

Sylwia Jakubczyk-Ślęczka

Musical Life of the Jewish Community in Interwar Galicia : the Problem of Identity of Jewish Musicians

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Sylwia Jakubczyk-Ślęczka

JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY IN KRAKÓW

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Introduction

The current musicological literature is of view that it is necessary to choose only one identity for a particular musician, which is something rooted probably in the nationalist idea. However, it does not take into account the historical, political, or social context, so this concept is definitely faulty. A prime example is the fact that the Polish musicological literature describes Jewish musicians engaged in Polish musical life and working in Polish cultural institutions as Poles,¹ while the Jewish musicological literature tries to claim that composers like Giacomo Meyerbeer, Jacques Halévy, Jacques Offenbach, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy and Gustav Mahler as well as many 20th-century composers, e.g. Leonard Bernstein, Ernst Bloch, Arnold Schönberg etc. as Jews.² This way, all the authors try to convince of the high value of their national music culture.

- 1 Examples: E. Dziębowska, entry *Lissa Zofia*, in: *Encyklopedia muzyczna PWM*, vol. 5, ed. E. Dziębowska, Kraków 1997; Z. Helman, entry *Bronisław Huberman*, in: *Encyklopedia muzyczna PWM*, vol. 4, ed. E. Dziębowska, Kraków 1997; J. Weber, entry *Gimpel Bronisław*, in: *Encyklopedia muzyczna PWM*, vol. 3, ed. E. Dziębowska, Kraków 1987.
- 2 H. Avenary, B. Bayer, entry *Music*, in: *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 14, ed. F. Skolnik, Jerusalem 2007; M. Brod, *Israel's Music*, Tel-Aviv 1951; H. Fromm, *On Jewish Music*.

In her work *Jewish Identities: Nationalism, Racism, and Utopianism in Twentieth-Century Music* Klára Móricz considers individually Schönberg's and Bloch's attitude towards their Jewish identity and resigns from unequivocal and simplified classifications. She draws attention to the complexity of the issue. The Karol Rathaus' biographer Martin Schüssler presents the changing identities of the composer and does not provide clear answer to the question of Rathaus' national identity. The identity of Józef Koffler as a Pole was constructed by his biographer Maciej Gołąb in the article *Garść informacji o Józefie Kofflerze i jego rodzinie z ksiąg metrykalnych gminy żydowskiej w Stryju*.³ However, Gołąb did not use any Jewish sources in his research that may have led him to different conclusions. In Polish musical historiography, the interest in this problem is also noticeable: in 2015, there was published a new lexicon entitled *Jews in the Music Culture on the Polish Lands in 19th and 20th Century* by Leon Tadeusz Błaszczyk.⁴

An inspiring look at the issue of Jewish national music culture can be seen in Esther Schmidt's work *Nationalism and the Creation of Jewish Music: The Politicization of Music and Language in the German-Jewish Press Prior to the Second World War*. The author writes:

The formation of a specifically Jewish music, which was part of the Jewish national movement, originated in Eastern Europe around 1900 and became popular in Austria and Germany about two decades later. As such, the currently much-discussed notion of Jewish art or music is not a perennial, but needs to be considered in the contextual socio-political reality of the early twentieth century.⁵

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- A Composer's View*, USA 1978; P. Gradenwitz, *Gustav Mahler and Arnold Schonberg*, in: *Contributions to a Historical Study of Jewish Music*, USA 1976; I. Heskes, *Passport to Jewish Music. Its History, Traditions, and Culture*, New York, Maryland, Israel 1994; A. Knapp, entry *Jewish music*, in: *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 13, ed. S. Sadie, London 2001; *Mahler and His World*, ed. K. Painter, Princeton, New Jersey 2002; A. M. Rothmüller, *The Music of the Jews. An Historical Appreciation*, Cranbury, New Jersey 1975; E. Rubin, J. H. Baron, *Music in Jewish History and Culture*, Sterling Heights, Michigan 2006; D. M. Schiller, *Bloch, Schoenberg, and Berstein. Assimilating Jewish Music*, New York 2003; L. Stevens, *Composers of Classical Music of Jewish Descent*, London, Portland, Oregon 2003.
- 3 M. Gołąb, *Garść informacji o Józefie Kofflerze i jego rodzinie z ksiąg metrykalnych gminy żydowskiej w Stryju*, "Muzyka" 2007, No. 2.
 - 4 L. T. Błaszczyk, *Żydzi w kulturze muzycznej ziem polskich w XIX i XX wieku: słownik biograficzny*, Warszawa 2014.
 - 5 E. Schmidt, *Nationalism and the Creation of Jewish Music: The Politicization of Music and Language in the German-Jewish Press Prior to the Second World War*, "Musica Judaica" 2000-2001, No. 15.

Similarly, the discussion about Jewish musicians' identity must include the historical and socio-political conditions which affected the choices made by individual people and also should take into account the perspective of the whole Jewish community as well as ideologically diverse groups functioning within it.

Jewish Musical Environments: Assimilators, Liberals, Nationalists and Socialists

Diversification of the Jewish worldview led to a division of traditional and essentially homogeneous culture into separate fractions. This division happened over the course of several generations, beginning with integration and, among the more radical, assimilation. Integration was a part of the Haskalah movement which appeared in Germany at the end of the 18th century. Moses Mendelssohn (grandfather of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy) and others promoters of the Jewish Enlightenment advanced integration of the Jews into European society. They recommended their coreligionists blend into non-Jewish environment by using the same language, dressing up in a similar way, adapting the rules and customs conventional in the public sphere. Galician Jews eager to integrate into Austrian society in Galicia abandoned Yiddish for German, were educated in German culture, and became part of the Austrian and German artistic environment. In the mid-19th century, the political view here was pro-Austrian.

On the basis of Haskalah ideals, radical Reform Judaism was created. Synagogue liturgy was shortened and, in some cases, abandoned completely. They introduced sermons in German, and in many instances employed the organ on Sabbath and Holidays and most radically mixed-gender choirs; these more radical reformers changed the music of the liturgy which henceforth became shorter, simpler (excess of ornaments, repetitions of words, long coloraturas were abandoned) and similar to Protestant chorale.⁶

Integration opened the public sphere for Jews. Professionally educated Jewish musicians joined in the work of European music institutions and local concert life. Musical life of Europe was enriched by

6 M. Edelman, *Discovering Jewish Music*, Philadelphia 2003; H. Fromm, *op. cit.*; A. M. Rothmüller, *op. cit.*; E. Rubin, J. H. Baron, *op. cit.*; E. Werner, *A Voice Still Heard...: The Sacred Songs of the Ashkenazic Jews*, University Park and London 1976.

musicians like Giacomo Meyerbeer, Jacques Halévy, Jacques Offenbach, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy and Gustav Mahler. Galician Jewry attempted to imitate the new Western European music and adapted the so-called “Vienna Rite,” a conservative reform that preserved Jewish prayer both textually and musically, which was the liturgical music of Salomon Sulzer. A generation later, they would adopt also the music of Louis Lewandowski from Berlin, and Samuel Naumbourg of Paris. They spoke German, were educated in German culture, cooperated with the Austrian and German artistic environment. Until the mid-19th century the direction of both integration and assimilation here was pro-Austrian.

The turn towards Polish culture took place in the 1860s. Since 1863, Krakow Jews organized Polish patriotic celebrations in Temple Synagogue. On such occasions, they held a solemn service that included organ and choirs, a patriotic sermon, and singing patriotic anthems. There were also patriotic academies with Polish literature and music.⁷ In the 1880s, the Association “Agudas Achim” (“Covenant of Brothers”) was established. Its members were Jews from Lvov, Krakow and some other Galician cities where they promoted the idea of national unification of Polish and Jewish nations. They used a special anthem *Boże, coś Judę* to call for brotherhood of Poles and Jews. The song was a contrafactum of the famous Polish patriotic anthem, *Boże, coś Polskę*. Lasting impact of the assimilation movement was noticeable in many spheres of social life of Galician Jews in the interwar period. The assimilators considered themselves as Poles of Jewish faith or of Jewish origin. They spoke Polish, published Jewish press in Polish, worked in Polish institutions, lived in Polish quarters of Galician cities, felt the heirs of Polish culture.

However, as Ezra Mendelsohn noted: “The Jews who were acculturated, who claimed to be of Polish nationality were by no means

7 A. Maślak-Maciejewska, *Wydarzenia patriotyczne organizowane w synagodze Tempel w Krakowie*, in: *Synagoga Tempel i środowisko krakowskich Żydów postępowych*, ed. M. Galas, Kraków-Budapest 2012; *id.*, *Działalność Towarzystwa Agudas Achim i jego związki z synagogami postępowymi we Lwowie i Krakowie*, “Kwartalnik Historii Żydów” 2014, No. 1; *id.*, *The Association of Progressive Jews in Kraków and its Synagogue in the Last Quarter of the 19th Century*, “Scripta Judaica Cracoviensia” 2015, vol. 13; *id.*, *Z dziejów judaizmu w XIX-wiecznym Krakowie – tożsamość, poglądy religijne i instytucje środowiska Żydów postępowych*, PhD dissertation, Jagiellonian University 2015.

completely assimilated”.⁸ There were two reasons why total assimilation was impossible. The first one lays in the national idea itself. Ethnic, cultural, religious distinctiveness did not allow full unification of two nations. The national concept emphasized the differences between “nations”, it did not serve to unite them. Most Poles and Polish Jews were convinced that the social experiment would be the failure of the assimilators. The second reason lays in the utopian conviction that such a large Jewish community would renounce its own identity. As Leo Strauss noted, assimilation can include individual people, but not the whole community.⁹ In order to overcome these obstacles and become a full-fledged members of the European society, Galician Jews rejected the idea of assimilation for liberal and national ones.

Liberal ideas assumed cooperation of all the members of the society in the public life and preservation of groups’ distinctness in the private sphere. Jewish liberals regarded their community as an ethnic group and maintained that there was no need to transform it into political one, i.e. nation. As Tomasz Gąsowski characterized this group: “Their purpose was that Jews would be non - adjectival citizen of the country of residence”.¹⁰ Liberal Jews, inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution, were also expected to be non-religious and to base their culture solely on secular values. Acceptance of liberal attitudes allowed Jewish musicians to engage fully in the public life and relieved their necessity to define or manifest their national or religious identity. By exempting themselves from religious duties and obligations they could get work in any musical environment or genre. They were no longer subject to state’s cultural policy, service to the nation or religious law. However, as Strauss rightly observes, the freedom of the different groups in the private sphere always results in divisions: “liberal society necessarily makes possible, permits, and even fosters [...] discrimination”.¹¹ These differences are then reflected in public activities of members

8 E. Mendelsohn, *Żydzi Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w okresie międzywojennym*, Warszawa 1992, p. 56.

9 L. Strauss, *Why We Remain Jews: Can Jewish Faith and History Still Speak to Us?*, A lecture given on February 4, 1962 at the B’nai B’rith Hillel Foundation of the University of Chicago [online] https://issuu.com/bouvard6/docs/leo_strauss_-_why_we_remain_jews_ [accessed: 09.08.2017].

10 T. Gąsowski, *Między gettem a światem. Dylematy ideowe Żydów galicyjskich na przełomie XIX i XX wieku*, Kraków 1996, p. 95.

11 L. Strauss, *op. cit.*

of the liberal society and some distinctive features of their repertoire (both performed and composed).

Some similarities to the liberal idea can be found also in socialist one, especially in social democracy promulgated by the “Bund”—to some extent popular in the interwar Galicia. The perfect Bundist was defined as a

Yiddish-speaking, informally educated, with socialist views and proud of his secular Jewish heritage, but also non-religious, cosmopolitan, very progressive and what is not less important, determined to change their environment, but not to emigrate (unlike the Zionists).¹²

Concepts of Bundists combined some ideas of socialists, liberals and nationalists. They were meant to be a way of survival of Jews in European diaspora. Socialism was treated as the way to equate the Jews with other nations. Liberalism was to serve as a promotion of non-religious but common values and cultural unification. Linguistic distinctiveness and preservation of Jewish cultural heritage, even only partially, were the way to save Jewish identity.

The cultural policy of the Bundists were subordinate to their worldview. The influence of socialism was visible in the establishment of the calendar of festivals and anniversaries solemnly celebrated by the members of this movement. Among them, there were events connected with the French Revolution, anniversaries of deaths of the movement leaders and annually celebrated International Workers’ Day. The goals of Jewish and other labourers were the theme of the songs performed during ceremonies. Many melodies were created on the model of the labourers’ song with characteristic marching rhythm and simple melody, easy to perform by a crowd of workers. The presence of the liberal idea was noticeable in using and composing “universal” melodies, not connected with any national culture. During the concerts of Jewish labourers music organizations, the classical repertoire was also performed. To express the attachment to the territory of diaspora and

12 M. Kozłowska, *Wandering Jews: camping culture and Jewish socialist youth in interwar Poland*, “Jewish Culture and History” 2015, No. 3, p. 246.

Jewish cultural heritage, Bundists used Yiddish folk songs which were the core of their repertoire.

The most radical form of the Jewish national idea was Zionism. The Zionists considered the Jews as a distinct nation and sought to unite dispersed Jewish communities. They postulated establishment of the Jewish State in Palestine and they also attempted to create the one national culture, partially by adopting Hebrew. They sought inspiration from ancient Jewish culture, depreciating value of Jewish culture in diaspora. They were interested just in the ancient traces in local tunes. That is why as a model for the new national music they indicated a folk repertoire of Middle Eastern Jewry, where the ancient traditions were the most audible. They also proclaimed the use of Hebrew language. They exchanged the Yiddish cultural topos for the new “Hebrew” ones, often derived from Bible stories. Under the influence of Zionist idea, the same was made in music—the traditions of European diaspora which initially inspired the composers of Jewish National School in music were exchanged for the “new Hebrew tradition”.

However, the most radical reforms were not carried out in prewar Europe. Living in diaspora was treated by Zionists as a stage of preparing for life in the future Jewish State. In the Polish Parliament, there was discussion about establishment of national-cultural autonomy for Jews. This autonomy would have created conditions for administrative, social and artistic experiments before settling in the Jewish State. Although this plan was not implemented, Galician Jews ran a network of their own institutions. Thus, in agreement with the authorities, the foundations of national life were built in the diaspora. Importantly, the idea of Jewish national emancipation grew up on the ground of European national thought and succeeded the failure of integrationists. Still, national-cultural autonomy was strongly rooted in European philosophy, history and culture. As the Zionists themselves explained:

the Palestinian idea couldn't be succeed without resolute following European civilization which is leading in the world.¹³

¹³ T. Gąsowski, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

In Search of the Identity of Individual Musicians

Because of this fragmentation within the Jewish world, it can be difficult to classify a particular person as assimilator, liberal, nationalist or socialist. As previously mentioned, there has frequently been a tendency both in Jewish and Polish musical circles to see certain musicians as their own. Fragmentation within the Jewish world at the time meant further subdivision made labeling a Jewish composer more difficult. Moreover, there were subdivisions within these four basic philosophies that complicate the issue further leading not only to claims of Jewishness but also of political affiliations.¹⁴ This is further complicated that musicians simply played where they chose to and rarely on the basis of affiliation alone.

The musicological literature defined musicians like Bronisław Gimpel, Bronisław Huberman, Józef Koffler, Stanisław Lipski as Poles without mentioning their Jewish background. All of them were educated in Polish institutions, worked for Polish institutions, and were engaged in Polish musical life. They performed classical music by European composers and composed works inspired by “universal” music trends, exactly as other “national” composers in Europe did. However, this Eurocentric perception reinforced nationalist chauvinism and caused Jewish musicians to be classified as non-Jews simply by their place of residence and the language they used. Who would not want to claim a virtuoso like Gimpel or Huberman as their own, especially as they were highly integrated into the Polish milieu. On the other hand, European national thought did not take into account the position of the Jews living in the diaspora and that Jewish emancipation began later than the European concept of Nationalism emerged.

Not all Jewish musicians were so completely assimilated: Lipski, Gimpel, Huberman, and Koffler never denied their Jewish identity. Moreover, all of them were engaged in musical life of the Jewish society, a fact ignored by researchers who did not read Jewish sources. Stanisław Lipski was a professor of Krakow’s Conservatory of Music, pianist and composer of piano, chamber and vocal music, especially songs inspired by Polish folk music and poetry of Young Poland

¹⁴ See: Cz. Brzoza, *Żydowska mozaika polityczna w Polsce 1917-1927 (wybór dokumentów)*, Kraków 2003; *id.*, *Żydowskie partie polityczne w Polsce: 1918-1927 (wybór dokumentów)*, Kraków 1994.

movement.¹⁵ His way of functioning in the public life was influenced by the idea of assimilation.¹⁶ In his private life, he maintained social and family contact with the Jewish community. On June 28th, 1925, he married Jachewet Debora Schoreber in the Temple Synagogue in Krakow.¹⁷ In 1924, he performed with cantor Baruch Sperber—the other Jewish musician—in the Old Theater in Krakow.¹⁸ The program expressed the auto-identity of both musicians. They performed compositions by Haendel, Beethoven, Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Meyerbeer, Moniuszko, Żeleński and their own compositions—excerpts from the opera *Dybbuk* by Sperber and probably Polish songs by Lipski. These musicians firmly had their feet in two musical worlds and had an attachment to European, Polish and Jewish cultural heritage.

Bronisław Gimpel and Bronisław Huberman were famous violin virtuosos. Bronisław Gimpel was born in well-known Lvov Jewish family. His grandfather was a founder and a director of the first and the only Jewish Theater in the city, called “Gimpels’ Theater”. After his death, Samuel, his son, took over the theater management and the music management was entrusted to Adolf, the father of Bronisław, a conductor of Temple Synagogue choir, a music teacher in Polish Theater in Lvov, an arranger of American operettas performed on the local stage. In the interwar period, the director of the theater was changed again. The new one was the son of Samuel, Maurycy. Due to the development of musical careers of Adolf’s sons, Bronisław, Jakub and Karol, their father served as musical director until the outbreak of the Second World War. Bronisław appeared on that stage just once, in 1923. He performed as the first violinist in the string quartet during the jubilee concert of Chune Wolfsthal, the conductor and composer of the theater for many years. His brother, Karol, appeared there as a conductor.¹⁹ At the same time, Jakub was the accompanist of Bronisław Huberman. The engagement of the latter in the musical life of Jewish community is obvious.

15 L. T. Błaszczuk, *op. cit.*; Marczyńska J., entry *Lipski Stanisław Samuel*, in: *Encyklopedia muzyczna PWM*, vol. 5, ed. E. Dziębowska, Kraków 1997.

16 See: H. Goldberg, *Przynależność przez muzykę: wkład Żydów w kształtowanie muzycznej polskości*, «Muzykalia XI. Judaica 3», July 2011.

17 Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, *Gmina Wyznaniowa Żydowska w Krakowie 1822-1939*, 107, *Księgi zaślubin postępowych Izraelitów w Krakowie*, sig. 1009, No. 755.

18 “Nowy Dziennik” 1924, No. 120, p. 7.

19 Z. Karlik, *Z sali koncertowej. Koncert jubileuszowy kompozytora Chune Wolfsthal*, “Chwila” 1923, No. 1610, p. 7.

Huberman was a founder of Palestinian Symphonic Orchestra and an active promoter of the Palestinian idea.²⁰

Very interesting is the story of Józef Koffler, the first Polish dodecaphonist. The problem Józef Koffler's identity was investigated by his biographer, Maciej Gołąb. He studied the biography and musical activity of Koffler. He analyzed the data from the metrics of his family.²¹ On this basis, he supposed the father of Koffler could be a Pole what made the composer identify himself as a Pole. The confirmation of his assumption Gołąb sees in the facts that Koffler was not engaged in the musical life of the Jewish community and he officially left Lvov *kehila* in 1937. Archival documents of Lvov Jewish community and Jewish press from Lvov shed a new light on the issue of the identity of Koffler. The musician was a chairman of Jewish Academic Choir in Lvov in the 30s.²² So, he was engaged in musical life of the Jewish community. His interest in the musical activity of Jewish musical environment confirms also the press. In 1936, Koffler published a critique of Jewish Artistic-Literary Society where he questioned the meaning of existence of Jewish Symphonic Orchestra in Lvov which organized concerts just for local Jewish intelligentsia. He called for the inclusion of Jewish musicians in the activity of Polish orchestra. His arguments were answered by the chairman of the Jewish organization. The polemics were probably a cause of conflict which led Koffler to the decision about leaving the organizational structures of the local Jewish community. But it did not mean he denied his Jewish identity. In 1938, Krakow's Jewish press informed that Koffler became the only Polish member of the World Center for Jewish Music in Palestine. Meanwhile, Lvov's Jewish press was silent on the fact of Koffler's distinction.²³

20 P. Szalsza, *Bronisław Huberman: czyli pasje i namiętności zapomnianego geniusza*, Częstochowa 2001.

21 M. Gołąb, *Józef Koffler i Szkoła Wiedeńska*, "Muzyka" 1996, No. 2; *id.*, entry *Koffler Józef*, in: *Encyklopedia muzyczna PWM*, vol. 5, ed. E. Dziębowska, Kraków 1997; *id.*, entry *Koffler Józef*, in: *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 13, ed. S. Sadie, London 2001; *id.*, *Józef Koffler*, Kraków 2005; *id.*, *Garść informacji o Józefie Kofflerze i jego rodzinie z ksiąg metrykalnych gminy żydowskiej w Stryju...*, *op. cit.*

22 CDIAU (Centralnyi Derzhavnyi Istorychnyi Archiv Ukrainy), *Єврейська релігійна громада, м. Львів, фонд 701* op. 3, *Листування з студентськими і учнівськими товариствами про надання субсидій 1928-1932, справа 1062*, pp. 44-47.

23 H. Apte, *Musica Hebraica*, "Nowy Dziennik" 1938, No. 226, pp. 9-10. See: A. Plohn, "Musica Hebraica", "Chwila" 1938, No. 6946, p. 12; P. Bohlman, *The World Center for Jewish Music in Palestine 1936-1940*, Oxford 1992.

The influence of the liberal idea is the most visible in activity of Jewish musicians on the stage of popular music. There they created the phenomenon which is called “Polish song of the Jewish origin”. The artists like Julian Tuwim, Marian Hemar, Andrzej Włast, Jerzy Jurandot, Ludwik Starski, Emanuel Schlechter, Władysław Schlengel (lyricists), Jerzy Petersburski, Henryk Wars, Artur Gold, Zygmunt Białostocki (composers) were the authors of many popular songs sung by the whole Polish society. Their compositions are regarded as a part of common national heritage. Artists themselves are also regarded as Polish ones. The lack of detailed research and reflection on their creativity caused that their origin and its influence on their compositions are forgotten. Meanwhile, they smuggled many Jewish traditional motifs to their melodies, for example the tune *Chosn kale mazl tov* appears in the song *Nikodem*. Among the songs composed by them there are *List do Palestyny*, *Srulek* or tangos like titled *Rebeka*, *Rachela*.²⁴ That was the way they reminded themselves of their Jewish identity—despite being involved in the work on development of universal music genres.

Equally significant is the example of Jewish musicians engaged in promotion of jazz music in the Second Polish Republic. The first jazz band in Poland was founded by two Germans and three Jewish musicians: Zygmunt Karasiński, Jerzy Petersburski and Alfred Melodysta. In the next years, the leading performers and composers of jazz music in Poland were: Szymon Kataszek, Artur Gold, Henryk Wars, Jerzy Gert and Leopold Striks. The bands of Gold and Petersburski or Karasiński and Kataszek were the most famous ones. The members of the latter became also known as the first jazz improvisers in Poland (1929). In Krakow jazz bands were founded by Sperbers brothers (The Jolly Boys), Rosner brothers (Rosners Jazz and Tango Orchestra, Rosners Brothers), Haars brothers and Stefan Bober (Szał, Silver Jazz), Leopold Karpf (The King Jazz). In Wł. Żeleński Music School in Kraków on the initiative of Kazimierz Meyerhold in 1933 the first Department of Jazz Music in Poland was established.²⁵ The reason why Jewish musicians were the promoters of jazz music in Poland should be sought in their family and social connections. Jewish families and communities dispersed in the world still communicated with each other. Thanks to that, Jewish

24 M. Gliński, *Polska piosenka pochodzenia żydowskiego* [online] <http://culture.pl/pl/artykul/polska-piosenka-pochodzenia-zydowskiego> [accessed: 10.08.2017].

25 K. Karpinski, *Był jazz. Krzyk jazz-bandu w międzywojennej Polsce*, Kraków 2014.

musicians in Poland faster than Polish ones had the opportunity to know the new music genre.

Similarly, Jewish composers and performers of classical music could be the promoters of the avant-garde in the interwar Poland. The first Polish dodecaphonist was already mentioned Józef Koffler. Expressionist inspirations may be found in the compositions by Wilhelm Mantel from Krakow.²⁶ An interesting work by another Krakow composer was *Mazurek* by Pawel Anhalt who was also a musicologist and conductor of Zionist choir. He combined the melody and rhythm of the Polish national dance with modern atonal and dissonant harmony.²⁷ The members of most “B’nai B’rith” lodges in Galicia formally began to support Zionism in 1925 but the lodge in Przemyśl did not. The concerts they organized never included compositions of the Jewish National School but rather concentrated on European ones.²⁸

Classical music was used as a tool of cosmopolitanism by “Bund”. For example, the “Kultur Lige” chorus in Tarnów in 1936 performed compositions by Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Schumann, Schubert and Moniuszko but it also had Jewish pieces in its repertoire. Both choir of “Kultur Lige” and other Jewish Socialists I. L. Peretz choir had in their repertoire songs by Socialist composer, Michał Gelbart.²⁹ The traditional Yiddish folk songs were performed on the stage of Krakow’s “Arbetheym”. The performer was singer Brünn, cantor of Temple Synagogue San Dywiński, the soloist of Lvov’s Opera (previously a pupil of cantor of orthodox Kupa Synagogue in Krakow, Eliezer Goldberg) Ignacy (Itzhak) Mann and professional musicians affiliated with local Jewish Music Society.

The famous folk singer and composer Mordechai Gebirtig was also a proponent of socialist ideas that influenced his works. He composed for example quasi-revolutionary song titled *Arbetloze marsh* (“Unemployed March”). His poem *Grandfather Pesach* is a critic of traditional religiosity which he accused of defending injustice and restraining necessary

26 H. Apte, *Wieczór kompozytorski dra Wilhelma Mantla*, “Nowy Dziennik” 1934, No. 324, p. 8.

27 P. Anhalt, *Mazurek*, Kraków ca 1930, [online] <http://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/dlibra/plain-content?id=138312> [accessed: 28.02.2017].

28 B. Czajeczka, *Archiwum Związku Żydowskich Stowarzyszeń Humanitarnych „B’nei B’rith” w Krakowie (1892-1938): zarys dziejów związku, historia zespołu i inwentarz*, Kraków 1994.

29 “Nowy Dziennik” 1930, No. 111, p. 8.

social transformations. However, his performances of traditional folk songs brought him the greatest fame. To the Jewish Socialists, Yiddish songs were meant to be a natural musical language of Jewish working masses and so Gebirtig wrote his melodies inspired by the sound of traditional Jewish music including, in some cases, synagogue melodies. Jewish Socialists, who by definition rejected religion, treated them as an element of secular Jewish tradition. That is why there are motifs characteristic of the synagogue modes in Gerbirtig's songs, for example *Adonai Malach* in the song *Baym taychele*, *Magen Avot* in *Motele* or *Ahava raba* in *Mamenyu, an eytse*.³⁰ Inspirations of synagogue music are also visible in the practice of lowering the second degree of the scale in the end of composed melodies, like in the songs *Kartofl zup mit shvomen* or *Krigs invalid*. A common phenomenon in Socialists songs is also the use of non-Jewish folklore. It was the result of centuries-old influence of surrounding nations' music but it was also acceptable by Socialists due to the compatibility of this phenomenon with the idea of attachment to the diaspora.

A separate study requires a biography of an outstanding musicologist, Zofia Lissa. Born in Lvov in 1908, she studied piano, music theory, musicology and philosophy. Additionally, she attended courses in psychology and art history. She was an adherent of Socialist ideology. However, she cooperated also with the national Jewish institutions like Jewish Artistic-Literary Society. In 1933, she led for its members the series of lectures dedicated to the history of music.³¹ Her articles from the interwar period were written in the spirit of the Socialist idea. However, it is even surprising how she used it to defend against racial theories.³² When she addressed the topic of biological predispositions of "different human races" for creating and performing music she argued with the racists with her knowledge of the field of the sociology of music, specifically pointing on the impact of the environment on individuals.³³ Thus, in the time of the popularity of racial theories, she

30 *Anthology of Yiddish Folk Songs. Mordechai Gebirtig*, vol. 5, ed. S. Leichter, Jerusalem 2000.

31 "Chwila" 1933, No. 5252, p. 16.

32 In the near future communist USSR indeed became a temporary asylum for Eastern European Jews who protected themselves from Nasizm. See: M. J. Chodakiewicz, *Zydzi i Polacy 1918-1939*, Warszawa 2000.

33 Z. Lissa, *Rasizm w muzyce*, "Chwila" 1934, No. 5327, p. 12; *id.*, *Jakiej rasy był Fryderyk Chopin?*, "Chwila" 1938, No. 6802, p. 10.

stressed the influence on human consciousness by living conditions. During the Second World War, Lissa stayed in the USSR. After her return to Poland, she held high posts in a country ruled by communists. She was a deputy director of Music Department in the Ministry of Culture and Arts. She established the Musicology Institute at Warsaw University and was its director for many years. Her publications were still infiltrated by the Socialist idea but the same time were very valuable and innovatory. As a woman and a Jew who lived in very difficult historical period she was forced to make difficult decisions. The analysis of her choices could be very interesting topic of research.

Zionists also presented an innovative approach to musical life. Henryk Apte, a violinist, lawyer, member of the Krakow's lodge "B'nai B'rith" was a leading animator of musical life of the Jewish community in Krakow. He was a director of all the most important Jewish music organizations there, choir "Shir" and later Jewish Music Society. As a member of the lodge, he obtained the funds for the activity of organizations he managed and for the individual musicians who were engaged in musical life of the Jewish community after they finished their education. In this way, he worked on realization Zionist concept of national-cultural autonomy of Jews living in the diaspora and prepared the basis of national administration for the future Jewish State.

Apte was also a music critic. He published reviews from Krakow's musical life in the Zionist magazine "Nowy Dziennik" ("New Daily"). He promoted European classical music. He reported the activity of Jewish music organizations and Jewish musicians from all over the world. He worked on popularization of Jewish national music. To the musical life of Krakow Jewish community, he engaged musicians from Vienna: Joachim Stutschewsky, and Edward Steuermann, who were the teacher in Jewish Music School established by Jewish Music Society.³⁴ Stutschewsky and Julius Wolfsohn were also active in Krakow's concert life performing for Jewish audience their own compositions and the works of other Jewish national composers. Wolfsohn took part in the first concert of Jewish symphony music which was held in Krakow in 1930.³⁵

34 "Nowy Dziennik" 1932, No. 232, p. 16.

35 "Nowy Dziennik" 1930, No. 45, p. 4; "Nowy Dziennik" 1930, No. 47, p. 8; "Nowy Dziennik" 1930, No. 49, pp. 11-12; H. Apte, *Z sali koncertowej. VIII Poranek symfoniczny. Współczesna muzyka żydowska*, "Nowy Dziennik" 1930, No. 52, pp. 6-7; J. Nemtsov, *Neue jüdische Musik in Polen in den 20-er-30er Jahren*, in: *Jüdische Kunstmusik im 20. Jahrhundert. Quellenlage, Stilanalysen*, ed. J. Nemtsov, Wiesbaden 2006.

Under Apte's leadership, the Jewish Music Society promoted the works of Krakow's Jewish composers. At one such concert organized by him in 1937 the compositions of members of the Jewish Music Society: Wilhelm Mantel, Paweł Anhalt and Benzion Wischniowitz.³⁶ The Society also dealt with the animation of musical life of Jewish communities in the smaller cities of Galicia, especially in Western Lesser Poland. Henryk Apte and Maria Salz-Zimmermann prepared a concert of Bach's compositions for Jewish audience in Tarnow in 1928.³⁷ In 1934, there was the only concert of Krakow's Jewish Symphony Orchestra. In the review of this event, Apte did not hide his pride and joy.³⁸ Once again, he proved his sincere devotion to music and Jewish national life.

There were also Galician musicians who engaged in Palestinian musical life. Apte reported on the development of Jewish music institutions in the Middle East. Stefan Schleichkorn, the Krakow's violist, made a concert tour in Palestine in 1936. Paweł Anhalt as a conductor of choir of Zionists organization "Akiba" arranged Palestinian songs for four- to six-voices vocal ensemble. As a musicologist, he tried to popularize the knowledge of Hebrew culture in the local press. However, no one of them wanted to live in Palestine. This situation was best explained by David Ben Gurion, Prime Minister of Israel in 1948-1953 and 1955-1963:

The middle class came here and was disappointed. They could not succeed because they wanted to live in Palestine doing what they did in the diaspora. They didn't understand that Palestine is not Poland.³⁹

But from Galicia came Julius Chajes, the composer of neoclassical music inspired by Palestinian folklore who lived in Palestine in 1934-1937.⁴⁰

Zionism enriched Galician Jews' musical life with interests and concerts of Jewish national music. Even some Galician composers began to compose pieces inspired by Jewish folk music. The compositions of Henryk Guensberg from Lvov were performed during the concert of Jewish music, next to the pieces by Bloch, Wolfsohn, Kahane, Loew and

36 "Nowy Dziennik" 1937, No. 133, p. 10.

37 "Nowy Dziennik" 1928, No. 101, p. 11.

38 H. Apte, *Z sali koncertowej. I Koncert żydowskiej orkiestry symfonicznej*, "Nowy Dziennik" 1934, No. 333, p. 6.

39 Ł. T. Sroka, M. Sroka, *Polskie korzenie Izraela*, Kraków-Budapest 2015, p. 377.

40 Y. Chajes, *Meet My Father, Julius Chajes*, "Pro Musica Hebraica" [online] <http://promusicahebraica.org/2011/10/11/meet-my-father-julius-chajes/> [accessed: 13.12.2016].

Chune Wolfsthal. Alfred Plohn, music critic of Zionist daily “Chwila”, noticed that the theme of his *Sonatina* was modeled on folk melody while his *Pastoral variation*, composed for violin, viola and clarinet, consisted of eight musical pictures of the country living connected with a common theme.⁴¹ Jewish inspirations in the compositions by Józef Neger from Przemyśl confirmed their titles: *Rabbi from Bacharach*, *Golus’ song* and *Complaint*.⁴² It is a characteristic phenomenon that the Jewish national idea was passed through diaspora filter. Galician composers used in their compositions the motifs from local Jewish traditions regarding these works as their contribution to the national culture. For the promotion of Zionist idea they simply used the language which was understandable for them and their audience. That is why also Nachum Sternheim composing his folk songs promoting the Zionist worldview used Yiddish language and traditional melodies of diaspora, even chassidic ones.⁴³

A harbinger of new desires and at the same time of return to tradition was the attitude presented by Itzhak Lust, a conductor of Temple Synagogue choir in Krakow, a music critic, analytic of musical life, medic. He was a member of Jewish Music Society and co-founder of the Jewish Music Friends’ Society.⁴⁴ He cooperated with Zionists and strove to establish an association focused on performing widely understood Jewish music. He was associated with progressive environment but criticized the Western European reform of synagogue music. He regarded it as a “musical mediocrity”.⁴⁵ Although his choir performed it, he also joined in its repertoire very traditional compositions of Krakow’s orthodox cantor, Eliezer Goldberg.⁴⁶ Lust was well-educated and strongly attached to tradition. Galicia was his homeland. He loved local culture but also recognized the need for its modernization without any revolution. His attitude united the most important aspirations of

41 *Z sali koncertowej. Wieczór muzyki żydowskiej*, “Chwila” 1938, No. 6862, p. 6.

42 *Z akademickiej sali koncertowej. Inauguracyjny wieczór muzyczny w Żydowskim Domu Akademickim*, “Chwila” 1932, No. 4624, p. 12.

43 G. Flam, D. Noy, *Hobn mir a nigndl*, Jerusalem 2000.

44 *Żydowskie Towarzystwo Muzyczne w Krakowie*, “Nowy Dziennik” 1928, No. 330, p. 7; “Di Post” 1937, No. 13, p. 7.

45 I. Lust, *O muzykę żydowską*, “Nowy Dziennik” 1929, No. 263, p. 11.

46 “Nowy Dziennik” 1938, No. 107, p. 11; H. Apte, *Koncert synagogałny*, “Nowy Dziennik” 1939, No. 126, p. 10; Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, *Gmina Wyznaniowa Żydowska w Krakowie 1822-1939*, 107, *Dokumenty synagogi Izraelitów Postępowych*, sig. 689.

traditional and modern Jewish environments, and harmonized with the announced social transformations. As Maksymilian Beck predicted in nationwide “Opinia”:

The front where the historical conflict of the future will be resolved is not located between fascism and communism.[...] Its new power is concentrated around the banner of religion and traditional morality as a basis of worldview.⁴⁷

Conclusions

As the results of my research show, it is necessary to include historical and socio-political context in determining the identity of Jewish Musicians active in prewar Europe. Analysis of the identity of individuals should be carried out with consideration of local conditions, the worldview of the local Jewish community, cultural policy of the organization to which a particular person belongs. It should also indicate the results of research conducted by representatives of other disciplines, especially historians and sociologists. They help to reveal the cover motivations of musicians and understand better the meaning of their—seemingly meaningless and universal—activities. They make it possible to discover a deeper layer of meanings inscribed in the activity of prewar Jewish musicians.

The changeability and flexibility of views exclude the possibility of unambiguous identification of musicians’ nationality. They rather suggest its complexity.⁴⁸ As I tried to demonstrate, many different—and sometimes even exceptive—ideas affected individuals. Particular persons could use different ideas for their own purposes and for undertaking various professional activities. Maybe this diversity of worldview of the Jewish community from prewar Galicia is also the key to understanding the fate of composers like Julius Chajes and Karol Rathaus, originating in Galicia. Both brought up in Galician families could take over their open-mindedness and their skepticism towards stiffness and unambiguous of any political view. That would explain

47 M. Beck, *Między komunizmem a faszyzmem – trzecie wyjście?*, “Opinia” 1935, No. 3, p. 3.

48 See: A. Maślak-Maciejewska, *Z dziejów judaizmu w XIX-wiecznym Krakowie – tożsamość, poglądy religijne i instytucje środowiska Żydów postępowych*, op. cit.

their problem to define their own identity and non-adaptability to the canons of the new world.⁴⁹

I hope that presented new biographical data and the new look at the issue of Jewish musicians' identity will provoke further research and deeper reflection on it. It is important for better understanding the history of the period, the activity of the musicians then and the human condition put to the proof on the eve of the Second World War.

Abstract

The article discusses the issue of Jewish musicians' identity by the example of prewar Galician artists. It emphasizes the role of social and political divisions within Jewish community and the impact of assimilation, liberalism, socialism and Zionism on the musical life of Jews in Galicia. Then, it discusses their influence on individual musicians like: Bronisław Gimpel, Bronisław Huberman, Józef Koffler, Stanisław Lipski, Wilhelm Mantel, Paweł Anhalt, Stefan Schleichkorn, Henryk Guensberg, Józef Neger, Henryk Apte, Izaak Lust, Zofia Lissa, Mordechaj Gebirtig, Nachum Sternheim and musicians active on the stage of popular music. Its aim is to encourage musicologists to reconsider the issue of prewar Jewish musicians' identity and to use findings of historians and sociologists in musicological literature. They indicate rather complexity, not unilaterality, of the self-identification of Jews in diaspora. Understanding of the Jewish musicians' work conditions allows to discover the hidden meaning of their actions.

Keywords

Jewish identities, Jewish musicians' identity, politicization of musical life, Jewish musicians, Galician Jews

49 Y. Chajes, *op. cit.*; B. Raba, entry *Karol Rathaus*, in: *Encyklopedia muzyczna PWM*, vol. 8, ed. E. Dziębowska, Kraków 2004; M. Schüssler, "Karol Rathaus—An American Composer of Polish Origin..." *The Development of an Americanized View of Rathaus and Its Consequences for the Reception of His Music*, "Polish Music Journal" 2003, No. 1; B. Schwarz, D. Pirone, entry *Rathaus Karol*, in: *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 20, ed. S. Sadie, London 2001.

Abstrakt

Życie muzyczne społeczności żydowskiej w Galicji w okresie międzywojennym. Problem tożsamości narodowej muzyków żydowskich

Niniejszy artykuł omawia problem tożsamości muzyków żydowskich na przykładzie przedwojennych artystów galicyjskich. Podkreśla znaczenie podziałów społecznych i politycznych wewnątrz społeczności żydowskiej oraz wpływ idei asymilacji liberalnej, socjalistycznej i syjonistycznej na życie muzyczne Żydów w dawnej Galicji. Następnie omawia ich oddziaływanie na indywidualnych muzyków takich jak: Bronisław Gimpel, Bronisław Huberman, Józef Koffler, Stanisław Lipski, Wilhelm Mantel, Paweł Anhalt, Stefan Schleichkorn, Henryk Guensberg, Józef Neger, Henryk Apte, Izaak Lust, Zofia Lissa, Mordechaj Gebirtig, Nachum Sternheim oraz tych aktywnych na scenie muzyki rozrywkowej. Celem artykułu jest skłonienie do ponownej refleksji nad tematem tożsamości przedwojennych muzyków żydowskich i wykorzystanie w literaturze muzykologicznej ustaleń socjologów i historyków wskazujących na złożoność, a nie jednoznaczność, autoidentyfikacji członków żydowskiej diaspory. Zrozumienie warunkowań działalności żydowskich artystów pozwala dopiero pełniej odczytać ukryte znaczenia podejmowanej przez nich aktywności.

Słowa kluczowe

tożsamości żydowskie, tożsamość muzyków żydowskich, upolitycznienie życia muzycznego, muzycy żydowscy, Żydzi galicyjscy

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