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## **Polish universities between the world wars and their communities as accounted by the “Ilustrowana Republika” newspaper**

### **Abstract**

“Ilustrowana Republika” was a daily newspaper published in Łódź in 1925–1939. Apart from news, it contained economic, social, cultural, educational, and sports reports as well as information on higher education. Higher education was discussed in over 440 articles and notes, which included information on Łódź and other Polish universities. Journalists wrote about activities that aimed at making Łódź a university city and about more important events from the life of Polish universities. Fewer accounts focused on academics; however, a great part of articles showed individual and non-typical student behaviour that was sometimes hard to accept, such as suicidal attempts, conflicts with law, or organising anti-Semitic manifestations by right-wing students for almost the whole interwar period. This article does not provide a complete picture of higher education and the academic community before World War II, as it presents only those facts and events that were described in the newspaper. However, it may be useful as a basic source for broader studies concerning higher education in the past.

**Keywords:** universities, academics, students, “Ilustrowana Republika”, Poland between the World Wars

The task of newspapers is to provide readers with information about the most important events taking place domestically and internationally. The selection of content depends on the policy adopted by the editors, which is a set of ideological assumptions and goals. Those principles determine which of the acquired information will be published in a newspaper and which will be omitted, and whether specific information needs a commentary or not. They also determine where in a newspaper the respective texts will be positioned: on the first page, if a text is very important, or on subsequent pages, if a text is not so important. These principles govern not only the contemporary market of daily newspapers, but they were also applied in the past. They also applied to the “Ilustrowana Republika”

daily newspaper, which was published from 1925 to 1939 in Łódź by the “Republika” (Republic) corporation. The main of the five shareholders and the CEO was the manufacturer Maurycy Ignacy Poznański<sup>1</sup>. The company, alongside such publishers as Pałac Pracy in Kraków, chaired by Marian Dąbrowski, Dom Prasy in Warsaw, founded by Henryk Budkiewicz and Antoni Lewandowski or Drukarnia Polska SA in Poznań, managed by Roman Leitgeber, was one of the largest publisher of popular press in Poland. According to Wiesław Władyk, the characteristic feature of the publishers of popular pressed, also called mass-circulation press was that: *They knew how to satisfy the expectations and tastes of readers, and how to make a good use of the political situation, making sure that no hasty policy demonstration affects their popularity*<sup>2</sup>.

This type of newspapers, although they called themselves apolitical, would often support propaganda campaigns or the views of larger political parties. This was the case with “Ilustrowana Republika”, which, not being formally associated with any of the parties, after the May coup supported the governing party, and avoided criticising it or even sometimes expressed positive opinions about the policies of the central authorities<sup>3</sup>. Its founders: Marian Nusbaum-Ostaszewski – editor-in-chief, Leszek Kirkien, editor of the economic section and Władysław Polak, editor of the local section, created a newspaper addressed mainly to richer inhabitants of Łódź, the purpose of which was to provide readers with quick access to political, economic, social, educational, cultural and sport news, both local, domestic and international. They paid special attention to the problem of poverty in the city, caused by the great economic crisis of the 1930s, the condition of local education, the situation of teachers and pupils<sup>4</sup>, and university affairs. Concerning the latter topic, in the fifteen years of the existence of the newspaper, it published more than 440 articles and notes about university education.

“Ilustrowana Republika” was keenly interested in the creation of universities in Łódź. Each, even minor hint on this subject was duly reported. In May 1928, it was sadly noted that the grant request submitted to the Sejm of the Republic of Poland by a member of the Polish People’s Party “Liberation”, Antoni Langer, for the foundation of a technical university was rejected by the majority of votes of the Budget Committee<sup>5</sup>. Five months later, a similar request, and to a similar effect, was made by the Executive Committee for

<sup>1</sup> PACZKOWSKI, A., “Prasa polska w latach 1918–1939”, Warszawa 1980, p. 167–169; WŁADYKA, W., “Prasa Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej”, in: J. ŁOJEK, J. MYŚLIŃSKI, W. WŁADYKA, “Dzieje prasy polskiej”, Warszawa 1988, p. 111–114; HRYCEK, M., “Stosunki w łódzkiej prasie okresu międzywojennego. Polemika prasowa na łamach łódzkich dzienników na przykładzie “Głosu Polskiego” i koncernu Republiki”, *Folia Litteraria Polonica* 2011, no. 1, p. 10–11; “Przegląd prasy łódzkiej”, *Ilustrowana Encyklopedia Historii Łodzi*, no year, issue no. 9, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> WŁADYKA, W., “Prasa...”, p. 111.

<sup>3</sup> C.f. e.g. PACZKOWSKI, A., “Prasa polska...”, p. 169.

<sup>4</sup> C.f. e.g. MICHALSKA, I., “Życie łódzkich rodzin w czasach kryzysu ekonomicznego lat trzydziestych XX wieku w przekazie gazety “Ilustrowana Republika”, *Wychowanie w Rodzinie* 2016, no. 2, vol. XIV, p. 195–208; also, “Sprawy szkolnictwa nauczycieli i uczniów w łódzkim dzienniku “Ilustrowana Republika” w latach 1925–1939”, *Przegląd Historyczno-Oświatowy* 2017, no. 3–4, p. 150–168.

<sup>5</sup> “Łódź nie otrzyma politechniki”, *Ilustrowana Republika* (hereinafter: IR) 1928, no. 131, p. 1.

the Celebrations of the 10th Anniversary of Independence, comprising, among others, the Deputy Voivode, the Mayor of Łódź, the Regional Superintendent of Schools and representatives of the Catholic and Protestant Church, and the Jewish qahal. The Committee adopted a resolution stating that, in order to commemorate the liberation of the Polish State, an academic institute should be founded in Łódź. Not specifying the expected type of university, it was declared that all efforts will be taken without delay, before 11th November. The newspaper reported that event and commented on it in the following way: *Concerning the nature of the university – it goes without saying that it should be a technical university. Only a technical university can meet the needs of an industrial centre*<sup>6</sup>. “Ilustrowana Republika” once again, in 1931, discussed the need for a technical university in Łódź, reminding that its plan, developed in 1864, was close to being implemented in subsequent years. A plot of land for the university building was allocated and a call for proposals for its design was completed. Meanwhile, a temporary building was rented and adapted for academic purposes, a chemical laboratory was set up, necessary research equipment was purchased, and a library was established. The laborious statutes provided for four years of studies in civil engineering, mining engineering and mechanics and technology, and 12 professorial chairs were to be founded. When a draft project was submitted to Petersburg for approval, Russian central authorities put a stop on it for political and economic reasons, fearing an accumulation of students among working-class circles and cautious about the promotion of education and development of a competitive industry in the Kingdom. The newspaper, referring to the long history of struggles for a technical university in Łódź as well as more recent events that took place a few years before, in the country that was once again independent, wrote sarcastically: *Łódź did not have a technical university back in the year 1865 (38,000 inhabitants). It still does not have one 60 years later, in 1931 (600,000 inhabitants)*<sup>7</sup>.

On the other hand, a branch of the Warsaw private university Wolna Wszechnica Polska (WWP) was successfully established in Łódź. The first note about that project was published in May 1928, saying that the Magistrate started preparations for opening a branch of that university in the next academic year. A special-purpose “working group” was appointed in order to cooperate with the authorities of the Warsaw University, recruit academic personnel and ensure appropriate premises and financing sources. In the same month, the newspaper reported a visit of the Warsaw WWP university, Teodor Vieweger in the Łódź City Hall to discuss the organisational and financial issues of the project<sup>8</sup>. The event triggered a press discussion on the purposefulness of this particular academic establishment. On the one hand, a longing for a university was expressed,

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<sup>6</sup> “Wyższa uczelnia w Łodzi zostanie założona dla upamiętnienia wielkiej chwili – odzyskania niepodległości. Uniwersytet, czy politechnika?”, IR, 1928, no. 27 [act. 273], p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> JÓZ. LIT., “Projekt politechniki w Łodzi był już całkowicie opracowany i bliski realizacji w 1864-tym. Dlaczego dotychczas nie uczyniono nic w tym kierunku?”, IR, 1931, no. 103, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> “Wolna wszechnica w Łodzi”, IR, 1928, no. 132, p. 7; “Wolna wszechnica w Łodzi”, IR, 1928, no. 141, p. 5; “Wszechnica w Łodzi”, IR, 1928, no. 173, p. 5; “Pierwsza wyższa uczelnia w Łodzi”, IR, 1928, no. 184, p. 7.

which would increase the city's prestige, but, on the other hand, the industrial nature of the city suggested that a technical university would be more appropriate. In both cases, the fact that there were no local academics cooled the enthusiasm. It was concluded, with regret but also with hope, that a branch of the Warsaw university would have to suffice for the time being<sup>9</sup>.

Thanks to serious engagement and huge effort of the Łódź and Warsaw "parties", from successful negotiations to specific actions, on 28 October 1928, the university, frequently referred to as "a new type of university", was officially opened. "Ilustrowana Republika" reported that, in the presence of the cultural elites of Łódź, local authorities, delegates of student associations from Warsaw and the Vice Minister for Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment, Sławomir Czerwiński, the opening speech was given by Teodor Vieweger, who emphasised the importance of the academic circles quickly responding to the needs of the changing reality. He explained: *The role of universities is becoming increasingly important, as they are responsible for supplying the community with a sufficient number of human resources with relevant academic qualifications. This, of course, means that universities must adapt to the current challenges posed by real life. We are far from modelling our university on mediaeval institutions. Today, life generates new kinds of universities*<sup>10</sup>. The meeting ended with a lecture on social hygiene prepared by Seweryn Sterling, PhD and the *Gaudeamus igitur* hymn<sup>11</sup>.

According to press releases, the university in Łódź initially offered studies at three faculties: Humanities (Polish studies, history, philosophy), Political and Social Science (law, economics) and Educational Sciences. The Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences was opened soon after. In 1929, the university acquired rights thanks to which its diplomas were equivalent to diplomas of public universities. It also managed a Business College, which focused mainly on accounting. Initially, it was planned to open a College of Polish Culture, and in the late 1930s, preparations were made to start a Faculty of Chemistry

According to the "Ilustrowana Republika", the university personnel consisted of nearly 50 professors from Warsaw and the local academic resources, mainly working as teaching assistants or giving lectures on specific topics. A vast majority, i.e. 88% of the students of the Łódź branch were the residents of Łódź, and the other students came from the nearby area<sup>12</sup>. It is worth noting that the nationality of students and the purposefulness of the University's existence in the "Promised Land" was questioned in 1935 by the National Party, which raised a motion on the City Council meeting to withdraw the

<sup>9</sup> Cf. e.g. H.P., "Ani uniwersytet, ani politechnika!", IR, 1928, no. 275, p. 7; "Uniwersytet czy politechnika", IR, 1928, no. 276, p. 7; "Jakie względy przemawiają na korzyść założenia w Łodzi uniwersytetu", IR, 1928, no. 276, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> "Historyczna chwila dla Łodzi. Uroczyste otwarcie oddziału Wolnej Wszechnicy", IR, 1928, no. 300, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> H.P., "Mamy uniwersytet w Łodzi", IR, 1928, no. 278, p. 7; "Otwarcie wszechnicy w Łodzi", IR, 1928, no. 299, p. 3; "Historyczna chwila dla Łodzi. Uroczyste...", p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> "Na Uniwersytecie Łódzkim. Wszechnica ...", p. 7; "10-lecie Wolnej Wszechnicy...", p. 7. Cf. also: "Skład osobowy i spis wykładów na rok akademicki 1936/37", Łódź 1936, p. 6–9.

100,000 PLN grant for the University. It was justified by the fact that most students were Jews and that those who were interested in higher education could go to other cities to study. Responding to those arguments, the newspaper quoted some numbers, according to which: most students were the children of blue-collar or white-collar workers, which were not wealthy enough to afford their children studying in distant locations. On the 10th anniversary of Łódź University, the words of its Rector, T. Vieweger, describing the community of students were quoted. He said that 35% of students were children of physical workers, 26% – children from industrial and trade circles, 18% – children of white-collar workers, 14% – farmers' children, 7% – other professional groups, and more than 81% of them all were Christians<sup>13</sup>

In the first year of its existence, the WWP University in Łódź had more than 250 students, one year later – 345 students, and in 1932 – over 400. The relatively low number of students, compared to public universities, in the opinion of the university authorities expressed in the newspaper, was due to quite high fees, which, in the first years of education, in the academic year 1928/1929, was 260, the next year – 320 zlotys per year, and in the 5th and 6th term of studies it was 360 zlotys.

In 1932, a year of studies cost around 320 zlotys, and three years later appr. 280 zlotys. On the other hand, Sławomir Maj from the University in Warsaw, the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences says that the fees ranged from 160 to 80 zlotys per term, and they reduced with each subsequent year of studies<sup>14</sup>.

Not having its own premises, Łódź university rented rooms in a primary school building at 24 Dra Seweryna Sterlinga Street and in the Public Technical and Industrial School at 115 Żeromskiego Street. In the late 1930s, "Ilustrowana Republika" journalists reported that the WWP university started erecting a large building at P./O.W. Street, under the direct supervision of the architect Marian Lalewicz, Professor of the Technical University of Warsaw. The plot for this purpose was donated free of charge by the company *Stiller i Bielezowski*. On 11 December 1937, in the presence of the Minister of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment, Wojciech Świętosławski, the cornerstone of that building was consecrated. The building, with lecture, seminar and tutorial rooms, workshops, libraries and offices for more than a thousand students was to be put into service in 1939.<sup>15</sup>

Few of the notes published in the newspaper suggest that the University in Łódź was sometimes criticised by the right-wing circles. In response to them, the newspaper quoted Reverend Professor Antoni Roszkowski, who said: *I don't know why this university is called "masonic". I am a priest [...] and I declare that nowhere else have I ever had such*

<sup>13</sup> "Zamknięcia Wolnej Wszechnicy domagać się będzie frakcja narodowa w radzie miejskiej", IR, 1935, no. 11, p. 5; "Prawda o Wolnej Wszechnicy", IR, 1935, no. 87, p. 8; "10-lecie Wolnej Wszechnicy...", p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> H.P., "Mamy uniwersytet...", 7; "Rozwój Wszechnicy łódzkiej", IR, 1929, no. 170, p. 4; MAJ, S., "Studia geograficzne w Wolnej Wszechnicy Polskiej w Warszawie 1918–1939", *Przegląd Geograficzny* 2013, no. 3–4, p. 222–223; *Rozwój Wszechnicy łódzkiej*, IR, 1930, no. 241, p. 7.

<sup>15</sup> "10-lecie Wolnej Wszechnicy...", p. 7; "Gmach Wolnej Wszechnicy stanie na placu zaofiarowanym przez f-mę "Stiller i Bielezowski", IR, 1936, no. 128, p. 9.

*freedom of teaching as I have at this university*<sup>16</sup>. The university's good name was also defended by students, who organised a rally, responding to an appeal published in February 1939 by the Organisational Committee of the new Medical Academy, which informed the residents that this initiative would turn Łódź into a university city. A resolution was passed that reminded of the history and achievements of the university and ended with the following appeal: *The academic youth of Łódź University firmly declares that they will not let their university to be disregarded and that they will fiercely react against any unjustified resentments, and they disagree that Łódź "will finally become a university city", because it already has a university, and a prospering one*<sup>17</sup>.

Despite the foundation of the Private University in Łódź, "Ilustrowana Republika" continued publishing articles according to which various local circles demanded more universities in order for the city to function properly. In 1930, manufacturers stated that a higher school of textiles was needed to educate weaving and dyeing engineers. They addressed relevant memorials to the Ministry of Education and the presidium of the Council of Ministers, offering specific help in the case of their positive decision, which, however, was not made before the outbreak of World War II<sup>18</sup>. Seven years later, the Chamber of Commerce proposed creating a higher school of business modelled on the Business University in Warsaw (WSH). However, it was decided that the school in Łódź should reflect the local conditions and educate mainly future managers of industrial and business enterprises. The newspaper reported all the efforts made by the organisational committee to create the university. They met with WSH professors in Warsaw to develop the school statutes and curriculum, and with officers at the Ministry of Religious Development and Public Enlightenment as well as with Minister W. Świątosławski in order to gain the government approval for the project. It was determined that the WSH in Łódź would first be a private or social university, and would become public a few years later, and that it would ensure a high educational level so as to be able to award academic titles to its graduates. In May 1938, the Organisational Committee, considering the time needed to obtain the necessary licenses, rent premises, hire lecturers and raise funds, passed a resolution to open the school in the autumn of 1939<sup>19</sup>.

The history of establishing the Medical Academy in Łódź was quite different. "Ilustrowana Republika" reported the discussions concerning that project as well as its progress. According to all the news reports, it was not the idea of the local circles, but rather of the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment, the Ministry of Military Affairs and the Ministry of Labour and Social Care that to create the new univer-

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>17</sup> "Protest studentów W.W. P. w Łodzi", IR, 1939, no. 57, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> "Wyższa szkoła włókiennicza ma powstać w Łodzi w najbliższym czasie", IR, 1930, no. 112, p. 5; "Wyższa uczelnia w Łodzi ma powstać, dzięki staraniom przemysłu", IR, 1930, no. 238, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> "Akademia Handlowa w Łodzi", IR, 1937, no. 316, p. 5; "O Wyższą Uczelnię Handlową w Łodzi", IR, 1938, no. 98, p. 5; "Dwie wyższe uczelnie mają być uruchomione w przyszłym roku szkolnym", IR, 1938, no. 128, p. 8; "Wyższa Szkoła Handlowa w Łodzi będzie uruchomiona na jesieni roku 1939", IR, 1938, no. 145, p. 5.

sity to educate military physicians. It was to become a part of the future Łódź University, which would also teach civilian physicians. The reason for establishing the university was catastrophic lack of medical doctors across the country. The 12,660 physicians and 1,950 feldshers (paramedics) were not able to ensure adequate health care for the population of Poland. Łódź was chosen for two basic reasons: first, the city had all kinds of hospitals (including venereal, for TB patients, surgical, with infectious diseases wards, the total of 2,500 beds, and a specialist hospital for 500 mentally ill patients), necessary for student training, and secondly – proximity to the capital, i.e. 1.5 hour by train, which made it easier to recruit professors from the Medical Faculty of Warsaw University. At first, the idea was to create a Medical Department at the Private University in Łódź, but this was not approved by the Warsaw and Krakow medical circles. Another idea was to create a Military Medical Academy or a Medical College as a branch of the Medical Faculty of Warsaw University. The final decision, however, was to establish an autonomous Medical Academy. There were some opponents, who claimed that a Medical Faculty should be opened at the existing Lublin University, or that a college should be established in Przemyśl, due to its proximity to Jan Kazimierz University in Lvov, or in one of the cities of the Central Industrial District. Also, medical faculties in Lvov, Warsaw and Vilnius protested in the ministry, claiming that the funds allocated to Łódź should rather be given to them, to expand the existing institutions. Also, the rally organised by the Physicians Club of Poznań University passed a resolution, which expressed disagreement, among other things, to violating the long tradition of establishing medical faculties at existing universities, and a concern that the Łódź academy would not be able to provide medical doctors with the necessary knowledge and skills. The Civic Committee for the establishment of the academy appointed a presidium of the executive committee and a Financial Committee, which immediately started consultations with professors of medicine concerning the most important aspects of the functioning of the academy, and with architects – concerning a design of the academy building. Meanwhile, negotiations were held with the municipal authorities to accelerate the process of donating 15 acres of land in Radogoszcz for the academy building. Finally, it was decided that the Academy would be located at Narutowicza Street and that a campus would be built in the near future. The central authorities granted 2 million zlotys for the building, on the condition that the same amount would be contributed by the local community. The newspaper, reporting the information to the readers, at one point noted with concern that the construction work could be postponed because of prolonged fundraising among the residents of Łódź. In April 1939, The Ministry of Labour and Social care urged to accelerate the construction work so that it would be ready for autumn courses. However, the Board of the Civic Committee decided that, because of shortage of time, the academic year would start in rented premises. The academy was to be financed by the central government and by the city, which promised to grant 180,000 zlotys a year for bursaries, especially for working-class youth undertaking medical studies in Łódź. It was planned that each year, the Academy in Łódź would promote 200 physicians<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> “Dwie wyższe uczelnie mają być uruchomione...”, p. 8; “Wyższa Uczelnia Lekarska ma powstać w Łodzi”, IR, 1938, no. 194, p. 5; “Akademia Lekarska w Łodzi”, IR, 1938, no. 196, p. 5; “Utworzenie Akademii

“Ilustrowana Republika”, even though it did not omit events that took place at universities in other cities, rarely informed about them. There were a few articles and notes about Warsaw University, in the first place about the inauguration of the academic year 1926, attended, among others, by the President of Poland, Ignacy Mościcki, Prelate Aleksander Fajęcki representing Cardinal Aleksander Krakowski, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, rectors of the Technical University, University of Business and University of Life Sciences, former Prime Minister Władysław Grabski and representatives of central and local authorities, the army, scholars and students. The Rector, professor Stefan Pieńkowski, in a report on the previous year described the university’s difficult financial situation, which resulted in a Senate resolution on suspending student recruitment for the year 1926/1927, unless the situation changes. To balance the budget, he had to close down three departments and dismiss six assistants and four administrative workers<sup>21</sup>. Also, short information was published concerning formal university admission criteria, such as submission of graduation certificate, CV and clean criminal record<sup>22</sup>. In July 1935, it was reported that the university was going to change its name from Warsaw University to the Warsaw University of Józef Piłsudski, and one year later – that the new Auditorium Maximum was consecrated<sup>23</sup>. Also, rectorial elections in 1936/1937–1938/1939 were reported, in which two elects, professor Stefan Pieńkowski and professor Franciszek Czubalski, refused to take the office. In the third round of the elections, the position was accepted by professor Włodzimierz Antoniewicz<sup>24</sup>.

The Łódź newspaper also wrote about the University of Life Sciences in Warsaw and Poznań University.

In the first case, the article concerned rumors about closing down the university due to the fact that the Rural Academy in Dublany and relevant faculties in Krakow, Poznań and Vilnius, as well as multiple rural courses offered a sufficient number of places for students, and because in times of economic crisis, the number of candidates for this type of studies decreased, and graduates had problems finding adequate employment<sup>25</sup>. In the latter case, there were articles about the ceremony of granting the title of doctor honoris cau-

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Lekarskiej”, IR 1939, no. 215, p. 5; “Akademia Lekarska w Łodzi”, IR 1938, no. 204, p. 5; “Akademia Lekarska w Łodzi ma być uruchomiona już w przyszłym roku”, IR, 1938, no. 247, p. 5; “Strajk akademików w Poznaniu”, IR, 1938, no. 296, p. 7; “Akademia Lekarska w Łodzi powstanie już od następnego roku akademickiego tj. w październiku 1939 r.”, IR, 1938, no. 275, p. 5; “Budowa uczelni lekarskiej w Łodzi”, IR, 1939, no. 70, p. 5; “Akademia Lekarska w Łodzi będzie utworzona”, IR, 1939, no. 82, p. 6; “Budowa Akademii Lekarskiej odroczone”, IR, 1939, no. 96, p. 5; “Akademia Lekarska w Łodzi będzie utworzona”, IR, 1939, no. 108, p. 5; “Akademia Lekarska w Łodzi będzie utworzona na razie w budynku wynajętym”, IR, 1939, no. 115, p. 5; “Osiedle uniwersyteckie w Łodzi”, IR, 1939, no. 141, p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> “Wczoraj Uniwersytet Warszawski święcił inaugurację swego dwunastego roku akademickiego”, IR, 1926, no. 296, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> “Zapisy na Uniwersytet Warszawski”, IR, 1927, no. 232, p. 6.

<sup>23</sup> “Nowy Gmach uniwersytecki w Warszawie”, IR, 1936 no. 19, p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> “Nazwa Uniwersytetu warszawskiego będzie zmieniona w drodze dekretu Prezydenta Rzplitej”, IR, 1935, no. 204, p. 4.

<sup>25</sup> “Szkoła Główna Gospodarstwa Wiejskiego” w Warszawie będzie zlikwidowana”, IR, 1933, no. 165, p. 2.



sa by the Senate of Poznań University to Marshal Józef Piłsudski in 1933, and a note that in 1935, the Rector gave a diploma to the Minister of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment Konstanty Chyliński confirming the above title, and asked him to deliver it to Marshal Piłsudski<sup>26</sup>.

The newspaper had little interest in both the universities across the country and the personnel of universities. It reported their different behaviour, sometimes controversial, sometimes brave and far from opportunism. The journalists did not fail to note an open letter published in Warsaw newspapers by engineer Stanisław Sarnowski, accusing professor of Warsaw Technical University Gustaw Mokrzycki of plagiarism, namely that he copied in his book the work of international researchers. Since the professor did not respond to accusations, the Łódź journalists published the following comment: *We believe that the professorial body should react and force their colleague to explain the very unpleasant and disgracing case*<sup>27</sup>. Another time, it was reported that a patient filed a suit against a physician – professor of Jagiellonian University January Zubrzycki, who, in her opinion, after performing an abortion due to a heart disease, against the council of physicians and without the patient's consent, performed another operation due to some complications, causing her subsequent infertility<sup>28</sup>. Another court case concerned a dispute between a student of Warsaw University and a radiologist who infected her with a venereal disease and left to marry another person<sup>29</sup>. The newspaper reported yet another court case, this time between scholars of Poznań University. Professor Józef Kostrzewski sued professor Czesław Znamierowski for defamation. The situation that resulted in the conflict took place during a lecture given at the university by Juliusz Kaden-Bandrowski, when a group of students in a loud rogue manner manifested their opinions about the writer. Professor Znamierowski, believing that the ringleader of the incident was his colleague, slapped him in his face with indignation. Despite pleas for an amicable settlement made by the rector and the city court, the case resulted in trial, following which the defendant was sentenced to three days of arrest<sup>30</sup>.

Vivid interest of university professors in the political situation in Poland was reported on the first pages of "Ilustrowana Republika". In December 1930, a manifesto issued by the personnel of Warsaw Technical University on the events in Brest, signed by 44 professors, 8 junior professors and several dozen assistants was reprinted in the newspaper. It said: *There are events in the life of states and nations, when people engaged in professional work who distance themselves from politics cannot remain silent. For the last few weeks, the whole society has been deeply moved by news of unbelievable offences committed against the inmates of Brest prison by administrative authorities. [...] We appeal, for the sake of*

<sup>26</sup> "Marszałek Piłsudski honorowym doktorem Uniwersytetu Poznańskiego", IR, 1933, no. 315, p. 1; "Uniwersytet Poznański w hołdzie Wodzowi Narodu", IR, 1935, no. 290, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> "Skandal w świecie naukowym", IR, 1928, no. 219, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> "Profesor uniwersytetu w Krakowie oskarżony przez pacjentkę", IR, 1933, no. 203, p. 10.

<sup>29</sup> "Romans doktora ze studentką skończył się przed kratkami sądowymi", IR, 1934, no. 84, p. 5.

<sup>30</sup> "Profesor uniwersytetu skazany za obrazę swego kolegi", IR, 1930, no. 309, p. 2.

public good and honour of the Republic, to competent authorities to investigate the case as soon as possible and punish the culprits<sup>31</sup>. Similar opinion was expressed by 44 professors of Warsaw University, who asked all scholars serving as Members of the Parliament to *prevent offences against human dignity in the Parliament and to prevent the fall of morality, the like of the incidents in Brest represented*<sup>32</sup>. Fourteen professors of Warsaw University, led by professor Leon Petrażycki, disagreed with the form and rationale of the manifest and issued their own statement, requesting immediate investigation into the situation of Brest prisoners<sup>33</sup>. Also, many academics reacted against anti-Semitic manifestations of ultra-nationalist students, fiercely opposing to the “bench ghetto” at universities. In late 1935, professors of Lvov Technical University condemned manifestations against the Jewish minority. Two years later, in October, fifty professors and junior professors of various universities in Warsaw unanimously disagreed to introducing separate benches for Jews and declared to take actions to prevent such situations in the Future, and in December of the same year, professors of Warsaw, Poznań and Vilnius universities signed a joint appeal for the prevention of any limitations of civic freedoms on the grounds of religious denomination, nationality or race. In January 1938, the protest was joined by university teachers from Lvov, who disapproved of the legalisation by the university Senate of the terror imposed by ultra-right wing youth. Professor Tadeusz Kotarbiński, to manifest his solidarity with Jewish students, taught his classes standing<sup>34</sup>. In an atmosphere of unrest at universities, ultra-nationalist students assaulted the professor of Lvov Technical University, Kazimierz Bartel and beat up the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities of Warsaw University, professor Marceli Handelsman, and the Rector of Jan Kazimierz University in Lvov, professor Stanisław Kuczyński, resigned from office, protesting against being pressed to approve of the discrimination of Jewish youth<sup>35</sup>.

Łódź newspaper was vividly interested in information about students. It was not so much about showing their daily life, but rather reporting issues that did not conform with the typical image of an academic as a well-behaved person who avoids bad company, complies with social principles and is dedicated to learning. “Ilustrowana Republika” on the one hand presented their individual, atypical, sometimes unacceptable behaviour and regular conflicts with the law, but on the other hand – their firm manifestations of ideological and political opinions.

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<sup>31</sup> “Brześć-etyka-polityka. Protest profesorów uniwersytetu i politechniki warszawskiej”, IR, 1930, no. 351, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>33</sup> “Profesorowie wobec sprawy brzeskiej”, IR, 1930, no. 352, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> “Profesorowie politechniki lwowskiej potępiają gwałty dokonywane na mniejszości żydowskiej”, IR, 1935, no. 352, p. 1; “Profesorowie przeciwko ghettu”, IR 1937, no. 299, p. 1; “Profesorowie przeciwko ghetto ławkowemu”, IR, 1937, no. 353, p. 6; “Protest profesorów lwowskich przeciwko ghettu”, IR, 1938, no. 21, p. 4; “Profesor Kotarbiński wykląda stojąc”, IR, 1937, no. 298, p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> “Brutalny napad na profesora Bartla”, IR, 1932, no. 139, p. 1; “Echa napadu na profesora Bartla”, IR, 1932, no. 141, p. 1; “Sprawcy pobicia prof. Handelsmana w areszcie”, IR, 1934, no. 78, p. 1; “Rektor Kulczyński ustępuje”, IR, 1937, no. 299, p. 1.

The death of students, e.g. of Warsaw University, Warsaw Technical University, Jagiellonian University, Poznań University, Vilnius University, Lublin University, Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow, University of Life Sciences in Warsaw or University of Agriculture in Cieszyn was frequently reported by the newspaper. The main reason of death among students were suicides. Their reasons were not always known. It could be unhappy love, as in the case of a student from Warsaw, who wrote in his farewell letter: *I will never stop loving you and I will always be at your side. Goodbye!*<sup>36</sup>, despair caused by premature loss of hair in a philosophy student, which she confessed to her girl friend<sup>37</sup>, nervous breakdown<sup>38</sup> or lack of any moral support<sup>39</sup>.

Men often shot themselves in the head or jumped under a train, women – jumped from a high building or poisoned themselves with gas. In one of the cases reported by the newspaper, suicide followed a murder of a girl friend. The newspaper also mentioned rumors of disgraceful participation in those incidents of a member of the university staff, who hypnotised students to force them to make a quick and final decision about their lives. It was noted that a large number of students attending his lectures made suicidal attempts. This stopped happening when he was absent from work for a long period of time<sup>40</sup>.

Sometimes, students were also fatal victims of accidents. They usually happened during summer holidays or half-term breaks. Tragedies took place in the mountains, at the seaside, by lakes or rivers, during horse rides or a fatal slide down the banister in a student dormitory.

“Ilustrowana Republika” also reported that a certain group of academic youth committed acts that are unworthy of a student or a human being. Those were ethical transgressions, offences or even serious crimes. Two university students turned out to be matrimonial fraudsters. Agronomy student from Poznań University, despite declarations and preparations for wedding, in the last moment resigned from marriage. Also, a future physician, whose education had been for many years sponsored by a dressmaker, having graduated from university, said that his love for her had faded away and that he would not marry her as promised<sup>41</sup>. Another reprehensible act was the removal of a typewriter from a rented apartment by a student of Warsaw University. When he hastily left the apartment, he left a note stating that he would return the typewriter as soon as he finished copying his

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<sup>36</sup> “Samobójstwo studenta”, IR, 1928, no. 98, p. 7; “Tragiczna miłość młodego studenta”, IR, 1931, no. 73, p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> “Samobójstwo studentki uniwersytetu”, IR, 1927, no. 123, p. 7.

<sup>38</sup> “Samobójstwo studenta w Warszawie”, IR, 1929, no. 89, p. 4.

<sup>39</sup> “Samobójstwo młodej studentki”, IR, 1932, no. 345, p. 5.

<sup>40</sup> “Straszliwe samobójstwo studentki”, IR, 1929, no. 341, “Samobójstwo studenta”, IR, 1930, no. 139, p. 5; “Samobójstwo studenta w Łodzi”, IR, 1930, no. 271, p. 5; “Straszne samobójstwo studenta wileńskiego”, IR, 1932, no. 324, p. 4; “Student zastrzelił studentkę i popełnił samobójstwo”, IR, 1936, no. 152, p. 5; “Tajemnicze samobójstwa studentów”, IR, 1929, no. 206, p. 5.

<sup>41</sup> “Student uciekł przed ślubem”, IR, 1933, no. 225, p. 3; “Student przyrzekł, że się ożeni”, IR, 1937, no. 356, p. 7.

academic paper<sup>42</sup>. Sometimes, students would commit financial fraud, e.g. paying for shares with bounced checks or falsifying court verdicts to gain financial advantage<sup>43</sup>.

When reporting student participation in robberies, the newspaper informed that some of them stole valuable objects and money from their landlords, others were leaders or members of thief gangs that robbed currency exchange offices in a methodically planned manner, or stole jewelry, fur, underwear and surgical tools from summer cottages in Warsaw suburbs. Twice, they even broke into their own universities. One such robbery happened in autumn 1939, and it involved stealing, over a couple of days, 15 microscopes, three projectors and precious instruments from the university dissection room of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences. The other time was in winter 1938, when an organised group lead by a student from a wealthy family of landowners stole 14 microscopes from the University of Life Sciences. They did this based on film scenarios about robberies<sup>44</sup>.

Also, the Łódź newspaper scrupulously reported news of the most serious crimes committed by university students. There was the case of a 16-year-old girl shot by her student friend, when she came into the firing line, in a shaded place, while he was shooting at an aggressive dog, and the infamous murder by a law student of his fiancé dancer in a dressing room in the “Ananas” theatre in Warsaw. A student of H. Wawelberg and Rotwand university shot his own mother with a gun, and a couple of young people, including two students of the Academy of Fine Arts murdered a servant of the doctor of medicine at Jagiellonian University, Józef Nussenfeld during armed robbery.

Nearly one-third of all the articles about universities and academic circles were accounts, or sometimes detailed reports, according to which, during the twenty years between the World Wars, universities became an “arena” for battles of various political ideologies and negative attitude to “others” arising from those ideologies. Those were not peaceful debates between the respective rationales, but rather turbulent manifestations and rallies that usually turned into fights or bloody street combats or violence at universities. The titles of the articles published in the Łódź newspaper suggest their nature and scope. Here are some of them: “Incidents at Warsaw University”, “Student fights in Warsaw after a National Democracy rally”, “National Democracy brawls in Lvov”, “Fight at Jagiellonian University”, “Police and students clash in Warsaw”, “Bloody student excesses in Warsaw”, “Student excesses in Lvov and Vilnius”, “More incidents at universities”, “Bloody incidents at the University of Business”, “Incidents at Wawelberg and Rotwand University”. Similar situations happened also at the Warsaw Technical University and Warsaw University of Life Sciences. At the core of those unrests were anti-Jewish attitudes of ultra-nationalist youth,

<sup>42</sup> “Ukradł w celach naukowych”, IR, 1934, no. 301, p. 6.

<sup>43</sup> “Dwaj studenci oszuści skazani zostali na 2 lata więzienia, IR, 1927, no. 283, p. 4; “Student prawa sfałszował podpisy”, IR, 1927, no. 111, p. 8.

<sup>44</sup> “Student-bandyta skazany na bezterminowe ciężkie więzienie”, IR, 1926, no. 269, p. 2; “Student na czele bandy złodziejskiej”, IR, 1930, no. 295, p. 3; “Student członkiem szajki złodziejskiej”, IR, 1932, no. 10, p. 2; “Studenci okradali uczelnie”, IR, 1937, no. 324, p. 5; “Student okradał wyższą uczelnię”, IR, 1938, no. 47, p. 5.

later, in the 1930s, associated with the National and Radical Party. Their primary objective was to introduce *numerus clausus* at Polish universities, limiting the admission of Jews, and to impose the “bench ghetto”, forcing Jewish students to sit in separate places designated for them. According to newspaper accounts, fights erupted when ultra-right wing students attacked Jewish youth, or when the latter defended their own rights, or then Polish youth of other political orientations stood up to defend their Jewish colleagues. The incidents, which often involved police interventions and arrests of their most active participants, repeated closures of universities or suspension of lectures, usually resulted in numerous casualties. Students also expressed their dissatisfaction by organising strikes. Some of them did it as a sign of solidarity with the Jewish community, others to defend their colleagues, detained for demanding separate benches for Jews. Sometimes, it happened, for example in Poznań, that students destroyed Jewish shops or broke windows in a synagogue. In Warsaw, a group of National Democracy students from Warsaw University, Technical University and the University of Business entered a lecture at the Private University and called the Polish youth to join the fight for the “bench ghetto”, and forced the Jewish students to sit on the left side of the room<sup>45</sup>.

The events took place more or less often throughout the entire twenty years between the World Wars, with few breaks. In January 1938, “*Ilustrowana Republika*” published the appeal of the general assembly of the professors of Lvov Technical University to the academic youth to stop escalating the violence.

*It says: Universities should be in every nation the centre of the nation's ideas and scientific efforts, regardless of the influence of political life. Violation of this right undermines the most important heritage of social culture. In the life of the universities of Lvov, the time has come when true care for the Polish future urges the general assembly of*

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<sup>45</sup> Because of a large number of articles concerning this issue, only some of them will be mentioned here. Cf. e.g. “Nowe zajęcia w Krakowie”, IR, 1929, no. 341 [act. 314], p. 1; “Zajęcia na terenie Uniwersytetu warszawskiego”, IR, 1928, no. 324, p. 1; “Bójka na Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim”, IR, 1928, no. 285, p. 3; “Starcia policji ze studentami we Lwowie”, IR, 1929, no. 68, p. 1; “Awantury studentów we Lwowie”, IR 1929, no. 154, p. 1; “Echa wypadków lwowskich”, IR, 1929, no. 150, p. 1; “Walki na ulicach Lwowa”, IR, 1929, no. 156, p. 1; “Skandaliczne zajęcia w Poznaniu”, IR, 1929 no. 156, p.1; “Uniwersytet krakowski zamknięty”, IR, 1931, no. 297, p. 3; “Ekscesy antyżydowskie studentów w Warszawie”, IR, 1931, no. 302, p. 1; “Zajęcia w uniwersytecie w Wilnie”, IR, 1931, no. 303, p. 1; “Wniosek endecji o numerus clausus na wyższych uczelniach”, IR, 1932, no. 64, p. 1; “Zawieszenie wykładów na politechnice lwowskiej”, IR, 1932, no. 142, p. 1; “Wystąpienia antysemickie studentów”, IR, 1932, no. 143, p. 1; “Nowe ekscesy studentów endekich”, IR, 1933, no. 38, p. 2; “Awantury na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim”, IR, 1933, no. 54, p. 1; “Zawieszenie wykładów na SGW i Politechnice Warszawskiej”, IR, 1933, no. 314, p. 2; “Zawieszenie wykładów na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim”, IR, 1934, no. 74, p. 1; “Zajęcia na uniwersytecie w Krakowie”, IR, 1943, no. 313, p. 1; “Burdy studenckie na wyższych uczelniach we Lwowie i Krakowie”, IR, 1935, no. 315, p. 4; “Zajęcia antyżydowskie w Warszawie”, IR, 1935, no. 315, p. 4; “Wyższe uczelnie będą nadal zamknięte”, IR, 1935, no. 329, p. 1; “Zajęcia na Politechnice Warszawskiej”, IR, 1936, no. 122, p. 1; “Awantury antyżydowskie we Lwowie”, IR, 1936, no. 148, p. 1; “Bójki na wyższych uczelniach”, IR, 1937, no. 15, p. 1; “Awantury na uczelniach trwają”, IR, 1937, no. 16, p. 1; “Strajk studentów we Lwowie i Poznaniu”, IR, 1937, no. 20, p. 3; “Znowu zajęcia na wyższych uczelniach”, IR, 1937, no. 49, p. 4; “Zajęcia na Wolnej wszechnicy w Warszawie”, IR, 1937, no. 309, p. 2; “Zajęcia na wyższych uczelniach”, IR, 1938, no. 20, p. 3; “Zajęcia w szkole im. Wawelberga i Rotwanda”, IR, 1938, no. 80, p. 3; “Dalsze zajęcia na wyższych uczelniach”, IR, 1938, no. 331, p. 2; “Ghetto na akademii stomatologicznej”, IR, 1939, no.5, p 5; “Wiec akademicki we Lwowie”, IR, 1939, no. 3, p. 4; “Starcia między studentami w Warszawie”, IR, 1939, no. 63, p. 3.

*professors to remind young people of the old truths that are violated in strange misunderstanding of the consequences. [...] We cannot stay silent and not condemn the methods that some young people use to achieve their goals and objectives. The wild attacks on individual students within universities are disgusting and no reaction from most young people to these incidents, unworthy of academic honour, makes us increasingly anxious about those young people, who, in the future, as the enlightened part of the society, will have so many cultural and noble duties tasks to perform for the country*<sup>46</sup>.

According to the newspaper, attacks against the Jewish were particularly drastic in Lvov. The professors' appeal did not trigger any reaction from the persons to whom it was addressed. Fights and attacks on Jews continued, often resulting in serious injuries. In March 1939, the police searched the Academics' Dormitory, the Technicians' Dormitory and the Medics' Dormitory, to strong resistance of their residents. During the search, a large number of guns knives, and explosives were found. 86 students were arrested. In May the same year, a chemistry student, Markus Landau was murdered at the Technical University<sup>47</sup>. Following this event, the professors of Lvov universities, led by professor Kazimierz Bartel, addressed a memorial to the Government and Parliament, saying that: *For a number of years, the universities in Lvov have been witnessing bloody acts of violence committed in the name of nationalism and anti-Semitism. The intensity and brutality of those incidents has been growing by the month. [...] This year, we witnessed the first murder, and in recent months, two more crimes were reported that bear all the signs of planned assassinations*<sup>48</sup>. Since most academic associations of Lvov Technical University did not react in an unequivocal manner to the incidents, the Minister of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment suspended 18 of them<sup>49</sup>.

With reference to the above information, it should be noted the in the period between the World Wars, academic youth in many other European countries also organised rallies and went to the streets. Sometimes, "Ilustrowana Republika" reported those events and explained the reasons for such public manifestations. In Prague, in Jassa, Romania, and in Bucharest, those were anti-Semitic demonstrations demanding *numerus clausus*, in Budapest and Szeget, there were anti-Semitic uproars, in Berlin, the goal was to remove Jews from universities, in Ghent, there were protests against flemisation of the university, in Athens protesters demanded lower university fees, in London, there were "wild celebrations" of the historic events of 1605, in Zagreb, the reason for unrests were differences in political opinions among students, in Madrid, there were protests against establishing a new, competitive odontology university in Valencia, in Paris, protesters demanded removing a professor of financial legislation from university, in Vienna, the reason for pro-

<sup>46</sup> "Apel profesorów do młodzieży akademickiej", IR, 1938, no. 26, p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> "Aresztowanie 68 studentów we Lwowie", IR, 1939, no. 71, p. 1; "Pogrzeb zamordowanego studenta", IR 1939, no. 147, p. 3; "Co się dzieje na Politechnice Lwowskiej", IR, 1939, no. 148, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> IR, 1939, no. 162, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> "Zawieszenie 18 stowarzyszeń studenckich na Politechnice Lwowskiej w związku z ostatnimi zajęciami", IR, 1939, no. 164, p. 5.

tests was the addition of two more terms of studies at the faculty of medicine. These events clearly show that students, apart from defending their rights, also engaged in politics and a large part of them had absorbed the nationalist ideology<sup>50</sup>.

To sum up, it should be noted that the information published by “*Ilustrowana Republika*”, although it gives a certain image of higher education and the academic environment in the period between the World Wars, this image is definitely fragmentary. The newspaper rarely reported the actual work of the universities or the engagement of their communities in studies. This is not surprising, as the newspaper focused on issues that were the priority for its editors, namely events in the local world of science, which resulted in a number of articles trying to promote Łódź as an “academic city”, and on affairs that could be the most interesting for the readers, namely unusual behaviour of professors and students.

This article is a monograph that presents an issue reported by a specific newspaper and it proves that periodicals may be a source of knowledge that could be hard to obtain otherwise, and also, it may serve as a material base for broader syntheses of higher education in the history of Poland.

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. e.g. “*Studenci czescy żądają wprowadzenia “numerus clausus” dla cudzoziemców*”, IR, 1929, no. 315, p. 3; “*Zamknięcie uniwersytetu w Pradze*”, IR 1929, no. 318, p. 1; “*Nowe zaburzenia studentów w Pradze*”, IR, 1929, no. 321, p. 1; “*Strejk studentów w Jassach*”, IR, 1929, no. 350, p. 3; “*Krwawe walki z policją. Uniwersytet w Bukareszcie został zamknięty*”, IR, 1932, no. 85, p. 1; “*Krwawe starcia policji ze studentami. Demonstracje w Budapeszcie i Szegedynie*”, IR, 1935, no. 322, p. 2; “*Krwawe zajęcia na uniwersytecie w Berlinie*”, IR, 1932, no. 180, p. 1; “*Awantury studenckie w Atenach*”, IR, 1929, no. 329, p. 1; “*Walka studentów z policją na ulicach Londynu*”, IR, 1930, no. 305, p. 3; “*Strejk studentów w Zagrzebiu*”, IR, 1933, no. 61, p. 2; “*Strejk studentów w Madrycie*”, IR, 1932, no. 101, p. 2; “*Awantury na uniwersytecie w Paryżu*”, IR, 1936, no. 65, p. 4; “*Demonstracje studentów w Wiedniu trwają*”, IR, 1937, no. 329, p. 4.

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