogue from sunrise”, „bench in school”. Good financial standing is implied by valuable utensils of brass, copper, tin, and iron, as well as by „big ducats”, „9 strings of pearls”, „golden ring”, „golden ring with an earring”, „golden ring with a stone”, „pair of earrings”, „7 ropes of corals”, „silver snuff box”, „knives with forks”, „4 silver spoons”. The possessions were sold and the money from the sale distributed among the children. Interestingly enough, it were the sons-in-law of the deceased who were appointed holders of the money the daughters inherited. Three under age children remained under the care of the guardians and their lots were to be located so that they would received the entire sum upon coming of age. (APCz, Akta miasta Cz-wy, sygn. 76, z. 1.)

Another artistic figure of Jewish Częstochowa was Perec Willenberg, who lived, painted, and taught painting at high schools and at his own school of arts. He was born in Makow Mazowiecki, but graduated from the Arts Academy and started his career under the aegis of Nachum Sokolow. Willenberg worked out a national Jewish style of synagogal interior decoration and he was the designer of the interiors of synagogues in Opatow, Częstochowa, and most probably Piotrkow. Refurbishment and renovation of the Old Synagogue was done in 1928-29 to Willenberg's design project. After the redecoration both its architectural elements and interior design were marked by original Jewish style following the designer's intentions. It included wall paintings with symbolic elements in the form of stylized letters of Hebrew alphabet and two Stars of David with a seven-branch candelabrum in the center at the ceiling. To quote a reporter of *Ekspres Czestochowski* of 1929 describing the interior redecorated by the maestro: "In accordance with the spirit of Jewish religion, banning human figures from religious painting, we see just the commandments, serpents soaked in blood, lightnings etc. Emblems of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, graphic rosette, expanding view of Rachel's Tomb and of the Wailing Wall on side walls, and Polish coats of arms on balconies round out the new interior of the synagogue, extremely pleasant to the eye due to harmonious colors and fine finish".<sup>49</sup> Perec Willenberg did also portraits of Jews. During the Nazi occupation he was hiding in Warsaw under assumed identity as a deaf-mute painter. He died in 1947.<sup>50</sup>

In 1916-22 a distinguished Polish-Jewish painter Eugeniusz Zak also lived in Częstochowa.

At the turn of the twentieth century the most popular Częstochowa meeting place, abounding in artistic events, was "Wolberg's Garden" at 12, Aleja Najświętszej Marii Panny (NMP Alley). The first official performance was on April 6, 1911 with Icchak Kacnelson's *Sages* and *Eternal Song* of Mark Arnsztajn staged. The famous Yiddish author and playwright Icchak Perec visited Częstochowa several times. Theater performances were first staged at Jewish wedding halls and at the firehouse. With time Jewish troupes could perform at the Lira and Warta halls, or even at the City Theater. Hardly any Jewish troupe performing in Poland failed to visit Częstochowa. Jewish dramatic art owed much of its popularity to amateur companies. In 1906 members of the Faraynigte Zionist Socialist Party founded an amateur theater group. In 1911-13 the Jewish Literatry Society also had its own theater section, whose members staged their shows at the halls of the Lira Society, of the City Theater, and at the so-called Paris Theater.

In spring of 1915 the Wolbergs extended their offer and opened up a new "Apollo" theater. The name was soon changed to the Nowosci (Novelties) Theater, and in the years 1919-1939 it was known as Polonia Theater. The best Jewish companies performed there, staging famous plays in Yiddish, Hebrew and Polish. Polish actors appeared there too in the Polish dramatic repertoire, and the theater hosted numerous concerts, amateur shows, and exhibitions.

There were 22 Jewish periodicals, including 6 dailies, 10 weeklies, and a bi-weekly, published in prewar Częstochowa. Most of them, namely 18, were Yiddish titles. Three were printed in Polish.<sup>51</sup> Various Jewish organizations and political groups used to set up youth clubs, reading rooms, and libraries. Literary Society, e.g., ran a library in 1905-07, which was liquidated with over 2,000 books in Yiddish and 600 in Hebrew, and was in such demand that its daily average of clients was around 50 people.<sup>52</sup> In 1922 the

<sup>49</sup> *Ekspres Czestochowski* 1929, nr 258, p. 2.

<sup>50</sup> *Ekspres Czestochowski* 1929, nr 258, p. 2; 1930, nr 143, p. 2, nr 160, p. 2 /July/, nr 5, p. 3; Izaak Kersz, *Szkice z dziejów Gminy Żydowskiej oraz cmentarza w Łodzi*, Łódź 1999, p. 122.

<sup>51</sup> M.Pawlina-Meducka, *Kultura Żydów województwa kieleckiego 1918-1939*. Kielce 1993, p.106.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*, p.82.

Society of Jewish Schools opened up a Jewish Workers' Library at 10 Strazacka Str. in Częstochowa.<sup>53</sup> In 1939 the Friends of Jewish Arts registered their Society in Częstochowa. Its mission, as formulated in the statutes, was to promote Jewish art, theater, music, singing, painting, and sculpture in particular, encourage scholarly research on the history of Jewish arts, assist Jewish artists with subsidies.<sup>54</sup> Numerous cultural and educational initiatives were undertaken and pursued by The Strzecha Robotnicza [Workers' Shelter] Society, also with its own library at 32, NMP Alley. In December 1937 a WIZO [Women International Zionist Organization] branch was set up in Częstochowa. It was focused on organizing Hebrew classes for the young people, public lectures, household courses for girls, and generally – preparing the young for emigration to Palestine.

#### **4. Rabbis and their role in the formation of ethnic political identity of Jews in the 19-twentieth centuryCzęstochowa**

Throughout the centuries rabbis played a major role in preserving ethnocentric identity of Jews. No wonder it was on rabbis that the administrative efforts of the nineteenth century foreign rulers of Poland focused. A rabbi was considered a sole representatives of a Jewish community as far as the contacts with local state authorities were concerned.

A 1830 law regulated official status of a rabbi in a Jewish community and even provided him some legal protection. As an article in the Ordinance stated in plain words: “No other Jew except for Rabbi or his temporary aide will ever be entitled to perform religious rituals without the presence and acceptance of the Rabbi in office”.<sup>55</sup> The judicial “strengthening” of rabbi’s position was one of the means of controlling, persuading, and governing Jewish population massively inhabiting cities and towns of the part of Poland under Russian rule. Repressions and measures against the Jewish otherness and identity were illustrated by an imperial edict of the Russian Tsar aimed at “civilising” Jewish citizens at his territory. Rabbis were made responsible for enacting the edict. A ban on traditional shaving bride’s hair off during the wedding ceremony was issued in 1853 under penalty for a rabbi. In case of the “violation” of the ban the rabbi should be brought: “... before a due criminal Court to be punished according to the law of the Empire, namely: confinement at a Reformatory House for two or three years, while dispossessed of certain privileges; if, however, despite this punishment they continue misconduct of this kind, they will be conveyed into the army... or, if unfit for military service, they will be deported to reformatory detention units for ten to twelve years”.<sup>56</sup> Introducing such laws and severe penalties for their infringement, the legislator was aware of the role of religion and tradition in Jewish life. Anti-religious acts were elements of the Russian state policy against ethnic minorities in the multinational tsarist empire. In this case Jews were the target.

A model figure of a rabbi, who managed to fulfill his duty towards his people, including creative approach to the problems within the community, while maintaining at

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<sup>53</sup> APCz, SPCz, sygn. 60, Żydowska Biblioteka Robotnicza, in 1928. Library was run by the Board of Jewish School at 23 Spadek Str. It is worth noting that the Board included members representing various political options, Bundists, Zionists, followers of Poale Zion.

<sup>54</sup> Founding members of the Society were: Feliks Spiro, Mendel Asz, Rafał Federman, Henryk Silberg, Józef Sack. WAPK, UWK-I, sygn. 3169, pp. 82-85

<sup>55</sup> *Dziennik Praw*, Nr 51, T. 13, p. 150

<sup>56</sup> *Dziennik Praw*, T. 47, Warszawa 1853, p. 31.



the same time correct relations with the state and local authorities, was Rabbi Nachum Asz.<sup>57</sup> He held the post of Częstochowa rabbi for 42 years, always tolerant towards religious cultures of other nations, Polish in particular. He was born in 1858 in Wyszogrod. His father, a renowned Talmudist, Rabbi Dawid Zvi Hersz Asz, spent most of his life in Grodzisk near Warsaw, successfully combining religious duties with running his own business, which made him a well-to-do Jewish citizen of the town. Nachum's mother, Blima Estera Goldfard, also came from a well known religious family, including a scholar and religious author Rabbi Yehuda Landau.

In his young years Nachum Asz was an outstanding student of the famous Kolo yeshiva of Rabbi Avigdor Bush Leventhal. Upon graduation Asz continued his religious education at the Kalisz school of Rabbi Samson Arensztajn. It was by him that the brilliant student Nachum Asz was consecrated as a rabbi in Warsaw in 1884. Besides, Asz married his mentor's daughter, Sarah. His first appointment was in Nieszawa, where he served as the rabbi 1889-1994.

Asz came to Częstochowa in 1894, nominated to the rabbi's post. A descendant of the family with long tradition of devout piety and scholarship, Asz was from his earliest years familiar with religious rules of Jewish life, but beside being an expert in rich traditions and history of the Jewish people, he was also very perceptive of the modern world and its developments. He arrived in Częstochowa as a mature married man of 36, having knowledge and practice of a fully competent rabbi. His sagacious approach to new challenges of the modern civilization that faced Jewish and Polish societies at the turn and in early decades of the twentieth c., apt comments, and fair judgements won him great esteem and reverence of the Jewish community of Częstochowa and vicinity, even if in his office he often had to resolve conflicts between the Orthodox and reform Jews.

At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Jewish society was increasingly torn by controversies. The disputes concerned "finding their place on earth", language of instruction for children and the young, religious ceremonies and rules of everyday life, attitudes towards the new Polish statehood, to other nations, Poles in particular, role of the kahal in Jewish society, disposition towards new ideological and social movements, both generated by Jews and for Jews, like Zionism, and the outside tendencies infiltrating into Jewish society, like socialism and communism. These dissensions marked Jewish political life and affected the rabbis as well.

Rabbi Avigdor<sup>58</sup>, a descendant of the Tsaddik Dawid Lelower, was a Częstochowa member of the conservative Agudah party. Rabbi Nachum Asz inclined towards Zionist

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<sup>57</sup> His three assistants were Jozef Klajnplatz, b. 1871 at Stopnica, who arrived in Częstochowa in 1896 and was appointed junior rabbi; he was already married and in 1929 he had 6 children over 18; Jozef Prokosz, b. at Olpin in Jaslo county in 1869; he got the post of junior rabbi in 1911 as a married man with 6 children; Nachman Grynfeld was born in 1884 in Sielce; he arrived in Częstochowa in 1911 and was appointed a junior rabbi as a married man with 5 children. /A.P.Cz. Starostwo pow. Cz-skie sygn. 366/

<sup>58</sup> Hasidic movement attracted mainly poor Jews, but in large numbers. One of their synagogues, however, at Nadrzeczna 36, was supported by the owners of the Fiszel&Dziubas soap factory, Jehezkiel Fiszel and Jozef Dziubas. By 1939 the Ger Hasidim had 4 houses of prayer, at Nadrzeczna, Nowy Targ 2, NMP Alley 6 and 31. The Krimolow Hasidim (Great Krimolow Rebbe Chaim Rabimowicz was one of 4 sons of the Radomsko Tzaddik) used to pray at shtibl by Warszawska 22. In 1900 a householder at NMP Alley 1 founded a private prayer house, which also was in use till the outbreak of WWII. Another one was established in 1906 at Strazacka 11, and yet another private prayer house was at Nadrzeczna 60, founded by the Khevat Lomde Tanach association in 1885. Not far, at Nadrzeczna 50, another solid building housed a Makhzikay Hadas prayer hall from 1911. Ohel Yaakov Praying Society had their prayer hall in a house built of brick in 1890 at NMP Alley 12. A Weksler opened up a private prayer hall, known as the Weksler Bet Midrash, at NMP Alley 6 in a house built in 1898. There are mentions of prayer houses at Kosciuszki 19, Mostowa 10, Garncarska, Warszawska 94, and Pilsudskiego. It is difficult to trace all private prayer halls, as many of them were illegal, and their existence was recorded solely in police reports or "denunciations", as e.g.: "... On March 14, 1926, at 10.30 am I found out a prayer house by 20 Ogrodowa Str., where Jews come to pray every day, and they have no permit of the Częstochowa Starosty for this house. Householders of the house have been charged. The defendants have been notified of the report" / A.P.CZ., St. Pow. Cz. Sygn. 352/. It is obvious that prior to that police report some denunciation must have been made, which had started the investigation. On the other hand, it was not easy to obtain a license to run a prayer house, as is obvious from the following case: in 1927 Mendel

movement. Despite the differences, Rab Avigdor respected the authority of Gaon Nachum Asz and along with others considered him to be the greatest Talmud scholar of his times in Częstochowa. Still their friendship came to an abrupt end during WWI. Occupying German administration set up a sale of potatoes on a Shabbat. A dispute flared up among the Jews whether to abide by the rules and starve or violate the holiness of Shabbat and buy food. The hasidic Jews lead by Rab Avigdor implored Rabbi Nachum to remind the Jews of the ban to buy on Shabbat, but the latter refused, considering the need to counteract hunger and the ensuing tragedies a priority over the need to observe Shabbat. His decision appalled Rab Avigdor, who, according to Wieslaw Paszkowski, was reported to “turn round and leave, not ever to speak to the chief rabbi Asz again.”<sup>59</sup>

Welfare and relief actions were organized by Rabbi Nachum Asz along very specific lines. He was disinclined to distribute alms, which he found humiliating for a beneficiary. His approach is best illustrated by relief actions for the victims of anti-Jewish pogroms in the early twentieth century. Spurred often by the Tsarist administration, the waves of anti-Jewish violence organized in Russia proper in the 1880s and in 1903-1906 did not spread massively onto Polish lands, but the news of the pogroms soon reached Częstochowa. Rabbi Nachum Asz headed the relief committee for the victims of a 1904 pogrom. The committee raised money to establish a provident fund to give loans to the victims. Rabbi Asz argued that loans were better than donations, because in view of religious precepts concerning soul saving, helping thy neighbors preceded charity, since the dignity and honor of the victims would suffer more at receiving charities.

Rabbi Nachum's activity often extended beyond the Jewish community of Częstochowa. In a traditionally Catholic town, a religious center for Poles and not only Poles, the Rabbi saw the need for mutual religious tolerance and cooperation of two nations in their joint efforts to restore Polish statehood while under foreign rule, and to build and develop the city and the entire country in reborn Poland. Asz strove towards higher life standards and peaceful coexistence of all Częstochowa inhabitants.<sup>60</sup>

In 1916 a wave of patriotic enthusiasm swept Częstochowa, stirring its Jewish community as well. At the anniversary of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May Constitution commemorative prayers were intoned at the Nadrzeczna synagogue by Rabbis Asz and Asajewicz, and by a famous cantor Fiszel. The ceremony included exhibiting two Polish banners from Napoleon's times which were being kept in hiding for over a hundred years. Next year, when Częstochowa was overjoyed with the destruction of the monument of Tsar Alexander II, and celebrated the memory of Tadeusz Kosciuszko at the hundredth anniversary of his death, Jews gathered at the Old Synagogue again to pay tribute to the great Pole and manifest their solidarity with the nation that had hosted them for

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Gelberg applied to the Administration Dept. of Częstochowa Starosty for a license to open up a prayer house. The application is affixed with the Rabbi's of Częstochowa Synagogal Board approval, stamped and signed by the president of the Jewish Community Board. Mendel had also to attach a plan of the room for prayers to his application. The administrative procedure began with checking the applicant's credentials with the police. In case of Chaim Rozenberg, e.g., the information obtained was: „... Chaim Rozenberg, son of Szmul aged 54, a merchant presently supported by his children, inhabitant of Częstochowa since 1900, presently at 17 Garmcarska Str.; his conduct has been ever since faultless. The prayer room at the above address has been in use since 1918 and is in good condition.” /A.P. CZ., St. Pow. Cz. sygn. 352/. Next step in the procedure was a sanitary inspection by the members of the commission. In the above case the sanitary commission was three people strong and stated that the accommodation of the future prayer hall was one room, which could seat twenty people. The license was granted. It is difficult to establish the number of such applications and how many, at what stage, were turned down.

<sup>59</sup> W. Paszkowski, „Lelowscy chasydzi”, *Dziennik Zachodni* nr 24, January 29-30, 2000, p. 10.

<sup>60</sup> J. Mizgalski, *Życie religijne częstochowskich Żydów w XX wieku przed holocaustem* [in:] Z. Jakubowski, S. Podobinski (eds.), *Z dziejów Żydów w Częstochowie*. Częstochowa 2002, pp. 93-127.

centuries.<sup>61</sup> Jews welcomed the rebirth of Poland as an independent state in 1918 and showed respect towards new Polish administration.

Częstochowa Jews felt they belonged to the city and the land, as was also evidenced by their contributions to Polish culture. Their participation was manifested at such occasions as the 1924 ceremonial reburial of Henryk Sienkiewicz in Polish soil. One of the first groups to declare their will to participate was the Jewish community of Częstochowa and Ezra Jewish Women Club, as well as the craftsmen and entrepreneurs.<sup>62</sup> In a letter addressed to the Sienkiewicz Reburial Committee, the Board of the Jewish community disclosed its wish “to take part in the veneration of the great deceased Polish writer and spiritual leader Henryk Sienkiewicz by celebrating a special memorial service at the New Synagogue on Saturday, October 25 at 11.a.m. Meanwhile we would appreciate if you could advise the Board when and where a wreath could be laid”.<sup>63</sup> The official ceremony organized by the City Council was attended by the major Jewish officials and leaders: Rabbi Nachum Asz, Abram Hamburger, a Board member, Dr. Batawia, Jozef Imich, Dr. Grejniec, the president of the Crafts Chamber, Samuel Niemirowski, president of the Commerce Chamber, and ladies: Mrs. Engineer Czeslaw Rajcom, Mrs. Daniel Landau, Mrs. Helena Wierzbicka, Mrs. Marcal Dobrzyńska, Mrs. Jozef Sztark. The Board informed the County Starosty of two ceremonial services on the occasion of Poland’s rebirth held at both synagogues, on Nadrzeczna and Wilsona streets.

In 1930 Częstochowa celebrated the visit of the President of Poland Ignacy Mościcki with a number of high rank officials. On the NMP Alley, by Franke’s house, a huge gathering of Jews with Rabbi Nachum Asz welcomed the distinguished guests of the city of Częstochowa. Asz delivered an address, emphasizing strong bonds that connected Jewish people with the Polish state.

Asz recognized the need to preserve Jewish national identity, but opposed confronting Polish people and administration. When Poland regained its sovereignty Rabbi Nachum consented to take the post of a rabbi at the military garrison in Częstochowa. He maintained steady friendly relations with the Częstochowa bishop Teodor Kubina.

In his quest for new prospects of development in the complex political and social situation at the turn of the 19-twentieth centuries and during WWI, Asz tended to back up the Mizrahi Religious Zionists. He was one of the first major rabbis in Poland to actually join their party. The Keren Ha-Yesod and Keren Ha-Yemet Funds, raising money for the young people emigrating to Palestine, owed many contributions to Rabbi’s Nachum support. Asz joined also popular festivities upon the inauguration of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. At a ceremony organized in 1925 in Częstochowa he delivered an address in Hebrew. The text was later translated into Yiddish and published as a special pamphlet.

The Częstochowa Rabbi wrote and published several books in Yiddish and Hebrew. The most acclaimed was his Polish brochure *W obronie uboju rytualnego* [In Defense of Ritual Slaughter] which appeared in 1935 and was selling so well among Jews and non-Jews that it had three reissues within a year. In his persuasive study Asz voiced Jewish opinions in the debate on *shechitah*. As the Rabbi he also had to resolve many family arguments and personal matters. An extant document proves how much his judgment was sought and trusted not only by Częstochowa Jews. In a 1934 certificate for the court Asz ruled that “... marriage of Icyk Enzel and Bajla born Blihaum, first married

<sup>61</sup> *Goniec częstochowski*, May 7, 1916, nr 103; S. Rożej, „Charyzmat miejsca”, *W drodze*, nr 8 (1979) p.59 nn.; J.

Pietrzykowski, *Jasna Góra w okresie dwóch wojen światowych*, p. 55, Warszawa 1987; J. Zbudniewek, *Jasna Góra w okresie hitlerowskiej okupacji*, in: *Studia Clarmontana*, I, p.354, (1980).

<sup>62</sup> Z. Jakubowski, „Sienkiewicz w Częstochowie”, *Nad Wartą*, nr 12/198, p.4 -5.

<sup>63</sup> A. P. Cz., Zespół Magistrat sygn. 8021.

Rusinow, as stated in the marriage certificate issued by the Jewish registrar of the Lodz City on October 13, 1927, [...] due to continuous discord between the spouses was by my decision formally dissolved on August 13, 1934, with the parties' consent, according to religious rules as formulated in chapter 3&119 of the *Eben HaEzer* religious treatise."<sup>64</sup>

Rabbi Nachum Asz brought up nine children, five sons and four daughters. Their father never forbade them to attend secular universities. On the contrary, they were encouraged to pursue such studies. Of Rabbi's sons Mojzesz had a job at the Jewish community, Dawid Hersz was an entrepreneur, Mieczyslaw was a journalist, Leon – a lawyer and city councilor. One of the daughters became a teacher.

Rabbi Nachum Asz died on May 12, 1936 in very special circumstances. The first anniversary of Marshal Józef Piłsudski's death was commemorated at the Częstochowa synagogue by a memorial service, attended by the Chief Rabbi. His participation in Polish celebrations indicated positive relations between Rabbi's political identity and the political identity manifested by Poles. According to his close companions, Rabbi Nachum was so deeply moved that he suffered a heart attack and died a few hours after the ceremony, at the age of 78. A living testimony to the reverence for Marshal Piłsudski that Asz instilled in his children, was the fact that his lawyer son, Leon, headed the Józef Piłsudski Commemoration Committee in Częstochowa. The 42 strong group, consisting of the leaders of Jewish Częstochowa community representing "all social institutions in our City", joined the General Committee, whose members resolved to honor the memory of the Marshall by founding a Józef Piłsudski Grove in Palestine. Częstochowa Jews suggested to name one of the lanes in the grove after their city. A letter of intent was addressed personally to many respectable Jewish citizens with an appeal to contribute financially to the cause.

## **5. Determinants of institutional Jewish education in the perspective of developing flexibly dynamic ethnic identity and political identity of the young**

While striving to define our identity we always attempt to separate our own from the other, from the unknown stranger. Such separation demands from us recognizing our bond with a group or community and, at the same time, realizing our distinctness from others. The problem of identity appears when a distinction is drawn (e.g., Jews from Catholics, or Jews from Poles) and recognized, and the decision (our own or imposed on us) concerning our belonging to one or the other group made. So our identity takes its origin in both inherent and external sources, the latter being our parents, teachers, priests etc. Education involves both options. In the multicultural environment of multicultural society the development of identity usually takes either of two courses: towards open identity or closed identity (or so called separatism). Therefore it would be worthwhile to consider the attitudes passed from one generation to the next in Jewish education as far as the cultural identity development processes were concerned. And these processes applied to: a) inherited identity (with the awareness of the past); b) displayed identity (with the awareness of the present, marked by multichoice and loyalty dilemmas); c) acquired identity (future conscious); and d) integrated multilevel identity.<sup>65</sup>

Talking about cultural message of Jewish education in the process of the development of dynamic ethnic identity of children and young people, we have to reckon four types of this message, and these are: 1) ethnocentric, focused on the ancestry heritage in inherited identity, 2) transgressive, in which the inherited identity is open to the external world, goes beyond the ancestral identity (especially in case of the inherited

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<sup>64</sup> A. P. Cz, Zespół akt Sąd Okręgowy, sygn 471.

<sup>65</sup> J. Nikitorowicz, *Kreowanie tożsamości dziecka. Wyzwania edukacji międzykulturowej*. Gdańsk 2005, pp. 61, 85-93.

cultural patterns becoming obsolete) ; 3) plural, based on multiculturalism and generating integrated cultural identity; 4) instrumental, usually generating political identity while either reducing or strengthening cultural roots.

Discussing various aspects of Jewish cultural identity we have already pointed out many elements, which could be defined as either inherent or external in the national identity (including political identity) formative process. To continue with the discussion we should identify these elements and their influence in Jewish education, whose direct and indirect role in laying the foundations of political identity was significant. Special tasks fell to Jewish schools due to their part in Jewish culture, as defined by the Talmud.

The Talmud, the compilation of ancient discourses and parables, was taught in all Jewish communities all over the world. Boys started to read Mishna and Gemara soon after as they were done with memorizing the first books of the Hebrew Bible. Scholarly study of the Talmud at more mature age involved many years spent at yeshivas and everlasting debates over its issues. Studying the same religious texts and laws, participating in almost identical rituals (only slightly differing from place to place, according to the “local custom” sanction) was a major unifying force, unique in the world history. In a sense it determined the dominant conservative component of Jewish political identity. And hence in the late nineteenth c. much opposition against the Talmud education, which to some was a needless burden, and to others – a serious impediment to any further development of the Jewish people, to their joining the main stream of social movements.

Today we see the Talmud and other collections of Jewish lore and tradition as the works of national genius, products of many centuries of scholarly work. Except for some superfluous or unacceptable fragments, the huge bulk of Talmudic texts is a treasury of cultural heritage of the Jewish nation, and as such it is a part of the entire human civilization. It also reflects the spirit of Jewish national and political identity. As Jaroslaw Kiliarski put it, nation is an abstract political community belonging to various social spheres, including the crucial political sphere. The term “politicality” has been used here in a wider sense than “politics” usually implies. It is interconnected with education. The sphere of education is the most obvious area to effect national identity, including political identity.<sup>66</sup>

The earliest Jewish schools were strictly religious. The system has been evolving through the centuries, but its principal idea did not change. Jewish schooling was always aimed at fashioning man’s inner self through the continuous contact with the world of ageless values since his early childhood. Some secular subjects were gradually introduced into the curriculum. These often included languages other than Hebrew, though the decision to teach a vernacular or official speech of a given country was frequently imposed by the state authorities. In Congress Poland under Russian rule, e.g., melameds had to pass an exam in Russian in order to obtain teaching license.

In reborn Poland, under the warranty of the Minorities Treaty, national minorities had the right to set and run their own schools, which were entitled to state subsidies. The failure to enact these regulations to the full was documented by numerous protests.

Upbringing involves building the cultural worlds of children and the young, with the competing traditions of various social ethnic groups influencing the process. Enculturation takes place mainly within a family and at school, with the latter instilling more “polished” aspects of culture. Whether a child accepts or rejects his or her ethnic cultural heritage depends to a considerable degree on the role of school. In a pluralist society it can either focus exclusively on cultural values of the ethnic majority (in this case – Polish) or else, it can aim at working out a kind of cultural pluralism.

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<sup>66</sup> *Wspólnota abstrakcyjna. Zarys socjologii narodu.* Warszawa 2004. Wyd. IFiS PAN, pp. 86-91.

In this sense “inherent” cultural pluralism of any person manifests itself in his/her bilingualism, because the person uses two languages originating from different ethnic stocks. One is most often inherited from one’s ancestors, while the other is the language of the dominating group. This sort of pluralism is contrasted with another variety, termed ethnocentric, or separatist, or “external”. In this case individuals remain enclosed within their own culture and their “pluralism” is just a social condition, not individual characteristic of any of them. Social and pedagogical contexts of the education are involved here.

One of basic functions of any ideological system in any generation is to evaluate other elements of culture, and to act as a building factor for both individual and group social systems. In most social groups this kind of evaluation continuing throughout any subsequent generation makes for the highly dynamic character of culture. Heritage is this part of culture which conveys the past. Other elements of culture are new innovations, coming from within or from without, from cultural systems of other groups in the course of cultural diffusion. The evaluating function performed by ideological system is twofold. On one hand it serves to assess values, which are new to a given generation of a given community. On the other, it helps to take a stance towards the heritage, which is also reevaluated, with the changing needs of a group (community). This part of heritage which is being actively evaluated constitutes the tradition of a given community.<sup>67</sup>

Generally we may say that any reasoning and any ideological identity is a challenge to political identity and reasoning. Attempts threatening traditional culture of a group provoke countermeasures and these are best defined by referring to values, which are central to a given group. Such actions are undertaken by ethnic groups in a pluralist society, where ethnic groups are not endangered by oppression, but by assimilation with the dominant culture. This is very true of Jewish ethnic groups. Contrary to language-centered cultures, the survival of Jewish ethnicity proved possible without relying a single, specific language to convey the culture and preserve stability. B.M. Sullivan<sup>68</sup> deduced from his research that ideological orientations play a major role in the enculturation of a young generation. In his view, the system values which are central to Jewish culture is complex, but very well integrated. It is presumed to consist of three essential elements: 1) religion; 2) national consciousness; and 3) historical consciousness.

Correlation of Jewish religion with Jews as a distinct group integrated by shared heritage strengthens both of these central values. This extraordinary symbiosis is illustrated by the fact that religious instruction in Judaism is one with teaching the history of the Jewish nation.

As Jerzy Jaroslaw Smolicz reminds, the Mosaic religion is the indispensable element of Jewish identity, but in more liberal circles a Jew who has forsaken his religion is still accepted as a member of Jewish group, provided he does not convert to another religion.<sup>69</sup> In A. Bowen-Jones’ opinion, “Jew is not only a person who believes in his God, Moses, and the Torah, born of a Jewish mother; he is also looking for his identity by referring culturally and historically to the ‘Jewish’ history in a sense, that Jews are his people and he is able to identify with the Jews of the past and with the Jews of the future; both “are” his people for him”.<sup>70</sup> In this perspective emphasis is put on individual emotional bond with the Jewish group seen as a distinct historical entity.

Thus for Jews the third central value is their historical consciousness, a characteristic, whose mode of operation varies from one ethnic group to another.

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<sup>67</sup> J. Szacki, *Tradycje*, [in:] A. Kłoskowska (ed), *Encyklopedia Kultury polskiej XX wieku. Pojęcie i problemy wiedzy i kulturze*. Wrocław 1991, pp. 205-215.

<sup>68</sup> I quote after J. J. Smolicz, *Kultura i nauczanie*..., p. 81.

<sup>69</sup> J.J Smolicz, *Kultura i nauczanie w społeczeństwie wieloetnicznym*, Warszawa 1990 PWN, pp.80-83.

<sup>70</sup> A.Bowen-Jones, „The demise of God and the secularization of Judaism”, *New Dor* 1973, September, p. 15-16.

Historical consciousness of belonging to a distinct cultural group is highly developed, e.g., among Poles, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Spaniards. Still, in case of Jews its significance has been enormous, resulting partly from the persecutions and the ensuing dispersion, partly from the strengthening religious commitment and their unique perception of the divine.<sup>71</sup>

The continuity of Jewish ethnicity in East and Central Europe owed much to the development of a specific language, Yiddish. Yet Yiddish was not a prerequisite to the survival of Jewish culture and tradition, since they have survived also in the Sephardic or Yemenite communities whose members spoke Arabic, and in many other Jewish communities using no specifically Jewish ethnic speech at all.

There is also a definite connection between central values and territorial, cultural, interactive and personal borderlands. Distinctive individual or group cultural identity is better understood when compared with the identities of other social communities. Such comparisons reveal meeting points of cultures, strictly speaking – cultural borderlines. According to Jerzy Nikitorowicz, “borderline territory is an area of coexistence of two or more cultural groups, most often differing in ethnographic background, language, religion, or nationality.”<sup>72</sup>

Borderland usually emerges on the territory between two centers. It involves border areas, which are overlapping and could belong to either of the centers. Historical centers could be Polish and Jewish, for example, with dominant groups within each center. These groups could be cooperating or conflicted. People generate their own useful customs and rules to facilitate the coexistence. These customs made for the cultural peculiarity of Częstochowa society with the possibility of individual choice of multicultural values. Thus, the overlapping of cultures resulted in the specific system of double identity. Borderland involves also the process of interpersonal communications and its effects. Thanks to everyday contacts people learn to be together despite the differences determining their belonging to a particular ethnic or religious group. Social bond is developed and maintained by what people have in common and by what puts them at variance. It needs collective coexistence in the borderland to understand others and their views, to learn to respect them and their distinctiveness, to cooperate, to be open. Tolerance is when individuals and collectives willfully enter thinking borderland. The tolerance-generating borderland, which would lay foundations of collective partnership, was a challenge for Jewish education in Częstochowa. Federal and local problems made Częstochowa societies (both Polish and Jewish) aware of the need to go beyond the limits of their own cultures. By no means, however, were the national stereotypes in both groups eliminated. And these stereotypes are significantly developed and promoted in education, especially teaching history.

Self-identification with a group demands the existence of other groups as points of reference. Otherwise the identification is pointless. Cultural identity results from the legacy of the past, from internal and external communication, from experiencing conflicts, and from the quest for the sense of existence. Cultural identity of Jewish community sprang from their conscious and emotional focusing on the values of their group which determined its distinctiveness.

J. Nikitorowicz points to four types of cultural identity, which either: 1) is strongly involved in two cultures (borderline personality); 2) is strongly involved in the dominant culture (assimilative); 3) strongly involved in a minority ethnic group (separatist, bent on preserving original identity); and 4) non-aligned to any group.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> J.J. Smolicz, *Kultura i nauczanie...* p.83.

<sup>72</sup> J. Nikitorowicz, *Pogranicze – Tożsamość – Edukacja międzykulturowa*, Białystok 1995. Wyd. Uniwersyteckie, p.11.

<sup>73</sup> J. Nikitorowicz, op.cit., pp. 83-84.

All four types of cultural identity could be discerned in Jewish education in Częstochowa. They were related to subsequent formative stages in acquiring this identity. The initial stage consisted in acquiring family identity, the second – local identity (identifying with the local Jewish community as the group of reference, with children adopting roles and attitudes of significant “other” people, entering their world), the next stage involved for children conscious extending their contacts with other children and adults, participating in situations, adopting roles, interacting within a group, and ultimately, the fourth stage of split autonomous identity, originating from the relationships with other communities, from accepting or rejecting their cultural values and patterns, from tolerating individuals or social groups (assimilation, accommodation, reorientation, identity dilemmas). These stages of cultural identification are also related to the systems of central values, indicating and influencing levels of identity, such as: a) identity granted by being born into a given family and culture, by growing up in a given community; b) identity acquired in the course of socialization and education, determined by cultural and personal characteristics, by cultural norms of the dominant group; c) mediative autonomous identity (biographic), resulting from personal life and experiences (diffusion, enculturation, accommodation, and assimilation etc. processes).

Any social development is marked by two opposite tendencies: to preserve and strengthen the existing order or to change. The war goes on between stability and innovation, integration and disintegration, between conflicting interests of social groups. Hence the significance of various forms of education practised in Częstochowa and available to young Jews beside the traditional school classes, such as theater, associations, organizations, trade and crafts unions, artistic events, social meetings etc., which amounted to multicultural and intercultural education going beyond the limits of one culture.

Jewish education has always been concerned with generating the need to cultivate Jewish identity, generating imperative to define themselves as Jewish, to maintain ties that integrate a community, such as numerous institutions, initiatives, various fundraising activities, keeping in touch with the Diaspora. These aims were achieved through reference to ancient traditions, symbols, and distinguished personalities. Jewish folklore was also widely made use of, archaic and peculiar features of Jewish culture accentuated.

Quite often craftsmanship or economic enterprises were vehicles of Jewish identity. Still, featuring Jewish identity with its distinctiveness was accomplished at the expense of identification with the authorities, whether local or state administration. In time a private Jewish business could turn into the public Jewish interest.

Considerations of civic nature made Jews realize their own cultural profits from multicultural society. Interacting with various groups in the city was easier with proficiency in Polish. Emerging attitudes made young people open to cultural pluralism respectful of ethnic cultures.

Some facts in the history of Jewish schools in Częstochowa provide a good illustration of the above assumptions. In the 1840 and 1850s a Jewish junior high school was run by Daniel Neufeld with Polish as the language of instruction. The school was closed when Neufeld was forced to leave Częstochowa in 1860. In 1897 the Union of Jewish Artisans and the Jewish Crafts Association, with major assistance from the Jewish Community, opened up a vocational School of Crafts for Jews. Various professions were trained there, as that of a carpenter, locksmith, metalsmith, mechanic, electrician etc. It made a high reputation for itself not only in Jewish circles.



In 1912 there were 32 heders in Częstochowa<sup>74</sup>. Their number varied, depending on the attendance, lodgings, and curriculum. The latter two were regulated by the law. Any institution aspiring to the status of a school had to follow the curriculum as defined by the compulsory education act of 1919. Lodgings had to meet sanitary and safety standards.

I have already mentioned the significance of the types of formative cultural message for the cultural identity of Jews. Basically all four types were present in the heder classes, but in certain circumstances some prevailed. Thus, children received ethnocentric type of message with family education. This primarily subconscious process of immersing children in Jewish identity was characterized by the mother tongue, songs, legends, dress, customs, rituals, norms, behavior and conduct which followed Jewish cultural patterns. Certain elements of ethnocentric message were also included in the teaching process at heders. It was aimed at divulging historically modeled social and cultural peculiarities of Jewish community. These peculiarities demarcated symbolic ethnic boundaries between “us” and “the others”. Ethnocentric attitude denotes evaluating attitude of approval of the culture of native community (Jewish in this case): religious, ethnic, family, local, regional etc., and disapproval of the cultures of other (strange) collectives. One’s own culture is considered a model one.

As educational programs indicate, some aspects of ethnocentric cultural message were to a certain degree continued at heders. Various forms and scope of this message were determined by the represented cultural identity of heders’ owners and teachers (melameds), to mention only few of many examples, such as David Frank’s heder at NMP Alley 8 or Luzer Laucman’s at Warszawska 14.<sup>75</sup>

A mixed of cultural message was pursued at Public Elementary School No.12 at 10, 14 Przemyslowa Str., Public Elementary School No. 13 at 19/23 Gabriela Narutowicza Str., and some others.<sup>76</sup> Those schools usually applied for subsidies from the City School Council. This ideology also dominated in Jewish vocational schools. The processes it involved included acculturation, ability to move freely to and fro Jewish and Polish cultures, to nurture self-esteem and competence in both, to find equilibrium between opposite influences in order to proceed with business. It did not take much, then, to introduce the pluralist message in heders, as demonstrated in Izrael Landau’s school<sup>77</sup>, in the Workers’ Children Shelter and I.L.Perec Folk School, Aguda School, Mina werde Orphans’ Home and others. The last, instrumental type of cultural message, was effected in Jewish schools in case of upper social classes, aspiring to cosmopolitan identity, or, as we would call it today, to commercial identity heavily affected politically (by parties, organizations, institutions).

In interwar Poland the model of Jewish education was widely debated. Heated arguments flared up concerning elementary schools, or rather their religious or secular, national or bilingual, character, the choice of Hebrew or Yiddish as the language of

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<sup>74</sup> Z Grzączyński, *Z problemów opieki i kształcenia młodzieży żydowskiej w Częstochowie w latach 1912 – 1939*, [in:] *Z dziejów Żydów w Częstochowie*, Częstochowa 2002 p. 46

<sup>75</sup> Mordka Chil Gryn’s – Warszawska 21, Eksztajn’s at Berka Joselewicza 9, Benjamin Wierzbicki’s at Targowa 9, Icek Bezliner’s at Targowa 12, Jakub Sztajnic’ at Targowa 7, Pinkus Arkusz’ at Stary Rynek 5, Icek Landau’s at Stary Rynek 12, Icek Gelber’s at Stary Rynek 19, Leib Chessin’s at Gaencarska 21, Fajwel Fajłowicz’ at Ogrodowa 9, Lejbus Landau’s at Senatorska 7 and many other cheders, whose longer or shorter life depended on parents’ social trust in melamed, financial situation of the cheder, including its lodgings and equipment, connections of the owner with the Jewish Community and state or local administration.

<sup>76</sup> Elementary School of the Jewish Schools Society at Jasnogórska 8/10, the Nauka Private Elementary School for Boys (Choyrev) at Berka Joselewicza 15, Private Elementary School for Boys of Tauba Wajnberg at Al. NMP 8, Hebrew Private Elementary School of Chil Grylak at Berka Joselewicza 9, Z. Wajnsztok Private 7 Grade Coed. School at Al. NMP 20, Berek Joselewicz Private Elementary School by Junior High School of Dr. Filip Axer at Focha 24.

<sup>77</sup> I. Landau, resident of Częstochowa, Stary Rynek 12, applied to the Częstochowa School Board: „I kindly submit an application for a license to run a private religious school with Polish as the language of instruction (no cheder).” /A.P. Cz., *Mag. Cz. sygn. 7673*

instruction. The educational controversies went far beyond the language question, reaching deeper, into the process of personality development. Their central problem was of attitudes towards traditions, spiritual and cultural values, and towards those elements of education which were focused on emphasizing political identity of the dispersed Jewish people.

Arie Tartakower cherished national and traditional upbringing even more than general education.<sup>78</sup> For Jewish school he laid out a different didactic route. Seeing a necessity for Jewish schools unlike the public ones, he argued that Diaspora Jews had been living in various cultural settings and needed to foster and nourish their national bond founded in tradition and culture. In his own words: "...[thus] it is only natural that [Jewish] school has a different range and character than schools in societies living and developing in normal circumstances. General education becomes less urgent as contrasted with the role of restoring healthy Jewish life in national, cultural and social terms."<sup>79</sup> Tartakower denounced some Jews for missing the point in the education issue, providing excuse for the authorities, who could not understand nor appreciate Jewish needs if Jews themselves failed to do so.

Intensity of controversies over Jewish schools brought them even to the parliamentary scene, as the questions of various Jewish parties submitted in the Polish Sejm indicated. In 1924 and 1925 Jewish Parliamentary Club protested against state subsidies to Yiddish schools. At the time the Club was predominantly Zionist, while Yiddish schools were usually set up by leftist or socialist parties.<sup>80</sup> Disputes over languages of instruction and educational objectives thwarted many efforts at attaining public funding for Jewish schools. The failure to establish a broad system of public elementary schools for Jewish children must have also resulted from the discord. State administration often waited to see the conclusion of the debate, but in lack of thereof, allocated the funds to the group, whose program concurred most with the government's intentions. The beneficiaries were the Yavneh schools run by by Zionist Mizrahi party, and, for some time, schools with Yiddish as the language of instruction. With the introduction of compulsory education in 1919 schooling expenses of Jewish parents doubled, if they were determined to bring their children up in the spirit of Jewish religion, tradition, and identity, because they were regularly taxed as any citizen, and still had to pay tuition in private Jewish schools run by various organizations or individuals. Those schools were for the most part self-supporting, only sporadically aided by the Jewish community, local administration, or educational inspectors. In fact Jewish schools owed their existence primarily to the enthusiasm and commitment of indefatigable teachers, educators, and members of associations helping Jewish education.

In his application for a license to run a school Luzer Laucman wrote: "I have conducted a religious school in Częstochowa for 30 years, at various locations. Recently, to provide it with an adequate lodgings I have rented rooms under the address as above, refurbished them thoroughly at the cost of several thousand zlotys, which were the only savings I had. [...] It is a matter of life and death for me, as in case my request is turned down I would be pitched with my family into the abyss of unthinkable poverty at the end of my days after 30 years of hard labor."<sup>81</sup>

In this case the officers of the Building Inspectorate of the Technical Department of the City Council reported: "... having closed the school premises in the annex to the building, which is very dilapidated, unsewered, its outer walls unplastered, the yard

<sup>78</sup> Arie Tartakower, *Problemy szkolnictwa żydowskiego w Polsce*, [in:] *Almanach szkolnictwa żydowskiego w Polsce*, vol. I, Warszawa 1938, pp. 25-30.

<sup>79</sup> Ibidem, p.26.

<sup>80</sup> J. Hafftko, „Społeczne szkolnictwo żydowskie w Polsce”, *Sprawy Narodowościowe* 1927, pp.96-98.

<sup>81</sup> Ibidem, p.528.

squalid. Having scrutinized the place the inspectors concluded that having any permanent classes with children in such conditions is absolutely out of question. Detailed list of recommended repairs necessary to improve sanitary conditions can be scheduled by sanitary technicians, possibly in cooperation with a representative of the School Council.”<sup>82</sup> As a result of this inspection report Laucman’s license was revoked.

Yet his application indicated other problems of Jewish schooling. Thirty years of work as a melamed were not enough to provide for his old age. He did not earn a retirement nor even could buy a school room. It seems the teaching profession was not very remunerative. As an elderly man the melamed was at the threshold of poverty, fearful for his future. His school-to-be was located in a poor neighborhood, inhabited by people as hard up as the melamed himself. The tuition must have been small, because otherwise parents could have not afforded it, and the heder brought meager profit.

Heder classes usually lasted all day long. They started at 8.am. with a prayer and continued till 1.pm. with some ten minute breaks. After the lunch break, lessons were resumed at 3.pm. until 6.pm. School week began on Sunday and ended on Friday afternoon. Boys were in practice left with no free time. Polish and math classes took four hours a day, Judaic classes on the Bible, commentaries, Talmud, Hebrew, and Jewish script filled the remaining time.

Monthly tuition was fixed by school headmasters/owners. Budget preliminaries to applications for a permission indicated that the fee varied between three and five zlotys. Heders were obviously diversified, more expensive ones offered better conditions and were situated in better neighborhoods. Heder masters worked as melameds with an assistant employee (*belfer*), whose monthly salary came close to 80 zlotys.

Heder masters competed for their pupils, sometimes resorting to dishonorable methods. Controversies or even quarrels were not uncommon. Feuds were often carried onto rabbinic courts or even to the local state administration. Files of the School Council and Inspectorate by the City Council abound in complaints and incriminating letters whose senders informed on their antagonists. In a letter of July 6, 1932, addressed to the Council, a school inspector postulated to withdraw the heder license of Eksztajn, whose address was Berka Joselewicza 9, on the grounds of mismanagement at his heders, the failure to meet Inspectorate regulations, and provoking continuous quarrels among heder masters.<sup>83</sup>

In June 1928 the School Council received a letter from Izrael Landau applying for a license to set up a private Jewish school. His plan was to have a religious school with Polish as the language of instruction, “no heder”, as he stressed. Since Landau expected to have sixty pupils, it implied major transformations occurring then in the Jewish society of Częstochowa. Obviously it were the parents who used to choose a school, not the children. Thus it must have been the parents who realized the importance of speaking Polish well as far as the future careers of the young were concerned. Religious instruction in Polish served two purposes: mastering the official language of the state and cultivating religious traditions of one’s people at the same time. As the school was private and there were parents ready to pay for their children to attend it, there must have been a demand for Jewish schooling in Polish.

The holdings of the State Archives in Częstochowa include a 1928 inventory of persons and institutions licensed by the School Council to run private schools and heders in the city. The interesting fact is that the only exception among religious schools was the seven-grade private school organized by the Workers’ Children’s Shelter Board and the I.L.Perec Folk School. Religious schools included ten heders, seven-grade Mahzikay

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<sup>82</sup> Ibidem p.530.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

Hadas school, private Agudah school, and four other religious schools.<sup>84</sup> In 1917 there were 15 public and private elementary schools for Jewish children.<sup>85</sup>

Very early in the Nazi German occupation of Częstochowa, on November 22, 1939, all Jewish schools were closed and their property confiscated by the order of the Radom district governor. 88 Jewish teachers perished in the Holocaust.

## 6. The ideological political identity of Częstochowa Poles and Jews as manifested positively and negatively in the context of anti-Semitism and anti-Polonism.

It is a known fact that in the eighteenth century ideology<sup>86</sup> began to play a significant role in the formulation of policies in many spheres of public life, such as economy, science, technology, and education. Ideology is often defined as a system of convictions or beliefs typical for a certain group and usually based on the interpretation of the group's history. This system provides the guidelines for the group to plan their actions. Collective belief are prevalingly determined by historical, social, political, and economic circumstances. Cultural heritage of the collective into whom a given ideology is implanted can often considerably modify this ideology. Ideology offers theoretical grounds for opinions, strivings, programs, and actions of a particular collective. Ideological rationalizations usually refers to some model figures, their authority and standards, which are easier subject of generalizations and exploitation. For over two centuries individuals and societies have been living in the world dominated by ideology.

Thus ideology is a set of systematized convictions that a group professes and that are supposed to explain the past of the group, analyze its present situation, and formulate guidelines for the future. This definition is based on the following presumptions: 1) ideological interpretation of the history gives the group a certain perspective in time and space; 2) explains present social, economic, political, or educational situation; 3) analysis of the past provides the group with a conception of social transformation involving certain patterns in the past events which could manifest themselves in the future; 4) ideology determines also working strategy, since it provides a model of the future to be

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<sup>84</sup> A.P.Cz., Mag. Cz., sygn. 7673

<sup>85</sup> In 1938 there were 7 private Jewish kindergartens run by *Zofia Wajnszok, Maria Prejzerowicz, Lotta Faktor, Bella Lipszyc, Towarzystwo Dobroczynności dla Żydów, Strzecha Dziecięca im. J.L. Pereca*. In June 1939, at the end of school year, there were 451 children attending kindergartens. Prior to the outbreak of WWII Jewish children attended 3 public elementary schools: nr 12 at Przemysłowa 10 and 14, nr 13 at G. Narutowicza 19/23, nr 15 at G. Narutowicza 19/23. Faculties always included Jewish teachers. Beside those Jewish children were educated at private schools or schools run by various organizations: *Szkoła Powszechna Towarzystwa Żydowskich Szkół Średnich i Powszechnych* set up in 1934 at Jasnogórska 8/10, *Prywatna Męska Szkoła Powszechna (Chojrew) „Nauka”* at Berka Joselewicza, *Prywatna Męska Szkoła Powszechna Tauby Wajnberg* set up in 1924 at Aleja Najświętszej Marii Panny 8, *Prywatna Szkoła Powszechna Wyznania Hebrajskiego Chilla Grylaka* set up in 1900 at Berka Joselewicza 9, *Prywatna 7 - klasowa Koedukacyjna Szkoła Powszechna im. Z. Wajnszok* (1916) at Aleja Najświętszej Marii Panny 20, *Prywatna Szkoła Powszechna im. Berka Joselewicza przy Gimnazjum dra Filipa Axera* set up in 1932 at Focha 24. Prior to WWII 605 Jewish children attended private elementary schools in Częstochowa. Henryk Markusfeld, Sandstein and Mokrauer established in 1917 *Gimnazjum Męskie Towarzystwa Żydowskich Szkół Średnich* at Dąbrowskiego 3a, later at a new building at Jasnogórska 8/10. Subsequent headmasters were Dr. Szymon Brysz, Dr. Majer Bałaban, Dr. Dawid Einhorn, Dr. Filip Axer, Jakób Blatt, Dr. Wolf Anisweld. Art teacher was Perec Willenberg. In 1917 Henryk Markusfeld, Sandstein and Mokrauer inaugurated also a junior high school for girls *Gimnazjum Żeńskie Towarzystwa Żydowskich Szkół Średnich* with the same headmasters. Since 1925 the school was managed by a headmistress Dr. G. Raschbaum. In the 1930s the two were joined into *Prywatne Gimnazjum i Liceum Towarzystwa Żydowskich Szkół Średnich i Powszechnych*. Its headmaster was Dr. Wolf Anisweld.

*Gimnazjum Koedukacyjne dr Filipa Axera* was founded in 1925, first at Kilińskiego 25, then at Focha 24. In 1930 *Prywatna Szkoła Zawodowa Doksztalcająca dla Terminatorek Związku Rzemieślników – Żydów* was set up. In 1939 its headmistress was Lilia Awner Esfir. It was located at Przemysłowa 10, *Prywatna Szkoła Doksztalcająca dla Terminatorów Stowarzyszenia Rzemieślniczego Żydowskiego* was functioning 1922-1939. In the 1930s *Prywatny Wieczorowy Kurs Handlowy Roczny* was run at NMP 20. In total private Jewish junior high schools were attended by 420 students, four vocational schools by 507.

<sup>86</sup> K. Mannheim, *Ideologia i utopia*. Warszawa; Gerald L. Gutek, *Filozoficzne i ideologiczne podstawy edukacji*. Gdańsk 2003, pp.142-150.

pursued. Moreover, it prescribes definite political and educational policies to achieve set objectives. It is worth noting that ideology is imposed by the dominant group and consequently introduced officially into educational program.

Hence, ideological identity of an individual as well as ideological identity of a community (group) is individual or collective awareness of their ideological distinctiveness as compared to others.

Jewish political parties were concerned with internal problems of Jewish society, the future of the Jewish people, their disposition towards history, including tradition, but also with the political actuality of life in a country under the foreign rule, during WWI, and in independent Poland. Political issues included contacts with non-Jewish ideologies, which provided new perspectives for Jewish social problems, and finally, visions of situating Jews anew among the nations, e.i., building their national home.

Political attitudes originated from individual experiences, social circumstances, political situation in the Polish lands, collective expectations and hopes, first inspired by platforms of various parties and then successfully or unfortunately faced with reality. Parties had followings proportionate to the attitudes of a Jewish community at a given time. Częstochowa Jewish community shared the plight of the entire city population with all political upheavals, modernizations, social and economic transformations, together with urban development. General political environment could not be ignored either, or rather its disposition towards Jews and their political representations. This environment comprised of Roman Catholic church, Polish parties, and the authorities. It would be therefore worthwhile to discuss the varieties of the compelled coexistence of Jews and Poles in Częstochowa with the rule of counterbalancing identities of both societies which it involved. Compulsory aspects of the coexistence were:

- economic and political (fighting the common enemy),
- territorial (living together in a city demanded joint efforts to improve life conditions),
- resulting from civilization development,
- health care,
- education, culture, sports;
- life conditions: poverty, unemployment, common struggle for a better standard of living;
- or subjective: ideological affinity in case of socialism or Jewish and Catholic orthodoxy;
- mutual tolerance of traditions and cultures (“You Jews stay in your cultural ghetto, we have our Polish Christian culture and tradition, you just do not interfere”).

In the nineteenth century, the Częstochowa Jewish community took active part in all Polish freedom efforts, all confrontations with the tsarist regime. A great number of Jews participated, for instance, in an independence manifestation in Częstochowa on September 8, 1862. In response inhabitants of the Old Town were attacked by Russian soldiers. There were many casualties, killed or injured. Several dozen houses, including many Jewish, were burnt down. After several days, to cover up the raid Colonel of the tsarist army Olenich gave an order to burn the entire city. Olenich reported to his superiors in St Petersburg that he had been forced to counteract anti-Semitic riots.<sup>87</sup> Jews persecuted for supporting Polish independence struggle included Daniel Neufeld. In the decades prior to the 1863 January uprising he was the headmaster of the Jewish junior high school. At one of the patriotic manifestations he was arrested, deported to Warsaw,

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<sup>87</sup> Z. Jakubowski, *Częstochowscy Żydzi...* p.13.

and in 1863 exiled to Siberia. Having returned from the exile he settled in Warsaw for the rest of his life.<sup>88</sup>

Supporters of assimilation were very active socially and politically in the last decades of the nineteenth c. The only difference between Poles and Jews that assimilationists recognized was religion, so they promoted Polish culture among Jews in schools and courses and opposed Jewish national tendencies. Sometimes they collaborated with Orthodox groups, since the two had similar views on the need to reconcile Jewish and Polish interests. Częstochowa assimilationists whose prominence was not limited to local scene included Dr. J. Sachs.<sup>89</sup>

Zionist and nationalist tendencies started to reach Polish Jews from Russia in the late 1880s. From their early years Zionists tried to diminish assimilationists' following in the Jewish society. In Częstochowa it was the Lira musical and literary society that became the scene of that confrontation. Founded in 1908 and initially dominated by advocates of assimilation, it was soon taken over by Zionists.

In reborn Poland by the decree of November 7, 1919, issued by the Head of the State<sup>90</sup>, Jews had the right to organize their religious life in *kahals*, Jewish communities. Strictly religious character of Jewish communities was contested by many Jewish political organizations throughout the interwar period. Those of leftist orientation wanted the community to become more of a self-governmental body, and demanded from the state authorities that its character should not be limited to religious functions. For conservative and orthodox groups the community was the stronghold of continuity of religious tradition of Jewish culture. Polish administration did not wish to equip it with self-governmental competences, as it would not be consistent with either "national" policy of the 1920s nor the "state" policy of the 1930s. The state would not relinquish nor share its power and restricted any self-government to the participation in local state administration. This approach suited Jewish Orthodox groups, who found the state policy towards Jewish communities helpful in resisting the Jewish left or Zionists.

On May 18, 1923 the Department of Religions addressed a confidential letter to provincial governors (*voivodes*) instructing them to effect elections to Jewish community boards as decreed by the law. The elected boards were supposed to prevent "... disorder of economic, administrative and cultural matters in Jewish communities."<sup>91</sup> The letter pointed to the disruption of the fragmented Jewish political scene. In case some antagonistic representatives were elected the internal strife could obstruct the functioning of the board, as it had already happened before.

The Department recommended to inaugurate the election first in minor communities, as otherwise "... bearing in mind that if in some major communities more radical religious or political elements come to power, such results could intensify their campaigns and make minor communities follow in their footsteps."<sup>92</sup> It was underscored, however, in the document that the authorities should maintain absolute neutrality "... and allow no pretext occur for any Jewish party to complain of any pressure from the authorities, because in case any such complain is justified it would only agitate the electorate contrary to our intentions."

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<sup>88</sup> Z. Jakubowski, *Częstochowscy Żydzi...* p.13, also: J.K. Urbach, *Udział Żydów w walce o niepodległość Polski*, Warszawa 1938, p. 87.

<sup>89</sup> „Żydowskie Stronnictwa i Obozy Społeczno polityczne w Królestwie Polskiem” /December 1917/, Warszawa 1917, table I.

<sup>90</sup> Dekret Naczelnika Państwa o organizacji gmin wyznaniowych żydowskich na terenie byłego Królestwa Kongresowego z 7.02. 1919r.

<sup>91</sup> Archiwum Państwowe w Kielcach, zespół akt UWK I sygn. 441.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

The Jewish kehilla of Częstochowa was a major one: in the 1923 election 25 delegates, 25 deputies, 12 board members and 12 deputies were elected. In the Częstochowa county there were four minor communities: Janow, Klobuck, Krzepice, and Przyrow, where 4 members and 4 deputies each were elected.<sup>93</sup> Częstochowa Jewish community in independent Poland was located at 14 Nowy Rynek and then at 10, Al.NMP, with six rooms and a kitchen.

An interesting study of the functioning of Jewish religious community in Częstochowa was compiled by William M.Glicksman.<sup>94</sup> A major issue within the Jewish community, as we read in the introduction to his book, was disunity. Quarrels and controversies between various groups prevented the board from working out a coherent stand towards both their own people as towards the municipality or state administration. The discord was most prominent during elections and distribution of means and subsidies, but also in case of various initiatives concerning Jewish life, especially if any additional funds to be raised were involved.

The 1931 kehilla election was very stormy. The platforms of Jewish political parties running for the community seats were extremely diversified. Agudat Israel needed kehillah to protect traditionally religious model of life. Hence the Orthodox condemned both the Bund and Zionists. The latter were of the opinion that kehillah should assume a role of an autonomous center of religious and cultural kind. And Bundists demanded it became an independent non-religious self-governmental body. The campaign took a very rough course. As often is the case in political campaigns, all parties resorted sometimes to reproaches and denunciations, or even informing against the adversaries to the authorities. The Orthodox claimed to be the only faithful Children of Zion, while their opponents were "renegades and traitors". Having the support of the Starosty Office, pursuing the state policy of treating the communities as strictly religious bodies, the followers of Agudat Israel stressed their claim to be the only Polish patriots among Jews and passed harmful information or bigoted comments on their rivals. At the meeting of the electoral commission on February 24, 1931, all political orientations were represented. The Agudat members vetoed the resolution concerning the commission on account of inadequate number of the Agudat delegates (namely two). In accordance with the electoral regulations the commission was eventually authorized by the local governor (after some time-consuming exchanges of individual names) and consisted of 16 delegates with two Agudat members.<sup>95</sup> Due to the victory of the Mizrachi party over Zionist Fraction, Samuel Goldstein, entrepreneur of the former, was appointed the president of the community. Yet the Zionist opposition headed by a teacher Mojzesz Mehring continued to obstruct the proceedings of the board until the Częstochowa governor in consultation with the Ministry of Religion and Education was forced to revoke Goldstein from the post.<sup>96</sup> The strife intensified in the 1930s, as reflected even in some police reports.<sup>97</sup> Still, representatives of anti-Orthodox groups did also participate in the Board activities, and prior to WWII the Bund played a significant role.

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<sup>93</sup> The Board consisted of 12 members and was chaired by Jakób Bendet Rozenberg, accountant b. 1887, his deputy was Berek Gewercman, age 56, merchant. The Council consisted of 18 members, chaired by 47-year-old merchant Joachim Weksler. All members were middle age or elderly, representing the crafts, intelligentsia, entrepreneurs, merchants, whose respectability and material standing were stable. / A.P.Cz. Starostwo Pow. Cz – wskie sygn. 366

<sup>94</sup> W.M. Glicksman, *A Kehillah In Poland, During the Inter-War Years*, Philadelphia 1969.

<sup>95</sup> Ibidem, pp.33-34.

<sup>96</sup> A P Cz. S P Cz., sygn. 352.

<sup>97</sup> To quote such a report of November 1930: „It needs stressing is that a major part of progressive Jewish population professes great dissatisfaction with what is going on in the local Jewish Community. These fractions expect that the president of the Board will not be appointed by the Ministry, while it seems that a special commissioner to manage the community would be welcome by many Jews. As is generally believed the community is run by a son of the deceased rabbi, Mendel Asz, who has dominated the president, Rozenberg and it is the main cause of disagreement in Jewish society here.” /A.P.Cz starostwo pow. sygn. 31./.

Jewish political parties ran also for municipality and parliamentary seats. In the first municipality election in independent Poland the Orthodox Jews campaigned as the Jewish Electoral Committee, which outran other Jewish groups and with its 2,467 votes obtained five seats in the City Council.<sup>98</sup>

In subsequent local elections in 1919-1939 the situation repeated itself. Tradition and religion were the major forces in the social life of Częstochowa Jews. New and unfamiliar visions of life proposed by radical national or socialist parties were distrusted by middle-class Jews. Commerce, enterprise, and crafts always profited from the stability of social life. In the 1920s electoral preferences were reflecting this truth, whereas the economic depression and upsurge of anti-Semitism in the next decade encouraged more radical views, especially in case of young or middle-aged Jews.

Economic difficulties and anti-Jewish outbursts (assaults, breaking window panes in Jewish shops) in the wake of WWI did not stimulate integration processes. The most deadly violence occurred on May 27, 1919. Positive and determined intervention of the police put an end to that infamous events. As the Częstochowa police commander Władysław Belina-Prażmowski stated in his report, Jewish casualties of the bloody pogrom organized by the soldiers of Haller's army included seven dead, nine seriously wounded, eleven with minor injuries and twelve slightly injured, who were able to leave the scene on their own. The news of the event spread all over Poland and abroad. At the Paris peace conference the participating powers resolved to send their representatives to Częstochowa to inspect ethnic relations in the "young Polish state" reestablished after WWI. The delegation included representatives of the United States, Great Britain, and France. The Polish cause at the conference might have suffered a serious damage due to the pogrom. On June 5, 1919 a document "Concerning the Pogrom of Jews in Częstochowa on May 27, 1919", initiated by two deputies, Hartglass and Thon, was submitted at the Polish parliament. The petition was signed by 17 deputies<sup>99</sup> and motioned that the government "urgently takes all necessary measures to counteract actively and verbally the pogrom propaganda as above, and to curb the soldiers' license". The deputies proposed also that the Parliament "adopt a resolution condemning with all might the anti-Jewish riots, which disseminate anarchy and disorder". The violence of May 1919 proved so shocking to the Częstochowa society that "the like bloody event never happened again, even if unrest continued and not without a cause"<sup>100</sup>. Jewish organizations in Częstochowa, with the Poale-Zion Right in the fore, set up protest strikes and closed the shops on June 30. Handbills were printed denouncing anti-Semitism and appealing to put an end to anti-Jewish outbursts all over Poland.

In the late 1930s Jewish organizations in Częstochowa continued to respond to the general situation of Jews in Poland, e.g., joining the protests against the "bench ghetto" at Polish universities or setting up strikes in protests against anti-Jewish legislation or political campaigns of some parties.<sup>101</sup>

In 1937 the Bund celebrated its fortieth anniversary. Another occasion was the fortieth anniversary of the Jewish garden farm. Bencjon Geller claimed it was the earliest Jewish agricultural enterprise in Częstochowa and vicinity.

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<sup>98</sup> *Goniec Częstochowski* (12.III.1919), nr 48; APCz, MCz, sygn. 8234.

<sup>99</sup> The petition was signed by Weinlicher, Grünbaum, Rosenblatt, Hirschhorn, Daszyński, L.Musiołek, K.Pużak, Barlicki, Zimiecki, Reydych, Smulikowski, J. Durczak, Klemensiewicz, Malinowski, Czapiński, Pączek, Perl, Niedziałkowski, Chipper, A.Chudy, A.Szczerkowski, Marek Dreszer, Napiórkowski, Pużak, Reger Perlmutter. / Biblioteka Sejmowa Wniosek nr 592 of 1919/.

<sup>100</sup> Walczak, *Życie społeczno-polityczne Częstochowy w okresie II Rzeczypospolitej*, unpublished, by the courtesy of the author.

<sup>101</sup> A.P.Cz., S.P.Cz, sygn. 19-2.



Palestine and its present scene also attracted attention of Jewish organizations. Numerous meetings or fundraising events were held, e.g., in support of the Keren Kayemet Fund for the Jewish emigration to Palestine.<sup>102</sup>

The powerful wave of anti-Semitism that swept through Europe, including Poland and Częstochowa, in the late 1930s, was evidenced in the texts published in *Goniec Częstochowski*, a middle-road paper: on the Ritual Slaughter Law<sup>103</sup>, on a report of the Parliamentary Budget Commission<sup>104</sup>; on "Parade of Jewish Wet Nurses on Our Streets"<sup>105</sup>; or on Municipality meeting<sup>106</sup>.

## **7. Heritage of Jewish creative ethnic and cultural identity and of Jewish creative political identity in the Częstochowa economy.**

By Częstochowa economy I mean here economic processes of the city, such as production, distribution, exchange, and consumption of goods, which satisfy human needs. The needs have always varied, starting with biological necessities (such as providing food, protection from cold) and coming to cultural needs (interpersonal contacts, need for information, knowledge etc.). Human needs are social by nature, because individual needs (of persons) and collective needs (of groups) are determined by the conditions of people's coexistence in a society. Obviously, the conditions change with the development of the society.

Not only human needs, but also means of satisfying them, range from material to immaterial. I assume material means to be products supplied by Jews in Częstochowa, while immaterial involve helpful experiences of Jewish individuals and groups which sank for good into the public consciousness of general Częstochowa public and were consequently used by its inhabitants in their economic activity.

Separate spheres of economic process were interrelated in many ways. The ways and forms of Polish and Jewish participation in the production processes were involved, whether as owners or employees, as well as numerous interrelations not only between production and consumption, but also mutual ties connecting people within production and consumption, because the subjects of economy processes are people (individuals, communities, entire city population). Economic subject is any active participant of the economy processes. Basic economic subjects were various enterprises, whether petty or big, or, in fact, people (groups of people), who had at their disposal actual means of production (such as land, raw materials, funds, facilities, equipment, means of transport etc.). Enterprises could be a single tailor's workshop or huge steelworks or textile plants.

A significant part of social economic processes were the ownership relations, which are the relations established between people in connection with using some goods or deciding about them. Such relations have an impact on the total of social interaction, including economic relations. Social relations are human interdependences originating from various activities (from the roles people performed in the society of Częstochowa). The ownership concerns both material and immaterial goods. There are two basic kinds of ownership: private property and public property, although there is also a intermediate

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<sup>102</sup> A P Cz., S.P.Cz, sygn. 19-6.

<sup>103</sup> *Goniec Częstochowski* 5.01.1937;

<sup>104</sup> *Goniec Częstochowski* 13.01.1937 with an editorial comment: "Italy and Germany are peaceful countries, while Spain and France are torn by internal strife, frequently provoked by Jews. Surplus Jews must be removed from Poland by means of emigration.

<sup>105</sup> *Goniec Częstochowski* 19.01.1937: „The everyday curse of Częstochowa Catholics are Jews and their wet nurses crowding the streets with baby carriages and obstructing pedestrians frequently on their urgent business.”

<sup>106</sup> *Goniec Częstochowski* 20.01.1937: „National Club rises and leaves the meeting in protest, the PPS and Jews turn down the motion to ban Jewish sale of devotional articles.”

kind of property, that is cooperative property. In the past it was often treated as a kind of public property.

Private property includes its capitalist variety, which involves using a private capital to pursue economic activity based on hired labor and profit oriented.

Creative cultural identity of Jews must have been grounded in the connection between enterprise and culture. Why enterprise? Enterprise, whether in a form of bazaar stall or a factory, is the factor that transforms any town or city, the world itself, in such a way that it surpasses our perception. Enterprise is the alternative mechanism of development. It originates from human ability to pursue a career suited to one's skills and capacities. It involves effective communicating with others, cooperation, grasping the mechanisms of market economy and their influence on the operation of an enterprise, competent investments and insurance, noticing new vistas for one's activity.

Enterprise requires alternative thinking, which can eventuate in choosing the best option in case of two or more mutually exclusive courses of action. The point to demonstrate is the type of reasoning that results in solving economic problems. And the creativity it involves is the capacity to think and act in unconventional way, instead of following established patterns. It consists in employing one's competence in a new way or acquiring new skills. Thus creative thinking is applying new or original perspectives in some sphere of reality. The perceptions can concern:

- a) differences (certain structures)
- b) similarities (network of relations)
- c) changes (and procedures taken)
- d) degree of change
- e) possibilities of modified perspectives

For some, creativity would mean willful and conscious effort, for others it would be just a question of chance, for others still – an impossibility. What makes for this diversity of opinions on creativity is the level of awareness of correlation of culture and enterprise, of culture and creativity, in which creative identity is grounded.

Why is culture at the base of creative identity? The scholarly study of enterprise and, consequently, of creativity, has been so far dominated by economists. With all due respect to economics as a science, it seems to have often missed such crucial aspect of enterprise as its social context: the influence of beliefs, norms, and values, that people in various cultures cherish. And yet these factors define the general framework for individuals to develop their enterprise and look for new opportunities. Capitalist system favors such characteristics as hard work, determination, and readiness to modify one's ways of thinking. It is the correlation of enterprise and culture that seems to be the most characteristic mark of creative cultural identity of Jews. In certain situations, in the diaspora for the most part, Jewish enterprise creates its own culture.

Cultural heritage of creative identity of Częstochowa Jews manifested itself in:

- a) being open to the non-Jewish world despite being rooted to some extent in traditional Jewish culture;
- b) general knowledge and ability to put it to practical use;
- c) quick perception of changing reality and capacity to define it;
- d) courage to look for new answers to problems while abiding by ethical rules;
- e) readiness to live in a family, local community, and Poland in the spirit of cultural heritage;
- f) learning, which was future-oriented to face new challenges (the traditional foundation provided stability, while the quest for future meaning

provided continuity; new generations had three senses developed – of continuity, connection, and direction).

Continuity was based on thinking “back and forwards” applied to institutions, ideas, and the family, on realizing that one is a link in the chain and belongs here to our small, local world and to the global one, on maintaining the continuity of things and generations, according to what the wise man said in the Proverbs: “leaveth an inheritance to his children’s children”. The sense of connection involved the need to belong to various kinds of collectives (neighborhoods, work teams, towns, communities, business groups, the rich, the poor, etc.). The sense of direction was in the purposefulness, in the search for identity, efforts aimed at attaining a certain style of life.

Thus enterprise is economic activity distinguished by various forms of creativity, innovations in particular. Discovering and perceiving economic opportunities, commercial affinities of economic organizations of ethnic groups, or various barriers and restrictions. All these were illustrated by the polarization of financial standing of Cześćochowa Jews.

The polarity could be seen in the streets: everyday or Shabbat clothes Jews wore, shop equipment and customers, market stalls and other forms of retail, among the buyers haggling on the price and striking a bargain. Their diet, personal hygiene, houses and furniture also spoke of this polarity. Traditional Jewish dress (Orthodox or hasidic) was more often adopted by the poor or low middle-class than by the prosperous Jews. The well-off and the rich followed the fashion in dress. Clothes signified social status and financial standing of the owner. Jews believed a Christian saying “fine feathers make fine birds.” The way you looked was important in the competitive labor market, in doing business, official dealing with the administration, etc. Practical side of life prevailed over tradition in that case.

Courtyards of big tenement houses, narrow streets like Garncarska, Targowa, Kozia Nadrzeczna, Senatorska, Gęsia, Ptasia, Spadek, Mostowa, were a mosaic of Jewish social life. The front apartments were occupied by the owners and prosperous tenants, flats in the back by moderately well-offs, while the poor were cooped up cheaply in basements, annexes, attics.

Two arteries, Warszawska and Krakowska streets, seemed to demarcate the social and territorial division of Cześćochowa Jews. It indicated three basic sections of their creative identity. Belonging to a section was determined by historically based individual or group financial standing. In material terms Jews were either hard up (including very poor), quite well-off, or affluent (including very rich). The material standing signified also the character of creative identity, whose range and targets were suited to capabilities. It is very interesting to note that belonging to the poor or medium stratum did not result in social depreciation of Jews’ creative identity. This identity retained its value in all social classes, because it was the effort and all kinds of ingenuity employed to earn one’s living honestly that mattered. That phenomenon was observable at the demarcation line. West of Warszawska and Krakowska streets were the wealthy neighborhoods, while east of the line was the old town, narrow lanes and tenement houses inhabited by craftsmen, shopkeepers, peddlers, workers. Their jobs, often seasonal, determined by the fluctuations of economy and of sales market, did not provide steady income to meet all the needs of families with many children. Poverty was frequent in this part of town. It owed its nickname, “Peking”, to its noisy streets, swarming with people, courtyards bustling with life, crowded houses with numerous annexes, cellars, cabins, attics, staircases built of all kinds of cheap materials. In the center new houses were built or the old buildings flashed its splendor of a history of over a hundred years. In the late

nineteenth c. the main street of Częstochowa, Aleja Najświętszej Marii Panny (NMP Alley), was a busy Jewish promenade. Rich tenement house owners, entrepreneurs, and merchants had their houses there.<sup>107</sup> Still, even the “chic” Jewish quarter with elegant stores, restaurants, and coffee shops, had its other side. Behind or beneath spacious, airy apartments, there were basements or squalid annexes, where several people lived in one room. Jewish courtyards did not differ from the Christian as far as sanitary conditions, overpopulation, and facilities were concerned.

There were obvious disparities in the celebration of Jewish festivals or family events between the rich and the poor, when the former enjoyed tables laden with good food and the latter could afford only a few cheapest products. Still, all families, especially those with many generations, found maintaining religious and life cycle tradition, even by modest means, very important. It symbolized belonging to a religious and ethnic community, was reassuring and joyful, gave the participants security and strength to endure the hardships. Moreover, celebrating Shabbat allowed escape from everyday drudgery.

To make a living required much ingenuity, whose ethics were regulated by the law. Still, for Jews the God’s law and tradition based norms of social life provided much more powerful moral dictate. Fear of God and His hand inflicting punishment upon a criminal, his family, or even future generations was more effective deterrent than any judicial court, at least for religious Jews, who definitely prevailed in the prewar Jewish community of Częstochowa. Profit motivated law-breaking occurred as often as with other nationalities and no social class was exempt, either.

Yet an ethnic minority faces more difficulties in this respect. The majority is always watchful, ready to criticize, to point out even petty mistakes, sometimes in order to avert attention from its own social afflictions. “Haggling” could turn into a quarrel, even a lawsuit. In tough market negotiations straightforwardness could be intertwined with deliberate scheming. Unrestrained craving for profit has always been a human weakness and it knows no national or religious boundaries. Trial files of the period include many infringed possession actions, theft, embezzlement, procurement, corruption, false accusation cases, actions for libel, and many others.

Social polarization was reflected in the community tax as set down by the Board of the Częstochowa Israeli Community in 1916. Jewish population was categorized for that purpose into four classes. The amount of tax was imposed on the heads of families was suited to the financial standing of a family. The uppermost category included 19 affluent families with tax ranging from 300 to 100 rubles. Presumably the amount corresponded to the social and financial ranking and thus the man at the top of the list was Szymon Najman taxed for 300 rubles.<sup>108</sup>

The second category included 68 families paying 75 to 20 rubles. The third category tax ranged from 18 to 8 rubles, paid by 120 families. The last and least amount was 6 or 4 rubles for 145 families. In total 352 families contributed to the Jewish Community, while the rest were considered too poor to pay anything. In the 1916 budget account the income was 33,918 rubles and 30 kopeiks, including 31,000 rubles from the taxation.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> S. Szymański, „Do dziejów Żydów w Częstochowie w okresie Konstytucyjnym Królestwa”, *Biuletyn ŻIH* 1961, Nr. 39. „The first to set up a store in Aleja NMP in 1853 was a Jew, Salomon Reicher.”

<sup>108</sup> Followed by: Edmund Ginsberg 250 rb., Izydor Geisler 250 rb., Jan Grossman 250 rb., Ludwik Kohn 250 rb., Seweryn Landau 200 rb., Leopold Kohn 175 rb., Dora Oderfeld 175 rb., Jozef Dziubas 150 rb., Chaskiel Fiszel 150 rb., Henryk Markusfeld 150 rb., Jozef Markusfeld 150 rb., Stanisław Winberg 150 rb., Izrael Meitlis 125 rb., Nusen Rozencweig 125 rb., Ludwik Tempel 125 rb., Majer Gitler 100 rb., Maurycy Neufeld 100 rb., Władysław Larko 100 rb /A.P.Cz., Akta m. Częstochowy sygn. 4898 z. 1/.

<sup>109</sup> In a 1916 letter of the Board addressed to the Municipality we read: „... as for the religious ritual fee it has not been charged in our community for 25 years and no such entry has been made in our budget. It is the intention of

Less affluent Jews displayed their creativity in retail and crafts. The creativity of the more prosperous ones was attested by big workshops and stores, small factories etc.

The creativity of the most wealthy Jews was manifested in various ways. The founders of industry, trade, and banking in Częstochowa included many Jews. Prominent families, like the Geislars, Grossmans, Kohns, Landaus, Oderfelds, Markusfelds and others, proved their faith in the positivist development approach. They initiated and expanded various branches of trade and industry, such as textile, paper, mechanic manufacturing, developed import and export, promoted cultural life. Successful Jewish businessmen contributed to the growth of the city with grand industrial, cultural, and religious buildings, many Jewish art lovers sponsored the cultural events and artists.

The differences between entrepreneurs were evidenced in their profits, number of employees, and the manner of distribution of their merchandise. Vendors used to go to the market with ready products to sell them at a stall or put up for sale in a small store. The business was booming primarily in the Nowy Rynek and Stary Rynek market squares. The places were crowded with petty peddlers and stallkeepers. In 1934 stalls were removed from the Nowy Rynek and installed at the Zawodzie market place. Jewish stores of more exquisite kind were situated at the main streets, such as NMP Alley.

Furriers, cobblers, shoemakers, hatters, tailors and other Jewish craftsmen often had their workshops at home.

But there were also huge Jewish-owned paper and wood works, chemical plants, textile and clothing factories, food, leather, and engineering industries. In 1921 Joint Distribution Committee surveyed 68,085 Jewish entrepreneurs, who employed 227,101 workers in 185 Polish cities and towns.<sup>110</sup>

The survey data indicated that Jewish entrepreneurs in Częstochowa were for the most part involved in producing directly consumer's goods, such as clothes, wigs, jewelry, tombstones, optic products, underwear, hats, embroidery, furs, cigarettes, shoes and boots, ropes, notebooks, sweets, chocolate, wine, glass. Jews were often working in metal-sheet work, coppery, locksmithery, book-binding, weaving, hosiery, rag sorting, rolling, and shredding, at mangles, photo shops, butcheries, herring smokehouses, dyeworks. Most workshops were equipped with most primitive, hand driven tools.

Starting in the mid-nineteenth c. Częstochowa was a major textile and steel industry center.<sup>111</sup> Stores, agencies, warehouses, packing and shipping stations were sprouting round big factories. The courtyards of the Częstochowa old town held numerous small factories and workshops.<sup>112</sup> Their owners did not have to provide large capital outlays nor

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the Board to spare the poor section of congregation and let the ritual services be provided to them at the Board's cost with the administrator's help. The priests receive salaries as recorded in the budget."/Ibid. /.

<sup>110</sup> Volume 4 of the survey analysis, ed. by Eliezer Heller, includes data from then Kielce and Lublin regions. In Częstochowa with the total population of 80,473, the questionnaire was completed by 1,078 Jewish entrepreneurs, most of them (1041) were in business, and 37 suspended, due to shortage of raw materials, low sales, ousting by competition, sick leave etc. 56 per cent of business firms employed extra workers, the rest were based on self-employment of a craftsman and his family, with an occasional „helper”. The total number of employees was 3,862, and one third were the workshops owners and their families, the rest – hired labor. It is quite characteristic that women's employment was low with the figure of 288 working women, mostly Jewish (79,5%). Only four Jewish children were mentioned in the questionnaires as working at workshops, contrary to other sources often referring to common practice of giving various minor and menial jobs to children. They helped with sale, at workshops as „junior apprentices”. In poor families with many children they were the cheapest assistants of their fathers. Jews were 52,6% of the entire hired labor at the time. /Zydowskie przedsiębiorstwa przemysłowe w Polsce/

<sup>111</sup> Some textile mills were owned by Jews: Henryk Markusfeld and Szymon Neuman were the owners of the Warta linen mill staffed with 2,250 workers in 1929, Izydor Singer, Roman and Zygmunt Markowicz had the Gnaszyńska Manufaktura, a metal factory.

<sup>112</sup> Their owners included: Bocian and Cymerman (printing houses at Aleja NMP 6&8, Kryman (wood mill at Nadrzeczna 48), Lederman (Ogrodowa 7), Silberstein (Krótka 35), Szpringer (Spadek 16 & Mostowa 41), stone masonry, pottery was Gelbard's at Wilsona 6 and Hasklowicz's at Aleja 18, ritual baths at Spadek 10, furniture workshop of Froim at Nadrzeczna 6, Hyndroff's at Nowy Rynek 15, Warszawski & Fajermann at Stary Rynek 31 and many others.

operating costs. Due to high unemployment labor was cheap and allowed for such organization of work that a single unqualified worker could be briskly trained to make one or more elements of a product. Such workshops adapted to the actual situation and could compete on the market with lower prices, being more responsive to latest fashion, complying with customer's wishes and financial means. And religious Jews could schedule their day more flexibly and with their families' help have more time to prayers.

Workshops owned by hasids were staffed with pious Jews exclusively and no women were allowed to work there.

## **8. The Political contribution of Polishness, Jewishness, and Europeaness into the shared values of multicultural Częstochowa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.**

In brief, the assumption behind the above title is that on the city scale the transmission of cultural heritage of various national origins involved values defined as "Częstochowanism". In respect to cultural characteristic of the Polish nation we speak of "Polishness", of the Jewish nation – "Jewishness", and in respect to the entire continent – "Europeanism". With regard to such assumption the following questions need to be considered:

- 1) What is understood by "Częstochowanism", what values does the term imply and how do they contribute to the community feeling?
- 2) The same question applies to Polishness, Jewishness, and Europeanism.
- 3) What educational message is to be derived from such perception of Częstochowanism, whose essential value seemed to be the cultural community and affinity of Częstochowa inhabitants with all their Polishness, Jewishness and Europeanism?

These questions seem important in the light of current civilization, as well as educational challenge concerning the need to ease various tensions resulting from the system transformation and from globalization. Preparing new generations to follow in their life the shared community ideals, which enrich and not divide, is the vital task of contemporary education. The process demands combining the local with the national, European and worldly. It seems there has always been a tendency to join efforts and strive towards common goals in urban multicultural societies, such as Częstochowa.

The specific multicultural character and the ensuing political identity of Częstochowa was determined by:

- 1) individual and public demand for specific values (e.g., economic) and services;
- 2) balance in many aspects maintained between numerous varieties of individual and social identities of Częstochowa inhabitants;
- 3) their ensuing open attitude;
- 4) their ensuing multi faceted tolerance enabling
- 5) cooperation and collaboration of inhabitants, and
- 6) cultural diffusion, or cross-dissemination of cultural produce of groups with different cultural identities; the cultural produce included material

goods, ideas, inventions, social practices, behavioral patterns etc.; the diffusion process involved mutual acceptance of ideas and patterns.

That cross-penetration of Polishness and Jewishness within “Częstochowanism” were of intracultural (between Poles and Jews within the city) and intercultural kind (beyond the city, but affecting it culturally, because generally any “imported” novelties had their impact on the cultural community of the city). The blessings of the cultural diffusion could have sometimes been mixed.

Let us now examine how the Polishness impressed itself on Częstochowa. The interpretation of the term itself (Polishness) and its role in the identity formation of Częstochowa inhabitants is an issue here. The denotation of Polishness is wider than that of “Polish nation”, since the communal values ascribed to the Polish nation and created by Poles were also imprinted by other national cultures. The problem is complex and falls outside any clear-cut definitions. Polishness has been certainly marked by adverse tendencies and dramatic national, social, and political conflicts throughout Polish history. It seems that Bogdan Suchodolski made a point with his definition of “genuine Polishness as manifested in the programs of cooperation of nationalities in the idealistic vision of the union of nations, and as permanently resisting any policy of domination or denationalization, even when overpowered. This genuine Polishness was a major attraction for foreigners, making many of them become true Poles.”<sup>113</sup>

Let us make an inventory of Polish strengths and weaknesses, virtues and faults. Qualities to be cherished and be proud of include: a) democracy; b) religious tolerance; c) freedom; d) honor; e) dignity; f) patriotism; g) solidarity. Unfortunately, deformities of those virtues were also a Polish characteristic. The fine tradition of 16<sup>th</sup> c. democracy and freedom-loving turned into lawlessness, jobbery, anarchy. Indolence and scorn for hard work, political factiousness, social indifference, lack of integrity, mindless imitation of foreign ways, and overtolerance of evil. None of these national flaws nor a blown-up national ego has been publicly overcome. All values wither without constant care and nourishment. Still, the positive qualities of Polishness contributed to the treasury of European and world heritage.

Let us now face the question of how the Jewishness impressed itself on Częstochowa. Jewish history abounded in diverse religious and cultural currents, which often clashed, like Chassidism versus Haskala and assimilation, but contributed to the development of Jewish society in Poland. In the nineteenth c. many leaders of Jewish community initiated or enormously forwarded the growth of industry, banking, commerce etc. It would suffice to mention Częstochowa Jewish celebrities like the Bezborodeks, Brills, Epselbojms, Fajgelewiczes, Ferlegers, Fridmans, Glazers, Goldbergs, Goldsztajns, Grilaks, Grossmans, Honigs, Horowiczes, Ickowiczes, Kohns, Kopinskis, Landaus, Markusfelds, Mejtllis, Orbachs, Ringelblums, Rozenbergs, Rozencwajgów, Rozewiczes, Sercarzes, Stapnickis, Szmulewiczes, Szyjas, Wags, Wajnbaums, Wajnbergs, Wekslers, Werds, Wolbergs, Zaks, Zeliksons. All of them and many others set up or contributed to many economic and cultural enterprises. These Jews were pioneers of modern banking and commerce, many branches of industry, of export and import.

What was then the Jewishness in the cultural heritage of Częstochowa? What are the constitutive features of Jewish culture? Which of them were included in the Częstochowa cultural community? As the synonym of national identity Jewishness is a set of diverse heritage concerning attitudes and life styles, ideals of historical descent, typical for the Judaism believers and for members of the ethnic group living in dispersion

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<sup>113</sup> B. Suchodolski, *Polska i Polacy*, Warszawa 1983. p. 26-27.

all over the world. Yet there is a coherent, though somewhat elusive unity in the diversity that allows to pinpoint some basic basic cultural qualities of Jewish nationality, such as:

- a) religious philosophy (wisdom and scholarship)
- b) religious rituality
- c) fairness
- d) ideological attitude
- e) pragmatic approach
- f) enterprise
- g) prudence
- h) inquisitiveness and insight
- i) mobility combined with stability
- j) diligence
- k) dependability
- l) gratitude
- m) efficiency

The most prominent Jewish characteristics in the Częstochowa cultural heritage were:

- a) enterprise
- b) pragmatic approach
- c) specific ideological attitude
- d) ceremonial rituality
- e) mobility and economic stability

The Europeanism is the most difficult to trace in the Częstochowa cultural heritage. Processes of direct and indirect cross-penetration of elements of European cultures (including the three foreign partitioning powers) inspired many innovations in the urban culture. On one hand Europe could be seen as a medley of states and nations with different mentalities and cultures, on the other – as a certain cultural entity, whose constitutive qualities are two opposite kinds of rationality: instrumental rationality and coherent rationality, means or value oriented, or the order of action versus the order of duty.

In words of Andrzej Flis: “Synthesis of both types of rationality occurred in modern Europe and was in fact equivalent to the process of arriving at a new unity due to amalgamating two distinct – and in many aspects opposite – traditions: Judeo-Christian with Greek. This synthesis resulted in the unprecedented dynamics of European civilization, while its disintegration initiated the contemporary crisis of the West and incurred numerous threats on the mankind. Overcoming this crisis, caused by the expansion of instrumental rationality accompanied by the decline of traditional values, can be possible only at the price of radical transformations of European cultural circle eventuating in a new balance between the action and the duty.”<sup>114</sup>

The constitutive characteristic of instrumental rationality is the optimization of operations, constantly focused on the cost-effect function. Consequently, instrumental rationality brings innovations. Effectiveness of coherent rationality, on the other hand, is best manifested in equivocal, many-faceted situations, when no solution seems absolutely right. And then, faced by the shortage of reasons, the members of a given community can use ritual with its typical rigidity (value oriented) as a sort of guardrail to help them get

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<sup>114</sup> A. Flis, „Cechy konstytutywne kultury europejskiej”, *Kwartalnik Filozoficzny* 1993, vol. XXI, z.2, Kraków 1993, p. 121.



safely across the situation that confused and bewildered them. Presence of ritual – according to E. Gellner – is a good mark indicating the boundaries of the world's changeability, confrontation with the fixed values. The essence of ritual is its rigidity, its insusceptibility to facts.<sup>115</sup>

What, then, did the inhabitants of Częstochowa get from Europeanism? The following European qualities seemed to take root in the cultural heritage of Częstochowa:

- a) instrumental rationality
- b) some coherent instrumentality
- c) secularity
- d) pluralism of perspectives
- e) Eurocentrism
- f) and its opposite – cosmopolitanism.

European culture is marked not only by innovations, but also by encounters of diverse elements, confrontations, competition, and – despite emergence of new divisions – by endless striving for unity.

## **9. The Political identity of Częstochowa Jews in the face of enslavement and destruction**

It might be useful to venture a statement that Jewish enslaved, annihilated and revived identities were a consequence of German ideological identity.

In late 1930s world public opinion was concerned about the rise of anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany, but nobody could foresee that imminent war would eventually result in the murder of millions of European Jews, including Jews of occupied Poland and Częstochowa.

In January 1939 the population of Częstochowa amounted to 138,000 people, including 28,486 Jews. Despite war casualties and victims of early German terror, by 1940 the number of inhabitants grew to 145,729, and with the population of suburban Grabowka (incorporated in 1940) it was as many as 161,334. The increase was due to the forced immigration of Poles deported from the Poznan district and of Jews deported from many cities and towns incorporated into German Reich, such as Lodz and Plock. Some Jews arrived to Częstochowa in search of a refuge. These legal and illegal immigrants came from Wieluń, Kłobuck, Krzepice, Janów, Przyrów, Żarki, Praszka, but also from Kraków.

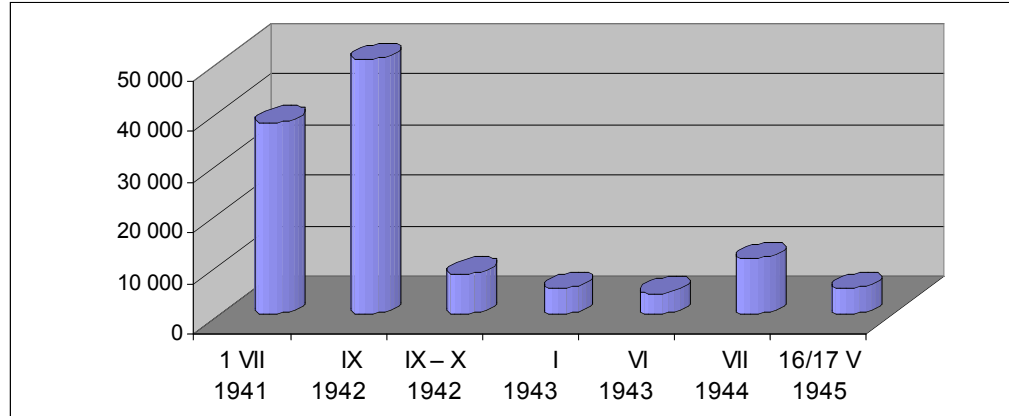
By the German law the Jewish Community Board (Judenrat under the German administration) was obliged to submit lists of registered Jewish newcomers. The statistics set up by the Judenrat survived and are accessible at the State Archives in Częstochowa. The documents cover almost two years, from January 15, 1940 to September 14, 1942.

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<sup>115</sup> Ibidem, p.125.

Table 2  
**Jewish Population in Częstochowa According to German Documents and Unofficial Judenrat Data**

1.0 7.1941	37 ,667 <sup>116</sup>
09. 1942	50 ,000 <sup>117</sup>
09- 10.1942	c8 ,000 <sup>118</sup>
01. 1943	5, 185 <sup>119</sup>
06. 1943	4, 101 <sup>120</sup>
07. 1944	11 ,000 <sup>121</sup>
16/ 17.04. 1945	5, 200 <sup>122</sup>



*Source: Materials at the State Archives in Częstochowa and at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw*

<sup>116</sup> German data

<sup>117</sup> unofficial estimate of the Judenrat

<sup>118</sup> c.2,000 were killed in the city, c.40,000 Jews were deported to the Treblinka killing center

<sup>119</sup> official number of Jews in the small ghetto, including 35 children of Jewish doctors and policemen

<sup>120</sup> after the liquidation of the small ghetto 3,350 inmates were working at Hasag-Peltsery camp, 230 at Garibaldi street (police warehouse), 521 Jews at at Hasag-Rakow, the number of Jews hiding on the Aryan side is unknown.

<sup>121</sup> inmates of the four Hasag labor camps

<sup>122</sup> 5,194 was the number of Jewish inmates at the Hasag-Peltsery and Hasag-Warta camps; 1,240 of them were born in Częstochowa.

The documents indicate that new arrivals in Częstochowa were not only single Jews of various professional status, but also families with many children. They were the cross section of the entire Jewish society in German-occupied Poland. Some Jews arriving in Częstochowa came from such distant places as Wejherowo, Gdynia, Lublin or Hamburg. The number of registration entries, which represented one name (usually of a family head), was 3,437, while the number of ensuing inhabitants was 6,679. The statistical data cannot illustrate human tragedies involved. These official documents were prepared for the German authorities and were not always true to the facts. Besides they did not include data on many Jews living in the ghetto with their families illegally. The figure most difficult to estimate is the number of Jews in hiding on the Aryan side.

Beginning with late 1939 and throughout 1940 German authorities proceeded with introducing in the GG, including Częstochowa, anti-Jewish legislation in the form of laws and regulations that were aimed at depriving Jewish population of any public right and reducing Jewish life to mere vegetation. In the context of the present study two issues demand our special attention: a) Polish attitudes towards Jews during WWII, and b) such components of the Holocaust which were preliminaries to physical destruction of Jews, namely brain washing and enslaving their identity to the point they were ready to accept obliteration of their identity. The process involved breaking Jewish resistance by disabling their organisms, reducing their security, degrading their self-perception, building feeling of guilt and identity regression. Thus Jews first had their identity enslaved and then annihilated.

Polish attitudes towards Jews varied, but even some prewar anti-Semites gave evidence of their sympathy. The Catholic Church did not issue any official statement, but many convents gave shelter to “non-Aryans”, especially Jewish children. Without help, whether individual or organized by the Żegota clandestine rescue organization, chances of survival were almost null. But readiness to help was not frequent. Many escapees from ghettos or death transports did not see any alternative except return to the ghetto. German terror justified passive attitude of many Poles. Helping Jews demanded heroic qualities, as the helpers risked their life and life of their families. Still, even after the war some were afraid to admit they had helped Jews.

The Holocaust as a phenomenon was studied from many points of view. Most frequently – in historical perspective, while its economic, administrative, legislative, and psychological aspects are less obvious.<sup>123</sup> I would urge synthetic approach, combining the above perspectives, because the Holocaust consisted in the orderly, systematic, step-by-step annihilation procedures:

- 1) official identification of the Jew
- 2) isolation of Jews from other social and national groups (in the ghettos)
- 3) mass impoverishment and starvation
- 4) deportations
- 5) concentration in labor camps and death camps, physical destruction of entire Jewish population

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<sup>123</sup> I prefer the understanding of the term – Holocaust – proposed by Alicja Grochowska (*Elementy prania mózgu w procesie zagłady Żydów*, Warszawa 1996, p.11), not because of its ambiguity, but because it seems to render more fully the problem of counterbalancing Jewish identity by Nazi German identity. Thus the Holocaust is understood as the physical destruction, uprooting of Jewish culture, and breaking down Jewish will to live.

On January 17, 1945, there were 5,200 Jewish survivors in Częstochowa, including 1518 native Jews. The survivors pointed out in their memoirs specific self-defensive patterns of conduct they owed their survival to, such as:

- 1) self-preservation instinct driving them to provide for their biological needs (procuring hiding places, food, medical help);
- 2) persistence in following at least some fixed patterns of cultural, religious, educational and everyday life;
- 3) self-therapeutic behavior (encouraging suggestions, compensation phantasies);
- 4) participation in some forms of resistance movement.

The following actions are examples of Jewish self-defense in Częstochowa. Despite the dramatic deterioration of life in the ghetto, its inhabitants set up semi-official or illegal orphanages, soup-kitchens, medical care, charities. As early as December 1939 Jewish leaders met to initiate illegal cultural activity. Early in 1940 clandestine classes were organized and staffed with high school teachers for Jewish students to continue their education. In February 1940 a library was set up at Nadrzeczna street, in spring of 1941 young Zionist organized a kibbutz at Berka Joselewicza street. On October 7, 1942 the Germans detected a shelter there with hiding Jews. In December 1942 the Jewish Fighting Organization, 300 people strong, was called into being. Częstochowa Jews took active part in the revolt at Treblinka. On March 19, 1943 Gestapo after prolonged tortures executed six fighters, who were arrested at 34, Wilsona Str.

Those forms of self-defense reactivated Jewish identity. Thus we can speak of **revived (rebuilt) identity**.

## Conclusion

Częstochowa was the only city in Poland with four Jewish labor camps set up by the Germans after all deportations. The number of inmates ran to 10,990 people, including 3,490 Częstochowa natives. As a result, Częstochowa was the only city to have 5,194 Jewish survivors, who during the siege of the city walked out of the camps at night on January 16, 1945 or in the next morning, after the guards fled. 2,578 of them were from Częstochowa, the rest left the town in next three months. At the same time 1,195 Hungarian, Czech, Romanian, French, Dutch, Austrian, Balkan, and Belgian Jews arrived in Częstochowa for a few weeks from German camps liberated by the Soviet army.

The liberation rapture did not last. Former camp inmates wandered listlessly about, having no place to go. Thousands of survivors were homeless and destitute, over a hundred children unattended. Over 200 youngsters, mostly girls, had no means of support and could easily go astray. Dozens of people were disabled, seriously sick, or mutilated.

Children in hiding posed another problem: of finding them and buying out.

”Children from camps, bunkers, children taken from their Polish keepers, from convents, children who survived in the country minding flocks, or those, who rambled from village to village, were often in poor physical, spiritual, and emotional state... Several were seriously disturbed, several had phobias, several did not want to admit they were Jewish. Some were stealing and robbery prone. Children rescued at convents adopted Catholic faith and continued to pray secretly to Virgin Mary pictures even at the Jewish orphanage”, remembered Liber Brener, chairman of the District Jewish Committee.

Prewar and underground leaders were forced to face the new situation and the problems. Representatives of the Bund, Poale Zion and Jewish section of the Polish Workers Party (PPR) set up the Jewish Committee of Częstochowa. Thanks to the assistance of the city Housing Commission most Jewish survivors got quarters in Częstochowa. Distribution of food and financial aid was organized. Lodging house was set up for Jewish camp ex-inmates travelling via Częstochowa, another for the temporary homeless, a house for the youngsters, a school. With the help of two Częstochowa physicians, Dr. M. Przyrowski and B. Rozenowicz, provisional medical ambulatory was opened. Children were settled with families.

The Committee was financed by the Central Committee of Polish Jews and by Częstochowa Jews from New York, Philadelphia, and Buenos Aires. Their help made it possible for the Committee to open up, in a village by Częstochowa, a health retreat for the people with most severe exhaustion symptoms and convalescents. Young people were enrolled at schools. Orphans were accommodated at a new orphanage at the Perce school building at 23, Krotka Str. Jewish religious life also came back to Częstochowa soon after the liberation: at the ritual bath building a prayer hall and kosher canteen were organized. Zionist organizations set up temporary kibbutzes preparing the young for their emigration to Palestine.

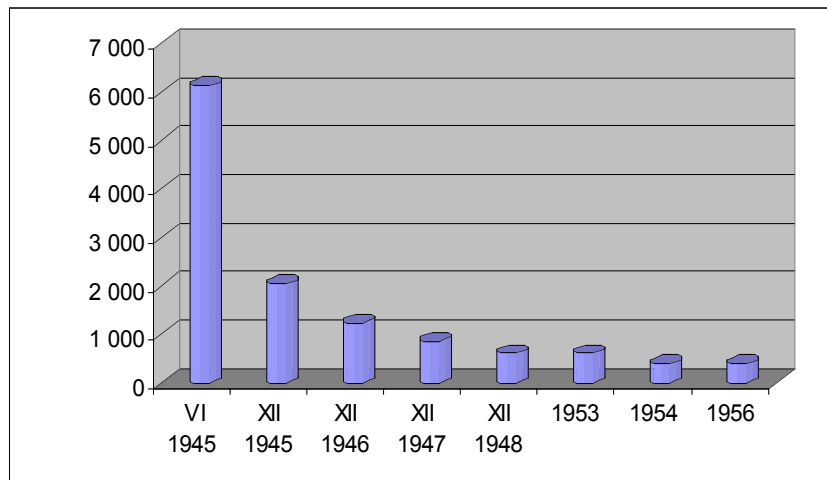
Just when Jewish life in Częstochowa seemed to take a more normal course, the situation changed abruptly. The Kielce pogrom of 1946 upset that frail security that the Częstochowa Jews could have. They were armed with some guns, armed men kept night guard at the Jewish orphanage. Activity of Polish reactionary forces, the feeling and political tendencies in the Jewish street started the Jewish exodus. The communist regime decision to dissolve Jewish parties at the turn of 1948 and 1949 concerned the Jewish Committee as well. The only organization to represent Jews was then the Cultural and Social Society of Polish Jews (TSKZ). Częstochowa Jewish community steadily

dwindled. Jews treated the city as a mere stop on their way abroad. By August 1956 there were only 400 of them left. Ideological identity once again predominated.

At the Markowicz villa at 36, Jasnogorska Str. a Cultural Center for Children and Youngsters was set up. It was frequented by the adults, too. Afternoon classes and interest groups included Yiddish course run by Chaim Segal (chairman of a Częstochowa cooperative), while Hebrew was taught by Teresa Wajman. Częstochowa actors, Bolesław Werowski and Ryszard Nadrowski, took care of an amateur theater club, Jan Kuklinski, soon a renowned photojournalist of the *Zycie Czestochowy* paper – of a photographic club. Art classes were conducted by the famous painter Jerzy Duda-Gracz (then an art high-school student). The center was closed after March 1968. Most of its frequenters were soon dispersed all over the world.

Table 3  
**Jewish Population in Numbers from the Reports of the Częstochowa Jewish Committee**

June 1945	6,143	6
December 1945	2,051	2
December 1946	1,235	1
December 1947	862	8
December 1948	612	6
1953	1,126	6
1954	1,044	4
1956	1,044	4



*Source: Statistics of Jewish Population in Częstochowa compiled by Liber Brener on the basis of the reports of the Jewish Committee in Częstochowa.*

In my view the present paper points out to a correlation between various transmissions and manifestations of cultural heritage on one hand, and the emergence of

interrelated cultural identities of Jewish and Polish inhabitants of Częstochowa on the other. That interrelated identities enabled the city population to face new challenges and come to terms with the changing civilization. The history of Częstochowa calls for a further, more detailed study with respect to the complexity and rarity of Jewish contribution to the cultural heritage of the city. The significance of such a study seems all the more obvious in the present entanglement of modernization, globalization, system transformation, and integration processes.

Universal integration of Europe does not imply erasing cultural heritage of its nations and ethnic groups. This integration is in fact a process of including the most valuable and genuine native elements into the common pool, as well as a transmission of ideas which are constantly enriching one another, cross-penetrating and complementing one another. This goal requires sound knowledge of cultural heritage of various European communities, including, obviously, the Jewish communities with the Jews of Częstochowa and their heritage.