Jewish Education In Kraków

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Introduction

As is well known, for many centuries Kraków was the capital city of Poland. As such, it attracted a large and diverse Jewish community. In the 19th century the city was the administrative centre of western Galicia. The Jewish population grew from about 4,000 at the beginning of the century to about 26,000 one hundred years later. By the mid 1930’s the Jewish population had grown to nearly 70,000. A very substantial body of literature and data therefore exists in relation to the Jewish community.

The purpose of this article is to give readers a general indication of the nature of information which is available in relation to education in the Jewish community of Kraków. As will be described, a great deal of detailed research has been carried out, particularly in recent years. This article by its very nature cannot therefore be comprehensive. However, hopefully it will be of some help to readers, enabling them to consider three topics. The first of these is the extent to which educators in the Jewish community worked in conjunction with, or against, those in the State education system. Secondly the diversity of attitudes to education within the community at any given time, and thirdly, the extent and manner in which Jewish educational establishments responded to external forces such as secularisation, Polish nationalism, Zionism and anti-Semitism.

Some authorities note that in the twentieth century the Kraków Jewish community was more Polonized than in other cities, and the relationship of the Kraków community with the majority took a different form from that in other major urban centres. For example, ‘in Kraków, unlike Warsaw or Łódź, Hassidic Jews speaking flawless Polish (as well as Yiddish) were a common feature of the landscape.’ It follows that some conclusions to be reached from this article may well not apply to other Polish cities, and almost certainly they do not apply to most Jewish communities which lived in villages and small towns.

Education has been built into Judaism from biblical times. The first verse of the Shema includes a commandment ‘Teach children diligently’. During the Babylonian Exile an extensive educational system was developed in order to be a reminder and substitute for the Jewish practices of the offerings and other commandments which were previously conducted at The Temple in Jerusalem. Education has continued to be an important aspect in the Jewish community up to the present times.

In this article, some attempt will be made to categorise educational establishments. This attempt has not been entirely successful and some might say it is not

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1 Antony Polonsky in his forward to S. Martin, Jewish Life in Cracow, 1918-1939 (Vallentine Mitchell, London, 2004), page x
2 Laurence Weinbaum in a foreword to Miriam Akavia, My Own Vineyard (Vallentine Mitchell, London), 2006
3 An important Jewish prayer, Deuteronomy, chapter VI, verses 4-9
4 See for example the Jewish Encyclopaedia (New York and London, Funk and Wagnalls), 1903 volume V, ‘Education’ entry
appropriate, because categories overlap and are therefore not mutually exclusive. This results in part from the diverse nature of different parts of the Jewish community. By way of example the article includes a section on religious schools and another separate section on Jewish private schools. It should be remembered, however, that a private school may well be a religious orthodox institution, such as heder or the Beis Ya’akov School. On the other hand, another private school might be secular Zionist.

In his paper, ‘The Jewish School Systems in Interwar Poland: Ideological Underpinnings’ Shimon Frost identified six types of educational networks. These were: Horev (orthodox schools for boys), Bais Yaakov (orthodox schools for girls), Yavne (orthodox Zionist), Tarbut (secular Zionist), Tzisho (Yiddish speaking, largely socialist Bundist), and bilingual (Polish-Hebrew).

All six types were represented in Kraków with the exception of the fifth, although Sean Martin has noted that the Bundist organisation Żydowskie Towarzystwo Oświaty Ludowej (The Jewish Society of People’s Education) was active in Kraków during the interwar years.

**Education in Kraków – 14th to 18th Centuries**

It is well known that Kraków was a major centre of religious learning from the time the community was created. Arguably, however, the Golden Age of religious study was in the 16th century. For example, the Talmud Torah was established by a statute of 1551.

As noted below, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the religious primary schools, known as heders, were the subject of serious criticism. However in earlier centuries, heders and institutions such as the Talmud Torah were revolutionary in that they made education available to all children, or at least all boys, in the Jewish community. As Paul Kriwaczek has noted ‘The significance of these schools can hardly be over estimated. In an age when almost everyone else was illiterate, in places where even aristocrats had difficulty in signing their own names, obligatory universal schooling for Jewish boys raised the Yiddish speakers’ cultural level far above that of their gentile contemporaries. In the sixteenth century the communal ordinances of Cracow stipulated that each school appoint a shrayber (scribe) to teach all children “to write the sounds of the language that we speak”.

A useful summary of early Jewish education is given by Professor Shmuel A Arthur Cygielman in his paper ‘Problems of Organization and Curricula in the Educational System of the Kraków Jewish community around the End of the 16th and

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5 Published in Andrzej Paluch (Ed), The Jews in Poland (Jagiellonian University, Kraków), 1992
6 Sean Martin, Jewish Life in Krakow, 199
7 It is possible to speculate that there was a Jewish presence in the Roman settlement of Carrodunum which was established on what is now the site of Kraków. However, the year of the establishment of the community is often taken as 1304 – ‘Jewish Cracow – A Story with a Beginning and an End?’ by Henryk Halkowski, a lecture given in 2004. The year 1304 is incorporated into the title of Majer Balaban’s two volume work Historja Żydów w Krakowie i na Kazimierzu 1304 – 1868. There are several references to ‘scola Judeorum’ and ‘der iudinschulen’ in Bożenna Wyrozumska (editor), The Jews in Mediaeval Cracow: Selected records from Cracow Municipal Books (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1995).
8 Paul Kriwaczek, Yiddish Civilisation – The Rise and Fall of a Forgotten Nation (London, Phoenix Publishers),134
Beginning of the 17th centuries. He refers to education leading to the early democratisation of the Jewish ritual and also mentions educational rules and frameworks established by authorities such as Rabbi Moshe Isserles and Rabbi Yo’el Syrkes, both of Kraków, and the Krakow Community Regulations of 1595. Additionally the author describes various institutions such as heders, the Talmud Torah, yeshivas (secondary religious schools) and trade schools.

Several studies have been prepared to describe the religious leadership of the city. One such work is Ir ha Tzedek by Israel Zunz. Principal amongst the great Rabbis was Moses Isserles. The place of worship built on ul. Szeroka by his father remains an active synagogue to this day.

Possibly the most important and extensive work on the history of the Jewish community in Kraków is Majer Bałaban’s Historja Żydów w Krakowie i na Kazimierzu, 1304-1868. Chapter 25 in the first volume is entitled ‘Skolnictwo Żydowskie w Krakowie w XVI i XVII’. (Jewish Education in Kraków in the 16th and 17th Centuries), whilst Chapter 27 describes the rabbinate in the the same period. Chapter 26 of volume II gives information relating to rabbinical families in the 17th and 18th centuries.

An additional source of information is Jan Krukowski’s paper ‘Żydzi a krakowska młodzież szkolna w XVII wieku’.

A further work on the Rabbinate is Luhot Zikaron; Sefer Kollel Toldot Rabbane Ha-Ir Krakuv be-Tseruf ha Atakot Tsiyyune Kivrotehem’ by Bernard Friedberg (published Frankfurt-am-Main, Kaufmann, 1904). A copy of this work is available at the Center for Jewish History in New York (www.cjh.org) under reference AJHS BM 750-F67.

More limited information about the rabbinate and about education is to be found in ‘Juden in Krakau – Ein Historischer Überblick, 1173 – 1939’ by Jehuda L Stein. This article is concerned primarily with the education of Jews within the Jewish community. However, it is apparent from Jehuda Stein’s work, and as noted below, that there was a Jewish involvement in the Kraków Academy from the earliest times. Since 1818 the Academy has been known as the Jagellonian University.

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9 This is included as an ‘Epilogue’ in Jewish Autonomy in Poland and Lithuania until 1648 (5408), Jerusalem, 1997
10 I. M. Zunz, A history of the Kraków Rabbinate from the Beginning of the 16th Century until the Present Time as a Contribution to the History of the Jews in Poland (Lemberg: Verlag des Verfassers in Commission bei A Faust Buchhandlung, 1874 written in old Hebrew; reprinted by Zion Publishing, Tel Aviv, 1969)
11 Originally published in Kraków in 1931, in 2002 this two volume work was published in Ivrit as Toldot ha’Yehidim b’Krakuv u’ve Kazimierz, 1304 -1868 (Jerusalem)
12 Other chapters in Volume I of Prof Balaban’s work deal with religious and kabalistic studies, and Hebrew printedmaterial
15Stein, section 9 ‘Juden an der Krakauer Universität’. The University was established in the medieval Jewish quarter on what is now St Anne’s Street (ul. Sw. Anny) which runs from the south west corner of the Main Market Square (Rynek Główny)
16 Kriwaczek, p.188
The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

A useful summary of Jewish education in Kraków in the early part of the nineteenth century, and in earlier centuries, is to be found in ‘This was the Hebrew School of Kraków’ published in 2011, particularly in the first section by Krystyna Samsonowska. It is clear from that work, as well as the sources that have been mentioned earlier in this article, that during this period education was almost entirely religious rather than secular. The largely unsuccessful attempts of the authorities to introduce secular education to the Jewish community are described by Anna Jakimyszyn in her article ‘Jewish Primary and Secondary Education in the Free City of Kraków, 1815-1846’. The author describes in some detail the regulations which were introduced by the authorities in four stages and the schools which were attended by Jewish students during the Period of the Free City (sometimes known as The Kraków Republic). This article is based on a more detailed work by the same author, Żydzi krakowscy w dobie Rzeczypospolitej Krakowskiej. This book includes the text of various statutes which governed Jewish education in the Free City. It also includes a detailed bibliography and names index.

Dr Jakimyszyn has noted that regulations introduced by the largely autonomous authorities of the Free City gave to Jewish pupils ‘the right of free access to public schools at the primary, secondary and higher educational levels.’ In practice, however, the vast majority of the community was reluctant to move away from the historic and religious base provided by the heder and yeshiva so that widespread secular education was not taken up to any great extent until the second half of the century. This may be illustrated by the fact that for most years between 1818 and 1826 fewer than 60 Jewish children attended the Corpus Christi School even though that school was situated in the Jewish area and provided some Jewish education.

In an attempt to encourage Jewish parents to provide a secular education for their children steps were taken to establish schools which catered only for Jewish children and which were not linked to the Church. Accordingly, 1830 saw the establishment of the Elementary School for Children and Adolescents of the Jewish Faith. This was attended by boys and girls from six years upwards. By 1833, the number of students attending this school had reached 127. However at this time the majority of Kraków’s Jewish children continued to attend illegally run ‘confessional’ schools. As noted below, that is to say schools which separated Jewish pupils from Christian pupils, without the authority to do so.

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17 This Was the Hebrew School of Kraków: The Hebrew Secondary School, 1918-1939’, Kraków (Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Krakowa, 2011). Also available in Polish but not to be confused with To była Hebrajska Szkoła w Krakowie published in Polish and Ivrit in 1989
18 Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry, Volume 23 ‘Jews in Kraków’ (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilisation, 2011). The Free City, which is sometimes referred to as the Kraków Republic was an autonomous area covered a wider area than the city alone, extending to the west. However, the town of Podgorze on the south side of the River Vistula was outside the Free City. See Włodzisław Czapliński and Tadeusz Ładogórski (editors) The Historical Atlas of Poland, a Production of the Department of the State Cartographical Publishers (Wroclaw, 1986), maps 34 and 36. Earlier unsuccessful attempts to introduce secular education to Jewish communities in Galicia are described in Suzan Wynne, The Galitzianers – The Jews of Galicia 1772-1918 (Kensington MD: Suzan F Wynne, 2006), 39, 40
19 Wydawnictwo Austeria, Kraków, 2008
20 ‘Polin’ Vol 23, 52,53
A higher level elementary school, known as the Jewish Junior High School, was opened in 1836. This catered for male and (separately) female students from Orthodox homes who had successfully completed their elementary school education. In 1835, the School was attended by 146 boys and 36 girls.

In 1838, the Elementary School for Children and Adolescents of the Jewish Faith merged with the Jewish Junior High School to form a new institution, the School of Trade and Industry. This catered for both boys and girls and reflected the fact that the majority of the Jewish community would earn their living by trade and vocational work rather than as a result of academic success. By 1845, the number of students attending the School of Trade and Industry reached nearly 300. However the new merged school did not cater for Orthodox needs as did the High School. Some seventy years passed before a new school would be established for Orthodox girls.

During the middle part of the century there was some movement to a more mixed educational system, largely at the instigation of the Progressive community. Having said that, compulsory education, and equal educational rights, were not introduced by the State until 1867, and as noted below, in practical terms, elementary education was not made compulsory until some fifty years later. It follows that many of those who emigrated in the 1870’s and the 1880’s will have had little or no formal secular education. Arguably, that makes their achievements in setting up new lives particularly remarkable.

The research by Krystyna Samsonowska and others reflects a growing competition and even conflict during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries between religious tradition and modern secularity. By the end of the nineteenth century there were the additional influences of Polish nationalism and Zionism. For many in the community this may well have resulted in a crisis, or at least a dilemma, of identity. There was also the development of institutions of practical instruction, particularly trade schools, as well as those of a more academic nature. These several trends resulted in a very wide range of educational establishments which catered for the needs of a diverse community.

An extended treatment of the history of Jewish education in Kraków in the mid to late nineteenth century is given in a work by Andrzej Żbikowski entitled ‘Szkolnictwo i Życie Kulturalne’.

Detailed school records are not widely available, though as mentioned below, some have survived. The extensive work, ‘Jewish Roots in Poland’ by Miriam Weiner

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21 ‘Polin’ Vol 23, 60
22 Andrzej Żbikowski, Żydzi Krakowscy i ich Gmina w latach 1869-1919 (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny w Polsce Instytut Naukowo-Badawczy, 1994). 1867 was a year which saw extensive constitutional reform including the Austro Hungarian compromise or ‘Ausgleich’.
23 The matter of identity is covered in an article ‘Żydowska szkoła krakowska?: Historycy Żydowscy wobec dylematów tożsamości’ by Natalia Aleksiun in Kwestia Żydowska w XIX wieku (2004).
24 A chapter in the Żbikowski’s book Żydzi Krakowscy i ich Gmina w latach 1869-1919 referred to by Sean Martin, Jewish Life in Cracow 1918-1939, 147. Most of the primary sources quoted by these authors, and others, are to be found in the State Archives in Kraków or, for example The Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. Further sources are held, however, at the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem.
indicates that some records are held in the Kraków State Archives (Zespół/document groups 482-493), and at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw (Zespół 101).

In his paper ‘Biography of the Jewish Press in Cracow (1918 – 1939)’ Czesław Brzoza notes that the following journals were published by schools and that some copies are held at the Jagiellonian Library.

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<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Institution</th>
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<tr>
<td>‘Nasza Skoła’</td>
<td>The Jewish High School</td>
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<td>‘Rok Pracy’</td>
<td>The Society of Jewish Schools in Kraków,</td>
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<td>Incorporating the Elementary, High and Craft</td>
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<td>‘Tachkemoni’</td>
<td>The Tachemoni School</td>
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<td>‘Z Naszego Życia’</td>
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**Religious Schools**

The bulk of religious instruction was conducted in heders and yeshivas. Heders, together with the Talmud Torah School provided primary education. The distinction between the two was that heders were privately funded, whereas the Talmud Torah was a communal institution maintained by the community for poor children whose parents could not afford tuition fees. In its heyday, during the inter war period, the talmud Torah, at Ulica Estery 6, had about 1,500 students. The same building also housed the Beit Meir Yeshivah run by Rabbi Mendel Wechsler. Heders generally were subject to government regulation from 1874. Nevertheless, a wide range of sources record the fact that generally heder instruction was of a particularly low standard and that the standard had not improved significantly by the early part of the twentieth century. Elementary education was not made mandatory by the State until 1919. Even in the 1920’s and 1930’s the Talmud Torah on Ester Street, together with the Isodei Hatorah Elementary School received poor reports. Since most of our ancestors experienced this form of instruction, it is worth referring to two descriptions:

The teaching in the Heder, the religious school I entered at the age of four, was done by rote. It consisted of a monotonous recitation of lines from the Pentateuch and translation of them into Yiddish. The mischief brought on by the boredom

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26 Included in ‘Bibliographies of Polish Judaica’, Jagiellonian University, 1983
27 See e.g. Arnon Rubin _The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communities in Poland_, Vol 3 Kraków (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press), 416
28 _This was the Hebrew School of Kraków_, 28. See also Eugeniusz Duda, _The Jews of Cracow_ (Kraków: Wydawnictwo ‘Hagada’ and Argona-Jarden Jewish Bookshop), 1999 40. For a more general description of education, culture and art see Eugeniusz Duda, _Krakowskie Judaica_ (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo PTTK ‘Kraj’ 1991) the chapter ‘Żydzi krakowscy w nauce, kulturze, sztuce’.
29 Sean Martin, _Jewish Life in Cracow 1918-1939_, 126
30 Sean Martin, 161,162. See also Rubin _The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communities in Poland and their Relics Today Volume 3, District Kraków_, 74.
31 The diversity of the community and its educational institutions was reflected by the fact that instruction could be in Yiddish, Hebrew, Polish or German, depending on the time and nature of the institution being considered. See for example the work by Mgr Alicja Maślak-Maciejewska on ‘Kraków’s Progressives – Between German and Polish Culture’ presented to a conference on German-Jewish Culture in Galicia, Kraków, June, 2013.
and restlessness of children studying in this fashion would result in corporal punishment by the rebbes.  

When I was five, I was sent to the heder. The classroom was small, the desks narrow, rough and painfully uncomfortable. We were sitting so close to one another that you could just not move your arm. In a singsong chorus we would repeat letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and then various combinations of syllables and vowels. So we keep repeating until we learn to read words we do not understand.

Conditions in one heder have been described as ‘very primitive’. For example in winter the classroom was heated by a wood fuelled stove and it was not uncommon for children to suffer burns.

It appears that religious secondary education was not as universally bad as religious primary education. On the contrary some secondary instruction was of a very high standard. Traditionally education beyond heder was reserved for boys and young men of the community and this was provided by a range of significant yeshivah’s and smaller institutions, including branches of the ‘Keter Torah’ network. This network had been established in various cities in Poland during the 1920’s and was affiliated to the Radomsk Hassidic community.

In terms of both religious and secular education, opportunities open to boys and young men were much wider that those available to girls and young women. This was a situation which applied well beyond Jewish communities and beyond Kraków. In the context of English education the suffragette leader Emmeline Pankhurst, a daughter of a Manchester textile manufacturer wrote in 1914, of the 1860’s ‘The education of the English boy, then as now, was considered a much more serious matter than the education of the English boy’s sister.’

A consideration of education in Kraków would therefore be incomplete without a reference to the Beis Ya’akov movement. It was this movement which introduced secondary education to young women in the orthodox section of the community.

32 Norbert Friedman, _Sun Rays at Midnight_ (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Corporation, 2006), 17
33 Leopold Infeld, quoted in _This was the Hebrew School of Kraków_, 18. Similar memories are recorded by Rafael Scharf in _Poland, What Have I to do with Thee_ (London: Vallentine Mitchell,1998), originally _Co mnie i tobie Polsko_ (Kraków: Fundacja Judaica, 1996) quoted by Sean Martin, 158,159. See also Sara Rosen, _My Lost World_ (Vallentine Mitchell, London, 1993), 6 and 53. Accounts of education in a heder and in a public state school are given by Irena Bronner in her work _Cykady nad Wisła i Jordanem_ (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2004). (The reference to Jordan is to Jordanow, the location of summer camps for Jewish children) One report of heders stated that they symbolised a withdrawal from society and that they were more or less medieval in their educational outlook (Martin, page 127). Recurring themes in various accounts of heders are boredom and the frequent use of corporal punishment. See for example Diane Armstrong, _Mosaic_ (Sydney, Australia, Random House 1998), 38, 39 and Anna Ray-Jones and Roman Ferber, _Journey of Ashes; A Boyhood in the Holocaust_, (Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2014), 29
34 Jechiel Weingarten ‘Life in Cracow for the very Young’ in _Silver Anniversary 1965-1990_ (New York: New Cracow Friendship Society, 1990). In his article, Mr Weingarten also gives an account of the hasidic small prayer rooms, or ‘stieblach’.
36 Though see above reference to the Jewish Junior High School which operated from 1830 to 1838
A great deal has been written about the Beis Ya’akov movement which was formed by Sarah Schenirer, and supported by the orthodox party Agudat Yisrael, shortly after the first World War. Sarah Schenirer was born into a Hasidic family in 1883 but nevertheless attended a State Polish school. Similarly by her own account, the first school which she established was an afternoon school where twenty five girls from Hasidic families received religious instruction after their classes in public schools.

The work ‘Carry Me in Your Heart’ by Pearl Benisch gives a particularly readable account of the life and work of the founder. Another work by the same author, ‘To Vanquish the Dragon’ deals with the movement during the Holocaust. Both works include references to a large number of named individuals, but unfortunately neither book has an index of names.

Sean Martin, and other authors such as Eugeniusz Duda, refer to the Heder Iwri schools, the first of which was founded in 1921. A Tachkemoni boys’ school was added in 1931 and shortly afterwards both schools moved to premises at ul. Miodowa 26. In terms of religious orthodoxy, these were not as strict as the traditional heders or yeshivas, or indeed Beis Ya’akov. However Heder Iwri was more traditional in religion than the Gimnazjum, even though it taught secular subjects. The approach taken by Heder Iwri may be illustrated by noting that at the opening of a new building in 1931 the choir sang ‘Boże, coś Polskę’ (a Polish patriotic hymn), a psalm, and Hatikvah (a Zionist anthem). Heder Iwri was closely linked with the Mizrachi movement which holds that Torah should be at the centre of Zionism. In terms of ideology, therefore, the Heder Iwri schools were close to the Yavne schools, except that, apparently, the latter placed an emphasis on general education which was taught in Polish. The Mizrachi Educational Institutions in Kraków have been described by Ze’ev Bauminger in ‘Sefer Kraka, Ir v’Am b’Yisrael’.

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37 Caroline Scharfer, ‘Sarah Schenirer: Founder of the Beit Ya’akov Movement’ in ‘Polin’ Volume 23
38 Agnieszka Oleszak, ‘The Beit Ya’akov School in Kraków as an Encounter between East and West’ in ‘Polin’ Volume 23, 278
39 Pearl Benisch, Carry Me in your Heart (New York: Feldheim Publishers), 2003
41 A pre-war reference in This was the Hebrew School of Kraków is Renesans religijny kobiety żydowskiej. Sara Szenirer – człowiek i dzieło by H Seidman (Łódz, 1936). Further references are given in Sean Martin’s book, 193. An account of the life of Sarah Schenirer is given by Moshe Prager in Arye Bauminger (editor) Sefer Kraka, Ir v’Am b’Yisrael (Jerusalem: Rav Kuk Institute with The Association of Cracovians in Israel, 1959), 369 – 376. See also Judith Grunfeld-Jung (New York: Boys Town Jerusalem, 1964), and Deborah Weissman ‘Bais Yaakov: A Historical Model for Jewish Feminists’ in The Jewish Woman, ed. Elizabeth Koltun (New York, Schocken Books), 1976.
42 Martin, Jewish Life in Cracow, 1918-1939, 175,176
43 References to 26 Miodowa are also included in Świat przed Katastrofą / A World before a Catastrophe (Kraków: Międzynarodowe Centrum Kultury, 2007) 50. References to secular schools are included in pages 49 and 50
44 Jan M Malecki, Świat przed Katastrofą/ A World before Catastrophe, 130, quoting the Zionist newspaper, Nowy Dziennik, 2 July 1931
Articles describing a number of Kraków schools, including Beis Ya’akov, and Isodei Torah, are to be found on the website of The Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw, [www.sztetl.org.pl](http://www.sztetl.org.pl) 46

**Jewish Private Schools**

Various writers refer to a category of educational establishment which they describe a ‘Jewish private schools’. These have been described as having been established to fill the gap between the heder and the ‘folk school’.47

Jewish Private Schools are the subject of a chapter in Sean Martin’s book ‘Jewish Life in Cracow, 1918-1939’.48 It is clear from a reading of that work that the term includes a wide range of educational establishments, including, for example, Beis Ya’akov and the Hebrew Gymnasium which is mentioned below. The author refers to a distinction between ‘confessional’ (wyznaniowy) schools and national (narodowy) schools. According to a previous commentator, Bienenstock, writing in Nowy Dziennik in 1919, confessional schools ‘separated Jews from everyone else’ whilst national schools did not. The implication is that ‘national’ schools were used as a means of integrating Jewish children into at least some aspects of Polish life.49 For example Dr. Martin refers to students from Jewish private schools taking part in the Schools Theatre Programme together with students from public and private Polish schools.50

Consistently with the distinction between ‘confessional’ and ‘national’ schools, the language of instruction varied with the ethos of each institution so that tuition in the various schools was in a mixture of Yiddish, Hebrew and Polish.51 One aspect that tended to be a common factor was that parents had to pay fees. This factor resulted in private

46 Go to ‘towns’ –› Kraków –› Jewish Community before 1989 –› Education.
47 Ż bikowski, Żydzi Krakowscy i ich Gmina w latch 1869-1919, 251 quoted by Krystyna Samsonowska in This was the Hebrew School of Kraków. Chapter X of the work by Andrzej Ż bikowski relates to education and cultural life
48 Two chapters of Martin’s book relate to education. Chapter 4 is entitled ‘Making Jews Polish: The Education of Jewish Children in Polish Schools’ whilst Chapter 5 is devoted to ‘Maintaining Community: Jewish Participation in Private Jewish Schools’. A more general description of Jewish education in Poland during the inter war years is to be found in Joseph Marcus, Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland 1919-1939 (Berlin, New York: Mouton Publishers, 1983), 145-162.
50 Martin, 187-189
51 In the census of 1931, 10,517 Jews (19%) declared Polish as their mother language, 23,316 (41%) declared Yiddish and 22,486 (40%), Hebrew – Arnon Rubin, The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communities in Poland Vol 3 Kraków), though among children the proportion speaking Polish was very much higher than 19%, arguably as high as 80% - Sean Martin, Jewish Life in Cracow 1918-1939, 152. The recording of 40% as having Hebrew as their mother language was possibly an overstatement resulting from the influence of Zionist leaders – Czesław Brzoza ‘Jewish Periodicals in Cracow (1918-1939)’ in Bibliographies of Polish Judaica (Kraków, Jagiellonian University, 1993). Concerning the use of Yiddish at Beis Ja’akov, see Martin, 180-182. though elsewhere (page 128) Martin states that there was no Yiddish school in Kraków. In Świat przed Katastrofą/ A World before Catastrophe, at pages 56 and 57, there is a suggestion that Yiddish was spoken in schools operated by Agudas Yisroel.
schools catering for only a minority of the population, particularly in the nineteenth century. As Dr. Martin comments Jewish private schools were a means of Jewish parents ensuring that their children received a Jewish education and remained a vital part of the community, even after an elementary education in a public Polish school.

Dr. Martin comments that the growth of the private school movement in the interwar period was a response to two separate factors. These were growing anti-Semitism, and an increasing sense of Jewish nationalism. For example, in 1937 Bronia Infeld founded Nasza Szkoła (‘Our School’), a secular establishment for girls, most probably as a response to antisemitism.52

Folk Schools

Brief mention has been made to a category of school described as ‘folk schools’. Although this term is used by several writers it does not seen to have been clearly defined. The ‘folk’ system appears to have been developed in the 19th century with some emphasis on cultural or national identity and vocational training rather than purely academic learning.

In the context of Kraków, Krystyna Samsonowska refers to the ‘Casimir the Great School’. This was established in the nineteenth century. Although it had a Jewish ethos, teaching was in German, with pro Austrian assimilation tendencies. Polish was introduced in about 1867. The school was later merged into The School of Trade and Industry (Szkoła Przemysłowo-Handlowa). As noted above, this was the institution which had resulted from the merger of two other schools in 1838.

Jewish vocational education is described by Sean Martin in his work ‘Jewish Life in Cracow, 1918-1939’.53 He refers to a girls’ vocational school which was opened in 1923 and the Private Jewish Co-educational Middle School for Trade (Szkoła Handlowa) which was opened ten years later. By 1937 the Middle School for Trade had some four hundred students. Mr Martin also mentions the Private Jewish Co-educational Gymnasium of Cracow Merchants. Establishments such as these supported the Zionist cause, for example by teaching agricultural skills which could be used in Palestine, or training students to be able to conduct trade between Poland and Palestine. Conversely, Zionist institutions such as the newspaper Nowy Dziennik stressed the importance of productivity from the younger generation calling for them to be educated in industrial schools.54

Eugeniusz Duda refers to two schools which were opened in 1933. The first of these was the School of Handicraft. This was originally at ul Brzozowa, 5 before moving to ul Podbrzezie, 3. The second school mentioned by Duda is the Secondary Commercial School at Ul Stradom 10 which was opened at the initiative of the Association of Jewish Merchants in Cracow.55 This would seem to be the same school as the Co-educational Gymnasium mentioned by Sean Martin.

52 Martin, 182-184
53 Martin, 184-186.
54 ‘Janusz Falowski ‘The Political Thought of Nowy Dziennik in its Early Period’, Polin vol 23, 248, and ‘Rodzicom żydowskim pod rozważę’, Nowy Dziennik 29 August, 1918
55 Duda, The Jews of Cracow, 49, 50
A summary of Jewish education in Kraków after the end of the First World War is provided by the writer Arnon Rubin. Modern day feminists would not be impressed to read that the professional school for girls, Markaz ha-Avodah, taught cutting and sewing, knitting and embroidery whilst the corresponding school for boys taught the skills of locksmiths and mechanics. On the other hand, the Educational Establishment for Israelite Orphans in Kraków, headed by Róża Rock, provided ‘a general education on an elementary level, as well as practical skills which gave pupils the opportunity for independent sustenance after leaving the institution’.

**Zionist Schools**

In Kraków, as elsewhere, Zionism was a growing force from the latter part of the nineteenth century. The cause was strongly supported by Ozjasz Thon who became the minister of the Reform Tempel, as well as holding a wide range of other communal positions. A feature of the Zionist educational establishments was that some teaching would be carried out in the Hebrew language.

The Society for the Establishment of a Hebrew School in Kraków was established in 1905 and the Hebrew Primary School was formed three years later. This development was quickly followed by the establishment of a Zionist Secondary School or ‘Gimnazjum’. However, this establishment was not sufficiently religious for all Zionist families. The Mizrahi Party therefore set up its own school, which in 1927 joined the ‘Yavne’ organisation. By 1929 this school had 400 students.

**The Hebrew Secondary School or ‘Gimnazjum’**

The Hebrew Secondary School in Kraków was established shortly after the end of the First World War. The school was founded by Salomon Leser and Chaim Hilfstein and the school was sometimes referred to as the Hilfstein School. Being a secondary school it was also referred to as the Gymnasium, or in Polish ‘Gimnazjum’.

At least three books have been written to describe this institution. They have similar names but in order of publication they are:-

(1989) *To była Hebrajska Szkoła w Krakowie: Historia i wspomnienia/ Zeh hayah beit hasefer ha’Ivri b’Krakuv*,. This bilingual work is mainly a collection of reminiscences by various former students, edited by Natan Gross.


(2011) *This was the Hebrew School of Kraków: The Hebrew Secondary School 1918-1939*.

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56 Rubin, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Communities in Poland and their Relics Today, Volume III, District Kraków*, 74

57 Powiśle/ Blowup (Kraków, 2006), 172

58 Krystyna Samsonowska in *This was the Hebrew School of Kraków*, 24

59 *This was the Hebrew School of Kraków*, 30-32

60 Natan Gross (ed.), *To była Hebrajska Szkoła w Krakowie: Historia i wspomnienia/Zeh hayah beit hasefer ha’Ivri b’Krakuv* (Tel Aviv: The Association of Cracovians in Israel and The Association of Students of the Gymnazjum in Kraków, Tel Aviv, 1989).
To a greater or lesser degree, all three publications give detailed information about individual teachers and students, and include photographs of classes and individuals. For example the 2011 publication includes a chapter ‘We had perfect teachers: On teachers at the Hebrew Secondary School’ by Justyna Koziol-Marzec. The books also include general background information. For example the 1989 publication includes a historical account of Jewish education in Kraków by Dr, Meir Bosak. The account gives information about several former students of the Gimnazjum, including some who fought in the Jewish Resistance (Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa) during the War. Descriptions of the school and the life of Chaim Hilfstein are also provided by Meir Boasak in the Yiskor Book ‘Sefer Kraka’.

Lists of about 2400 students who attended the school in 1934 and 1935 have been put on a database which is searchable on the genealogical website www.shoreshim.org. The site also includes a database of teachers whose names appear in the 1989 publication mentioned above. Class photographs from the School for 1935, 1936 and 1938 are to be found at www.shoreshim.org/en/infoKrakowClassPhoto.asp. The site also lists 48 students who graduated in 1936, as reported in the Nowy Dziennik newspaper.

A number of books have been published in the series ‘The Library of Holocaust Studies’. These works record the memories of Holocaust survivors. Typically, each book starts with an account of a pleasant lifestyle prior to 1939. One such work which gives a description of attendance at The Hebrew Secondary School is Who Are You, Mr. Grymek? by Natan Gross. He describes the school as ‘an oasis, an island isolated from Polish reality – and yet Poland and Polishness, in all their manifestations, were better represented and conveyed in our Hebrew school than was Jewishness’. Another book in the series is My Own Vineyard by Miriam Akavia. She points out that her parents hesitated to send her sister to the Gimnazjum, not only because of the fees, but also because boys and girls were taught together. Ironically there was also a fear that the Zionist ethos would encourage students to leave their families and emigrate to Palestine.

Further recollections of the school, and one Hebrew teacher in particular, Benzion Rappaport, are recorded by Rafael Scharf in his book Poland, What have I to do with Thee… In the chapter, ‘Kraków – blessed its memory’, the author comments that pupils of the Gimnazjum came from far and wide, from Debniki, Pradnik, Krowodrza and even Wieliczka.

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61 Kraków: Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Krakowa, 2011; also available in Polish as To byla Hebrajska Szkoła w Krakowie.
62 Sefer Kraka, Ir v’am b’Yisrael, Arye Bauminger (ed.), (Jerusalem, the Association of Cracovians in Israel, 1959), starting at pages 329 and 358
64 Miriam Akavia, My Own Vineyard (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2006) originally published in Hebrew by Dvir Publishers. See particularly chapter 14
65 Rafael Scharf, Poland, What Have I to do with Thee…’ (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1998), originally published in Polish as Co mnie i tobie Polsko ... (Kraków: Fundacja Judaica, 1996).
A further account of the School is also given in Sean Martin’s book which has already been mentioned.66 Dr. Martin notes that during the 1930’s the Gimnazjum had about 750 students. To a large extent the students were children of the professional intelligentsia, and merchant classes who could afford the fees. These included children from some families who had moved away from the traditional Jewish neighbourhood. Generally lessons were taught in Polish though lessons relating to Jewish subjects were conducted in Hebrew. Inspector’s reports on the school were good, and the school was granted ‘public rights’ The theoretical effect of that was that generally students from the Gimnazjum could continue their education into University. In practice, however, there were obstacles to higher education.

Public and Private Polish Schools

A description of the wide range of educational establishments operated within the Jewish community should not hide the fact that a large number of young people attended schools within the public state sector. Indeed, as early as 1885 a majority of Jewish children in Kraków were attending public schools.67 The percentage attending public schools had increased by the interwar years, although many school age children continued to attend heder or some other form of religious establishment for part of each day.68 For example, in relation to families engaged in the bakery trade it has been stated, ‘These were Hassidic families whose daughters went to Polish state schools, learned the romantic Polish poets by heart and spoke Polish with their siblings at home. In the afternoons, they had private religious instruction.69 Large numbers of Jewish students attended fee paying, i.e. private Polish schools. It follows that those wishing to research their family histories during the late 19th and early 20th centuries should not restrict their enquiries to schools operated within the Jewish community.

Unfortunately Dr Martin noted that relatively little information has survived for the public Polish schools which the majority of Jewish children attended. Nevertheless, he does refer to the facts that various school archives have survived and that for some schools these include registers of students (katalog klasowy).70 The genealogical website www.shoreshim.org includes a searchable data base containing over 1100 names of Jewish students who attended one of three non Jewish schools in Kraków. Likewise, the genealogyindexer website includes links to reports of the Kraków IV Gimnazjum for various years between 1916 and 1932.

Dan Hirschberg’s extensive site at www.ics.uci.edu/~dan/genealogy/Krakow/index.html

66 Martin, Jewish Life in Cracow’, 163-175 A further source of information is Zygmunt Hoffman ‘Prywatne żydowskie gimnazjum koedukacyne w Krakowie (1918-1939) in Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego 147-148 (no 3-4) 1988), 101-109
67 Martin, Jewish Life in Cracow’, 159 quoting Andrzej Żbikowski, Żydzi Krakowscy i ich Gmina w Latach 1869-1919, 249. See also http://yourjewishgem.blogspot.com for Jewish graduates from the State Kraków C K III Gimnazjum in 1884
68 See, for example, comments above regarding the education of Sarah Schenirer and her early pupils
69 Maria Balinska, The Bagel; The Surprising History of a Modest Bread (Yale University Press, New Haven, 2008), 76
70 Martin, 24, 25 and 30 to 33 on pages 147,148
includes links to lists of Kraków students who successfully completed their studies in the years 1868, 1869 and 1871. The lists relate to four secondary schools including Saint Ann. The website also includes a link to lists of students at the Lyceum.

In order to give an indication of scale Dr Martin noted that during the interwar period there were between 55 and 60 public elementary schools and 10 private elementary schools employing a total of about 630 teachers. He refers to various schools which were attended by Jewish children, and gives information about four schools in particular. These are

- Stanisław Konarski Elementary School, Nr 9
- Józef Dietl Elementary School, Nr 11
- Klementyna z Tański Hoffmanowa School, Nr 15 and
- Jan Śniadecki Elementary School, Nr 16

Sean Martin quotes the following description of the public school in Kazimierz, the Klementyna z Tański Hoffmanowa School Nr 15, which is taken from Irena Bronner’s work *Cykady nad Wisła i Jordanem*. The description is in stark contrast to the descriptions of heders which have been mentioned.

It was a warm and clean elementary school. The parquet floors sparkled brightly. After entering, we took off our boots and put on felt slippers. The walls were very prettily decorated…

A private Polish school mentioned by Dr Martin is the Queen Jadwiga Private Gymnasium for Girls. He points out that in 1937, 28 per cent of the girls attending that school were Jewish.

A feature of these schools was that Jewish students celebrated secular State events, whilst at the same time the schools recognised the need for religious education which was provided by the Jewish community. The result was that to a significant extent Jewish students lived in or straddled two worlds, as described for example by the memoirs of the art historian Halinka Nelken.

Higher Education

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71 Martin, 129. The following public schools are listed as being among those attended by Jewish children. Kazimierz Wielki School, Nr 5
- J I Kraszewski School, Nr 8
- Stanislaw Konarski Elementary School, Nr 9
- Józef Dietl Elementary School, Nr 11
- Mikołaj Rej School, Nr 14
- Klementyna z Tański Hoffmanowa School, Nr 15
- Jan Śniadecki Elementary School, Nr 16 and
- Jan Długosz School, Nr 22

An article in the ‘education’ section of the virtual shtetl website www.sztetl.org.pl refers to the career of Samuel Hirsch Schmelkes who was associated with High School No 7 for over 20 years. The website is operated by The Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw.

72 Martin, *Jewish Life in Cracow*, 141, 142

73 In connection with religious instruction in public schools Martin refers to various sources which are available at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw.

74 Halina Nelken, *Pamiętnik z getta w Krakowie* (Toronto: Polski Fundusz Wydawniczy w Kanadzie, 1987), published in English as *And Yet, I am Here!* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), and see Martin, 135,136.
A historical summary of Jewish links with the Kraków Jagellonian University is given by Jehuda L Stein in his work *Juden in Krakau – Ein historischer Überblick 1173-1939*. This demonstrates a degree of Jewish academic involvement over a number of centuries. Most accounts of Jewish life at the University, however, relate to the twentieth century.\(^75\)

Despite the range of practical obstacles which faced members of the Jewish community, significant numbers were able to attend the Jagellonian University in the period leading up to the end of the First World War.\(^76\) The relationship between the community and the University in the period after 1919 has been summarised by Arnon Rubin as follows:

The manifestations of anti-Semitism in the Jagellonian University were extreme, but that did not deter Jewish students making every effort to learn there. In the academic year 1921/22 1339 Jewish students learned in the Jagellonian University. That is 34.34% of the overall number of students. Possibly as a result of antisemitism, by 1928 Jewish students had their own hall of residence at 3, Przemyska.\(^77\)

Arnon Rubin points out that by the 1930’s several faculties restricted the number of Jewish students, whilst other faculties such as medicine and pharmacy excluded Jewish students altogether.\(^78\) This is a theme taken up by Dr Albert Tilles in his account *The Academic Aspect of Life in Cracow from a Jewish Perspective*. In particular Dr Tilles describes the practical difficulties faced by students in the medical faculty.\(^79\) The restrictions on the number of Jewish students attending the University are also described by Jehuda Stein, noting that by 1937/8 the Jewish students accounted for only 12.2 percent of the total. In her work ‘The Kraków Ghetto and the Plaszów Camp Remembered’ Malvina Graf refers to the difficulties in studying at the Jagiellonian University in the 1930’s.\(^80\)

A further insight into higher education is given by Mietek Pemper in his book *The Road to Rescue*.\(^81\) The author studied at the University and also at the Academy of Economics in Sienkiewicza Street. He describes the reaction of Jewish and other students following a decree in the autumn of 1938 that Jewish students could sit only on certain benches in the lecture halls. Mr Pemper was one of the few Jewish students to complete his studies in Kraków, at both the University and The Academy of Economics, following the end of the Holocaust.

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\(^75\) For various sources in Polish see Michał Galas and Antony Polonsky, the introductory chapter of volume 23 of ‘Polin’ pages 42, 43

\(^76\) See also Mariusz Kułczykowski, *Żydzi-studenci Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w dobie autonomicznej Galicji (1867-1918)* (Kraków: Jagiellonian University, Institute of History, 1995).

\(^77\) *Świat przed Katastrofa/ A World before a Catastrophe*, 50

\(^78\) Rubin, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Communities in Poland and their Relics Today, Volume 3, District Kraków*, 74.


\(^80\) Malvina Graf, *The Kraków Ghetto and the Plaszów Camp Remembered*, (Florida State University Press, Tallahassee, 1989), 4 and 5

A further account of Jewish experiences at the University in the 1930’s is given in the work *Universytet Zbirów* (Ruffian University or University of Thugs’) which was published shortly after the war.\(^8^2\)

A number of Jewish academics at the University are described by Eugeniusz Duda in his works *The Jews of Cracow* and *Krakowskie Judaica*.\(^8^3\) These include Rafał Taubenschlag, Leon Sternbach, Joachim Metallman, Filip Eisenberg and Julian Aleksandrowicz. A further short list from 1926 is included on the ‘Jewish Gem Genealogy’ website at [http://yourjewishgem.blogspot.com](http://yourjewishgem.blogspot.com)

The Yiddish work *Tsvishn Beyde Velt-Milchomes* by Isaac Schwartzbart incudes two chapters concerning the Jewish professors from the Jagiellonian University and their relationships with the non Jewish professors.\(^8^4\)

The Academy of Fine Arts was founded in Kraków in 1818 as part of the University. It became the School of Fine Arts after gaining independence in 1873 but reverted to its original name about twenty years later. Jewish participation in this institution is described by Dr Natasza Styrna in ‘Jewish Artists in Kraków 1873-1939’\(^8^5\).

In the interwar years the community established a number of establishments outside the University. One such establishment was Żydowskie Towarszystwo Oświaty Ludowej (The Jewish Society of People’s Education). Members of this organisation were Bundists and partisans of a united workers front. Nevertheless lectures given by the Society included a wide range on subjects which were unconnected with politics. The names of other organisations concerned with adult education to a greater or lesser extent include the Jewish Society for Jewish Culture and the Association for the Development of Culture among the Jews of Małopolska.\(^8^6\)

### Education during the Holocaust

Jewish Education did not completely stop with the German Invasion. However an early edict in December 1939 prevented Jewish students from attending public schools. Large numbers were therefore transferred to the Jewish Gymnazjum. This new environment was alien to many students, as was described, for example by Irena Bronner and Halina Nelken,\(^8^7\) and by Miriam Akavia.\(^8^8\) At about the same time, the occupying power took steps to limit education for non Jews. These steps included the rounding up and deporting of professors at the University in Kraków.\(^8^9\)

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\(^8^2\) A publication in 1946 by Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna w Polsce, Kraków, edited by the administrator of the Commission, Michał Borwicz.


\(^8^5\) Dr Natasza Styrna, *Jewish Artists in Kraków* (Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Krakowa, 2008), a bilingual (Polish and English) exhibition catalogue. See also Dr Natasza Styrna, ‘Jewish Artists in Inter-War Kraków’ in ‘Polin’, Volume 23.

\(^8^6\) Martin, *Jewish Life in Cracow*, 199

\(^8^7\) Bronner, *Cykady nad Wisłą i Jordanem* and Nelken, *And Yet, I am Here!* The educational environment was also alien to those Polish nationals who had been expelled from Germany in October, 1938 – testimony of Willy Zalmon, Haifa, Israel.

\(^8^8\) *An End to Childhood* (Vallentine Mitchell, London), 30.

The Germans issued a further order to shut down all Jewish private schools. Arnon Rubin has noted that secret education was organised by the community and that this education continued until the liquidation. For a short period some parents who could afford it paid for private tuition. Education in the Ghetto was also arranged by members of Zionist youth groups. When professional teachers were no longer available older students taught younger ones. For example, Halina Nelken refers to ‘small group instruction’ given by older children to younger ones. She also refers to the Orphans’ Vocational Hospital which was operated by the CENTOS charity. According to one author, weekly medical seminars were held in the Kraków Ghetto. According to Miriam Akavia, a school was run in the Ghetto by a Mrs Mania, and following her death a kindergarten was established.

Several references to education within the ghetto are made in an exhibition catalogue published by the Galicia Jewish Museum. Reference is made there to both primary and secondary education, including a trade school at the orphanage.

Despite these examples, references to secular education in the Ghetto are relatively few and far between compared with other aspects of life in the ghetto and at Płaszów. Many authors describe the work of hospitals, orphanages and old people’s shelters but they are relatively silent on secular education. Almost certainly, secular education was far more limited than in the Warsaw Ghetto where, for example, the Judenrat received permission to open elementary schools in September 1941.

Some authors emphasise the lack of educational opportunities during the Holocaust. For example, in his account of life under the German occupation up until the establishment of the Kraków Ghetto, Roman Pytel notes that Jews were permitted to attend schools conducted and supervised by the Jewish Council. He further states, however, that the Council failed to open any schools ‘so that the Jewish community was deprived of any educational facilities during the occupation’. As Joseph Bau put it, describing life in the ghetto, ‘Rabbis, teachers and university lecturers, and any others connected with cultural or educational activities were hounded and hunted down. Nobody

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90 Rubin, 79 This secret education was probably more religious than secular
92 Rivka Liebeskind Kuper, quoted in Arieh Bauminger, The Fighters of the Cracow Ghetto (Keter Press, 1986, Jerusalem), 28 and 29, also in Hebrew: Lochamei b’Gettoh Krakav (Tel Aviv, 1967), 28
93 Halina Nelken, And Yet I am Here, (University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1986)
94 Aleksander Skotnicki in Świat przed Katastrofą (A World before a Catastrophe), (Kraków, 2007), 17.
96 Galicia Jewish Museum, Fighting for Dignity; Jewish Resistance in Kraków, Kraków, 2008, 20, 23 and 24
97 For a general description of education in the Warsaw Ghetto see Barbara Engelking and Jack Leociak, The Warsaw Ghetto; A Guide to the Perished City (Bloomington, IN, 2009), 343-366, translated from Polish by Emma Harris, 343-366.
98 Roman Pytel, in Silver Anniversary 1965-1990 (New York: The New Cracow Friendship Society, 1990). Pytel states that there was some secret education in the ghetto but the implication of both Roman Pytel and Arnon Rubin is that this education was religious rather than secular.
dared to admit to even a slight involvement in those spheres. However, these comments seem to be somewhat at odds with the information given by the sources which have been mentioned. They are also apparently inconsistent with a school timetable dated 1941 which sets out a curriculum for education in the Kraków ghetto. This curriculum covers secular as well as religious subjects.

If on the one hand secular education was severely limited in the Ghetto, on the other hand, there is no doubt that some Jewish religious life, including religious education continued during the occupation, in Kazimierz, then in the Ghetto, and ultimately at Płaszów Camp. The pharmacist Tadeusz Pankiewicz noted that the secret teaching of Judaic subjects flourished in the Ghetto, partly through the Talmud Torah and partly as a result of the work of three synagogues. Bernard Offen has briefly described the heder at the Talmud Torah at ul Rękawka, 30 in Podgórze, adding that this was closed down in May 1940. Arnon Rubin refers to there being several synagogues in the Ghetto. He also refers to the ongoing work of the Orthodox Isodei Hatorah School. Bible and Jewish history lessons were taught in the Ghetto by members of Zionist youth groups and the religious fervour of members of the Gerer Chassidic group is described by Moshe Prager in his book *Those Who Never Yielded*. One source refers to a library of religious books which was maintained in the Płaszów camp. Jewish religious life in Kraków during the occupation has also been described by Rabbi Menasze Lewertow, who survived the Holocaust as a result of being included on Schindler’s list.

**After the Holocaust**

Following the liberation of Kraków in January 1945 many survivors returned to the city, largely in attempts to find surviving relatives and friends. The immediate post war period is described in ‘The Image of Post War Kraków in Jewish Writing, 1945-1950’ by Monika Stepien which is included in Polin volume 23, and also briefly by Arnon Rubin is his work which has already been mentioned. He notes that by the beginning of 1946 the number of Jews in Kraków reached 10,000. During 1945 and 1946 a number of educational institutions were established to cater for the secular, occupational, religious and Zionist needs of the community. For example, as Eugeniusz Duda has noted, Zionist

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100 See www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4696654,00.html

101 Tadeusz Pankiewicz, *The Cracow Ghetto Pharmacy* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1987), 6 Several authors have suggested that the pharmacy was frequently visited by Jewish academics and professionals. See, for example, Anna Ray-Jones and Roman Ferber, *Journey of Ashes; A Boyhood in the Holocaust* (Creative Independent Publishing Platform, 2014), 112


103 Rivka Liebeskind Kuper quoted by Aryeh Bauminger, *The Fighters of the Cracow Ghetto* (Keter Press, Jerusalem), 29


105 Pearl Benisch, *To Vanquish the Dragon* (Feldheim Publishers, Jerusalem and New York, 1991), 275

parties established a private elementary school\(^\text{107}\), and a ‘Tarbut’ primary school was established in the former Jewish dormitory at 3, Przemyska Street.\(^\text{108}\)

In her work *Dziewczynka w czerwonym płaszczyku*\(^\text{109}\) Roma Ligocka described her post war experience of school as follows:

The Jewish school has reopened in Kraków. It is small and the school building is poor, dark, with tiny rooms. .. There are eleven children in our class. They come from different places … I have been looking forward to school, but now I am speechless. The atmosphere is tense, and not a minute goes by without someone crying. Someone may say a word too loudly, and the teacher, who has also been in a concentration camp, will start crying right away.

Another author has noted that the building at 26 ul. Miodowa which previously housed the Zionist Mizrachi secondary school was used to shelter Jews returning to the city after the war.\(^\text{110}\) However the work of these and other institutions was effectively curtailed by a government imposed cessation of Zionist activity in Poland, and successive waves of anti-Semitism. These included an attack in Kraków in August 1945, and a pogrom in nearby Kielce the following year. As a result of these and other events, some Holocaust survivors hid their religion and attended Catholic schools.\(^\text{111}\) Some students embraced Catholicism, certain aspects of which led them to Communism (which in the immediate post war period did not openly oppose the Church), the Pioneer youth movement and the Związek Akademicki Młodzieży Polskiej (The Association of Polish University Students).\(^\text{112}\)

By 1951, much of the surviving Jewish community had emigrated from Poland, and little record of Jewish education in Kraków is to be found in relation to the second half of the twentieth century. For example, Henryk Boguslawski (Hirsch Baldinger), who was a lecturer at the Dental School, left the city for Australia in 1948.\(^\text{113}\) An exception to this generalisation was Mie\-tek Pemper who completed his studies at both the University and the Academy of Economics and who remained in Kraków until 1958.\(^\text{114}\) Other Jewish and attended state schools academics who remained in Kraków included Prof Julian Aleksandrowicz, a specialist in internal medicine and hematology,\(^\text{115}\) and Jonasz Stern who was a professor at The academy of Fine Arts.\(^\text{116}\)

\(^\text{107}\) Duda, *The Jews of Cracow*.
\(^\text{111}\) Diane Armstrong, *Mosaic* (Sydney Australia: Random House Publishers), 384-386. Roma Ligocka also attended a Catholic School for a short time. Polin vol 23, 377. Roman Polanski came from a non religious background and was twelve years old in 1945, when he returned to Kraków with his father. An account in Wikepedia states that he saw a number of films at school in the post war period.
\(^\text{112}\) Polin vol 23, 378, 379
\(^\text{113}\) Diane Armstrong, 396
\(^\text{114}\) Pemper, *The Road to Rescue*, the chapter ‘Return to Kraków, A City Without Jews’
\(^\text{115}\) Duda, *The Jews of Cracow*, 50
Eva Hoffman (née Ewa Wydra) was born in July, 1945 and attended state schools, and also music school, in Kraków until she and her family emigrated in 1959. In her book *Lost in Translation* she describes the influences of forces such as communism and anti-Semitism on her education.\textsuperscript{117}

Halina Nelken returned to Kraków in 1945 and gained a degree in the History of Art and Philosophy at the Jagiellonian University. She worked as a curator at the National Museum in Kraków before leaving Poland in 1958.\textsuperscript{118}

**Education in the Twenty First Century**

An account of Jewish education in Kraków without a reference to the twenty first century would do an injustice to those organisations which serve the current Jewish community of the city. Members of the community include a wide range of individuals some of whom wish to live as modern Jews but who are not Jewish according to Orthodox Jewish law (halacha). Many such individuals were ‘hidden’ but they are identifying with the Jewish community in increasing numbers. To reflect this diversity there is a correspondingly wide provision of Jewish education. This includes both the Orthodox and Reform or Progressive wings of the religion.

Institutions which support the community include the Jewish Community Centre on ul Miodowa and the Czulent Jewish Association, which for example operates a library from the basement of the Community Centre. Further educational resources are available through the Judaica Foundation Center for Jewish Culture on ul Meisels, and the Galicia Museum on ul Dajwór. Additionally the Jewish Studies Department of the Jagiellonian University is to be found on ul Józefa. Reference should also be made to the Festival of Jewish Culture which has been held annually in Kraków for many years.

**Conclusions**

The popular view of Polish Jewry is often that conditions were universally poor and in a permanent state of conflict with the non-Jewish community from which Jews were isolated except in so far as they were impacted by acts of antisemitism.\textsuperscript{119} Consistent with this perception is one that the Jewish community was largely homogenous.

The information which is available regarding Jewish education in Kraków is not intended to suggest that relationships between the Jewish and non Jewish communities were easy, and certainly there is no suggestion that Jews did not face serious discrimination. Yet a first conclusion which can be reached, in relation to education, is that there were examples where the two communities worked together.

Secondly, at any given point in time, the different sections in the Jewish community had different attitudes to education. The community itself was not uniform, and neither therefore were the educational institutions which the community established.

\textsuperscript{118} Notes from Halina Nelken, *Images of a Lost World: Jewish Motifs in Polish Painting, 1770-1945* (I B Tauris & Co Ltd, London, 1991). See also her work *And Yet, I am Here*.
\textsuperscript{119} For a discussion of this view see ‘Polin’ Volume 24 ‘Jews and their Neighbours in Eastern Europe since 1750’
Thirdly, the community changed over time as it responded to outside forces such as secularisation, Polish nationalism, Zionism and antisemitism.

As in many aspects of Polish Jewry, a consideration of Jewish education in Kraków is not as simple as it first appears.