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JEWISH DEPUTIES IN THE LEGISLATIVE SEYM OF THE SECOND POLISH REPUBLIC 1919–1922

In 1918, after 123 years of thralldom Poland regained its independence. However, it was a few years later that its frontiers were finally settled. For this reason the first elections for the Sejm were organized in stages and were not held throughout the whole territory which was finally incorporated to the Polish State. In the years 1919–1920 deputies from most of the regions situated in the centre, west and south-west of the country were elected. The population of these regions – according to the general census from 1921 – amounted to 16.9 million, in this number there were 1.8 million Jews inhabiting mainly towns and dealing with trade and handicraft. The Jewish candidates received 508.6 thousand (9.2%) votes; but only 11 out of them (2.8 % of all the deputies) entered the Sejm; the electoral law, although very liberal, proved to be unfavourable for the Jewish population because of the division of the country into large constituencies which comprised not only towns but also rural areas around the towns. Moreover, their failure was due to the excessive number of registers competing with one another and to the fact that Jews were less active as far as the elections were concerned.¹

Ten deputies created a loose Independent Union of Deputies of Jewish Nationality (the IUDJN). There were three independent clubs within this union:

1. National-Jewish Deputies' Club (Zionists): Isaac Grunbaum, PhD, elected in Warsaw, writer and lawyer, unquestionable leader of Polish Zionists; rabbin Osias Thon (Ozjasz Thon), PhD, the only representative of the territory which had formerly been annexed by Austria; lawyer Apolinary Hartglas, a representative of the Jewish population from Podlasie; George Rosenblatt (Jerzy Rosenblatt), PhD, a doctor from Łódź, leader of the Jewish fraction in the City Council and President of the local Zionist Committee; Salomon Weinzieher, PhD, also a doctor, social worker from the Dąbrowa Basin; Shia

¹ A. Próchnik, *Pierwsze piętnastolecie Polski Odrodzonej* (The First Fifteen Years of Reborn Poland), second edition, Warszawa 1957, pp. 50–61; B. Wasutyński, *Ludność żydowska w Polsce w wiekach XIX i XX. Studium statystyczne* (The Jewish Population in Poland in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Statistical Study), Warszawa 1930, *passim*; *Statystyka wyborów do Sejmu Ustawodawczego* (Statistics of the elections to the Legislative Sejm), ed. by L. Krzywicki, „Wiadomości Statystyczne” („Statistical News”) Vol. 2, 1920, No 3–6, pp. XXVI–XXVIII; P. Korzec, *Antisemitism in Poland as an Intellectual, Social and Political Movement*, (in:) *Studies on Polish Jewry*, ed. by Joshua A. Fishman, New York 1974, English Section, pp. 35–36; L. Hass, *Wybory warszawskie 1918–1926* (Warsaw Elections 1918–1926), Warszawa 1972, pp. 59–60, 69.

Hensel Farbstein (Szyja Heszal Farbstein), a tradesman, elected in Białystok, President of the Zionist religious organisation („Mizrachi”).²

2. Orthodox Club: Abraham Hirsh Perlmutter (Abraham Hirsz Perlmutter), rabbin from Warsaw and Moshek Ela Halpern (Moszek Ela Halpern), rabbin from Łódź. After the death of the latter in the spring of 1921 his seat in the Sejm was taken by Usher Israel Mendelson (Uszer Izrael Mendelson), an industrialist and social worker (6 december 1921).³

3. Club of the Jewish People's Party (the folkists): Noe (Nojah) Pryłucki, a lawyer, writer and publicist, leader of the Party and Samuel Hirshhorn (Samuel Hirszhorn), a journalist and publicist. Both were elected in Warsaw. The mandate of the former was annulled by the Supreme Court (10–24 May 1919) because he had no Polish citizenship and his seat in the Sejm was taken by David Naumberg, a writer, journalist and social worker.⁴

Ignacy Schiper, a lawyer candidate, historian and publicist, who had been elected from the Poaley-Zion (Workers of Zion) register, did not join the IUDJN at first but cooperated with it more and more closely so that in December 1920 he was an official representative of the IUDJN in the Sejm Commissions.⁵

It should be noted, however, that the number of deputies of Jewish origin was greater – it amounted to 19 persons; the persons not listed here regarded themselves as Poles and visibly manifested their negative attitude to the Jewish parties and their national demands.⁶

² T. Rzepecki, *Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 1919 roku* (The Sejm of the Polish Republic in 1919), Poznań 1920, pp. 125, 138, 149, 172, 182, 190; H. H. Ben Sasson, Grenbaum Izhak, (in:) *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Jerusalem s.d., vol. 7, columns 1121–1123.

³ T. Rzepecki, op. cit., pp. 124, 156; *Parlament Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 1919–1927* (Parliament of the Polish Republic in the Years 1919–1927), ed. by H. Mościcki and W. Dzwonkowski, Warszawa 1928, p. 314; *Sejm Ustawodawczy Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej. Spawozdanie Stenograficzne* (The Legislative Sejm of the Polish Republic. Stenographic Report (hereafter SRLS). session 226, 13th May 1921, p. 7.

⁴ M. Fuks, Pryłucki Noe, (in:) *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* (Polish Biographical Dictionary), Vol. 28, Wrocław 1985, pp. 629–630; SRLS, session 43, 30 May 1919, p. 4; *Zbiór Orzeczeń Sądu Najwyższego jako Trybunał u Wyborczego r. 1918, 1919, 1920* (Collection of Judicial Decisions of the Supreme Court as the Electoral Tribunal, years: 1918, 1919, 1920), Warszawa (1920), sessions 6 and 8; T. Rzepecki, op. cit., p. 136.

⁵ T. Rzepecki, op. cit., p. 151; L. Halpern, *Polityka żydowska w Sejmie i Senacie Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, (Jewish Policy in the Sejm and Senate of the Polish Republic), „Sprawy Narodowościowe” („Nationalistic Affairs”), Annual Set 8 1934, No 1, p. 34; *Sejm Ustawodawczy* (The Legislative Sejm [hereafter LS]), Print No 2390, pp. 10,21.

⁶ W. Trzczeński, *Analiza składu Sejmu Ustawodawczego 1919–1922* (The Composition of the Legislative Sejm 1919–1922. Analysis), „*Ekonomista*” („Economist”) Annual Set 22, 1922, Vol. 3. p. 40; SRLS, session 6, 25 Febr. 1919, p. 203; session 101, 20 Nov. 1919, pp. 21–26.

Members of the IUDJN, similarly to the parties represented by them, differed as far as their views and tactics were concerned. Representatives of the orthodox Aguda, in accordance with their general party line, represented conciliatory attitudes, they seldom made speeches in the Sejm and their speeches were balanced. On the other hand, speeches of the Zionists, especially Grunbaum's were very fierce; however, they did not equal the bellicosity of the folkists' speeches. The differences were so great that when on 27 February 1919 N. Pryłucki made a speech which was aggressive in its form and contents other Jewish deputies called him a „pogrom maker” and on the next day M. Halpern distanced himself on behalf of Aguda.⁷ Lack of common line within the IUDJN was also visible when one touched problems concerning basic programmatic conflicts among the particular Jewish parties. One can reckon the following differences e.g.: the attitude to Palestine, an element of the Zionist programme arousing the strongest resistance of Aguda; the position of Mosaism in the Jewish social life; the role of the Jewish communities regarded as a religious organ by the orthodox and as a laic institution defending national autonomy by the Zionists and folkists; the problem whether education should have religious or secular character.⁸ In most cases, however, the IUDJN deputies despite the differences concerning their own matters conducted common policy in the Sejm.

The Zionists were the most active group of the Union, the group which imposed its policy upon the rest. It was due to the fact that Aguda was not very active in the Sejm and its activity was limited to religious matters as well as to the lack of the folkists' leader, Noe Pryłucki.⁹ The situation of the Jewish deputies in the legislative Sejm was difficult. The parties of the Right and the Centre dominating in the Sejm as well as the Left, which was in opposition, were ill-disposed towards the Jewish deputies. Even the Polish Socialist Party (the PSP) did not approve of a great number of postulates of the IUDNJ. The atmosphere of a sharp parliamentary fight, obstruction and demonstration did not make the situation easier, either.

The IUDJN because of the small number of its representatives in the Sejm, consisting of several hundred members, could affect Parliamentary debates only through entering into alliance with other parties. After voting for Wojciech Trąmpczyński, the Rightist candidate for the speaker of the Sejm, which was undoubtedly an attempt at

⁷ SRLS, session 8, 27 Febr. 1919, p. 344; session 9, 28 Febr. 1919, pp. 352–353; Cf. also: E. Mendelsohn, *The Dilemma of Jewish Politics in Poland: Four Responses*, (in:) *Jews and Non-Jews in Eastern Europe*, ed. by B. Vargo and G. L. Mosse, New York 1974, pp. 205–217.

⁸ Ex.: SRLS, session 42, 27 May 1919, p. 5; session 186, 17 Nov. 1920, p. 11; session 188, 23 Nov. 1920, pp. 32–33; session 283, 7 Febr. 1922, p. 4.

⁹ E. Mendelsohn, *Zionism in Poland, The Formative Years 1915–1926*, New Haven 1981, p. 132.

reaching a compromise with the Right, the Zionists and the Orthodox became tactical allies of the Left in all the political matters which were not directly connected with the problems of national minorities. Such an attitude was also strongly recommended to the representatives of the party in the Sejm by the fourth conference of the Zionist Organisations in Poland (August 1919).¹⁰ The cooperation with the Left was due not only to the conflict with the nationalist People's-National Union (the PNU), the National Democratic Party, but also – despite substantial differences in particulars – was due to the similarities between the programmes especially as far as concepts of social political systems were concerned. It was especially evident in the constitutional discussion when both the Left and the Jewish deputies proclaimed themselves in favour of the most democratic character of the state and one-chamber Parliament.

Unfortunately, although the Leftist parties, first of all the PSP, gave support to the IUDJN in its fight against symptoms of anti-Semitism organised by the National Democratic Party their opinion as to solving the Jewish problem was different from that of the representatives of the Union and they refused to support even such postulates which only aimed at preserving the Jewish national separateness.¹¹ Thus the cooperation was possible only if state matters of general character were concerned; the approaches of the IUDJN and the Polish Left to the matters directly related to the Jewish minority differed very much.

The IUDJN, similarly as the whole Parliamentary Left, was in opposition to most of the governments. On 15 July 1919 in a discussion on the budget the Jewish deputies declared themselves against Ignacy Paderewski's cabinet to which they had adopted a wait-and-see attitude at first. The Union also adopted an unfavourable attitude to Leopold Skulski's and Władysław Grabski's governments.¹² However, in July 1920 when Poland faced the threat of the Bolshevik offensive I. Grunbaum on behalf of the IUDJN declared support for Wincenty Witos's coalition government and assured that the Jewish people were ready to „make sacrifices necessary for the defence of the state”; however, in October 1920 he stated that „the systematic anti-Semitism” of the government made the Jewish deputies withdraw further support for the Prime Minister and his government.¹³ The IUDJN did not proclaim itself in favour of the non-parlia-

¹⁰ P. Korzec, *op. cit.*, p. 55; E. Mendelsohn, *Zionism...*, p. 132.

¹¹ Cf. *ex. LS*, Prints No 991, 2066, 2140 and others; SRLS, session 101, 20 Nov. 1919, p. 25, session 37, 13 May 1919, p. 49.

¹² SRLS, session 69, 15 July 1919, pp. 45–57; session 106, 19 Dec. 1919, pp. 67–82; A. Hafftko, *Działalność parlamentarna i polityczne posłów i senatorów żydowskich w Polsce Odrodzonej (Parliamentary and Political Activity of Jewish Deputies and Senators in Reborn Poland)*, (in:) *Żydzi w Polsce Odrodzonej, (Jews in Reborn Poland)*, Warszawa (1933), Vol. 2, p. 320.

¹³ SRLS, session 166, 24 July 1920, pp. 33–35, session 172, 14 Oct. 1920, pp. 41–57.

mentary government of Antoni Ponikowski, either; however, the Jewish deputies were in the Leftist majority supporting Arthur Slicinski's and Julian Nowak's cabinets.¹⁴

The IUDJN deputies concentrated their parliamentary activity to a great extent on the specific matters concerning the Jewish minority: problems of personal autonomy, national separateness of Jews, education, citizenship, abolition of legal restrictions, defence of the good name of the Judaic religion, protection from pogroms and economic anti-Semitism. The political line represented by the Jewish deputies often corresponded with the interests of national minorities in general ex. fight for maximum democratisation of the state's social-political system.

The problem of personal autonomy (national-cultural) was the basic one from the beginning of the Parliamentary session. Although variants of this institution proposed by the Jewish deputies were often very general, they did not differ from one another very much and were based on a memorial handed over to the English and French Embassies in Poland by the Zionists in January 1919. N. Pryłucki, A. Perlmutter and I. Grunbaum declared themselves in favour of the programme of personal autonomy in their first speeches on 24 February 1919; the representative of Aguda spoke even about a „supreme legal-governmental organ” of this autonomy, and the folkists' leader demanded „national electoral group in all kinds of elections”. A month later N. Pryłucki having stated that „national-personal autonomy was the only safeguard of equal rights, proposed a scheme of its organs: on the local level – secular Jewish communities, and as the central authorities – The Supreme Jewish Council. During a discussion on the constitutional declaration of the government S. Hirshhorn and I. Grunbaum put forward a demand for autonomy. The latter stressed that the autonomy was necessary for „the Polish Jews (...) to satisfy (...) their needs that no one else would be able to satisfy”, and a bit later he remarked that personal autonomy might be useful for Poles who were a minority on the Eastern Borderland scattered in the future Ukrainian State or the White Russian State.¹⁵

The IUDJN continued to put forward the postulates of autonomy as the constitutional discussion went on. Amendments to the draft of the constitution which were proposed by the Jewish deputies stipulated for linking the wide territorial autonomy of the areas where the non-Polish nationalities dominated, with the personal

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, session 249, 1 Oct 1920, pp. 30–44; session 303, 5 May 1922, pp. 59–71; session 325, 6 July 1922, pp. 54–55; session 333, 3 Aug. 1922, pp. 12–15.

¹⁵ *Materiały w sprawie żydowskiej w Polsce (Materials Concerning the Jewish Problem in Poland)*, No 2, *Żydzi jako mniejszość narodowa (Jews as a National Minority)*, ed. by I. Grunbaum, Warszawa 1919, pp. 16–17; SRLS, session 5, 24 Febr. 1919, pp. 183–184, 189–190, 193; session 15, 18 March. 1919, pp. 812–813; session 37, 13 May 1919, pp. 5, 66; session 41, 23 May 1919, p. 62.

autonomy of all national and religious minorities. They were to receive the right of creating their own associations whose range of activity should comprise „religious matters, education, charity, problems of hospitals, protection of emigrants, registration and keeping the registers of people”. These associations would have the right to impose taxes on their members although the project stipulated also for the state subventions. A special ministry would have control over the activities of the associations. I. Schiper, a poaley-Zionist, also demanded that the associations should have the right to put forward propositions to the authorities and self-governments and broad rights to economic restructuring; at the same time, he was against giving any rights to the religious minorities. Amendments suggested by the IUDJN were not supported by any Polish party and they were rejected by the Sejm.¹⁶

The Jewish deputies did not succeed in a matter which they regarded as the key one because they estimated the situation in reborn Poland wrongly. Encouraged by W. Wilson's vague declarations and the introduction of the national-personal autonomy in the Ukraine and later in Lithuania they put forward postulates which were defined – not quite unfittingly – as an attempt at creating „a state within a state”. However, Poland as far as its domestic and foreign affairs were concerned was after all a state too strong to try to win Jews' political support by giving them autonomy as the governments of Ukraine and Lithuania had done. The IUDJN deputies were quite alone in their fight because even the PSP, despite different declarations of some of its publicists and the western socialists' views, rejected the programme of national autonomy completely and limited itself only to the postulate of giving fully equal rights to the representatives of the dispersed minorities.¹⁷

At that time personal autonomy might have been introduced only if the Entente Powers had imposed it. As a matter of fact, representatives of American Jews and East-European Jews in Paris were aiming at making the Entente Powers impose personal autonomy but a treaty made between these Powers and Poland on 28 July 1919 (the so called „minority treaty”, „Little Treaty of Versailles”) did not contain such

¹⁶ LS, Print No 1883, pp. 41–42; SRLS, session 186, 17 Nov. 1920, p. 14; session 220, 16 March 1921, p. 20.

¹⁷ Materiały..., No 2, pp. 87–90; B. Dinur, Ukraine, The Period of the Independent Ukraine and Jewish National Autonomy, (in:) Encyclopaedia..., Vol. 15, columns 1517–1518; J. Gar, Lithuania, In Independent Lithuania (in:) *ibid.*, Vol. 11. Columns 356–378, 381–382; K. Somoslawski, Autonomia kulturalna mniejszości narodowościowych (Cultural Autonomy of National Minorities), „Przedswit” („Dawn”), Annual Set 38, 1919, No 3–4, pp. 24–29; E. Jeliński, Polityka Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej wobec mniejszości narodowych w latach 1918–1939, (The Policy of the Polish Socialist Party Towards National Minorities in the Years 1918–1939), „Dzieje Najnowsze” („Recent History”), Annual Set 15, 1983, No 1–2, p. 94; M. Sliwa, Polska myśl socjalistyczna (1918–1948) (Polish Socialist Thought (1918–1948), Wrocław 1988, pp. 54–55.

resolutions because its aim was – as Lloyd George stated – to create conditions for gradual assimilation of minorities to the prevailing nationality.¹⁸ It meant that Jews had no chances of personal autonomy in Poland. The fact that the IUDJN continued to put forward this postulate contributed only to permanent inciting of anti-Jewish chauvinist tendencies in the country.

Undoubtedly, national autonomy was a maximum programme in the circumstances existing in reborn Poland; in 1919 – and later – the problem of Jews' national separateness raised doubts in many parties. The Jewish deputies stressed the fact of objective existence of the Jewish nationality many times. Nevertheless, the Leftist deputies adopted an antagonistic attitude; F. Perl regarded Jews only as „remnants of a medieval caste”. The Rev. Eugeniusz Okon, a priest, at that time member of the Polish Peasants' Party (the PPP) – „Liberation” regarded Jews only as a religious minority; similar opinions were expressed by assimilationists and the Centrist National Workers' Party. The National Democrats were more likely to recognize Jewish national separateness.¹⁹

The problem of the Jewish language was of a special character. The problem, which of the two languages, Hebrew or Jewish (Yiddish) should be the Jews' every-day language was the subject of the sharpest disputes among political groups of this minority. At the same time, the very fact that there was no general agreement as to the choice of the language, was one of the basic arguments of the opponents of Jewish national separateness. The IUDJN deputies regarded this matter as their internal problem which could be solved only by the nation itself, not by any foreign elements.²⁰

The Zionist deputies were strongly engaged in a fight over the Yiddish language which broke out in the Sejm. The Right called it a language of „usurers, spies and criminals” regarding it as a German dialect, not a separate language, a potential tool of Germanisation. The PSP deputies claimed that it was redundant and giving it the

¹⁸ *Sprawy Polskie na konferencji pokojowej w Paryżu w 1919 r. (Polish Problems at the Peace Conference in Paris in 1919), Dokumenty i materiały (Documents and Materials), Vol. 3, Warszawa 1968, Part III, compiled by R. Bierzanek, pp. 265–266, 324–325; K. Lundgreen-Nielsen, The Polish Problem at the Paris Peace Conference, 1918–1919, Odense 1979, pp. 307–311, 341–348, 371–385.*

¹⁹ *SRLS, session 5, 24 Febr. 1919, pp. 183, 191–193; session 185, 16 Nov. 1920, pp. 44–46; session 37, 13 May 1919, p. 49; session 5, 24 Febr. 1919, p. 188; session 15, 18 March 1919, p. 815; Charakterystyki i programy stronnictw politycznych na terenie Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (Characterization and Programmes of the Political Parties in the territory of the Polish Republic), compiled by J. Bełcikowski, the second edition (revised), Warszawa 1923, p. 49; R. Dmowski, Separatyzm Żydów i jego źródła (Jewish Separatism and its Sources), Warszawa 1909, pp. 26, 29.*

²⁰ *SRLS, session 185, 16 Nov. 1920, p. 44.*

rights provided by the minority treaty, did not correspond to the real needs of the Jewish population.²¹

The person who devoted most attention to the defence of the Yiddish language was I. Schiper; he stressed that it was a separate language wide-spread in the world with its own literature and press. A. Hartglas viewed the attacks on this language as an attempt at the continuation of the policy of assimilation. According to him this policy was belated and had no chance of success and it might only additionally contribute to the growth of the Jewish national self-knowledge similarly as it had been the case with the Germanized Poles and Czechs. The IUDJN deputies demanded that the Jewish language should be given equal rights, that the meetings in this language should not be harassed any more, that the ban on signboards in Jewish should be lifted, that the documents written in this language should not be denied the importance of evidence.²²

The matter of minority schools was closely connected with the language problem. Being afraid that the state might interfere in the Jewish language conflict, the IUDJN deputies put forward an amendment to the draft of the Constitution. This amendment stipulating for freedom of teaching „in any language” was, however, rejected by the Sejm. However, the problem was not limited to the choice of the language of instruction at schools. The real aim was to gain maximum freedom for the educational system of national minorities. Therefore in the the constitutional debate the IUDJN deputies declared themselves in favour of separate schools for each national minority; schools controlled by the state as little as possible, but subsidized by it, preferably private, and in any case administered by representatives of society, preferably by autonomous organs of a given nationality. Within the club there were divided opinions whether schools should be secular or religious.²³

When at the beginning of 1922 the Sejm debated on the drafts of General Education Act, I. Schiper presented many examples of an unfavourable or even antagonist attitude of the authorities to the Jewish secular schools especially those which used Yiddish as the language of instruction; at the same time religious educational system (cheders' system) was protected. Referring to these objections Tadeusz Łopuszański, the deputy minister of religion and public enlightenment, assured that as new legal regulations were being introduced there was no reason to be anxious about the

²¹ SRLS, session 82, 31 July 1919, p. 40; session 81, 30 July 1919, p. 88.

²² Ibid., session 186, 17 Nov. 1920, pp. 4–7. session 185, 16 Nov. 1920, pp. 52–54, 56.

²³ LS, Print No 1883, p. 44; SRLS, session 152, 1 June 1920, pp. 15–18; session 217, 10 March 1921, p. 43; session 220, 16 March 1921, p. 22.

education of national minorities and added that these problems would be regulated by a separate law.²⁴

The Jewish and German deputies encouraged by this statement, put forward a draft of such a law at the end of February. It stipulated for establishing a separate public elementary school with a language of a given minority if in a parish there were at least 40 children of school age belonging to this minority. If there were fewer such children in a given parish it was suggested that the neighbouring parishes should be joined; if such a solution was not possible it should be secured that religion and the mother tongue would be taught. The curriculum was to be adapted to the needs of a given minority. The teaching load of Polish was to be the same as in general elementary schools. Children's nationality and religion were to be determined on the basis of their parents' declaration, the latter, together with other representatives of a given minority, were to have general control over schools. Financial resources (from the state budget) were to be allocated according to the amount of learning children. This motion, however, never became the subject of Parliamentary debates.²⁵ As a result teaching in Hebrew or Yiddish could be conducted only in private schools attended by a minority of the Jewish children of school age.

The matter of citizenship was an important problem for a considerable part of the Jewish community from the territories formerly annexed by Russia. The Jews who had moved to the Polish Kingdom as a result of persecutions and pogroms which had taken place in Russia after 1881, the so called „litvaks” (Lithuanian Jews), were refused Polish citizenship by the authorities. It was due to the fact that as there was no act regulating this problem the authorities regarded „permanent residence” in the territories represented in the Legislative Sejm as decisive factors, and the „permanent residence” was interpreted according to administrative regulations from the period of partitions. On the other hand, being considered a foreigner caused a lot of troubles.²⁶

On 7 March 1919 at the beginning of the term of the Sejm O. Thom put forward a resolution calling upon the government to work out a liberal draft of a citizenship act. On the next day S. Hirshhorn protested against refusing the citizenship to Jews inhabiting Poland but not born within its territory.²⁷

²⁴ SRLS, session 281, 27 Jan. 1922, pp. 48–54; session 283, 7 Febr. 1922, p. 35–38.

²⁵ LS, Print No 3361, annex 1; S. Mauersberg, *Szkolnictwo powszechne dla mniejszosci narodowych w Polsce w latach 1918–1939*, (Universal Education for National Minorities in Poland in the years 1918–1939), Wrocław 1968, pp. 1622–188.

²⁶ S. Rundstein, *Obywatelstwo i opcja w traktacie ryskim* (Citizenship and Option in the Riga Treaty), Warszawa 1921, pp. 3–4; SRLS, session 112, 20 Jan. 1920, pp. 12–13.

²⁷ SRLS, session 11, 7 March 1919, p. 529; session 12, 8 March 1919, pp. 521–522.

The minority treaty (article 3) granted Polish citizenship to all the ex-citizens of the invading states habitually resident in the territory which was or was to be recognized as a part of Poland. On 8 August 1919 the IUDJN deputies and the deputies of the PSP, the PPP „Liberation” as well as the representative of the German population in the Sejm put forward a draft of the citizenship act. It stipulated, among other things, to for granting Polish citizenship to all persons habitually resident in the territory of the Polish State on the day when the treaties determining frontiers were ratified.²⁸ As the term „resident” was not precisely specified in the draft it meant that the liberal regulations of the civil law should be referred to for a more accurate definition.²⁹ However, most members of the Constitutional Commission came to a conclusion that the act should contain a definition of this term based on the only way to avoid double citizenship which was inadmissible because the citizens had the duty to be faithful to their state. I. Grunbaum protested against such a solution stressing the illusoriness of the entries in the books of „permanent inhabitants” which were the basis for administrative determination of habitual residence.³⁰ During the plenary discussion in January 1920 the IUDJN repeated the arguments presented by its representative at the constitutional commission. Moreover, the Jewish deputies pointed to the incompatibility between the project and the minority treaty, the inconsistency of criteria established for particular parts of Poland (formerly annexed by different invaders) – in Great Poland and Pomerania the criteria were based on the regulations of the civil law; persons who had been refused the right to citizenship were called up to the army. The real aim of the project was to make „litvaks” a category of „inhabitants” deprived of some rights; Stanisław Głabiński, the representative of the National Democratic Party in the Constitutional Commission, spoke about it openly. Nevertheless, a law exactly the same as its draft was passed.³¹

Formulations similar to those discussed above were to be found in a treaty between Poland, Russia and the Ukraine, signed on 18 March 1921 in Riga. It caused a next protest of the Jewish deputies.³² In April 1922 the problem of citizenship was raised for the last time. During a discussion on a law relative to establishing state’s control over the Vilno territory I. Grunbaum speaking about several thousand stateless persons living in Poland expressed his anxiety that the ex-inhabitants of Central

²⁸ LS, Print No 991, annex 1.

²⁹ On the regulations Cf.: H. Konic, *Prawo osobowe (Matrimonial Personal Law)*, Part 1, Warszawa 1924, pp. 11–29.

³⁰ LS, Print No 1153, pp. 1, 7.

³¹ SRLS, session 107, 8 jan. 1920, pp. 9–19; session 112, 20 Jan. 1920, pp. 4–13, 18–21.

³² *Ibid.*, session 223, 14 April 1921, p. 53.

Lithuania would be included among this category; these anxieties proved to be unjustified to a great extent as finally many categories of ex-Russian citizens received Polish citizenship in this territory; although according to the act of January 1920 they should not have got it (they were not entitled to it).³³ Legal restrictions, the subject of which were Jews, were the heritage of the age of the partition. In the territory formerly annexed by Russia the restrictions comprised among other things: prohibition of purchasing peasants' grounds, limitations concerning inhabiting borderlands and passive voting right in the elections of autonomous organs. Moreover, Jews could not receive the privilege of exploiting mines. In the territory formerly annexed by Austria documents written in the Hebrew alphabet had no binding force of law.³⁴ The first speeches of the Jewish deputies contained demands for abolition of these resolutions and introduction of equal rights for all the citizens in the country. On 23 May 1919 the IUDJN put forward an emergency motion concerning this matter. Article 7 of the minority treaty also dealt with the equal rights. After it had been ratified on 1 August 1919, the Jewish deputies put forward a next emergency motion demanding the „abolition of legal limitations of the Jewish minority” in the region of Białystok.³⁵ Similarly to the previous one, it got stuck in the Legal Commission of the Sejm for a long time. At the same time, however, if the Sejm passed laws concerning matters in which there existed restrictions, the restrictions were abolished. But the administrative authorities were still introducing new emergency regulations which caused – of course – new protests of the IUDJN. Even in the constitutional discussion there appeared an amendment – finally rejected – according to which the president's office could be held only by a Catholic.³⁶

The constitution passed on 17 March 1921 adopted article 7 of the minority treaty and at the same time in article 38 it was stated that new legal regulations could not be contrary to the constitution. However, when in the summer of 1921 the parliamentary debates were devoted to the problem of the change of some regulations of the civil law which were in force in the territories of the former Polish Kingdom, the Sejm in spite of the amendment put forward by A. Hartglas rejected the motion to repeal the act which prohibited non-Christians from taking care of Christian children

³³ *Ibid.*, session 297, 6 April 1922, pp. 28, 43–44; *Ustawa o obywatelstwie państwa polskiego (Law Relative to the Citizenship of the Polish State)*, Compiled by S. Rundstein, Warszawa 1924, pp. 12–13.

³⁴ *Die Nationalitäten in den Staaten Europas*, hrsg. von E. Ammende, Wien 1931, pp. 123–124.

³⁵ *SRLS*, session 5, 24 Jan. 1919, pp. 183, 191; session 41, 23 May 1919, p. 88; session 83, 1 Aug. 1919, pp. 139–140.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, session 217, 10 March 1921, p. 64; session 218, 11 March 1921, p. 45; session 239, 1 July, pp. 17–18; *LS*, Print No 2167.

on the pretext that this problem would be settled by a separate act.³⁷ In 1922 the government put forward a draft of such an act, a draft based on the Jewish deputies' motions discussed above; however, because of the obstruction of the Rightist majority of the Sejm it was not passed until the end of the parliamentary term; and the legal restrictions of the Jews were not abolished by the Sejm before 1931.³⁸

The IUDJN also devoted much attention to matters directly and indirectly connected with Judaism. And thus at the end of 1919 during a discussion on an act regulating working hours the IUDJN deputies objected to obligatory rest on Sunday and defended Jews' right to work on that day; but both the Polish Right and Left were against it: the former for economic reasons, the latter for ideological ones. The PSP wanted to fight against religious rules regarding them as an obstacle to the assimilation of Jews and the PSP representatives in the Sejm even claimed that celebrating Saturday was not a necessary element of Judaism. It caused – of course – strong retorts of the deputies of Aguda (M. Halpern) and Mizrachi (S. Farbstein) who stressed that „whoever (...) stands out against celebrating Saturday to gain profit by the same token stands out against all the principles of the Jewish faith”³⁹

The atmosphere prevailing in the Legislative Sejm is reflected by the fact that during its plenary sessions there happened occuranti-Jewish attacks on the Mosaic religion. The Rev. Kazimierz Lutosławski, an especially active member of a strongly anti-Semitic society „Progress” („Rozwój”), distinguished himself in this sphere. At first the IUDJN deputies rabbin O. Thon and M. Halpern and I. Grunbaum were proving that Lutosławski's arguments based on distorted and second-hand quotations of Talmud were wrong. Later when it turned out that any matter-of-fact discussion was not possible they stopped responding to further provocations abusing Judaism.⁴⁰ The parties of the Polish Left, on the other hand, attacked „Jewish clericalism”. S. Hirshhorn, a folkist, in his response did not deny the existence of the phenomenon but regarded it the Jews' own problem which should not be examined by the Sejm; however, similarly to the Zionists, he protested against „artificial clericalisation” of the Jewish communities which

³⁷ SRLS, session 239, 1 July 1921, pp. 13–22, 31–34.

³⁸ Ibid., session 287, 21 Febr. 1922, pp. 78–80; LS, Print No 2167; A. Hafftka, *Ustawodawstwo Polski Odrodzonej w stosunku do żydowskiej mniejszości narodowej* (Legislation of Reborn Poland in Relation to the Jewish National Minority), (in:) *Żydzi ...*, Vol. 2, pp. 239–240.

³⁹ SRLS, session 101, 20 Nov. 1919, pp. 17–26; session 105, 18 Dec. 1919, pp. 24–33.

⁴⁰ Ibid., session 180, 29 Oct. 1920, pp. 42–44; session 192, 2 Dec. 1920, pp. 23–24, 37–41.

was introduced when the government of the socialist Jędrzej Moraczewski remained in office.⁴¹

The fight for the equality of religions waged by the Jewish deputies during the constitutional debate was more than just defence of the rights of Judaism. Representing interests of all non-Catholics they proposed amendments to the draft of the constitution stipulating for prohibition against forcing people not to celebrate (i.e. to violate) holidays of their religion unless it was required by military service, state service, state defence or keeping order; stressing that „the supreme position” of the Roman-Catholic religion had only an honorary character which could be achieved by adding an explanation that it was a „supreme position among equal religions” settling upon the approach of non-Catholic religions to the state through an act which would be introduced after considering proposals made by organs created according to binding rules of a given religion or elected in accordance with „general principles”; putting strong emphasis on the fact that regulations concerning recognition of religions referred only to „new religions not practised in Poland”; rejecting the condition that children were to be taught by teachers of the same faith only „if the circumstances, which would be specified in a separate act, made it possible”. The deputies of Aguda demanded in an additional amendment that „nobody should be forced into violation of the rules of his religion unless it was required by the state defence”. The proposals of the IUDJN, repeated during the plenary discussion, were not accepted by the Sejm. On the other hand, majority of the deputies declared themselves in favour of the amendment to article 17 of the draft proposed by the PPP („supreme position of the Roman-Catholic religion among other equal religions”); the form of this amendment was identical with that proposed by the IUDJN but its contents were different. The Sejm also rejected the idea of introducing religious schools.⁴²

The first years of Poland’s independence were time of strong intensification of anti-Semitic feelings of society which found their outlet in two waves of pogroms: from November 1918 to the middle of 1919, and in the summer of 1920. The real reasons for these events were to be found in the professional structure of the Jewish population, in the fact that trade and a considerable part of industry and handicraft were in the hands of Jews in the territories formerly annexed by Austria and Russia. And this fact

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, session 188, 23 Nov. 1920, pp. 10, 31–32. The deputies of Aguda according to their tactics did not enter into discussion on this problem during Plenary sessions of the Sejm. On the decree quoted cf.: K. Krasowski, *Związki wyznaniowe w II Rzeczypospolitej. Studium historycznoprawne (Religious Unions in the Second Polish Republic. A Historico-legal Study)*, Warszawa 1988, pp. 182–183.

⁴² LS, Print No 1883, pp. 43–44, 46; SRLS, session 180, 29 Oct. 1920, pp. 44–45; session 186, 17 Nov. 1920, pp. 35–38; session 188, 23 Nov. 1920, pp. 15, 29; J. Sawicki, *Studia nad położeniem prawnym mniejszości religijnych w państwie polskim*, Warszawa 1937, pp. 57–60.

was an important obstacle to the expansion of the Polish lower-middle class and development of the Polish bourgeoisie. Moreover, one should not disregard the influence of the Catholic Church which had been creating the image of a „Jew – Christ’s murderer” for ages. The cultural difference of the followers of Judaism made the things even worse. It was a good foundation for the National democrats’ anti-Semitism which was developing since the beginning of the 20th century and becoming more and more important in the propaganda and ideology of Polish nationalism. The immediate causes (of the outburst of violent anti-Semitism) were the cooperation of some Orthodox with the German invaders and the policy conducted by the Zionists in the Eastern Borderland, as well as the role played by persons of Jewish origin in Bolshevik Russia and the fact that the feelings of Polish society became aggressive due to the war, occupation and the accompanying economic crisis. The Right tried to relieve the atmosphere through anti-Semitic excesses.⁴³

These pogroms as well as the propaganda accompanying them were subjects of many speeches made in the Sejm. In 1919 the IUDJN stressed that the pogroms were the National Democrats’ provocation against the Polish Left and its programme of social reforms and the government did absolutely nothing about it.⁴⁴ The events of the summer in 1920 caused far more serious accusations against the authorities; it was due to the fact that organs directly dependent on the government undertook many anti-Jewish actions. On 14 October 1920 I. Grunbaum accused W. Witos’s cabinet of formulating its domestic policy on the basis of anti-Semitism and stirring up mob’s hatred for Jews; his speech was illustrated by a number of drastic examples. At the same time the IUDJN deputies defended Jews from accusations of collaboration with the Bolsheviks. The problem of anti-Semitic disturbances was touched upon in the Sejm for the last time at the beginning of May 1921 when the Jewish deputies together with representatives of the Polish Left put forward an emergency motion concerning „using violence against Jewish workers by the state police and the dregs of society on 1 May.”⁴⁵

Removing Jews from the Polish economy was another form of fight of the Right against the Jewish population, this form was far nastier than the anti-Semitic

⁴³ P. Korzec, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–29, 39; A. Hertz, *Żydzi w kulturze polskiej (Jews in the Polish Culture)*, Paris 1961, pp. 194, 196–197; C. S. Heller, *On the Edge of Destruction. Jews of Poland Between the Two World Wars*, New York 1977, pp. 47–53, 64–76; E. Mendelsohn, *Zionism ...*, pp. 97–104; R. Wapiński, *Narodowa Demokracja 1893–1939. Ze studiów nad dziejami myśli nacjonalistycznej (National Democracy 1892–1939. From Studies on the History of the Nationalistic Thought)*, Wrocław 1980, pp. 129–131, 212.

⁴⁴ SRLS, session 6, 25 Febr. 1919, pp. 239–240; session 16, 20 March 1919, p. 886; session 17, 21 March 1919, pp. 917–918; 10 April 1919, pp. 61–65 etc.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, session 180, 29 Oct. 1920, pp. 51–52, 58–59; session 181, 11 Nov. 1920, pp. 50–51, 55–56; LS, Print No 2040, 2065, 2066, 2068, 2094, 2100, 2101, 2127, 2155, 2167, 2168.

disturbances which occurred from time to time. Introduction of compulsory rest on Sunday proved to be the nastiest thing. A draft of an act stipulating for such a solution was put forward in the Sejm in April 1919. The Jewish deputies headed by I. Grunbaum immediately started to oppose this proposal. They initiated calling the Assembly of Jewish Tradesmen, which because of difficulties in receiving the authorities' permission was held not before 21-22 October 1919 and the resolutions of which showed a decidedly negative attitude to the prohibition of trade on Sunday and holidays.⁴⁶

When at the end of the year the draft was discussed during a plenary session of the Sejm the Jewish deputies fought against article 10 of the act concerning working hours; this act contained a resolution calling for compulsory rest on Sunday. Unfortunately they failed. I. Grunbaum, the first representative of the IUDJN to take part in the discussion, stressed that the real aim of the article was to „reduce the competitive force of the Jewish trade and handicraft” but – he added – in consequence it would be harmful for the state. M. Halpern, in turn, presented regulations existing in many countries according to which Jews were allowed to work on Sunday. S. Farbstein continued this thought stating that Poland would be the first European state to make Jews rest on Sunday; moreover, according to him the regulations contained in the draft would violate the minority treaty. I. Schiper remarked, on the other hand, that the regulations contained in article 10 of the act would affect workers of the Judaic faith and would check the process of Jews' transition from trade to industry and handicraft. The IUDJN and I. Schiper made amendments stipulating for excepting Jews from the law prohibiting work on Sunday. Furthermore, M. Halpern suggested calling a special Sejm Commission which would examine the problem once again. All these proposals, similarly to S. Hirshhorn's motion aiming at letting at least good shops function on Sunday, were rejected by the Sejm. In consequence the Jewish deputies, not supported by anybody else, did not manage to reduce, even slightly, the range of the law which was a severe blow to the basis of the Jewish economic life.⁴⁷

When at the beginning of 1922 in the Sejm there were debates on an amendment to the act concerning working hours, S. Farbstein having stated that „all the Jewish population was groaning under the yoke of this act” stressed that Poland as a result of making peace with Soviet Russia had a chance to resume its intermediary role between the East and West but it would require, however, a change of Poland's attitude

⁴⁶ J. Marcus, *Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland, 1919–1939*, Berlin (West) 1983, pp. 213–214; L. Schiper, *Dzieje handlu Żydowskiego na ziemiach polskich*, (History of the Jewish Trade in the Territory of Poland), Warszawa 1937, pp. 683–684.

⁴⁷ SRLS, session 101, 20 Nov. 1919, pp. 27–33, 37–41; session 105, 18 Dec. 1919, pp. 29–33, 40–41; LS, Print No 1232, p. 14.

to the Jewish population including „abolition of compulsory Sunday rest”. However, this speech met with no response.⁴⁸

The IUDJN deputies also put forward motions concerning other matters connected with ousting Jews from supplying the army, against accusing them of speculations, ousting them from administration and Civil Service. Because the authorities conducted an anti-Jewish economic policy, the IUDJN strongly stressed that the state's interference into economic life should be limited as much as possible. The IUDJN deputies speaking on behalf of the townspeople protested many a time against the tax policy which favoured the countryside and agriculture.⁴⁹

The Jewish deputies did not hide their joy when they learnt about the ratification of the minority treaty. They believed that the treaty would protect not only Jewish rights but also rights of other national minorities in the state. On the other hand, I. Schiper, a poaley-Zionist, similarly to the PSP, protested against the treaty because „it did not satisfy aspirations of the working class” and because „it was a one-sided act imposed on the minorities by the victorious Powers under such circumstances that its enforcing was doubtful”.⁵⁰

The attitude adopted by the IUDJN in the constitutional debate expressed to a great degree interests of all the minorities.⁵¹ It was also true about the support for the postulates of the Polish Left aiming at making Poland's social-political system as democratic as possible. The problem whether Parliament should consist of one or two chambers was arousing the sharpest controversies. The Jewish deputies declared themselves against the existence of the Senate, the more so that the draft stipulated for introducing several categories of virilists to this institution I. Grunbaum, I. Schiper and S. Hirshhorn undermined arguments of the supporters of the Upper Chamber and stressed that the Senate would become the seat of the reactionaries, and that there would not be sufficient number of the representatives of national minorities in it.

⁴⁸ SRLS, session 282, 31 Jan. 1922, pp. 33–36.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, session 27, 7 April 1919, pp. 40–42; session 42, 27 May 1919, p. 65; session 87, 7 Oct. 1919, pp. 75–82; session 99, 14 Nov. 1919, p. 42; session 134, 18 March 1920, pp. 24–28; session 259, 8 Nov. 1921, pp. 17–19; session 270, 10 Dec. 1921, pp. 12–20 etc.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, session 82, 31 July 1919, pp. 35–42, 132–134. Discussion of the treaty cf. W. Michowicz, *Polska wobec traktatu i procedury mniejszościowej w latach 1920–1934* (Poland towards the Minority Treaty and Minority Procedures in the Years 1920–1934), „Zeszyty Naukowe UŁ” („Scientific Publications of the University of Łódź”), Series 1, No 15, 1960, pp. 192–196.

⁵¹ On more detailed account of the discussion cf. S. Krukowski, *Geneza konstytucji z 17 marca 1921* (Genesis of the Constitution from 17 March 1921), Warszawa 1977, pp. 233–307.

Moreover, I. Schiper defended the proposition of the PSP, the proposal for creating the Labour Chamber.⁵²

One should note other postulates put forward by the IUDJN namely: giving the right to legislative initiative to each parliamentary fraction and directly to the citizens of the state; enlarging parliamentary immunity as much as possible; allowing deputies to hold the function of an editor responsible for the merits of a given publication; enlarging independence of the judiciary; broad autonomy for national minorities; predominance of social influence of the state in the educational system; full equality of religions; making it more difficult to introduce the state of emergency; making the first revision of the constitution within a year from the settlement of the state's frontiers.⁵³ These motions as well as general motions i.e. those not concerning minority problems directly – were aiming at maximum democratisation of the social-political system and were often so radical that even the socialist deputies did not want to approve of them; therefore, not supported by other parties, they were rejected in voting.

The Jewish deputies stressed their roles of spokesmen of all minorities during the discussion on the project of the Sejm and Senate electoral regulations. They, together with the PSP, the National Party of Workers, the PPP-Left, the Club of Constitutional Labour, the Assembly of Townsmen and German deputies aimed at basing the regulations of these acts on sheer proportionality without making any concessions to the majority system. According to the IUDJN deputies the electoral regulations were to increase the predominance of the National Democrats and the radical parties. Strong resentment was caused by the principles of allocating mandates from the State register of candidates and the electoral geography which was unfavourable for the towns and the Eastern Borderland. According to I. Grunbaum the electoral regulations were „an expression of adopting a policy of violence towards national minorities” and made the minorities compose a bloc in order to secure sufficient representation for themselves in the future Parliament. The IUDJN also aimed at enlarging the circle of persons with the right to vote and submitting the elections to strict control of the representatives of particular political parties.⁵⁴ The

⁵² SRLS, session 168, 28 Sept. 1920, pp. 30–34; session 193, 3 Dec. 1920, pp. 55–59; session 218, 11 March 1921, pp. 40–43; session 175, 19 Oct. 1920, pp. 61. On the conception of the Labour Chamber cf: M. Sliwa, *Mysl polityczna Mieczysława Niedziałkowskiego (1893–1940)* (Political Thought of Mieczysława Niedziałkowski (1893–1940), Warszawa 1980, pp. 119–129.

⁵³ LS, Print No 1883, *passim*.

⁵⁴ SRLS, session 305, 9 May 1922, pp. 22–34, 45–46; session 306, 10 May 1922, pp. 6–8, 29–35, 64–67; session 307, 11 May 1922, pp. 44–45; session 309, 16 July 1922, pp. 16–24; session 329, 25 July 1922, pp. 30–37. Józef Buczek, one of the members of the Constitutional Commission and co-author of the drafts of electoral regulations, admitted having constructed electoral regulations in such a way that they reduced

IUDJN voted against the electoral regulations and they solemnly protested against both these acts in a declaration read by I. Grunbaum. The Polish Left adopted a similar approach, too.⁵⁵

The IUDJN also declared itself against the draft of the act „relative to provincial self-government especially in the provinces of Lvov and Stanisławów and Tarnopol”, which was being examined by the Sejm during the last days before elections. The IUDJN stressed that the act was unreliable, concessions offered to the Ukrainians were just half-measures and that it was an attempt to make Jews a tool in the Polish-Ukrainian conflict.⁵⁶

The IUDJN attempts at democratisation of the State were also visible during discussions on a number of ordinary acts particularly those concerning criminal law (summary criminal courts, offences committed by civil servants, amnesty, political offences) or the scope of the rights of the administration.⁵⁷

As far as the international policy was concerned the Jewish deputies declared themselves in favour of making peace with Soviet Russia, in favour of the federalist conception and against incorporating the Eastern Borderland directly into the Polish State. Even at the beginning of 1921 the folkists suggested that Poland should enter into union with Lithuania (it was due – among other things – to the broad autonomy which the Jews possessed in this country at that time). S. Hirshhorn was also against establishing close links with France by Poland arguing that such an alliance would be too remote and besides Paris would always prefer Russia to Poland. Instead he recommended rapprochement with Great Britain.⁵⁸

The Jewish deputies in the Legislative Sejm did not achieve greater success, on the contrary, they did not prevent many laws and actions of the government which were unfavourable for their electors. Obviously, it was due to a great extent to the relationship of forces in the Chamber and to the lack of strong and at the same time

the national minorities' chances of achieving greater success. J. Buczek, *Główne Zasady ordynacji wyborczej do Sejmu i Senatu. Studium krytyczno-porównawcze (Main Political Principles of the Regulations Relative to Elections for the Sejm and Senate. A Critical-Comparative Study.)*, Warszawa 1922, pp. 58, 60, 102–103 and others.

⁵⁵ SRLS, session 332, 28 July 1922, pp. 21–23.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, session 341, 26 Sept. 1922, pp. 84–85.

⁵⁷ Session 59, 30 June 1919, pp. 57–63; session 76, 24 July 1919, pp. 16–18; session 96, 7 Nov. 1919, pp. 13–14; session 115, 29 Jan. 1920, pp. 36–42, 56–59; session 229, 24 May 1921, pp. 13–18; session 263, 22 Nov. 1921, pp. 13–21.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, session 28, 8 April 1919, pp. 31–34; session 103, 25 Nov. 1919, pp. 26–31; session 142, 29 April 1920, pp. 11–19; session 198, 17 Dec. 1920, pp. 34–37; session 223, 14 April 1921, pp. 50–51; session 224, 15 April 1921, pp. 92–98; session 308, 12 May 1922, pp. 51–61.

close allies. The few representatives of the German population could not become such allies although from 1920 cooperation between them and the IUDJN was closer and closer. The parties of the Polish Left were only tactic allies and their views were similar to those of the IUDJN only as far as general matters were concerned. All these factors, together with the highly reluctant attitude of a considerable part of Polish society which was under the influence of the nationalist parties, encouraged Jews to join with other national minorities in the state, to create a common bloc in the approaching elections. Such a turn was a fault not only of the Polish political fractions. The Jewish representatives in the Sejm, similarly to their parties, were also at fault. They adopted improper tactics and practically did not take into consideration the feelings of the Polish nation which having regained its independence after a long lasting thralldom had to fight for maintaining its sovereignty almost with all the neighbouring States. Putting forward demogogic postulates which one could not expect to be realized, referring to the intervention of the Entente Powers, inconsiderate propaganda campaigning – only made the relations between the two nations worse similarly as anti-Semitism of the National Democrats did not help to reach agreement by them. Such progress of events was due to a great extent to the lack of parliamentary experience of politicians of both the sides, most of whom so far had been accustomed to the conditions of the autocratically governed Russia – radicalism of views created in these circumstances and attempts at solving conflicts by means of fight not negotiations did not prove to be proper methods in the demotratic system of Poland.

Translated by *Dobromiła Szczygielska*

ZSIDÓ KÉPVISELŐ A MÁSODIK LENGYEL KÖZTÁRSASÁG TÖRVÉNYHOZÁSÁBAN 1919–1922

Az 1918-ban függetlenné vált Lengyelországban az első választásokon a zsidó képviselőjelöltek megszerezték a szavatok 9,2%-át, de csak 11-en kerültek be a szejmbe. A választási rendszer a főleg városlakó zsidóságnak nem kedvezett, mivel a nagyvárosokat összekapcsolták a nagy vidéki területekkel. Igen sok volt a jelölt és a zsidó lakosság (1,8 millió fő a 16,9 milliós összlakosságból) sem vett részt aktívan a választásokon.

10 zsidó képviselő megalakította a Zsidó Nemzetiségű Képviselők Független Szövetségét (ZSNKFSZ), amelyen belül külön csoportot alkottak a cionisták, az ortodox és az ú.n. néppártiak. Mély belső ellentétek taktikai és stratégiai kérdésekben egyaránt megosztották a zsidó képviselőket. A kormánnyal szemben békülékeny és igen passzív ortodoxokat az igen aktív cionisták háttérbe szorították. A nem zsidó pártok több száz képviselője, ideértve még a Lengyel Szocialista Pártot is – meglehetősen ellenségesen viselkedett a zsidó képviselőkkel szemben. Együttműködni csak a baloldali pártokkal sikerült egyes konkrét kérdésekben – pl. az alkotmányügyi vitákban

1920. júliusában a fenyegető bolsevik támadás idején a ZSNKFSZ közzétette, hogy a zsidók készek áldozatokat hozni az állam megmentéséért, de októberben a zsidó képviselőt a kormány antiszemitizmusára hivatkozva megvonták támogatásukat a kormánytól. A zsidó képviselők elsősorban az egyéni és kollektív polgári szabadságjogok kiterjesztését tartották fontosnak Lengyelországban. A zsidó nemzetiség területi vagy egyéni autonómia-törekvéseit a többi politikai párt nem támogatta. Ugyanígy az 1919. július 28-án az antant hatalmak és Lengyelország között aláírt békeszerződés sem tartalmazott kisebbségvédelmi előírásokat, mivel azt Lloyd George kifejtette: a fő célnak olyan körülmények teremtését tartották, amelyek elősegítik a kisebbségek fokozatos asszimilációját.

A nyelvhasználat vitájában a jiddis nyelvet a lengyel jobboldal egyenes képviselői az uzsorások, kémet és bűnözők nyelvének nevezték, míg mások a germanizálás egyik eszközének tartották a lengyelországi zsidók döntő többségének nyelvét. Nem fogadták el a lengyel képviselők az iskolai oktatás demokratizálására, az államilag támogatott nemzetiségi iskolák fellállítására vonatkozó előterjesztést sem.

Komoly problémát jelentett az oroszországi pogromok elől a lengyel királyság területére menekült zsidók, az ú.n. litvákok (litvániai zsidók) állampolgárságának kérdése is. Tőlük ugyanis a hatóságok megtagadták a lengyel állampolgárságot. A zsidó képviselők elsődleges célja a teljeskörű állampolgári egyenlőség kivívása volt. Míg a törvényhozók jó része elvben elfogadta, hogy el kell törölni a jogegyenlőséget sértő törvényeket, a helyi közigazgatási hatóságok több olyan rendkívüli intézkedést vezettek be, amelyek kiváltották a ZSNKFSZ tiltakozását. A zsidókat leginkább sújtó jogtipró rendelkezéseket végül is csak 1931-ben törölte el a Szejm. Kemény vitákat okozott például a kötelező vasárnapi pihenőnap kérdése. A zsidók azon kívánságát, hogy ők dolgozhatnak ezen a napon, sem a lengyel jobb- sem a baloldal nem támogatta. A vallási egyenlőségért vívott harcban a zsidók minden nem-katolikus érdekét is képviselték – elismerték ugyanakkor a katolikus vallás elsődleges jogállását, de csak az „első az egyenlők között” elv alapján. Ezt az elvet a katolikus vallás kizárólagosságának alapján álló lengyel képviselők nem támogatták.

Lengyelországban a tárgyalt korszakban két komoly pogrom-hullám söpört végig. Az első 1918 novemberétől 1919 közepéig tartott, a másik 1920 nyarán volt. A gazdasági okok mellett a katolikus egyház felelőssége is kétségtelen, amely a „Krisztusölő zsidó” képét hagyományosan fenntartotta Lengyelországban. Az antiszemitizmus egyébként a 20. század elejétől kezdve egyre nagyobb szerepet játszott a lengyel nacionalizmusban. A pogromok közvetlen kiváltó okai között lehet említeni egyes ortodox zsidók

együttműködését a német megszállókkal, a cionisták magatartását a keleti határvidéken, a zsidó származású bolsevikoktól és a háborútól való félelmet is.

Az alkotmányos vitákban a zsidó képviselők egykamarás parlament mellett szólaltak fel, a szenátust a reakciós erők bástyájának tartották. Mint annyi más kérdésben, ebben sem jártak sikerrel, mert a parlamenti erőviszonyok ezt egyszerűen nem tették lehetővé. A német kisebbségnek is csak néhány képviselője volt a sejmben, a lengyel baloldali képviselők pedig csak taktikai szövetségesek voltak. Mindehhez hozzájárultak a zsidó képviselők függetlenségét hosszú időszak után visszaszerzett és létében fenyegetett állam képviselőinek érzékenységevel sokszor nem törődve olykor demagóg követeléseket is előterjesztettek.