

von Attributen und Charakterzügen projiziert wurden, die eine Abgrenzung, womöglich sogar eine radikale Trennung von Juden und Polen in den Augen der Verbindungsmitglieder zwingend notwendig machte. Die Vorstellung von einem angeblich nötigen Kampf gegen die polnischen Juden war jedoch keine Erfindung des ZPKA oder anderer Gruppierungen, sondern entsprang vielmehr der Weltanschauung des nationalen Lagers und anderer politischer Richtungen. Sie lieferten die Grundlage für den antijüdischen Kampf auf den polnischen Hochschulen in der Zwischenkriegsära, während der Kampf selbst in den Augen seiner Akteure die logische Schlussfolgerung aus dieser Weltanschauung sowie eine patriotische Pflicht darstellte.

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## The Cadaver Affair in the Second Polish Republic A Case Study of Practical Antisemitism?<sup>1</sup>

On 12 March 1930, Polish students at the Medical School of Warsaw University held an antisemitic manifestation. They proclaimed the beginning of a “new stage” in their battle for Jewish cadavers to be used for medical training. After placing a note reading ‘Jews not allowed’ on the door of the prosectorium and cordoning off the entrance, they forcibly removed their Jewish colleagues from the building. Finally, greeted enthusiastically by passers-by, they marched from the Institute of Anatomy at Oczyki Street to the main campus at Krakowskie Przedmieście, carrying banners: “Long live medicine without Jews”, “We demand Jewish cadavers for prosectorium”, “We demand numerus clausus in Medical School”.<sup>2</sup> This account of the antisemitic manifestation at Warsaw University suggests a likely correlation between the calls for a *numerus clausus* and the cadaver affair in the context of increasingly radicalised Polish campuses. Why did the students raise the demand for Jewish corpses to be used in medical training? Were the demands for a *numerus clausus* and the call for Jewish cadavers in the Second Polish Republic interconnected?

At first sight, the combination of demands voiced by Polish students might seem odd. The calls for introducing a strict quota system to keep Jewish students at bay in order to counter the perceived overrepresentation of Jews in medicine were being discussed in

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank my friends and colleagues for their comments on the drafts of this article: Katrin Steffen, Imke Hansen, Ela Bauer, Zofia Trębacz and Ewa Nizzińska. This article is part of my research project that focuses on the so-called Cadaver affair at central European universities in the period between two world wars.

<sup>2</sup> At the main courtyard of the university, the students held a rally and voted for a resolution which would be handed over to the Rector. Representatives of all Warsaw institutions of higher learning spoke at the meeting, expressing their solidarity with medical students and promising them assistance. See Zamknięcie prosektorium w Warszawie. Manifestacja studentów z powodu niedostarczenia zwłok przez żydów [Closing Down of the Prosectorium in Warsaw. Student Rally after Cadavers are not Provided by Jews]. in: Gazeta Warszawska [Warsavian Gazette], 13 March 1930, 1.

public, as well as at university campuses and in the Polish Parliament. Yet student organisations, contemporary observers and journals paid less attention to the conflict over provisions of cadavers in medical schools.<sup>3</sup>

A close analysis of anti-Jewish riots at Polish universities in Warsaw, Cracow, Wilno (Vilnius in contemporary Lithuania) and Lwów (Lviv in today's Ukraine) points to medical schools as often being the focus of ethnic, political, cultural and religious conflict between young Poles and Jews. Right-wing student activists, politicians, journalists, and faculty members discussed the measures for safeguarding academic institutions from what was often described as a 'Jewish flood', and brought these two aspects of antisemitism at universities – the *numerus clausus* and the Jewish cadavers – together. In both cases, the discourse focused on the practical social, political, and economic profits Poland would derive upon limiting the number of Jewish students at Polish universities, particularly at medical schools.<sup>4</sup> This paper examines the situation at Polish universities, in particular at medical schools, by analysing together these two issues brought up in the antisemitic discourse in the Second Polish Republic. It focuses on the language of the discourse, in particular the modes of presenting the situation at medical schools and in the country's medical profession, approaches suggested by the students and faculty and the justification cited for introducing new policies and social practices.

### Numerus Clausus and the Cadaver Affair

The constitution adopted in March 1921 guaranteed equal rights for all citizens of the Polish Second Republic rebuilt in the aftermath of the First World War. Polish state universities in Lwów, Warsaw, Wilno and Cracow attracted growing numbers of Jewish students as part of a rapid growth of students enrolled at various institutions of higher education.<sup>5</sup> Until 1923, Jews were able to enrol at Polish universities with relative ease. Yet, a

prominent presence of Jewish students, especially in the departments of law and medicine, already drew the attention of Polish students and faculty in the early 1920s. They stressed the challenge of such an influx of minority students to the limited resources of the newly reborn state and its institutions and voiced concern for the future of the liberal professions. In particular, Polish student organisations voiced demands for introducing a quota system in order to limit the number of Jewish students. In fact, "A fundamental rallying cry of nationalist youth, which it used to gain control at the universities, was the campaign against what it believed was the excessively high level of young Jews entering higher education."<sup>6</sup> Already in February 1920, at the First General Congress of Polish Academic Youth (*Zjazd Polskiej Młodzieży Akademickiej*) in Warsaw, student representatives from Poznań called for an economic, cultural and social boycott of the Jews. They also expressed their conviction that Jews should only be admitted to institutions of higher learning according to the percentage they comprised as a national minority.<sup>7</sup> While the first congress voted down the motion, the calls gained momentum and popularity already in the first half of the 1920s.<sup>8</sup> Nationalist students organised demonstrations on university premises in Lwów, Cracow and Warsaw, demanding the introduction of a quota system at institutions of higher learning in the country.<sup>9</sup>

The rectors of all Polish academic schools discussed the matter of *numerus clausus* at their conference in Warsaw in February 1923.<sup>10</sup> Following a failed attempt to introduce a quota system through the Polish Parliament, Stanisław Głąbiński (1862–1941) – a legal scholar at Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów and a politician of National Democracy –

3 See Szymon Rudnicki, From "Numerus Clausus" to "Numerus Nullus," in: *Polin* 2 (1987), 246–268; Monika Narkowska, Numerus clausus, ghetto bawkowe, numerus nullus, paragraf aryjski: antysemityzm na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim 1931–1939 [Numerus Clausus, Ghetto Benches, Numerus Nullus, and the Aryan Paragraph: Antisemitism at Warsaw University 1931–1939], Warszawa 1999; Zofia Przybyś, Numerus clausus na uczelniach Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej [Numerus Clausus at the Colleges of the Second Republic], in: Ewa Wiar Pior Zawilski (ed.), *Studia i szkice dedykowane Julianowi Baranowskiemu [Studies and Sketches Dedicated to Julian Baranowski]*, Łódź 2010, 84–98.

4 On the student press see Andrzej Piłch, *Prasa studencka w Polsce 1918–1939*, Zarębski historyczny bibliograficzny Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1998; A Historical Survey, Bibliography], Kraków 1990; Ania Mągoszka, *Polska prasa studencka w II Rzeczypospolitej* [Polish Student Press in the Second Republic], Poznań 1994; Agnieszka Grabon, *Problematyka żydowska na łamach prasy akademickiej w okresie międzywojennym* [Jewish Question on the Pages of the Student Press in the Inter-war Period], Kraków 2008.

5 During the first decade since 1921, this number rose from 34,266 to 48,155. D. Saul Langras, *Żydzi a studia akademickie w Polsce w latach 1921–1931*: Studium statystyczne [Jews and Academic Studies in Poland in the Years 1921–1931], Lwów 1933, 7.

6 Rudnicki, From "Numerus Clausus" to "Numerus Nullus," 247.

7 Mauryer Karniol, *Sprawa żydowska na Zjazdach Ogólnych Polskiej Młodzieży Akademickiej* [Jewish Question at the Congresses of the Polish Academic Youth], in: *Kozwaga, Młeczeżnik, Zjednoczenia Organizacji Polskiej Młodzieży Akademickiej Pochodzenia Żydowskiego* [Prudence: Monthly of Union of the Organisation of Polish Academic Youth of Jewish Extraction], Warsaw No. 1 (June 1922), Vol. VII, 12–18, here: 12. This motion was rejected by 52 votes, against 35. Moreover, the congress adopted the motion about "creating and strengthening Polish universities and recognizing the work of Polish youth of [National] faith working to turn Jews into citizens according to the Polish spirit," *Ibid.*, 12–13.

8 See Karniol, *Sprawa żydowska na Zjazdach Ogólnych Polskiej Młodzieży Akademickiej*, 12–13. "The Second Congress took place in Wilno in December 1921 with 80 participants from all over Poland. Warsaw delegates of *Rezwój* [Development] the so called 'Academic Association for the Defence of National Life – Akad. Stow. Obrony Życia Narodowego' called for regulating the issue of Jewish students. *Ibid.*, 14–15.

9 See Przybyś, *Numerus clausus na uczelniach Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, 85–87. For the account of the demonstrations in Warsaw, see Olsztyńska manifestacja młodzieży przeciw zażądaniu wyższych uczelni [Enormous Youth Demonstration against Overrepresentation of Jewish Students at the Universities], in: *Gazeta Warszawska*, 24 November 1922, 1. W sprawie numerus clausus, [With Regard to Numerus Clausus], in: *Gazeta Warszawska*, 20 March 1923, 1.

10 The Rector of Warsaw Polytechnics stressed on the record that this was a serious matter not to be passed over. See *Protokół 4-go posiedzenia Konferencji Rektorów Szkół Akademickich z dnia 7 lutego 1923 r.* [Protocol of the Fourth Session of the Conference of Academic Schools' Rectors on 7 February 1923], in: *Konferencja Rektorów Szkół Akademickich w Polsce w latach 1919–1931*, *Protokóły, parady, uchwały i memoriały*, wstęp Stanisław Estreicher [Conferences of Rectors of Academic Institutions in Poland in the Years 1919–1931, Protocols of Conferences, Resolutions and Memorials, Introduction Stanisław Estreicher], (ed.) Ludwik Zemborski, Warsaw 1932, 55–56, here 55.

issued in the summer of 1923 a circular that allowed individual departments to limit the number of their incoming students “as the need arises.”<sup>11</sup> Indeed, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education reminded the rectors of universities in Warsaw, Lwów, Wilno and Cracow of legitimacy in limiting the number of students in law and medicine to be accepted each year.<sup>12</sup> In 1927, the rectors agreed that limiting access to universities constituted an important tool in shaping the ethnic, social and gender profile of the student body.<sup>13</sup>

Enjoying a relatively broad autonomy, Polish state universities began introducing informal quota systems already in the early 1920s, which affected primarily Jewish candidates.<sup>14</sup> In particular, as early as 1923, medical schools imposed an unofficial *numerus clausus* curbing the number of new Jewish students.<sup>15</sup> As a result of these policies, the

11 AUJ, SII 674, Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego “Do Rektoratów Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w Krakowie, Uniwersytetu Jana Kazimierza we Lwowie, Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Uniwersytetu Poznańskiego, Uniwersytetu Stefana Batorego w Wilnie, Politechniki Lwowskiej, Politechniki Warszawskiej, Szkoły Głównej Gospodarstwa Wiejskiego w Warszawie, Akademii Górniczej w Krakowie, Akademii Medycznej Weterynaryjnej we Lwowie” [To the Rector’s Offices of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, of Jan Kazimierz University in Lvov, Warsaw University, Posen University, Stefan Batory University in Wilno, Lvov Polytechnic, Warsaw Polytechnic, The Warsaw University of Life Sciences, University of Mining in Cracow, and Veterinary Academy in Lvov], Warsaw, 12 July 1923, no. 6272-IV/23, Numerus clausus na uczelniach Druggiej Rzeczypospolitej [Numerus Clausus at Universities of the Second Polish Republic], 88-90; Rudnicki, From “Numerus Clausus” to “Numerus Nullus”, 248-249.

12 AUJ, SII 674, Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego w sprawie liczb przyjmowanych studentów, 25 September, 1925, no. 10380/IV/25, “Do Rektoratów Uniwersytetów: Jagiellońskiego w Krakowie, Jana Kazimierza we Lwowie, Warszawskiego, Poznańskiego, Stefana Batorego w Wilnie, Politechniki Lwowskiej, Politechniki Warszawskiej, Szkoły Głównej Gospodarstwa Wiejskiego w Warszawie, Akademii Górniczej w Krakowie, Akademii Medycznej Weterynaryjnej we Lwowie, Akademii Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie, Do Dyrektora Państwowego Instytutu Dentystycznego w Warszawie” [To the Rector’s Offices of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, of Jan Kazimierz University in Lvov, Warsaw University, Posen University, Stefan Batory University in Wilno, Lvov Polytechnic, Warsaw Polytechnic, The Warsaw University of Life Sciences, University of Mining in Cracow, Veterinary Academy in Lvov, Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow, to the Directors of the State Dental Institute in Warsaw], In his circular, Minister Stanisław Grabski argued that the reasoning behind the policy was practical and based on limited resources rather than aiming at limiting the number of Jewish students.

13 12 konferencja rektorów szkół akademickich w dn. 23 i 24 kwietnia 1927 r. w Poznaniu [The 12<sup>th</sup> conference of rectors of academic institutions on April 23 and 24, 1927 in Poznań], in: Konferencje Rektorów Szkół Akademickich w Polsce w latach 1919–1931 [Conferences of Rectors of Academic Institutions in Poland in the Years 1919–1931], 113-133, 118-120. For example, the Rector of Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów, Prof. Józef Semiradzki considered introducing the quota system a necessity; Jews used to comprise 65 per cent of the university’s student body, and the policy reduced that number to 36 per cent. *Ibid.*, 118.

14 On the changes to the autonomy, introduced in 1932, see Bohdan Jacewski, *Polityka naukowa państwa polskiego w latach 1918–1939* [Politics of Scholarship of the Polish State in the Years 1918–1939], Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk 1978, 167-176.

15 As early as November 1917, members of the board of the Medical School at Jagiellonian University in Cracow agreed that preference would be given to Polish candidates over “candidates of Jewish nationality”. *Archiwum Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego* [Archives of the Jagiellonian University, further AUJ], *Wydział Lekarski* [Medical School, further WL], II 68 protokoły posiedzeń grona profesorów nauk lekarskich w UJ [protocols of the sessions of Medical School faculty] 30 November 1917, I. 809. At Warsaw University, Emanuel Ringelblum’s application for the Medical School was refused on the grounds of *numerus clausus* in the 1920–1921 academic year. See *Archiwum Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego* [Archives of the Warsaw University, further AUW], RP 9070.

percentage of Jewish medical students declined steadily. During the 1922–1923 academic year, Jewish students constituted over 34 per cent of all medical students, but by the beginning of the 1930s, this number had decreased to 18.5 per cent. During the 1930s, Jewish students found it increasingly difficult to gain access to universities, especially to professional studies in medical school and the departments of pharmacy and dentistry. Their number continued to decline, and on the eve of the Second World War, it was “rapidly approaching the vanishing point.”<sup>16</sup>

Similarly to the discussions about the need for a *numerus clausus* raised in the context of the supposed Jewish “overrepresentation” at medical schools, since the 1920s nationalist student activists and some university faculty demanded a proportional supply of Jewish cadavers for the training of future physicians. Prof. Zenon Orłowski (1871–1948) – the Dean of the Medical School at Stefan Batory University in Wilno – “personally stood up for the Polish students.”<sup>17</sup> Right wing students protested against the failure of securing Jewish corpses for medical schools: “Jews do not deliver their corpses but want to study on Christian corpses.”<sup>18</sup> Framing their request as fair and rational, they specifically demanded Jewish cadavers for the Jewish medical students to dissect.<sup>19</sup> Their ultimatum put pressure on Jewish communities, as Jewish religious law requires that Jewish dead be buried undisturbed and regarded dissections and autopsies as desecration.<sup>20</sup>

Student associations and some faculty members, professional associations and political activists called for a *numerus clausus* and for Jewish cadavers both on campuses and in the broader public discourse. While the discussion about limiting the number of Jewish students appealed to the broader academic community more than the obscure demand for increasing the number of Jewish cadavers in medical schools, both aspects often merged together at rallies and in memoranda. The discourse led to, accompanied and followed anti-Jewish violence.

16 Raphael Mahler, Jews in Public Service and the Liberal Professions in Poland, 1918–39, in: *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 4 (October 1944), 291–350, here 345.

17 Sprawa trupów żydowskich w Wilnie [The issue of Jewish Cadavers in Wilno], in: *Nasz Przegląd*, 22 October 1926, 2.

18 J.K.S., Na froncie walki o kulturę i prawa narodu [On the Frontlines of the Battle for the Culture and the Rights of the Nation], in: *Pro Christo. Faith and Action*, 1 (1932), 39.

19 On the emergence of the affair at Polish universities and the increasingly restrictive demands of the nationalist students see Natalia Aleksstun, *Jewish Students and Christian Corpses in Inter-war Poland: Playing with the Language of Blood*, *Label*, in: *Jewish History* 26 (2012), 327–342.

20 Nitabei Meitum [Dissections], in: Abraham Steinberg (ed.), *Encyklopedia hitchait refut ha-no'e, ha-hole ve ha-retua* [Halachic Medical Encyclopedia: The Physician, the Patient and the Medical Treatment], Jerusalem 1996, Vol. 5, 568–577. See also Edward Reichman, *From Maimonides the Physician to the Physician at Maimonides Medical Center: A Brief Glimpse into the History of the Jewish Medical Student throughout the Ages*, in: *Verpo Yerppe. The Journal of Torah and Medicine of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine Synagogue and RIETS* 3 (2011), 1–25.

## Rioting

Medical schools proved to be among the primary sites where radical right-wing student groups formulated and attempted to implement their projects of partial or complete exclusion of Jewish youth. Their ever more radical antisemitic propaganda found fertile ground among medical students concerned with the cost of their studies and with their professional prospects after graduation. Although members of nationalist student organisations on campuses, such as the National Union of Student Youth (Narodowe Zjednoczenie Młodzieży Akademickiej), the All Polish Youth (Młodzież Wszepolska), and various other student corporations were "never in a majority; they nevertheless managed to gain control of the student organisations and impose their views."<sup>21</sup> Therefore, with the radicalisation of academic youth in the 1930s, violent conflicts at medical schools, linked to the issue of Jewish cadavers in the dissecting room, increasingly provoked anti-Jewish violence in other departments. They also spread to the urban space beyond the campus, attracting the attention of on-lookers, journalists and politicians.<sup>22</sup>

The pattern of anti-Jewish violence spilling out of Institutes of Anatomy into other university departments gained momentum in the 1930s. In the course of the riots at the Institute of Anatomy in Warsaw, which took place on 12 March 1930, right-wing students drove Jewish medical students out and forced its head – Prof. Edward Loth (1884–1944) to close down the facility. A crowd of students from Warsaw's institutions of higher education attacked Jews at the Institute of Anatomy. They dragged Jewish medical students out of the dissecting room, threw them down the stairs, and forced them out of the building. Several Jewish students suffered injuries.<sup>23</sup> Marching to the main campus, students continued to shout antisemitic slogans demanding a quota system and Jewish cadavers in their medical school.<sup>24</sup> The incident ended with an anti-Jewish rally.

21 Rudnicki, From "numerus clausus" to "numerus nullus", 247. For Młodzież Wszepolska numerus clausus played a central role in their calls and in their appeal. See *Złoty młodzieży akademickiej*, Zjazd Rady Naczelnej Młodzieży Wszepolskiej [From the Life of Academic Youth. The Congress of the Council of All Polish Youth], in: Warszawa Gazeta Poranna, 1 October 1925, 6 (2). On political activism of students at Polish universities see Andrzej Plich, *Studentki ruch polityczny w Polsce w latach 1925–1939* [Student Political Movement in Poland in the Years 1925–1939], Kraków 1972.

22 On the broader context of anti-Jewish violence in Poland in the second half of the 1930s, see Jolanta Zmuda, *Zajścia antyżydowskie w Polsce w latach 1935–1937* [Anti-Jewish Incidents in Poland in the Years 1935–1937], Warsaw 1994; Joanna Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other. The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present*, Lincoln 2006.

23 See Kazimierz Orzechowski, *Sprawozdanie z działalności Wydziału Lekarskiego Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego w roku akademickim 1929/1930 (od 1 września 1929 do 31 maja 1930 r.)* [Report on Activities of the Medical School of Warsaw University in the Academic year 1929/1930 (from 1 September 1929 until 31 May 1930)] [...], Warsaw 1930, 13–15; and the unsigned report "Anti-Jewish Outrages in Poland," April 1931?, YIVO Archives, RG 348, f. 137.

24 See Zamknięcie prosektorium w Warszawie, 1.

In the fall of 1931, multiple violent incidents occurred on campuses following a similar pattern. In October and November, nationalist medical students in Cracow argued about the issue of cadavers after a lecture in the Institute of Anatomy, removed Jewish students from the premises and continued demonstrating in other departments with the demand for Jewish cadavers and a *numerus clausus*.<sup>25</sup>

Again, in Warsaw in November 1931, during riots at the Department of Law that broke out due to the alleged "provocative behaviour of the Jewish students" at the elections of the student representative in the first year, Gentile students physically removed fellow Jewish students from the university courtyard. They proceeded to march with calls of "We demand numerus clausus!" Accompanied by a policeman on a motorcycle and a truck, they headed to the prosectorium at Oczerki Street.<sup>26</sup>

Just a few days later, one of the most notorious cases of antisemitic riots took place at Stefan Batory University in Wilno. Initially, medical students approached Prof. Michal Reicher (1888–1973) – the head of the Institute of Anatomy – with the question of "whether the infants on which Jewish students are working in the prosectorium are Jewish or Christian". Reicher refused to answer the question and cancelled his classes.<sup>27</sup> On the same day, Jewish students were prohibited from attending lectures at the Medical School, or even other seminars or entering the university library.<sup>28</sup> The students gathered at a rally on 10 November, demanding that the university ensured provisions of cadavers from the Jewish community to serve exclusively Jewish medical students and introduction of the quota system at the university.<sup>29</sup> Eventually, the conflict led to anti-Jewish demonstrations that lasted until 12 November 1931.<sup>30</sup>

Riots took place again at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow in November 1936. They broke out at the medical school's Institute of Anatomy, and spread to other depart-

25 See *O Żydach żywych i żydach umarłych czyli numerus clausus i tryny żydowskie* [About the Jews who are alive and those who are Dead or Numerus Clausus and Jewish Cadavers], in: *Nowy Dziennik*, 31 October 1931, 4. See also Zajścia w Krakowie: Demonstracje studentów [Incidents in Cracow. Student Demonstrations], in: *Gazeta Warszawska*, 30 November 1931, 6.

26 Nowe manifestacje antyżydowskie. Rektor wydał odezwę do młodzieży [New anti-Jewish Manifestations. The Rector has issued an appeal to the Youth], in: *Gazeta Warszawska*, 5 November 1931, 3.

27 See the letter Reicher wrote to the Rector of the University on the very same day requesting further instructions, *Zakład Anatomii Opiszowej USB do lego Magnificencji Rektora* [Institute of Descriptive Anatomy (Stefan Batory) University] to His Magnificence Rector], dated 9 November 1931, Lietuvos Centrinis Valstybes Archyvas [Lithuanian Central State Archives, furthermore LCVA], f. 175, a. 1 (1A), b. 605, 1 and 1 verso.

28 See also a similar report by Prof. Stanisław Hiller (1891–1965) – the head of the Institute of Histology and Embryology, letter dated 9 November 1931, no. 93/31, LCVA, f. 175, a. 1 (1A), b. 605, 2. See also a report from Adam Łysakowski – a director of the University Library to the Rector of the University, dated 10 November 1931, no. 197, ibid., 40–40 verso.

29 *Do Prześwieconego Senatu Uniwersytetu Stefana Batorego w Wilnie na ręce* [Magnificencji Rektora prof. Dr. A. Januszkiewicza], LCVA, f. 175, a. 1 (1A), b. 605, 47.

30 Aleksander Stebrakowski, *Sprawa Wacławskiego: Przyczynek do historii relacji polsko-żydowskich na Uniwersytecie Stefana Batorego w Wilnie* [Wacławski Affair: a Contribution to the History of Polish-Jewish Relations at Stefan Batory University in Wilno], in: *Przebiegłd Wschodni* 9, 35 (2004) 3, 585–601.

ments. Jews were forcibly removed from the rooms and were verbally abused and attacked.<sup>31</sup> Polish medical schools seem to have been at the centre of antisemitic violence. They also became the battleground for nationalist propaganda which appealed to students beyond medical schools.

### The Allure of the Numbers

In the discourse about Polish universities, and especially about medical schools, right-wing student groups and their allies referred to arguments about Polish national self-defence and economic competition. They complained about overwhelming presence of Jews at Polish institutions of higher learning in general, and at medical schools in particular. And they abhorred the perceived reluctance of Jewish communities to provide Jewish cadavers, viewing such an approach as unjust vis-à-vis the number of gentile cadavers donated to medical schools.

Right-wing journals and dailies cited statistics of student enrolment and bemoaned the number of Jews among them. They argued that Jews dominated institutions of higher learning. *Mysł Narodowa* cited official statistics in the fall of 1921. It gave the percentages of Jewish students among the general student population: 31 per cent at Warsaw University, 31 per cent at Jagiellonian University in Cracow, 46 per cent at Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów, and 20 per cent at Stefan Batory in Wilno. Moreover, they assumed that there were additional Jews who escaped official statistics since they 'hid' themselves as Catholics.<sup>32</sup> Wacław Komarnicki (1891–1954), a Polish lawyer, politician, professor at Stefan Batory University, member of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Polska Akademia Umiejętności), and member of the Polish parliament,<sup>33</sup> explained why the *numerus clausus* targeted Jewish students:

"Slavic national minorities (Byelorussians, Ruthenians and Russians), as well as Lithuanians and Germans in the institutions of higher learning not only do not exceed but do not even reach their percentage in the general population. Glaring disproportion occurs on the other hand between the percentage of the Jew-

31 See the appeal issued by Władysław Szaler – the rector of the University to the students dated 24 November 1936, *AUJ*, II 674, Do młodzieży akademickiej; Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie, L.: 10661/36. See also *ibid.*, Przebieg zajść na Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim w listopadzie 1936 r. [The course of Events at Jagiellonian University in November 1936].

32 *Mysł Narodowa* [The National Thought], no. 46, 18 November 1922, 5.

33 Having studied law at the universities of Lwów and Dorpat [Tartu in Estonian], Komarnicki received his PhD from the Jagiellonian University in 1920. Since 1921 he held the chair in State Law and State Science at Stefan Batory University in Wilno. In 1924–1927, he served as a dean of the Department of Law. He was also a representative of Stronnictwo Narodowe in the Polish Parliament (1928–1935). Last but not least, Komarnicki sat on the City Council in Wilno from 1927 until the outbreak of the Second World War.

ish population in the country and the percentage of the Jewish students in the Polish academic institutions."<sup>34</sup>

Medical schools were the focus of counting the percentage of Jewish students in the general student population and the percentage of Jewish corpses delivered to dissecting rooms. In 1927, the Rector of Jagiellonian University Prof. Leon Marchlewski reported that the Medical School in Cracow followed the pattern of accepting no more than 12–13 per cent of Jews, in accordance with their number in the country.<sup>35</sup> In the course of investigation at the Medical School in Warsaw, Edward Loth and the Association of Jewish Medical Students reported numerical data on provisions of Jewish and Christian corpses.<sup>36</sup> In October 1926, medical students at Stefan Batory University in Wilno submitted a memorandum pertaining to provisions of Jewish cadavers. They cited "statistical data, which [were] [...] based on trustworthy sources shed light on the matter. Therefore they justify the behaviour of Christian students."<sup>37</sup> According to such interpretations, both the access of Jewish students and the absence of Jewish corpses relied on a perverted understanding of equal rights.

### From Equality of Rights to Jewish Privilege

Right wing politicians and publicists argued that Jews manipulated the equality of rights argument and in fact reversed it, gaining advantage and privilege over the gentile student body. They presented universities as an important battleground in the Jewish attempt to gain control over the country. By 1922, the journal *Mysł Narodowa* (National Thought) already warned of "constant rise of Jewish influence in every aspect of the state". It described institutions of higher education as "arteries of our social organism poisoned

34 Wacław Komarnicki, Numerus Clausus w szkołach akademickich. Referat wygłoszony przez D-ra Wacława Komarnickiego Prof. Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego. Pośła na Sejm na posiedzeniu Komisji Osiwatowej Sejmu w dniu 3 marca 1932 r. o wniošku Klubu Narodowego w sprawie unormowania ilości studentów i wolnych słuchaczy w szkołach akademickich [Numerus Clausus in Academic Institutions. A Report Delivered by Dr. Wacław Komarnicki – a Professor at the Wilno University, a Member of the Parliament at the Session of the Parliamentary Commission on Education on 3 March 1932 about the Initiative of the National Club with Regard to Normalising the Number of Students and Auditors in Academic Institutions], Warszawa, Obóz Wielkiej Polski, 1932, 13.

35 *Ibid.*

36 See a copy of the report signed by Professors Jerzy Modrakowski, Roman Nilsch, and Edward Loth, issued in Warsaw, 28 October 1926, *AUW*, WL-2, 53. See also "Do Rady Wydziału Lekarskiego Żydowskiego Stowarzyszenia Medyków" ["To the Board of the Medical School from the Association of Jewish Medical Students"], *ibid.*, 55–55 verso.

37 LCVA, f. 175, a. 3 IX B, b. 151, 27, Memoriał Komisji Międzykursowej Studentów Chrześcijańskich i Żydowskich do prosekutorium [Memorial of the Commission of Christian Students of all Years of the Medical School of Stefan Batory University in Wilno with Regard to Providing Jewish Cadaver to Prosekutorium], dated on 25 October 1926.



by the murderous poison of the Jewish influence.”<sup>38</sup> The journal portrayed *numerus clausus* as a tool which had previously allowed safeguarding some degree of ethnic “Polishness” of academic institutions, but was removed by the minister of education.<sup>39</sup> Without a quota system Polish universities found themselves in a precarious position. The journal reminded its readers:

“Whoever is familiar with the role the Jews play among the youth, who knows their propaganda of the worst demoralisation and depravation, against religion and obstruction vis-a-vis the state, of communism, whoever remembers the Jewish youth in 1918 who fought on the side of our enemies or in the best case scenario sitting in our field hospitals or provisions’ offices, this person will understand the complete monstrosity of this decree.”<sup>40</sup>

According to the author of the article, elimination of the *numerus clausus* removed the last obstacle for the “Jewish flood” (zalew żydowski), which inevitably would “hinder, degenerate and morally corrode our youth.”<sup>41</sup> Thus taking over universities was – according to the right-wing press – a realisation of the Jewish goal of “destroying the value of future generations and taking over our intellectual life”. *Mysł Narodowa* called on its readers:

“We cannot allow a situation that 50 per cent of lawyers, doctors, and scholars in Poland would be of Jewish nationality. We must defend ourselves from a surgery which might turn our society into a handicap. Jewish elements at institutions of higher education ought to be limited in the degree proportional to their percentage in Poland.”<sup>42</sup>

They declared the demand for a *numerus clausus* of 13 per cent Jews to be a “rational and natural postulate.”<sup>43</sup>

University faculty and right-wing student organisations also presented the demand for Jewish corpses in the prosectorium as rational and fair. For example, the 1926 Warsaw University senate resolution requiring the provision of Jewish corpses based its implicit claim to legitimacy in an appeal to the constitutional equality of all citizens, from which standpoint it was posited that “Jewish society ought to contribute to the possibility of medical studies equally to the Christians in the name of science.”<sup>44</sup> By refusing to acknowledge and act on this principle – that is, by sending its youth but not its corpses to medical schools – Jews, as many Christians perceived the matter, achieved a privileged

or advantageous position. In November 1927, the medical school and the academic senate in Wilno both accepted the same line of thinking when they ratified a motion that “all of the population, without regard to denomination – Christian, Jewish, Karaitic, and Muslim – ought to provide cadavers to fulfil the needs of the Institute of Anatomy.”<sup>45</sup>

In November 1931, during the violent incidents in Wilno, students submitted a memorandum for the academic Senate to the Rector of the University, Prof. Aleksander Januszkiewicz (1872–1955). While expressing loyalty to the academic authorities, they asked for meeting their “just demands”. They called for “regulating the provisions by the Jewish community of Jewish cadavers for the use of Jewish students in accordance with the earlier decision of the Senate of [Stefan] Batory [University] and of the legislative bodies of the Polish Republic.” In the same document they also called for a *numerus clausus* “based on the just percentile division of places at the university.”<sup>46</sup>

In Cracow, *Głos Narodu*, while condemning anti-Jewish violence at universities, called the demands for the quota system and for Jewish cadavers “just and rational.”<sup>47</sup> The journal *Pro Christo* explained to its readers that the matter not only contradicted equality of rights, but also proved to be yet another Jewish privilege:

“The current state of affairs, in which Jews study medicine and surgery on the corpses of diseased Christians based on the unprecedented claim that the corpses of autochthons of this country are something inferior and lower than the corpses of their coreligionists – is impossible to bear for a normal and self-respecting society! It would be impudent to cite the principle of equality before law by those who separate themselves in the given matter [of cadavers], aiming at not allowing into prosectoria the cadavers of their coreligionists and gaining in this way a particular privilege vis-à-vis students of other nationalities.”<sup>48</sup>

*Pro Christo* claimed that the conflict in the prosectorium represented “the usual method of Jewry to benefit from all the rights that everybody is entitled to on one side, desiring to gain an upper hand over the rest of the population with factual privileges and monopolies on the other side.”<sup>49</sup>

Characteristic of this way of justifying a *numerus clausus* was the report prepared by Komarnicki, who argued that

45 LCVA, F. 175, Ap. 3 IX B, B. 151, 120. In practice, the senate hoped to rely on provisions of homeless corpses of all denominations. It also condemned violent incidents in the dissecting room and authorised the head of the institute to divide specimens until official regulations were issued by the ministry.

46 LCVA, f. 175, a. 1A, b. 605, 47–47 verso. Dó Przewietnięgo Senatu Uniwersytetu Stefana Batoryego w Wilnie, na ręce J. Magnificencji Rektora Prof. Dr-A. Januszkiewicza [To the Illustrious Senate of the Stefan Batory University in Wilno, to the attention of His Magnificence Rector Prof. Dr. A. Januszkiewicz].

47 Celi irodki [The Goal and the Means], in: *Głos Narodu*, 8 November 1931, 1.

48 S.I.K., Na francie walki o kulturę i prawa narodu, in: *Pro Christo-Wiarą i czynem*, no. 1, 1932, 39.

49 Ibid., 39–40.

38 *Mysł Narodowa*, No. 46, 18 November 1922, 5.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

42 *Mysł Narodowa*, No. 46, 18 November 1922, 6.

43 Ibid.

44 Uchwała Senatu akademickiego w sprawie zwłok żydowskich [Resolution of the academic senate with regard to Jewish cadavers], 18 November 1926, LCVA, F. 175, Ap. 3 IX B, B. 151, 173.

"we must ensure a just participation of all ethnic, linguistic and religious groups of the population of the Polish State. The matter means executing the constitutional rule of equality of all citizens [...] in the March Constitution. Excessive participation of one ethnic group would deprive members of another group of their access, and therefore would constitute the privilege of one group to the disadvantage of others."<sup>50</sup>

### Economic Competition

In his analysis of the antisemitic propaganda on campuses, Rudnicki rightly argued that "Advantage was taken [...] of the severe economic situation and poor employment prospects. Because of the lack of employment opportunities for intellectuals, it was easy to convince young people that posts occupied by others should belong to the host community – to the ethnic Poles."<sup>51</sup>

In addition to the cultural conflict, there was also the economic strife since Jews were accused of taking over offices and liberal professions. In Cracow, the Catholic daily *Głos Narodu* bemoaned the limited resources of non-Jewish academic youth who competed at the university and upon graduation with the Jews who were better-off:<sup>52</sup>

In particular, medical schools were presented as battlefields for the future of the medical profession and for the economic success of the ethnically Polish intelligentsia. Thus, the rector of Jagiellonian University, Marchlewski, supported the quota used by the Medical School in order to insert Polish youth into the medical profession, which had been seen as dominated by Jews by up to 65 per cent – or "Jewified" (zazydzony do 65 procentu)<sup>53</sup> "Obviously, Polish youth must respond to it. If they did not, it would have given a proof of a lack of broader aspirations, lack of vital forces, of Catholic inferiority and weakness."<sup>54</sup> These authors played on the fear of Polish society, inciting it against professional Jewish intelligentsia, and particularly against Jews in liberal professions.

### From Prosectorium to Jewish Domination

The Rector of Stefan Batory University in Wilno, Prof. Stanisław Pigoń (1885–1968), rejected the notion of entry exams as a way of regulating the number and the profile of incoming students. Such exams would facilitate the entry of more Jewish students to the university, since "they, as intellectuals, develop earlier than the Slavs and pass exams better"<sup>55</sup> In 1932, *Pro Christo* devoted a lengthy article to the cadaver affair. According to the article, the movement of the academic youth against the so called Jewish flood "started as usual with the prosectorium."<sup>56</sup> Its author applauded what he described as "the impulsive reaction of the academic youth directed against the Jewish invasion at institutions of higher education."<sup>57</sup> The author explained to his readers that the

"prosectorium is merely a fragment of a phenomenon which is broader and rests on deeper reasons. The essential reason is that there are two cultures divided by an unbridgeable gap of strangeness. Religion, racial and national characteristics, as well as habits, opinions and aspirations are utterly different and alien between us and the Jews."<sup>58</sup>

In Poland, Jews constitute "an independent national and cultural unit, which although scattered all over the country, still separates and distinguishes itself from the rest of the citizens."<sup>59</sup> *Pro Christo* painted a picture of a dangerous phenomenon connected to the emergence of a large Jewish intelligentsia in Poland. It claimed that Jewish intelligentsia had "adopted only the external glamour of their surroundings according to the laws of mimicry (language, clothing, entertainment), while carefully and energetically cultivating the internal and essential expressions of Semitic culture."<sup>60</sup> Under the guise of various political ideologies from Zionism to communism, and with its background in "commercial-industrial sphere", the Jewish intelligentsia was to engage in "cultural invasion."<sup>61</sup> *Pro Christo* explained that "the reflex of the Catholic and Polish academic youth was in principle a completely healthy and moral reflex of defence of a healthy organism against an invasion of the financially strong enemy with a culture alien to our religion and our nation, which has already begun to be a burden with its

<sup>50</sup> Wacław Komarnicki, Numerus Clausus w szkołach akademickich, 12.

<sup>51</sup> Rudnicki, From Numerus Clausus to Numerus Nullus, 246-247.

<sup>52</sup> Na ile wydarzeń w Uniwersytecie (Against the Background of the Events at the University), in: Głos Narodu, 31 October 1931, 5.

<sup>53</sup> Konferencje Rektorów Szkół Akademickich w Polsce w latach 1919–1939, 118.

<sup>54</sup> S.J.K., Na froncie walki o kulturę i prawa narodu, in: Pro Christo-Wiarai czyn, no. 1, 1932, 41.

<sup>55</sup> Konferencje Rektorów Szkół Akademickich w Polsce w latach 1919–1931, 119. Apart from keeping at bay Jews, Pigoń suggested that there should also be a quota system for women. Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> S.J.K., Na froncie walki o kulturę i prawa narodu, in: Pro Christo-Wiarai czyn, no. 1, 1932, 39.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. On the journal see Arkadiusz Meller, Antysemityzm czy antyjudyzm na łamach miesięcznika Pro Christo? In: Historia i Polityka, Vol. 8 (2009). See also Anna Landau-Czajka, W jednym śladu domu. Konceptce rozwiązania kwestii żydowskiej w publicystyce polskiej lat 1933–1939 [They Resided in One House. Conceptions of Solving the Jewish Question in Polish Journalism in the Years 1933–1939], Warsaw 1998.

<sup>58</sup> S.J.K., Na froncie walki o kulturę i prawa narodu, in: Pro Christo-Wiarai czyn, no. 1, 1932, 40.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

predominance.<sup>62</sup> The journal blamed the radicalisation of the student movement on the Jews:

"In 1923–1924, the call for a numerus clausus was put forth at universities without beatings. In the course of several years, the customs in Poland have changed. Currently, bloody incidents occurred and explosions of passions in which Jews – characterised by their Eastern temperament – participated actively."

Inevitably, the journal warned its readers that the Jews hoped to "ensure their supremacy over the Polish nation."<sup>63</sup> The nationalist daily press supported the arguments set forth by the Catholic journal. *Gazeta Warszawska* declared that the manifestation in which 600 students were said to have participated proved yet again that "the academic youth stands firm on guard of the Polishness of institutions of higher education."<sup>64</sup>

## Contemporary Jewish Interpretations

Jewish student organisations, association of Jewish physicians, Jewish observers, politicians and journalists found were divided in their understanding of the cadaver affair and its link to broader issues of Jewish presence at Polish universities. While they fought against the idea and practice of a quota system, their attitude towards the calls for provisions of Jewish cadavers proved complex.<sup>65</sup> It seems that at times Jewish students and physicians distinguished between these demands: Michał Reicher declared that

"A significant percentage of the students of Mosaic faith in the Medical School at our university fully justify these demands, and places the obligation of providing indispensable material on the part of the Jewish community in order to enable future physicians to gain appropriate scientific preparation."<sup>66</sup>

The Association of Jewish Physicians in Wilno while condemned impairing the access of Jewish medical students to the local prosectorium, reiterated "Preparing cadavers should not be considered their profanation by anybody. Otherwise, one ought

<sup>62</sup> The author did criticise slightly the methods applied in this healthy reflex: "One can obviously criticise purporefulness and morality of particular fragments, as always in group manifestations." *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Nowe manifestacje antyżydowskie. Rektor wydał odezwę do młodzieży, in: *Gazeta Warszawska*, 5 November 1921, 3.

<sup>65</sup> See A. Hantglas, Numerus clausus, in: *Nasz Przegląd*, 30 March 1923, 5. See also the protest signed by Jewish physicians in Cracow on 6 May 1923, AUJ, S II 674, Do Senatu Uniwersyteci Jagiellońskiej na ręce Jęgo Magnificencji Rektora Dra Władysława Natansona w Krakowie [To the Senate of the Jagielloonian University to the Attention of His Magnificence Rector Prof. Dr. Władysław Natanson].

<sup>66</sup> LCVA, f. 175, a. 3 IX B, b. 151, p. 1, "Do Wydziału Lekarskiego Uniwersyteu Stefana[Białorego] w sprawie dostarczania zwłok ze szpitala żydowskiego do prosectorium" [To the Medical School of Stefan Batory University, on the issue of provisions of cadavers from the Jewish hospital to prosectorium], Wilno November 1, 1921.

to abandon it completely."<sup>67</sup> In the spring of 1927, Jewish physicians in Cracow passed a resolution appealing to the Senate of the Jagielloonian University for its understanding of the difficult situation of Jewish medical students. "We recognise fully the fairness of the position that corpses of homeless Jews ought to be delivered to the Institute of Descriptive Anatomy in contrast to the cadavers of homeless of other denominations." They protested against making the students responsible for the lack of such corpses and appealed for passing a governmental decree regulating the matter for the whole country.<sup>68</sup>

Other Jewish commentators suggested time and again that Polish students' petitions and demonstrations, which demanded Jewish cadavers for medical training, constituted yet another aspect of the quota policies. In the summer of 1926, The Association of Jewish Physicians in Wilno argued that

"[t]his campaign is in its entirety directed against Jewish students and inspired by antisemitic organisations which by removing Jewish students in such a way from the lectures in the prosectorium aim at completing the already existing numerus clausus which exists in practice and transforming it to numerus nullus."<sup>69</sup>

The Polish language journal of Jewish students, *Trybuna Akademicka*, maintained that the affair represented an organised course of action leading toward the development of an instrument to be used against Jews. The journal noted that the medical and legal professions had traditionally been "free" professions offering Jews secure self-employment and appropriate livelihoods.<sup>70</sup> It described the affair as "yet another link in the antisemitic chain with which they want to fetter us."<sup>71</sup> *Trybuna Akademicka* compared the demand for Jewish corpses with the "guns that Christian colleagues have obtained in order to guard the threshold of the Wilno dissecting room against Jewish medical students."<sup>72</sup> In February 1929, Jacob Wygodzki (1856–1941) addressed the issue of Jewish cadavers at the meeting of the Committee on Education in the Polish Parliament calling

<sup>67</sup> N.P. Dokola "awantury trupiej" na Uniwersytecie wileńskim. Burzliwy wiec Kola Medyków U.S.B. Żydzia opuszczają salę. Protest Związku Lekarzy-Żydów w Wilnie (od naszego korespondenta wileńskiego) [About the cadaver affair at the Wilno University. A turbulent rally of the Association of Medical Students at Stefan Batory University, Jews leave the room. Association of Jewish Physicians in Wilno protesting (from our Wilno correspondent)], in: *Nasz Przegląd*, 12 July 1926, 5.

<sup>68</sup> AUJ, II 5 674, Do senatu akademickiego Uj na ręce Jęgo Magnificencji Rektora [W Pana Leona Marchlewskiego w Krakowie [To the Academic Senate of the Jagielloonian University to the Attention of His Magnificence Rector Prof. Dr. Leon Marchlewski in Cracow]]. The rally met on 12 or 17 April 1927, but the document submitted to the Senate bore the date 27 May 1927.

<sup>69</sup> N.P. Dokola "awantury trupiej" na Uniwersytecie wileńskim. Burzliwy wiec Kola Medyków U.S.B. Żydzia opuszczają salę. Protest Związku Lekarzy-Żydów w Wilnie (od naszego korespondenta wileńskiego), in: *Nasz Przegląd*, 12 July 1926, 5.

<sup>70</sup> See Trupia sprawa [The Affair of the Corpses], in: *Trybuna Akademicka* 11-12:31-32 (November-December 1926), Vol. IV, 6-7.

<sup>71</sup> Lem, Zmarływiechamie trupow [Resurrection of the cadavers], in: *Trybuna Akademicka* 8:20 (November-December 1925), Vol. III, 3.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.



the affair “a typical product of antisemitic thinking.”<sup>73</sup> *Nowy Dziennik* raised a politically charged possibility that “Who knows if it is not about starting disturbances in order to test a confrontation with the government.”<sup>74</sup>

Jewish dailies paid far more attention to the quota system at medical schools, reporting regularly on the situation at various universities and the efforts of the Jewish representatives on behalf of Jewish students.<sup>75</sup> When discussing on the conflict at medical schools, Jewish press often underscored the absurdity of the affair. Popular Warsaw Yiddish daily *Haynt* published a mock interview titled “To give the corpses or not to give the corpses.”<sup>76</sup> The Warsaw Jewish daily *Nasz Przegląd* called it a “sad campaign.”<sup>77</sup> Jewish press ridiculed the program of those Gentile students who wanted to “remove from universities Jews who are alive while multiply in the prosectorium Jews who were dead.”<sup>78</sup> Jakub Appenszlak had a son beg his father for finding him a “Jewish corpse” so that he could study medicine.<sup>79</sup> While interpretations of the affair varied, Jewish observers noted the potential of the affair for antisemitic propaganda.<sup>80</sup>

## Conclusions

In the nationalist discourse of the Second Polish Republic, its Jewish citizens were increasingly described as aggressors acting against Polish national interests, and transgressors against Polish honour and culture. While presented in rational terms of economic competition and civic duties, the demand for Jewish cadavers expressed part of a broader phenomenon of attempted vilification of Jewish students and their marginalisation in the body politic of the country. By the second half of the 1920s, the notion of the gradual exclusion of Jews from Polish universities in general, and from medical schools in particular, continued to gain wide-spread support among Polish students and faculty.

In the 1930s, Polish universities became – what Celia Heller termed – “the hotbed of Anti-Semitism.”<sup>81</sup> Jewish students were not allowed to join Mutual Aid (Bratnia Pomoc), the only student group officially recognised by university authorities, effectively hindering their chances to receive the few available scholarships and loans, and were similarly excluded from student fraternity-run dormitories. Physical segregation in the classroom, in the form of separate benches, was instated and legally recognised in several institutions, beginning in 1937. Right-wing students, journalists and ideologues portrayed Jews as a lethal danger to the country’s political, economic and cultural interests, and considered universities to be a laboratory and a front line in the national struggle for their vision of Poland.

The issues of *numerus clausus* and the cadaver affair proved connected in the context of Polish universities and the conflict concerning the future intelligentsia of the Second Polish Republic. In the struggle against the supposed Jewish overrepresentation at institutions of higher learning, the medical colleges played a leading role. Christian doctors’ associations, students’ associations, Catholic media, politicians, and medical school faculty decried the disproportionate numbers of Jews in medical schools. They also pressured university rectors and senates to take a stand on the issue, citing examples from abroad: Romania and Hungary. Given the combination of aggressive lobbying and frequent violent disruptions during lectures, the medical schools in Wilno, Lwów, Warsaw, and Cracow introduced the quota system in the 1920s.

Whenever there were riots in the prosectorium, or student demonstrations, there were calls for introducing a quota system and for forcing provisions of Jewish corpses. In

- <sup>73</sup> Jakub Wygodański, In Sambation, *Zichroynes fun tzweim seym 1922–1927* [In Sambation, Recollections of the second parliament 1922–1927], Wilno 1931, 109. On Jewish responses to the affair see: Natalia Aleksjuna, Christian corpses for Christians? Dissecting the Anti-Semitism behind the Cadaver Affair of the Second Polish Republic, in: *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. XX, no. X (2011), 1–17.
- <sup>74</sup> *O Żydach żywych i Żydach umarłych czyli numerus clausus i trupy żydowskie* [About the Jews who are alive and those who are Dead or Numerus Clausus and Jewish Cadavers], in: *Nowy Dziennik*, 31 October 1931, 4.
- <sup>75</sup> See Broni Boże ani jednego Żyda więcej [God forbid not one more Jew!], in: *Chwiła*, 1 October 1923, 6; Numerus clausus na wszechnicach, in: *Chwiła*, 4 July 1924 [Numerus clausus in colleges], 5; Mowa posła Thoma w sprawie wniosków o numerus clausus [Deputy Thom’s speech with regard to the initiative of numerus clausus], in: *Nasz Przegląd*, 14 October 1923, 3.
- <sup>76</sup> *Wet men geben meim oder wet men nish geben keyn meim* [Will One Give the Cadavers or Will One Give None], in: *Haynt*, 22 June 1923, 5.
- <sup>77</sup> N.P. Dokola „awantury trupiej” na Uniwersytecie wileńskim. Burzliwy wiec Kola Medyków U.S.B. Żyda opuszczają salę. Protest Związku Lekarzy-Żydów w Wilnie (od naszego korespondenta wileńskiego) [Around „Cadaver affair” at Wilno University. Stormy Rally of the Caucus of Medical Students, Jews Leave the Hall. Protest of the Association of Jews-Physicians in Wilno (from our Wilno Correspondent)], in: *Nasz Przegląd*, 12 July 1926, 5.
- <sup>78</sup> *O Żydach żywych i Żydach umarłych czyli numerus clausus i trupy żydowskie* [About the Jews who are alive and those who are Dead or Numerus Clausus and Jewish Cadavers], in: *Nowy Dziennik*, 31 October 1931, 4.
- <sup>79</sup> Pięrot [Jakub Appenszlak], *Między wierszami. Czy ma pan trupę* [Between the Lines: Do you Have a Cadaver Sir?], in: *Nasz Przegląd*, 22 November 1936, 3.
- <sup>80</sup> A. Weksczel, *W sprawie trupów żydowskich* [With Regard to Jewish Cadavers], in: *Nasz Przegląd*, 27 October 1926.

<sup>81</sup> See Celia Heller, *On the Edge of Destruction: Jews in Poland between the Two World Wars*, Detroit 1994, 119. Rudnicki distinguishes three stages in the nationalist campaign at Polish universities: 1) The 1920s and the efforts by young nationalists to gain power and influence in the universities; 2) The first half of the 1930s when the numerus clausus slogan was replaced by the numerus nullus one and the campaign over the ghetto bench began. The campaign had also moved from the propaganda level to that of physical confrontation; 3) The second half of the 1930s, which was characterised by an intensification of campaign methods and notable successes for the young nationalists. Rudnicki, *From numerus clausus to numerus nullus*, 247.

both cases, nationalist activists and commentators assigned to medical schools a particular importance for the Polish national interests and for the future of the Polish state. Both cases were also argued similarly – as a case of justice, logic and fairness. Moreover, both were based on proportionality; reversed in the case of the cadavers. Jewish students were expected to provide as many corpses as there were Jews in the student body, while the student body was to be based on the percentage of Jews in society. Last but not least, both arguments were based on the hope that eventually and/or ideally there would be no Jews to talk about, especially not in medical schools.

It was no coincidence that anti-Jewish student manifestations carried on their banners demands for Jewish corpses and for the introduction of quotas. The matter of *numerus clausus* and the cadaver affair were often bound together and riots at medical schools often led to increased demands for *numerus clausus* and vice versa. Likewise, student activists, national politicians, and journalists also discussed them together as they stemmed from the similar understanding of the place for Jews in Poland, envisioned as a nation state. In the summer of 1937, at the meeting of the admissions office of Warsaw University, its clerk answered the question about possibilities of Jews studying medicine at the Medical School: "Well, Jews are welcomed here, but as objects of exercises in the prosectorium."<sup>82</sup>

82 Robert Gawkowski, Włodzimierz Antoniewicz, Szczyty i szczyty, w serii: Poczet rektorów Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego [Włodzimierz Antoniewicz, Apexes and Splendours in the Series: Genealogy of Rectors of Warsaw University], in: Uniwersytet Warszawski. Pismo uczelni [Warsaw University. The Journal], no. 1, February 2012, 62.

Klaus Taschwer

## Geheimsache Bärenhöhle

Wie eine antisemitische Professorenclique nach 1918 an der Universität Wien jüdische Forscherinnen und Forscher vertrieb<sup>1</sup>

Anfang November 1917 hielt Max Weber in München einen berühmten Vortrag: Unter dem Titel *Wissenschaft als Beruf* legte der deutsche Soziologe eine umfassende und bis heute lesenswerte Analyse des Wissenschaftsbetriebs vor. Eine der Kernaussagen seines Texts: Eine Laufbahn an der Universität ist immer auch Glückssache; nicht immer die Besten machen in der Wissenschaft Karriere. Weber machte in dieser Zeit selbst einen wenig bekannten Karriereschritt: Er verhandelte in diesen Monaten über ein Ökonomieordinariat an der Universität Wien, das er im April 1918 antrat.<sup>2</sup> Weber lehrte im Sommersemester 1918 in Wien, doch bereits im Sommer 1919 folgte er einem Ruf nach München. Im Jahr 1919 erschien der Text dann in der Druckfassung, in der es unter anderem heißt: „Das akademische Leben ist nichts als ein wilder Hasard. Wenn junge Gelehrte um Rat fragen kommen wegen Habilitation, so ist die Verantwortung des Zureddens fast nicht zu erragen.“<sup>3</sup> Diese Zeiten sind oft zitiert wurden; weit weniger oft wurde zitiert, was danach kommt: „Ist er ein Jude, so sagt man ihm natürlich: lasciate ogni speranza.“<sup>4</sup> Weber spielte damit auf einen Satz aus Dantes *Göttlicher Komödie*.

1 Ich danke Mitchell Ash (Universität Wien), Kurt Bauer (Wien), Brigitte Bischoff (Universität Wien), Thomas Brandstätter (Universität Basel), Julia Budka (Universität München), Tatjana Buklijas (University of Auckland), Robert Czepel (Wien), Oliver Hochadel (Consiglio Superiore de Investimentos Científicos, Barcelona), Hansjörg Klausinger (Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien), Thomas König (Universität Wien, IHS), Georg Kopsky (Universität Wien), Juliane Mikoletzky (Technische Universität Wien), Wolfgang Reiter (Universität Wien), Stefan Senell (Archiv der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften), Karolina Sigmund (Universität Wien), Martin Summer (Österreichische Nationalbank Wien), Matthias Srojtka (Universität Wien) und einem anonymen Gutachter herzlich für kritische Anmerkungen.

2 Joachim Radkau, Max Weber. Die Leidenschaft des Denkens, München/Wien 2005, 747-754.

3 Max Weber, Wissenschaft als Beruf, in: ders., Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre, Tübingen 1986, 582-613, hier 588. Zit. – ohne dem Sachverhalt allerdings systematischer nachzugehen – bei u. a.: Albert Müller, Grenzziehungen in der Geschichtswissenschaft: Habilitationsverfahren 1900–1950 (am

# **Alma Mater Antisemitica**

Akademisches Milieu, Juden und Antisemitismus  
an den Universitäten Europas zwischen 1918 und 1939  
Academic Milieu, Jews and Antisemitism  
at European Universities between 1918 and 1939

Herausgegeben von

Regina Fritz, Grzegorz Rossolinski-Liebe und Jana Starak

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Regina Fritz und Grzegorz Rossiński-Liebe

## Universitärer Antisemitismus in der Zwischenkriegszeit

### Eine Einleitung

Am 26. September 1920 verabschiedete die ungarische Regierung ein Gesetz, das die Zahl der jüdischen Studenten auf sechs Prozent reduzierte. Dieses Regelwerk war nicht nur das erste antijüdische Gesetz in Europa nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg, sondern auch das erste in einer Reihe antisemitischer und rassistischer Bestimmungen, die einen Teil Europas bis 1945 prägen sollten. In den anschließenden Jahren folgte eine Vielzahl an Regelungen, die Jüdinnen und Juden in mehreren europäischen Ländern nicht nur aus den Universitäten, sondern aus dem gesamten gesellschaftlichen Leben schrittweise ausschlossen.

In zahlreichen europäischen Staaten kamen die Forderungen nach gesetzlich diskriminierenden Schritten gegen Juden aus dem akademischen Milieu, allen voran von radikalen Studentenverbindungen und Kameradschaftsverbänden sowie antisemitischen Professoren und Dozenten. Zu dieser Radikalisierung der Studentenschaft und des akademischen Milieus trugen neben den schon lange vorher geführten ideologischen Auseinandersetzungen und Diskursen, die sozialen, wirtschaftlichen und politischen Veränderungen bei, die in Folge des Ersten Weltkriegs und des Zerfalls der alten Imperien (insbesondere in Mitteleuropa) auftraten. Grenzverschiebungen und Migrationsbewegungen schufen zudem neue wirtschaftliche und gesellschaftliche Verhältnisse und beförderten den Konkurrenzdruck, der durch die Wirtschaftskrise noch zusätzlich erhöht wurde. Der Ab- bzw. Aufbau alter bzw. neuer politischer und nationaler Eliten brachte eine Unsicherheit am akademischen Arbeitsmarkt mit sich, die viele durch die steigende Arbeitslosigkeit zu spüren bekamen.

Zunehmend glaubten jene rechtsradikalen und antisemitischen Bünde, die seit Ende des Ersten Weltkrieges in steigender Zahl entstanden waren, die gesellschaftlichen Probleme durch die Beschränkung des Anteils jüdischer Studierender an den Universitäten lösen zu können. Bei der Durchsetzung ihrer Vorstellungen scheuten sie auch nicht vor