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Jewish schools in Lodz in the late 1940s.

Szkoły żydowskie w Łodzi w drugiej połowie lat 40. XX w.

Summary:

The main aim of this study is to analyze the state and status of Jewish schools that functioned in the second half of the 1940s in Poland. Especially Jewish schools in Lodz were taken under consideration in the analysis of the research problem included in the title of the paper. In the second half of the 1940s there were: Private Jewish Perec General School in Lodz, Private Jewish General School Bojowników Getta in Lodz, religion courses, the Netzach Izrael Rabbinical College, as well as a secondary school and vocational courses.

Keywords: Jewish schools in Poland, Lodz, national minority, education

Streszczenie:

Głównym celem niniejszego studium jest analiza stanu i statusu szkolnictwa żydowskiego, które funkcjonowało w Polsce w II połowie lat 40. XX w. Przy analizie problemu badawczego zawartego w tytule opracowania w szczególności wzięte zostały pod uwagę szkoły w Łodzi. W drugiej połowie lat 40. XX w. funkcjonowały tam: Prywatna Żydowska Szkoła Powszechna im. J. L. Pereca, Prywatna Żydowska Szkoła Powszechna im. Bojowników Getta, kursy religijne, Wyższa Szkoła Rabiniczna Netzach Israel, oraz liceum i kursy zawodowe.

Słowa kluczowe: szkoły żydowskie w Polsce, Łódź, mniejszość narodowa, edukacja

1. Introductory notes

Soon after the Second World War Jewish community in Poland started to rebuild its political and cultural-educational life. Along with the liberation of the country Jewish self-help committees were organized in particular districts and after the foundation of the Central Committee of Jews (CKŻP) in Poland they became its local centers. Parties and political organizations started their activities again. Also religious congregations were created. A lot of attention was given especially to children and adolescents. Alongside a complex system of institutions that took care of children, measures were taken very soon to organize a system of education in order to compensate lack of education that lasted several years.

There were four types of Jewish schools in general that functioned in the second half of the 1940s: schools of the Central Committee of Jews with Yiddish as the language of instruction¹, schools of Zionist organisations where lessons were performed in Hebrew², religious schools organized by religious congregations³ and vocational schools⁴. Especially Jewish schools in Łódź were taken under consideration in the analysis of the issue mentioned in the title of the paper.

At the end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s ideological and organizational pluralism in Jewish communities was abolished. Instead, one organization representing interests of Jewish population, i.e. the Social and Cultural Society of the Jews in Poland, was established. The activity of Zionist organizations was forbidden and the freedom of Jewish religious congregations was significantly restricted. The process of bringing under control training, educational and cultural institutions by Jewish communists was strengthened by a conference of Jewish teachers, writers, cultural and social activists that took place on 5 and 6 March 1949 in Warsaw. In accordance with the provisions of the conference of teachers in Łódź in 1946 as well as the meeting of Jewish committees in February 1949, they passed a resolution to unify Jewish educa-

¹ For more information about the schools of the Central Committee of Jews see also: H. Datner, *Szkoły Centralnego Komitetu Żydów w Polsce w latach 1944 – 1949*, "Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego. Instytut Naukowo – Badawczy w Polsce" 1994 no. 1-3, p. 103 – 119; H. Datner – Śpiewak, *Instytucje opieki nad dziećmi i szkoły powszechne Centralnego Komitetu Żydów w Polsce w latach 1945 – 1946*, "Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego w Polsce" 1981 no. 3, p. 37 – 51.

² For more information see also: E. Pogorzała, *Szkolnictwo hebrajskie w Polsce w latach 1946 – 1949*, "Przegląd Historyczno – Oświatowy" 2006 no. 3/4, p. 139 – 158.

³ For more information see also: E. Pogorzała, *Działalność oświatowa żydowskich kongregacji wyznaniowych w Polsce w drugiej połowie lat 40 – tych XX w.*, "Facta Simonidis. Zeszyty Naukowe Państwowej Wyższej Szkoły Zawodowej w Zamościu" 2008 no. 1, p. 175 – 190.

⁴ H. Chałupczak, T. Browarek, *Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce 1918 – 1995*, Lublin 2000, p. 183 – 184.

tional system in Poland⁵. In consequence, schools of CKŻP were nationalized, schools with Hebrew as the language of instruction were closed, the activity of ORT was suspended and the only tolerated educational activity of congregations was limited to religion courses for pre-school children.

2. Characteristics of particular types of Jewish schools.

The Central Committee of Jews in Poland was created in October 1944 in Lublin as the representation of Jewish community to Polish authorities. Following issues were mentioned among its statutory objectives: restoration of cultural life, revival of educational system and cultural institutions, taking special care of children⁶. The Central Committee of Polish Jews included representatives of legally existing Jewish parties, that is Jewish Communists (the so called Jewish fraction of the Polish Workers' Party), the Bund, the Ichud, Leftist Poalej Zion, Rightist Poalej Zion and Hashomer Hatzair.

The first schools were organized by local Jewish committees that afterwards created a network of provincial, district and city structures of CKŻP. As soon as before the half of 1945 schools functioned in Białystok, Warsaw and Chorzów⁷. A target model of schools for Jewish children, which was a people's school for children aged between 7-15 with the Jewish (Yiddish) language of instruction and compulsory Hebrew teaching, was created as a result of a plenary session of CKŻP in July 1945⁸.

The educational system developed by the committee was connected with the tradition of pre-war schools of the CISzO organization (The Central Yiddish School Organization)⁹. Yiddish was the language of instruction in the most establishments, teaching of Hebrew and the history of Jews was compulsory¹⁰. Fast organizational development of the CKŻP schools took place in 1946 after a wave of repatriation from the USSR. In February 1946 the

⁵ Archive of New Acts in Warsaw (later AAN), PZPR, ref. 237/XVII/81, p. 45; Archive of Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw (later AŻIH), CKŻP Department of Education, ref. no. 303/IX/581, p. 127.

⁶ *O powstaniu i zadaniach CKŻP*, „Biuletyn Żydowskiej Agencji Prasowej” from 13. 11.1944 r., in: *Dzieje Żydów w Polsce 1944 – 1968: teksty źródłowe*, ed. A. Cała, H. Datner – Śpiewak, Warszawa 1997, p. 102 – 103. The Committee was originally called “the Central Committee of Polish Jews” The name “the Central Committee of Jews in Poland” was used from February 1945 onwards, and the seat of the committee was moved to Warsaw.

⁷ H. Datner, *Szkoły...*, p. 104.

⁸ Archive of Jewish Historical Institute, The presidium of CKŻP, ref. no. 303/I/1, p. 91.

⁹ The Central Yiddish School Organization was established in 1921. It organized private lay schools with Yiddish as language of instruction. The main aim of these establishment was to support Jewish lay culture in diaspora and the propagation of socialist ideology. The establishments of CISzO wanted their pupils to be Polish citizens aware of their identity. (H. Chałupczak, T. Browarek, p. 181).

¹⁰ AAN, Ministry of Education, ref. no. 1764, p. 135.

Committee controlled 10 schools, whereas in December the number of these establishments increased up to 35¹¹. In the following years the structure of the CKŻP schools stabilized.

The second type of private Jewish schools were Hebrew schools. The co-operation of Jewish groups within the frame of CKŻP was based on a significant compromise that resulted from the need to coordinate social care activities that also included children care. The didactic – educational profile of the CKŻP schools created in 1945 – 1946 did not fully correspond with the ideology of Zionist activists. As a result, the policy of general education for Jewish children went into two directions. On the one hand, Zionist organizations established their own schools with Hebrew as the language of instruction; on the other hand, CKŻP operated establishments where lessons were performed in Yiddish.

The activity of all Zionist parties within the frame of system of education, the so called “productivization” and education of adolescents were coordinated by the organization “Hechaluc Pionier”, which had its seat in Łódź. According to the provisions of the statute, Hechaluc’s aim was to educate Jewish adolescents in the Zionist – socialist spirit as well as prepare them for efficient work in Poland and pioneer work in Palestine¹². The first Hebrew schools were established at the beginning of 1946¹³. In May there were probably 9 schools attended by 1100 pupils¹⁴.

In October 1946 a three day long meeting of teachers of Hebrew education took place in the head office of Hechaluc in Łódź. The participants were the principles of 9 active Hebrew schools attended by approximately 800 pupils who created guidelines on educational work for the new school year and discussed such issues as school curriculum, books and aids¹⁵.

11 Hebrew schools were established until the end of 1946. In the middle of 1947 there were already 13 establishments attended by 1130 pupils. This situation did not change in the next school year¹⁶. In the school year 1948/1949 the number of Hebrew schools decreased by

50% and there were only 6 schools. Courses were organized in kibbutzim and in the establishments of Zionist organizations in the places where Hebrew schools formerly functioned¹⁷. In September 1949 only 4 schools were reopened:

¹¹ H. Datner, *Szkoły...*, p. 105 – 106.

¹² AŻIH, Organizacje syjonistyczne, ref. no. 333/5, p. 155.

¹³ AŻIH, Prezydium CKŻP, ref. no. 303/I/11, p. 223.

¹⁴ H. Datner, *Szkoły...*, p. 114.

¹⁵ *Kronika krajowa: Zjazd szkolnictwa hebrajskiego*, „Mosty” no.1 from 27 October 1946, p. 3.

¹⁶ AŻIH, Organizacje syjonistyczne, ref. no. 333/6, p. 107, 189, 232.

¹⁷ AŻIH, Organizacje syjonistyczne, ref. no. 333/271, p. 257

in Łódź, Wrocław, Wałbrzych and Legnica¹⁸. However, these establishments were also closed soon after their foundation.

Religious associations that were established after the liberation of the country also organized various forms of religious education for children and adolescents, primarily in the form of religious courses of the Hebrew language, the history of Jews and the principles of Jewish religion¹⁹. Elementary religious schools appeared on a larger scale in the second half of 1945. Over 40 establishments of this type were organized at that time²⁰. According to G. Zalewska, the number of pupils in 36 cheders and Talmud-Tora schools amounted to over 2 000 in June 1946²¹. B. D. Weinryb also mentions 36 Talmud-Tora schools in 1946 but with a smaller number of pupils – 1200²².

After the immigration of Jews from the USSR within the repatriation process secondary religious schools called “yeshivas” were established (in Kraków, Wrocław, Szczecin). In Lodz (Łódź) functioned Netzach Izrael Rabbinical College²³. At the beginning of 1947 there were 80 religious congregations. Three Talmudic schools (yeshivas) existed in Kraków, Szczecin and Wrocław²⁴, as well as 36 people’s religious schools – Talmud-Toras²⁵. The elementary religious schools were attended at that time by about 1000 children, and there were 100 pupils in 3 yeshivas²⁶. Sources from the middle of 1948 mention 36 schools with 1100 pupils²⁷. On 1 January 1949 there were 55 congregations and 45 “scientific establishments Talmud-Tora” (religious courses)²⁸. In February 1950 functioned 41 congregations among which 30 run religious courses for over 500 pupils²⁹.

Apart from the schools of CKŻP, Hebrew and religious schools maintained by religious congregations there was also Jewish vocational education. It included courses that prepared students for a particular profession and vocational schools

¹⁸ AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty, ref. no. 1764, p. 234

¹⁹ *Z informacji żydowskiej Agencji Prasowej. O działalności Żydowskiego Zrzeszenia Religijnego, Łódź, 30 lipca 1945 r.*, in: *Dzieje Żydów...*, doc. no. 113, p. 275 – 276.

²⁰ H. Chałupczak, T. Browarek, p. 184.

²¹ G. Zalewska, *Szkolnictwo*, in: A. Cała, H. Węgrzynek, G. Zalewska, *Historia i kultura Żydów polskich. Słownik*, Warszawa 2000, p. 334.

²² B. D. Weinryb, *Poland*, in: *The Jews in Soviet Satellites*, ed. by P. Meyer, B. D. Weinryb, E. Duschinsky, N. Sylvain, Westport 1953, p. 287.

²³ H. Chałupczak, T. Browarek, s. 184; J. Adelson, *Żydzi w Polsce 1944 – 1984*, „Kalendarz Żydowski” 1985/86, p. 167.

²⁴ W. Jaworski mentions that there was also one yeshiva in Bytom in 1947. (W. Jaworski, *Jewish Religious Community in Upper Silesia 1945 – 1970*, in: *Jews in Silesia*, ed. by M. Wodziński, J. Spyra, Cracow 2001, p. 255). In *Żydzi na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1945 – 1970*, Sosnowiec 2001, p. 93, he writes that there was one Yeshiva and Waad Hacała in 1947 in Bytom, whereas in Gliwice functioned Judaistic Science College in 1946.

²⁵ AAN, Ministry of Public Administration, ref. no. 931, p. 4.

²⁶ H. Chałupczak, T. Browarek, p. 184.

²⁷ H. Datner, *Szkoły...*, p. 115.

²⁸ AAN, Urząd ds. Wyznań, ref. no. 5b/29, p. 3.

²⁹ AAN, Urząd ds. Wyznań, ref. no. 5b/32, p. 63.

run by cooperative societies and kibbutzim, mainly the Organization for Development of Industry, Craftsmanship and Agriculture. This organization was also known as the Society for Encouragement of Employment and Agriculture among Jews. After the II World War in 1946 it was reactivated in Poland and it was officially permitted to function in March 1946. Three and six months long vocational courses gradually turned into 1- year or 2- years courses. ORT used the subventions of the Joint and the Office for Productivization of Jewish Population (organization that promoted employment in production and encouraged agriculture). During the period 1950-1956 ORT did not function in Poland³⁰.

The seat of the head office of ORT was located in Warsaw. The activities of ORT encompassed two major fields of work, i.e. vocational training and encouragement of agriculture. In September 1946 it offered 20 courses and vocational schools attended by 473 pupils³¹. The first main conference of representatives of ORT in Poland took place on 12 and 13 October 1946. While deciding about the guidelines for the future activities, the board of the ORT in Poland chose the centralization policy, which meant that their establishments would be created only in bigger cities. In terms of quantity, the organization did not operate many schools, but, according to the representatives of ORT, these schools were of very high standard. Although ORT had created and operated vocational schools before the Second World War, it was mainly permitted to organize only short-term courses in the post-war period. Not long after that they gradually turned into vocational schools³².

In October 1946 ORT had 8 departments. It operated 24 courses and vocational schools for 583 pupils³³. At the end of the school year 1946/1947 ORT ran 14 schools, 40 training workshops and 10 courses, which made altogether 64 establishments with 1367 pupils. The first educational conference of ORT accompanied by all –Polish exhibition of works of this organization took place in June 1947 in Wrocław. During the conference the teachers and instructors of ORT discussed the results of their first year of work, shared their experiences and formulated the guidelines for unified curricula for schools and courses. On 1 October 1947 the organization operated altogether 60 establishments for 1483 pupils, including 14 schools, 40 workshops and 6 courses. At the beginning of the school year 1947/1948 new curricula were introduced and the duration of courses was

³⁰ N. Aleksiu, *Dokąd dalej? Ruch syjonistyczny w Polsce (1944 – 1950)*, Warszawa 2002, p. 55.

³¹ AAN, MAP, ref. no. 792, p. 8, 12.

³² For example, in January 1948 1-year Knitting School for Girls was established in Legnica on the basis of former courses where participants learnt how to produce stockings, socks, tights etc. (*Poszerzenie wiedzy zawodowej wśród młodzieży żydowskiej w Polsce*, „Mosty” no. 104 (226) from 2 September 1948, p. 4).

³³ *Pierwszy walny zjazd delegatów Organizacji Twórczości ORT w Polsce*, Warszawa 1946, p. 2.

extended. The new curricula encompassed to a larger extent theoretical subjects, which was necessary for those who wanted to pass their apprenticeship exams. Teaching of the language and history of Jews was also introduced³⁴.

From 28 December 1948 to 10 January 42 instructors and teachers of particular trades from 10 training centers participated in an educational course for ORT teachers organized by the Ministry of Education³⁵. The vocational courses operated by ORT were financed from the so called social fund received from the headquarters of World ORT in Geneva, whereas vocational secondary schools were subsidized by the Central Office of Vocational Training³⁶. Enrolment was carried out through press advertisements. Out-of-town students were provided with accommodation in a dormitory, full board and scholarships³⁷.

In January 1949 ORT operated 5 vocational secondary schools (at that time it organized only 1st grade classes for 87 pupils among which there were 19 pupils of Polish nationality), 8 2-years vocational schools (160 pupils; 36 of them were of Polish nationality) and 57 schools and courses (911 pupils, 210 of them were of Polish nationality). ORT also ran workshops for children – altogether 25 workshops for 470 children³⁸.

At the end of 1950 and beginning of 1951 the organization suspended its activity in Poland. As a result of a resolution passed by the Liquidation Office, the whole property of the schools was taken over by the Central Office of Vocational Training³⁹.

3. Jewish educational system in Lodz (Łódź)⁴⁰.

The registration campaign in spring 1944 showed that 16 000 Jews lived in Łódź, at that time the second largest Jewish population center in Poland⁴¹. In

³⁴ AŻIH, CKŻP – Wydział Oświaty, sygn. 303/IX/32, npg.; AAN, MAP, sygn. 790, k. 56 – 57.

³⁵ AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty, ref. no. 1764, p. 198 – 200. *Pismo uczestników kursu pedagogicznego do Ministerstwa Oświaty z 8 stycznia 1949 r.*

³⁶ AAN, PZPR, ref. no. 237/XIV/149, p. 80.

³⁷ „Mosty” no. 101 (223) from 26 August 1948 r., p. 4; *Nowe kursy zawodowe ORT-u*, „Mosty” no. 103 (225) from 13 August 1948, p. 4.

³⁸ AAN, PZPR, ref. no. 237/XVII-81, p. 61 – 63.

³⁹ AAN, PZPR, ref. no. 237/XIV/149, p. 80.

⁴⁰ About Jewish community in Łódź in the post-war period see more: L. Olejnik, *Wojewódzki Komitet Żydowski w Łodzi – powstanie i główne kierunki działalności (1945-1950)*, „Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego” 1998 no. 3, p. 3 – 22; L. Olejnik, *Spoleczność żydowska w Łodzi w latach 1945-1950: zarys problemu*, „Acta Universitatis Lodzianensis. Folia Historica” 1997 vol. 60, p. 125 – 147; L. Olejnik, *Łódź wielonarodowa w pierwszych latach po II wojnie światowej*, „Rocznik Łódzki” 1998 vol. 45, p. 185 – 210; L. Olejnik, *Mniejszości narodowe w Łodzi w latach 1945-1950*, „Kronika Miasta Łodzi” 1999 vol. 1/2, p. 193 – 203.

⁴¹ J. Adelson, *W Polsce zwanej ludową*, in: *Najnowsze dzieje Żydów w Polsce w zarysie (do 1955 roku)*, ed. J. Tomaszewski, Warszawa 1993, p. 420 *Polsce w zarysie (do 1955 roku)*, ed. J. Tomaszewski, Warszawa 1993, p. 420.

the second half of the 1940s there were: Private Jewish Perc General School in Łódź, Private Jewish General School bojowników Getta in Łódź, religion courses, the Netzach Izrael Rabbinical College, as well as secondary schools and vocational courses.

3.1. Private Jewish Perc General School in Łódź

The school started to function on 15 September 1945. It was located at 49 Kiliński street and maintained by the Provincial Jewish Committee⁴². A school inspection conducted in November 1947 showed that it offered a school curriculum on a primary school level. This curriculum was extended by additional lessons of Hebrew and Jewish history. The language of instruction was Yiddish. The school had a full organizational structure, i.e. 7 grades and 13 classes, out of which 5 were parallel classes. 22 teachers were employed and most of them had university degree. The level of teaching of subjects performed in Polish was assessed positively. At school children were supplied with additional nutrition⁴³. On 11 November 1947 the school received a temporary permission of the School Inspectorate to become as a private school⁴⁴. In the school year 1947/1948 it was attended by 348 pupils, and in the following year, that is in 1948/1949, the number of pupils amounted to 357⁴⁵. In September 1949 the school was nationalized.

3.2. Private Jewish General School Bojowników Getta in Łódź.

The school was located at 18 Południowa street. It started to function on 1 September 1946. The establishment was run by the parent – teacher association of the school and the Productivity Center. In 1947 the school applied for a concession but a vetting commission, disqualified the building of school as unsuitable for educational purposes⁴⁶. In response to the question of the Ministry of Education in reference to schools for Jewish children, school inspector of Łódź district asked in February 1948 the Ministry for recommendation of which stand it is “necessary” to take towards this school establishment⁴⁷. In reply to the letter of the school inspectorate of the Łódź district from 24 February 1948, the Ministry accepted the decision of not granting a concession to this school because, according to the Ministry, the school did not meet the requirements

⁴² AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty, ref. no. 1371, p. 3.

⁴³ AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty, ref. no. 1371, p. 11; ref. no. 1764, p. 75.

⁴⁴ AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty, ref. no. 1764, p. 70.

⁴⁵ AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty, ref. no. 1378, p. 150.

⁴⁶ AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty, ref. no. 1371, p. 3.

⁴⁷ AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty, ref. no. 1764, p. 70.

mentioned in the Private Schools Act⁴⁸. In the school year 1947/1948 the school was attended by 145 pupils, and in the following year, that is in 1949/1949, by 170 pupils (October 1949)⁴⁹. In January 1949 the establishment was attended by over 150 pupils, the first grade was divided into two classes and the number of pupils in classes amounted even to 30⁵⁰.

In the school year 1949/1950 four schools with Hebrew as the language of instruction were reopened, including the establishment in Łódź. In October 1949 it was attended by 153 pupils in 7 grades⁵¹. Although the Ministry of Education instructed the school inspectorate of the Łódź district in March 1949 to close the school on 30 June, the letter concerning this issue sent by the Department of General Education stuck in the office of the Minister in the Presidential Department⁵².

The attitude of the Minister towards the liquidation of the Hebrew establishment in Łódź in February 1949 fully shows the policy of educational authorities towards the liquidation of Hebrew schools. It was mentioned in this document that this school could not be disqualified on the basis of its state when speaking in terms of educational deficiency. However, it was decided to close it, following the principle of liquidation of private schools. It was ordered in the justification of this decision to conceal the real reasons and produce a general statement in reference to the lack of compliance with the regulations in force concerning private schools⁵³. Finally, teaching in the Hebrew school in Łódź declined due to the emigration of pupils and teachers.

3.3. Religious education.

The Jewish Association in Łódź (at that time the largest center of Jewish population in Poland) started to function in April 1945. According to information from July 1945, the Association organized education in form of religious courses that included teaching Hebrew, the history and Jews and the principle of Jewish religion⁵⁴. In February 1950 more than 38 pupils attended these courses⁵⁵. There was also the the Netzach Izrael Rabbinical College in Łódź⁵⁶.

⁴⁸ AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty, ref. no. 1764, p. 72.

⁴⁹ AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty, ref. no. 1378, p. 150.

⁵⁰ AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty, ref. no. 472, p. 2.

⁵¹ AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty, ref. no. 1764, p. 234.

⁵² AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty, ref. no. 1764, p. 234.

⁵³ AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty, ref. no. 472, p. 6.

⁵⁴ *Z informacji żydowskiej Agencji Prasowej. O działalności Żydowskiego Zrzeszenia Religijnego, Łódź, 30 lipca 1945 r.*, in: *Dzieje Żydów...*, doc. no. 113, p. 275 – 276.

⁵⁵ AAN, Urząd ds. Wyznań, ref. no. 5b/32, p. 63.

⁵⁶ H. Chałupczak, T. Browarek, p. 184; J. Adelson, *Żydzi w Polsce 1944 – 1984*, „Kalendarz Żydowski” 1985/86, p. 167.

In October 1951, during a meeting of a department of the Social and Cultural Jewish Society in Łódź the issue of an alleged existence of a cheder and the fact that the number of children attending this establishment rose from 25 to 50 in comparison to the previous year aroused controversy. Only afterwards it became clear that it was not a “cheder” but an illegal religious kindergarten. In response to it, the Committee of Polish United Workers Party in Łódź allowed the registration of children even of unemployed mothers in state kindergartens in order to keep these children away from this establishment.⁵⁷ The activity of the congregation gradually declined caused by a religious emigration of Jews.

3.4. Vocational education

There were also vocational schools and courses in Łódź. The department of ORT in Łódź announced the enrolment in a secondary vocational school in the technical-dentist, children’s wear production and mechanical-locksmith profiles for the school year 1949/1949⁵⁸. It is known that in January 1949 in Łódź there were: one class of a 3-year mechanical secondary school of the 1st degree, attended by 13 pupils, and the following courses: knitting (the duration of the course – 1 year; the number of pupils – 12), children’s wear (respectively: 1.5 year, 18 pupils), corsetry (8 months, 15 pupils); leather craftsmanship (1 year, 6 pupils), lingerie (1 year, 16 pupils), additional training for dressmakers (2 months, 12 participants) and regular carpentry workshops for children, attended by 20 pupils⁵⁹.

4. Final notes

The abolition of Hebrew educational system at the end of the 1940s was accompanied by a limitation of pluralism in Jewish communities. During a session of the Central Committee of Polish United Workers Party Secretariat in August 1949 the plan of liquidation or nationalization of particular Jewish institutions and organizations was accepted and it was decided about the permission for a legal emigration to Palestine⁶⁰. In the period from 13 September 1949 to February around 28 000 Jews left Poland (including 5 000 – 6 000 children at

⁵⁷ G. Berendt, *Życie żydowskie w Polsce w latach 1950 – 1956. Z dziejów Towarzystwa Społeczno – Kulturalnego Żydów w Polsce*, Gdańsk 2006, p. 197.

⁵⁸ „Mosty” no. 100 (222) from 24 August 1948, p. 7.

⁵⁹ AAN, PZPR, ref. no. 237/XVII-81, p. 61 – 63.

⁶⁰ L. Olejnik, *Polityka narodowościowa Polski w latach 1944 – 1960*, Łódź 2003, p. 406.

the maximum age of 13). They constituted around 30% of the population⁶¹. In December 1949 the Ministry of Public Administration decided about the dates of liquidation of Jewish Zionist organizations⁶². The process self-dissolution of Hechaluc administration, including the Department of Education and Culture, started at the end of 1949⁶³.

The end of 1949 and beginning of 1950 brought along the liquidation of Zionist movement in Poland. The final confirmation of the state policy in this field was a circular of the Central Committee of Polish United Workers Party to provincial committees of the party at the beginning of 1950 with an instruction saying that Zionist activity is forbidden⁶⁴, which started a peculiar ostracism of Zionist movement in all spheres of political and social life in Poland.

The liquidation of last Hebrew schools, the nationalization of educational system of CKŻP as well as a ban on ORT activity were synonymous with the end of the diversity of organization and policy of Jewish educational system in Poland. Although official authorities claimed that the Religious Jewish Confessional Union (ZRWM) makes use of its rights as a legally recognized confessional association⁶⁵, the activity of congregation started to be significantly limited in practice, especially in reference to the liquidation of activity of the Joint and support given to the emigration of religious population⁶⁶. In the 1950s the Religious Jewish Confessional Union (ZRWM) had a tense relationship with the lay Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland (TSKŻ), which was formed in October 1950 from the former CKŻP and the Jewish Cultural Association. Both organizations aimed at gaining the influence over the Jewish population. The Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland (TSKŻ) criticized religious schools run under the auspices of congregations⁶⁷.

As indicated above, the biggest schools of the Committee were nationalized. Smaller establishments were closed. The number of CKŻP schools that had to undergo the nationalization process was determined in a regulation issued in

⁶¹ M. Pisarski, *Emigracja Żydów z Polski w latach 1945 – 1951*, in: A. Grabski, M. Pisarski, A. Stankowski, *Studia z dziejów i kultury Żydów w Polsce po 1945 r.*, ed. J. Tomaszewski, Warszawa 1997, p. 72.

⁶² AAN, MAP, ref. no. 790, p. 27.

⁶³ AŻIH, Organizacje syjonistyczne, ref. no. 333/2170, p. 253.

⁶⁴ AAN, Spuścizna Sz. Zachariasza, ref. no. 476/21, p. 125.

⁶⁵ *Statement of the Ministry of Public Administration*, „Jewish Life in Poland” 1950 January no. 10, p. 1.

⁶⁶ J. Adelson, *W Polsce zwanej ludową...*, p. 433.

⁶⁷ E. Waszkiewicz, *Kongregacja Wyznania Mojżeszowego na Dolnym Śląsku na tle polityki wyznaniowej Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej 1945 – 1968*, Wrocław 1999, p. 126.

April 1949⁶⁸. The Minister of Education ordered the preparation for opening (in fact, takeover) of general schools with the Jewish language of instruction on the secondary school level in Wrocław and Łódź, and on the elementary level in Wrocław, Dzierżoniów, Pieszyce, Bielawa, Zagórze, Kłodzko, Świdnica, Strzegom, Ząbkowice, Ziębice, Legnica, Wałbrzych, Żary, Łódź, Kraków, Szczecin, Warszawa and Śródborów (Otwock). The matters of organization and school curriculum were dealt with in a regulation issued in June 1949⁶⁹.

After some time rather regressive tendencies could be noticed in public schools with Yiddish as the language of instruction that functioned since 1949. Already at the end of the school year 1949/1950 it was decided to close some schools⁷⁰. At the beginning of the school year 1953/1954 Polish became the language of instruction, and the Jewish language started to be taught as one of the school subjects. Judaic subjects were eliminated from the school curriculum⁷¹.

In the school year 1950/1951 the school with Yiddish as the language of instruction at 49 Kiliński street in Łódź was attended by 313 pupils. Also secondary school grades were introduced and 16 teachers were employed. Two of them were of Polish nationality. Six teachers were fully qualified⁷². In the school year 1951/1952 there were 8 elementary school classes (261 pupils) and 2 secondary school classes (8th and 9th grades) with 34 pupils⁷³. In Łódź there were 10 classes of elementary school with 283 pupils, whereas secondary school classes were attended by 59 pupils in the school year 1952/1953. 22 teachers were employed. In the following year, that is 1953/1954, it was planned to open the 11th grade and thus create the full system of grades in the secondary school, which would enable pupils to take the A-level exam⁷⁴. The establishment in Łódź functioned as an elementary school and general secondary school with Yiddish learnt as additional subject till the end of the 1960s. It was not until March 1968 that the anti-Semitic events put an end to an institutionalized system of education for the children of Jewish origin.

⁶⁸ AAN, the Ministry of Education, ref. no. 1764, p. 268. *Zarządzenie Ministra Oświaty z 12 kwietnia 1949 r. (No. II P-1616/49) w sprawie otwarcia publicznych wzgl. państwowych szkół ogólnokształcących z żydowskim językiem nauczania*; the content of this regulation was introduced to the public opinion in a statement concerning opening public or state schools with Yiddish as the language of instruction (Official Journal of the Ministry of Education from 1949, no. 9, item 174).

⁶⁹ Regulation of the Minister of Education from 17 June 1949 (No. II P-2338/49) on organization and school curriculum of public or state secondary schools with Yiddish as the language of instruction (Official Journal of the Ministry of Education, no. 9, item 163; AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty, ref. no. 1764, p. 215 – 227).

⁷⁰ AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty, ref. no. 1764, p. 318.

⁷¹ AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty, ref. no. 1764, p. 325.

⁷² AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty, ref. no. 1764, p. 351.

⁷³ AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty, ref. no. 1752, p. 38.

⁷⁴ AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty, ref. no. 1755, p. 27 – 28.