

JANUSZ KORCZAK'S "MAŁY PRZEGLĄD"

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"Mały Przegląd" was a weekly supplement to the Polish-language Jewish daily newspaper "Nasz Przegląd". Launched by Janusz Korczak, it was probably the first paper in Europe directed to, and written by, children. This paper gives a full account of its content and of the changes it underwent over the thirteen years of its existence between 1926 and 1939. One painful topic is anti-Semitism in interwar Poland, how this affected children and young people, and how Korczak attempted to deal with it.

During the inter-war period about 200 Jewish magazines were published in the Polish language.¹ It is not possible to give their precise number, as it is difficult to qualify some of the magazines as exclusively "Jewish" or "Polish". They were edited by Jews, some of the texts were targeted at Jewish readers, yet, as it appears, the editors' ambition was to reach also the Polish reader. There were 87 periodicals for children (excluding one-offs).² Magazines for children or those for adults usually did not last long – many of them vanished after the publication of only a few issues.

There were, however, magazines that remained on the publishing market for years. The most popular as well as the most influential with regard to the public opinion were dailies, which were published during almost the whole period of the Second Polish Republic, such as "Nasz Przegląd" (Our Review) published in Warsaw, "Chwila" (Moment) published in Lwów and "Nowy Dziennik" (New Daily) published in Kraków. Although they all addressed the same kind of audience, there were considerable differences between them. "Nasz Przegląd" was not formally related to any political party, yet it represented a Zionist orientation and had the ambition of being a national daily. Its circulation grew rapidly as a result of its appeal to a diverse readership. The newspaper

¹ See: Cała. It is difficult to ascertain the number of newspapers published because many of them disappeared after the publication of one or two issues. In many studies the number of magazines and newspapers is underestimated. For example, a web-page that generally presents thorough research, says that during the inter-war period "Jews published 160 magazines and newspapers with a daily circulation of 790,000 copies". <http://www.izrael.badacz.org/zydzi_w_polsce/dzieje_rzeczypospolita.html>.

² See: Szajn.

also tried to establish and maintain successive groups of younger fans by publishing "Mały Przegląd" (Little Review), "Mały Przegląd" a magazine for children addressed to the youngest readers. The "Nasz Przegląd" succeeded in hiring Janusz Korczak, who was already known at the time as the editor of the supplement for children.

There have been many publications devoted to "Mały Przegląd". However, usually they are rather short texts, either occasional articles or fragments of publications of a broader scope. Marian Fuks devoted a whole article to this supplement on the occasion of the centennial anniversary of Korczak's birth.³

The analysis of this magazine poses a certain difficulty not only because of its creator and editors, but most of all because of its readers, the Jewish children. When reading or analysing "Mały Przegląd", it is simply impossible to forget that almost the whole editorial team, including Janusz Korczak, as well as the majority of its readers perished during the war. As a result, it is impossible to find any critical remarks about this magazine. A good illustration of this phenomenon are Igor Newerly's memoirs, in which he claims that none of the young people cooperating with the magazine ever betrayed the trust of the editors and creators of the magazine, as well as that there were no conflicts either among the editorial staff, or within the magazine's local groups, unsupervised by adults, or at the summer camps. There is no proof that this was the case, and it does not seem likely that during the eight years of the magazine's existence there were no conflicts whatsoever... The past is clearly idealised in this case, which is regrettable. Especially since the analysis of the magazine suggests that not everything was so ideal. For example, there were frequent cases when children sent other people's texts under their own names to the magazine.

Another problem is treating "Mały Przegląd" as the source material for the analysis of Janusz Korczak's thought. Authors often focus on his texts published in the magazine (possibly because these articles can be found in the *Collected Works*, and thus access to them is easy), ignoring the fundamental part of the magazine which consists of the texts written by the children themselves. Also, due to the fact that Korczak ended his work on the magazine relatively early, those earlier issues have been much better analysed than the later ones published when Newerly became the editor.

³ See: Fuks.

Thanks to Korczak, "Mały Przegląd" was not just another typical magazine for children. What made it special was its contributors. The magazine's correspondents were children themselves; to be precise, they were the readers who sent their own texts, letters and interviews. One has to mention that it was not the only magazine of this kind. School newspapers were based on the same principle – they were written and edited by the children themselves. However, these school newspapers were usually short publications, addressed to a narrow circle of readers, marred by the school's censorship, focused on school-related issues and with a rather short lifespan. Celebration of religious and national holidays, discussion of books on the compulsory reading list, infrequent school-life reportages, stories or poems – constituted the usual content of such school newspapers for students of Polish-language Jewish schools. Sometimes some difficult issues were discussed in these newspapers, such as assimilation or rather de-nationalisation, as was the case in the "Olamejnu" (Our world) newspaper of the Jewish gymnasium in Kielce; Zionism, as in the "Ogniwo" (The Link), a students' newspaper of the L. Szakin Gymnasium in Łódź; or the history of the Jewish people, as in the "Życie Uczniowskie" (Student Life) from Lublin. However, all these newspapers were ephemerals, rarely published for more than a limited number of years. There were also newspapers that had only one hand-written issue, as was the case of the "Ogniwo". While they all tried to raise those "serious" issues, they almost never discussed everyday problems of children and youth. Nobody who published their texts in a school newspaper would write about their own personal problems related to school, family or first love.

"Mały Przegląd" was a national magazine published regularly for 13 years, from 1926 until the outbreak of the war (the last issue was published in September 1939). The original, and unprecedented, character of the magazine was based on the idea of Janusz Korczak, who encouraged the future authors and readers: "Sometimes one does not want to tell everything to people close to them, yet would like to complain to somebody or tell a story about one's life, thoughts and needs [...] It will be possible to pass the stories on to us orally, by phone, by mail, dictate or write them."⁴

The magazine was targeted at Jewish children, even though it was published only in Polish. It is not completely clear whether the magazine was published in Polish

⁴ See: Gliński.

because it was a supplement to a Polish-language daily, and thus from the start was targeted at acculturated readers. Or rather the intention may have been to help the young generation learn the Polish language better. One should bear in mind that during the inter-war period 80% of Jewish children attended Polish-language state schools. The language Korczak used when replying to letters and articles deserves special attention. It was a very simple language, similar to the language in his books, interwoven with words used usually by children and sometimes by young people. It is hard to say today whether it was just his writing style or rather it was deliberate simplification of the language in order to make the magazine more easily understandable for children whose mother tongue was other than Polish. In the reply to accusations that he was propagating graphomania, Korczak used to say: "Graphomania is not dangerous, what is dangerous is illiteracy. [...] To teach Jewish children to write well in Polish is a beautiful and necessary task. Thanks to this magazine whole hosts of children have learnt to use this great treasure, the Polish language."⁵ Thus the magazine helped Jewish children learn to fluently express their thoughts in Polish. And in this respect, the acculturation of Jewish readers was an indirect goal of "Mały Przegląd". This acculturation was meant to make their adult lives easier and did not have an ideological or assimilationist character.

Since "Mały Przegląd" was just a free supplement to the "Nasz Przegląd" daily, a large number of Polish readers could not be expected. Their parents probably would not buy the Jewish press. One could wonder whether the magazine was addressed only to children who spoke Polish? Parents who spoke Yiddish at home more likely were buying dailies in Yiddish. Yet, some children from outside the main target group also read the magazine. Korczak replied enthusiastically to children's question whether they could write in Yiddish, as it was the language they were thinking in and because they were not able to formulate their thoughts clearly in Polish. He assured them that they could write in Yiddish. Whereas when Polish children asked if they could also write to "Mały Przegląd", Korczak's reply was more ambiguous. He somewhat discouraged potential readers by stating that of course they could write, but their friends would probably laugh at them. It is hard to say whether this was the real reason for discouraging Polish contributors, or rather whether Korczak and the "Nasz Przegląd" wanted to have a magazine for just Jewish children and not all children. However, Marian Fuks

⁵ Newerly 2001, p. 315.

writes in his memoirs that as "Marian from Warsaw",⁶ a child correspondent of the magazine, he met not only Jewish readers of "Mały Przegląd". One should not be surprised since there was no equivalent magazine addressed to Polish readers, whereas problems raised in it were important to all children, not just the Jewish ones.

As the years passed, Polish readers were more welcome. In 1932, a Polish reader who had been already reading the magazine for half a year, asked if the editor also published letters by non-Jews and received the following reply: "If you have been reading "Mały Przegląd" for half a year, you may point to its various shortcomings, but impoliteness is not one of them. Of course, "Mały Przegląd" is a magazine for Jewish kids, but they are hospitable and not prejudiced against other nationalities."⁷ A few years later letters by Polish children were also published on a more regular basis; many of them expressed their rejection of anti-Semitism.

What was special about the magazine was not just the fact that it was mainly based on children's writing, even though this is the first thing mentioned by all authors writing on Korczak or the children's press. It was also probably the only magazine that was not addressed to a defined age group. Other magazines were aimed at children and youth of a certain age group – all poems, stories, riddles and competitions were selected on that basis. Whereas in the case of "Mały Przegląd", the readers (or rather collaborators), as Korczak referred to the young people writing for "Mały Przegląd") were small children, who dictated their letters to their parents or sent short texts of several sentences written in badly formed letters on postcards, as well as young people entering adulthood. There is no doubt that Korczak preferred the former ones. In one of the first issues of the magazine Korczak already had to reply to accusations made by older readers that the magazine was not properly addressed to them and that it could have been divided into separate sections for younger children and for youth. Korczak explained that young people had greater opportunities for expressing their thoughts, had books, lectures and theatres, and were more free from adult supervision. Thus, they did not need such a newspaper as much as younger children did. Nonetheless, since the sub-title of the newspaper referred also to youth, there would be a special section for young people in it. At the same time, Korczak himself did not feel competent enough to decide

⁶ Marian Fuks, „Mały Przegląd” Janusza Korczaka, op. cit., s.7

⁷ "Mały Przegląd" (from now: MP), 23 XII 1932,

<http://www.pskorczak.org.pl/strony/stara_strona/strony/biul_maria_szulecka.htm>.

what such a section should look like and, as a result, there was a competition call for the "youth prospectus."⁸

A magazine that was mainly based on readers' contributions could not survive without older correspondents. Korczak tried to encourage adults to write for the magazine, yet the section devoted to their texts had to be closed rather quickly due to the lack of interest on the part of adult readers.⁹

The editorial team consisted of children. Although Korczak, as well as his successor Igor Newerly, were adults, other positions were filled by teenagers who did the jobs reserved in other magazines for professional editors. Keeping card-files was the responsibility of a 14-year-old orphan from the *Dom Sierot* orphanage and, according to Newerly, his files could arouse the envy of two grey-haired archivists and one notary.¹⁰ "The editor's right hand" was a 14 or 15-year-old gymnasium student Madzia Markuze,¹¹ often mentioned by Korczak as of invaluable help. Her brother also collaborated with the editorial team. It is difficult to fully re-create the editorial team membership list, because it was simply not mentioned in the magazine. When the name of Korczak was withdrawn from the imprint, the name of the new editor was not mentioned. It is difficult to say why Korczak stopped being the editor of the magazine. Marian Fuks' supposition was that he withdrew since he did not want to lend his name to a magazine in which he could not publish what he wanted.¹² Korczak himself claimed that he was just tired and passed on this task to a younger person who had more free time.¹³ Yet, there is no proof of that. In 1934 a note listing the names of editors was prepared and it contained the names of Abramow (Newerly) and other editors, students of the fifth to eighth grade of gymnasium.¹⁴ In 1936, following a stormy discussion between the "old" and "new" editors with regard to the type of readership that the magazine was supposed to address, the magazine returned to Korczak's idea and he started to publish his texts again, although on a smaller scale.¹⁵

⁸ MP,17, XII, 11, V (1926), n. 11, p. 5, in: Korczak, vol. 11, part. II, p. 140.

⁹ Marta Ciesielska, *Geneza utworów „Nasz Przegląd”*, in: Korczak, vol. 11, part III.

¹⁰ Newerly 1984, p. 20.

¹¹ Ivi, p. 36.

¹² Fuks, p. 12.

¹³ Korczak, *Pamiętam MP*, 1, I (1937), n. 379, p. 1, in: Korczak, vol. III, p. 232.

¹⁴ Ciesielska 2003, p. 8.

¹⁵ *Narada przełomowa*, MP, 6, XI (1936), p. 1.

From the start, Korczak's magazine was intended to be much more like "regular" newspapers for adults than any of the existing magazines for younger readers. The usual way for such children's magazines was to publish fairy tales, stories, poems and moralizing tales, in other words, texts meant both for pleasure and education. Current or everyday affairs were reflected only in occasional texts devoted to national anniversaries or special events (e.g. the new Constitution or the death of Marshal Pilsudski). The lives of children, if depicted at all, were usually fictionalised. As a matter of principle, magazines worked only in one direction, i.e. they passed information to the reader, perhaps with the exception of letters to the editor. In the case of "Mały Przegląd", however, communication went both ways as letters started discussions in which Korczak himself sometimes participated. When criticised, he sometimes tried to defend himself and sometimes he accepted the criticisms and apologised. What is more, the discussions on the pages of "Mały Przegląd" undoubtedly demonstrated that there was space for difference of opinions (for example, a discussion on whether feeding the answers to fellow students was a good or bad thing lasted for a long time). And what is more important, usually it was for the readers to decide which views were acceptable and which were not, as well as what one should do in different situations. This was an unprecedented practice in the children's literature and press of that time. "Mały Przegląd" almost entirely refrained from publishing literary fiction. Korczak believed that a magazine for and by children should not publish literature, because children were too young to be capable of creating good literary texts. Writing about their own lives and everyday affairs was much more valuable and natural for them than trying to produce literary fiction, usually lacking in originality and imitative. Starting from the second issue, readers were discouraged from sending stories and poems. The editor considered writing literature as some sort of entertainment, similar to drawing and painting, singing or staging plays. This was for private or family entertainment and should be reserved only for the closest and most sympathetic audience. "Do not bring out this to the market place, children. Have your quiet treasures in your own heart and the hearts of your dearest and nearest, and keep them in the drawers of your school desks."¹⁶ For this reason, literary texts in "Mały Przegląd" were sporadic. Usually they were published during vacation months, when correspondence from children for unknown reasons was not published at

¹⁶ MP, 15, X 1926, no 2, pp. 5-6, in: Korczak, p. 33.

all. Although the volume of correspondence was smaller during vacations, according to the editors the magazine's files were still bursting with letters and correspondents were complaining about having to wait for too long to have their texts published. Perhaps it was believed that vacations were a happy-go-lucky time. After Korczak left the magazine, the format was somewhat changed. It started to feature film and book reviews, short literary texts, riddles. In 1933-34 also Korczak's novel *Kajtuś Czarodziej* (Kajtush the Magician) was serialised in the magazine, which was a clear departure from the rule of the "magazine of children and youth."¹⁷

The magazine published information on current affairs, directly related to children. The established principle – and a rather unique one – was that the world of children and the world of adults were to a certain extent separate. Thus it was not enough to describe the world of adults in a more accessible way. It was also not acceptable to write about children's issues from the perspective of adults who first and foremost wanted to educate and train children, instead of trying to understand their problems. "Mały Przegląd" demonstrated each time that children's affairs are neither trifling, nor silly, nor insignificant, but just different."¹⁸ Thus, affairs deemed too trivial by others were discussed here: the need to wear a school pinafore when other children did not have to, losing teeth, quarrels with friends, losing things.

Nevertheless, despite all the declarations and the change of the magazine's name, it is debatable whether this was not also a journal for adults – for parents and teachers. It seems that nobody has posed this question so far, which is regrettable. One should to remember that the magazine was bought by adults and not by children themselves, since it was just a supplement to one of the most serious Jewish dailies. Thus adults must at least have had a look at the magazine, if they did not read it regularly. It appears that at least during the first years of its existence, when Korczak used to write for it, many topics devoted to children had also a didactic value for adults. Undoubtedly the aim was to demonstrate children's point of view as well as to provide adequate educational approaches for adults. For example, the aim of an intervention in case of a child very unhappy about being dressed by the mother in a school pinafore was not only to show the young readers that the magazine cared about small things, but also to demonstrate to the parents that such seemingly petty things were important to children, who

¹⁷ Ciesielska 2003, p. 7.

¹⁸ Newerly 1984, p. 19.

should never be dressed in a way that made them look ridiculous. Discussions about cheating at school had to provoke self-reflection among young people as well as draw teachers' attention to the ambiguity of the issue. Complaints about parents and teachers indicated that adults could do a lot to improve their contacts with children. All this was addressed to adult readers in an obvious way, not to mention comments targeted at educators and parents, including those about dictating letters that no child would write on their own, or about inadequate educational methods. There were also texts addressed directly to parents, sometimes Korczak did not even try to hide that fact. The most characteristic example of such a text was a reply to the worried Tadzik, which started as follows:

It is good, Tadziolek, that you cannot read yet, otherwise I would be in trouble as I need to write a rather unpleasant reply to your mummy. So, your mummy is not telling the truth, when she says that one's tummy aches when one eats with dirty hands, as well as she is not telling the truth, when she says that children who throw litter about in a room are put into a stove. Children should never be told lies, otherwise they will stop believing their parents.¹⁹

Several scholars working on "Mały Przegląd" have made an interesting observation that this was a medium similar to contemporary internet forums. "'Mały Przegląd', a supplement to the 'Nasz Przegląd' could be called "'protointernet'". "Mały Przegląd"—with its use of the old printing and postal techniques anticipated today's advanced interactive possibilities – with a circulation of 50,000 it gave a voice to children. [...] Possibly for the first time in the history of the Polish press, and thus, of the Polish media, it blurred the boundaries between the authors and the audience, creating social engagement in a sense that contemporary media strive to achieve to a considerably smaller effect."²⁰

Gliński makes a similar observation:

Today we could say that "Mały Przegląd" functioned as an *avant la lettre* social media platform. Its interactive and two-way nature is rather striking. An important principle of the magazine was to refer to the opinions of the readers and correspondents on a regular basis. Especially in the initial

¹⁹ Korczak, p. 56.

²⁰ Filiciak, Toczyński.

period, when Korczak was the editor-in-chief, children could count on the Old Editor to reply to their letters, give advice, comment or criticise. In "Mały Przegląd" children could find a forum for expressing their opinions about other children's problems, often similar to their own. It reminds one of the contemporary 2.0 communication model, where the division between creators and recipients is blurred. One reservation could be made here: if "Mały Przegląd" were a social media platform, it would be completely safe – because the moderator of this forum was Janusz Korczak himself.²¹

This is not fully the case. One could certainly feel safe, because all discussions were polite and letters were carefully selected. Korczak read the letters received and decided what to do with them: whether to publish them, intervene or talk to the author, not to mention that there was no possibility of an immediate reply, which after all was not expected. Korczak often subjected the letters to harsh criticism. He acknowledged it himself: "I know that I write unpleasant things and I am sorry about this [...], yet the editorial office is not a shop where you need to be polite to the buyers."²² The reason for those "unpleasant" replies was the editor's respect for the authors shown by treating them as mature persons, as well as his temperament of an educator: Korczak believed that the duty of the magazine was to educate its readers. Most often correspondents were criticised for excitability, banality and lack of originality. Korczak wanted the letters to contain personal thoughts and reflections by children, written in a colloquial everyday language, and not in a school language full of platitudes. The texts had to deal with real life problems or experiences, thus one could not expect praise for sending a fairy tale or a poem (although in later years they were sometimes published). *Editor's replies* were similar to those that could be found in magazines for adults, the editor did not praise the authors for the very fact of sending a letter and did not hesitate to criticise the things he was not happy about. Yet, it was not the case that simply "children's letters" or texts by children were published. Usually these texts were carefully edited. Their style, punctuation and grammar were faultless even though they were written by Jewish children, whose Polish language skills were not always perfect. Besides, letters often were considerably shortened, sometimes literally just to one sentence. This gave rise to a lot of complaints, especially in the later period, when young people started to send their letters. The editors were blamed for distorting the meaning of the letters.

²¹ Gliński.

²² MP, 15, X (1926), no 2, pp. 5-6, in: Korczak, p. 32.

When the magazine started to receive letters, usually there were about 100 to 150 per week.²³ On its fifth anniversary the magazine informed its readers that altogether it had received 23,475 letters.²⁴ All letters were read and carefully filed according to the issues raised in them. There was a rule that every child who wrote for the first time was mentioned in the section titled *They have written to us for the first time* (this section existed only in the initial period). In this way, all authors, irrespective of whether their letters were published or not, could see their surname in printing (well, in fact, it was rather their names only, surnames started to appear only in the thirties, when Abramow was the editor, and only in the case of more important texts). Regular correspondents and authors of the most valuable letters received small fees for the published texts, for example, for the publication of fragments of the *Journal of Care* (*Dzienniczek opieki*) Icek Cukierman received 5 złotych.²⁵ The editorial staff claimed that they knew not only what they paid for, but also what the fees would be spent on.²⁶

The most persevering received postcards rather than money. This form of recognition also gave a sort of financial reward – these postcards were at the same time passes for morning shows at the cinema for the card holder with two accompanying persons. These must have been greatly valued since in responses to the question “When did you cry because of “Mały Przegląd”?” the loss or destruction of the postcard was the most frequently mentioned reason. In an interview for the “Tygodnik Powszechny”, Józef Hen said: “The editorial team, as was the habit of the Old Doctor, turned things the other way round: it was not the parents who took the child to the cinema, but the child who invited the parents.”²⁷ Whether this was the real intention of the editorial team, it is hard to say, yet from the letters to the magazine one could deduce that children took their friends with them much more often than their parents. Postcard holders were treated as regular collaborators of the magazine and were also invited to press conferences. Newerly estimated the number of correspondents to be several thousand, out of which 50 collaborated with the magazine on a regular basis. They were entrusted with the most serious tasks: reportages, interviews, supervision of correspondents’

²³ Newerly 2001, p. 316.

²⁴ *Pięciolecie „Małego Przeglądu”*, MP, 9, X (1931), pp. 1-2.

²⁵ Ciesielska 1997, p. 111

²⁶ *Pięciolecie „Małego Przeglądu”*, MP, 9, X (1931), pp. 1-2. Authors’ fees: 1927 – 390.30, 1928 – 1596.20, 1929 -1765, 1930 -1781.55, 1931 -1655.

²⁷ Hen.

groups in cities, editing of columns.²⁸ Correspondents' age ranged from eight to sixteen and they came from different backgrounds: "from haute bourgeoisie families, from the working class and the jobless poor, with a predominance of children from the petite bourgeoisie."²⁹ This proves that "Mały Przegląd" possibly had a broader scope of readership than the "Nasz Przegląd", which certainly was not addressed to the poorest strata of Jewish society.

It is impossible to ascertain the number of collaborators writing for the magazine. We only have data for the first five years, which tell us that every year a considerable number of them were 'crossed out' because they failed to contribute: 580 correspondents were deleted in 1929, and 1831 in 1931. One could think that this was not a positive phenomenon, but Korczak rather regretted that collaborators actually stayed on instead of leaving. According to him, the first and second generation of correspondents left, but the third one stayed on and was growing up together with the magazine, "keeping out" younger children. Korczak's intention was to create a magazine for children aged 7 to 13, whereas under his successor, fifth grade students, who should have left by then, were just starting to write for "Mały Przegląd". Although Newerly defended himself saying that older children wrote very interesting texts, Korczak put forward an irrefutable argument that the length of the magazine dropped from 6 to 4 pages. So, once again the magazine was to be based predominantly on the texts of younger correspondents.³⁰

Apart from its publishing activity, the magazine also organised other activities including summer camps, raft trips,³¹ as well as engaged in various interventions and campaigns, including public ones. For example, there was an intervention with regard to the Warsaw city authorities that decided to fence off with barbed wire a playground in the Krasiński park (the intervention was successful, even though it took some time). Another intervention, this time with regard to a personal matter, was in respect of a six-year-old reader very unhappy about being dressed in a pinafore by his mother.

One could identify three or even four different periods in the history of the magazine. The first one covered the first ten issues, which, for obvious reasons, com-

²⁸ Newerly 1984, p. 23.

²⁹ Id. 2001, p. 321.

³⁰ *Narada przelomowa*, cit.

³¹ Newerly 1984, p. 23.

prised texts by editors themselves, mainly by Korczak. In that first period the letters from the readers only started to arrive, it was not yet clear how to organise their selection, what topics the readers should tackle, what sections or questionnaires should be published, etc. The adopted mode of cooperation between the readers and the editorial team was conceived during that period.

In the next stage of its development the magazine – still under the supervision of Korczak – started to publish issues based predominantly on the letters by the “correspondents”. The letters were signed with the names and places of residence of the authors (in case of Warsaw it was the name of the street, otherwise – the name of the town). It is not possible to fully distinguish between the texts by the editorial team, which sometimes were not signed, from the texts written by children. In 1929 a small but significant change was made to the subtitle of the magazine. Instead of a “magazine for children and youth” from now on a “magazine of children and youth” was published, which confirmed once again that it was not a magazine for children, but one created by the children themselves.

When in 1930 Jerzy Abramow (Igor Newerly) became the editor-in-chief, the magazine changed its target audience to young people rather than children. In 1931 the magazine published complaints that there was nothing of interest for youth in it and that its readers had enough of reading about “loose teeth”. “Children were growing up. The magazine was losing in terms of the charm of sincerity and gaining in terms of form and outreach.”³² Letters were more often signed by surnames, issues raised were becoming more serious and the magazine itself became more similar to other magazines for young people. Instead of short letters and information, the magazine started to publish whole columns full of difficult words, popular science articles (including those dealing with sexual life, although that was rather rare), many texts on Zionism, assimilation, a whole series of articles about mentally retarded children – none of this suitable for the youngest readers. Korczak, who was much more interested in children writing sincerely what they thought, was not particularly happy about this new direction. He was still present on the pages of “Mały Przegląd” after officially handing the magazine over to another editor-in-chief, although the number of his contributions shrank. In the first three months of the magazine’s existence there were about 100 texts by Korczak, the same

³² Newerly 2001, p. 322.

number was published in the whole of 1927, in the next two years there were 25 texts per year and in the first half of 1930 there were only 3.³³ However, in 1936, when it became clear that publishing a magazine suitable for all age groups was impossible, the editors went back to the original concept of the magazine for the youngest children.³⁴

It is hard to say precisely how the magazine was perceived. The best illustration of its popularity was the fact that it continued to be published for 13 years. However, its form provoked some controversies. Some adults either underestimated the work of children, seeing it as a waste of time or even forbade them to write to the magazine, believing that publication of a child's work might be harmful to the child. One of the readers wrote:

"Mały Przegląd", a seemingly useful stimulus of mental development, in fact creates a rather unhealthy atmosphere among children. Having been promised that an article will be published, the child loses its spiritual balance and is dreaming of fame. He remains in this state for half a year, until he finally sees the fulfilment of his dreams, which becomes a stimulus for further literary endeavours, which ultimately completely ruin the child's health.³⁵

Young readers, at least in the first years of the magazine's existence, complained about the pettiness of issues raised in the magazine. What is surprising, the experience of "correspondents" does not seem to prove that writing for the magazine "brought them fame". Of course, they were proud of their successes, and postcards were certainly an important token of recognition, yet they also complained that other children sometimes laughed at them because of their writing for "Mały Przegląd". This is rather surprising: it is hard to say whether this was about envy or rather about the conviction that "Mały Przegląd" was an "unserious" magazine and writing for it was not much of an achievement.

The Relations with the *Dom Sierot* Orphanage

Korczak, who was involved in the work for "Mały Przegląd" as well as the *Dom Sierot* orphanage, did not think it appropriate to keep both these forms of educating

³³ Ciesielska 2003, p. 9.

³⁴ Ivi, 13.

³⁵ Fuks, p. 10.

children separate. First of all, "Mały Przegląd" was – which is rarely mentioned – a magazine of a very didactic nature. Korczak made use of his considerable experience of working with children at the orphanage and he believed that the magazine was an important means of education.

A number of Korczak's collaborators at "Mały Przegląd" were wards of the orphanage. The life of the orphanage was documented on the pages of the magazine.³⁶ One has to mention that this is a highly controversial aspect from today's perspective, even though at that time probably no-one saw anything inappropriate in that. The problem was that "respect for a child" so strongly promoted by the Old Doctor, did not cover the sphere of intimacy and privacy of the orphanage wards. Children were mentioned by their names and surnames, and it was easy to identify them.

It is difficult to raise objections to the publication of reports of trips or various events (taken down in shorthand and published anonymously by Abramow).³⁷ Some of the texts simply described the everyday life of the *Dom Sierot* orphanage, so different from other orphanages. We can find descriptions of the *sejms* (self-government), the principles governing the court, sports club, popularity rankings, the institution of guardians, everyday life regulations. This must have been interesting for readers brought up in their family homes and showed the life of the orphanage wards in a relatively attractive way. They certainly were not "poor orphans" deserving sympathy and pity, or children living at the margins of the "normal" family world. The *Dom Sierot* orphanage appeared to be an exceptionally friendly institution, usually better than the world that the children had come from.

Yet, there were also texts that would have never been published today, and presumably could also raise controversies in the interwar period. One of such texts was the "Journal of Care" serialised in 1927. According to the *Dom Sierot*'s rules, the newcomers were taken care of by the more experienced wards, who also received complaints about the behaviour of the newcomers. The journal was published as a sort of tribute to one of the wards, a 12-year-old Icek, who took care of the handicapped Nyson with great dedication. The journal is indeed interesting, the young guardian is full of devotion. However, the text that was matter-of-fact when addressed to adult guardians, becomes rather repugnant when made available to thousands of readers.

³⁶ Selected texts on the Orphanage were published in Ciesielska.

³⁷ Ciesielska 2003, p. 8.

On Saturday Nyson was misbehaving. He fouled a toilet seat. He also peed in the front yard [...] He fouled a toilet seat and his bed again. [...] He eats his cutlet with his hands (took his saliva and threw it on the floor [...] He snotted on the floor and lost his handkerchief [...] He laughs stupidly [...] Today he was dancing and everybody was laughing at him [...] he snots and spits on his jacket.³⁸

Korczak wrote that Icek passed his exam in patience with flying colours, probably the publication of his journal, in fact very well written and very mature, was a form of reward. Yet, Nyson was not treated with adequate respect by the Old Doctor. Korczak believed – perhaps rightly so – that handicapped children should not be wards of large orphanages such as the one established by himself, and instead needed to be sent to specialised institutions. However, this text demonstrates that Korczak perceived the “right of a child to respect” did not extend to such children – respect was deserved only by “smart” and not by “stupid” (a term used by Korczak himself) children.

After Korczak had left, reports from the orphanage on Krochmalna Street were no longer published until 1936, when they were published once again in their usual form.

Poles and Jews

The subject of Polish-Jewish relations was present in the pages of the magazine throughout its existence. We can identify three important issues: contacts with peers of different nationalities, which, despite being part of the everyday life of the readers, appeared least frequently; anti-Semitism (which unfortunately went hand-in-hand with those contacts); general attitude to Poland as the home country. This last topic came up regularly on national holidays and anniversaries. All these issues were discussed by the children or editors from the Jewish point of view.

The discussions of Polish-Jewish relations in “Mały Przegląd”, and especially the discussion of patriotism, are fascinating. Generally nothing particularly unusual was published there. What is striking about the interwar Jewish press is the presence of self-censorship in the majority of newspapers and magazines. One would search in vain for stereotypical descriptions of Poles. Stereotypical pictures of the Polish population are

³⁸ MP, nn. 1, 8, 15, 22, 30 (1927), in: Ciesielska 1997, pp. 49-57.

absent to the extent that simply cannot be accidental. This happened for a variety of reasons: because of censorship, for the sake of readers who had Polish acquaintances, as well as probably in order not to further fan the hostility towards Jews by writing things that might offend Poles. The magazines were practically free from any generalisations, even where they seemed rather obvious. A thorough analysis of articles from Jewish magazines in the Polish language does not tell us how Jews really perceived Poles. Anything that was published in the press, and especially anything published by a minority that suffered discrimination, was subjected to double censorship – the official censorship by the state as well as the unofficial, internal one, which often was harsher than the external one. Thus, we do not know what the Jewish patriotism towards Poland was really like. If we take all texts by journalists at face value – the patriotism was widespread and absolute.

"Nasz Przegląd" was not an organ of any political group, yet it represented a Zionist orientation. Its attitude towards Poland could be defined as "critical patriotism". "Mały Przegląd" sometimes broke away from this formula, and, what is most surprising, this happened only when it was primarily addressed to children and not youth. The magazine did not really use a stereotype of a Pole, but the patriotism of readers appears to be less unambiguous. The fact that Jews in Poland were not always treated well was not disguised in the "Nasz Przegląd", but love of the motherland was never a disputable matter. In "Mały Przegląd", the issue of patriotism was a matter for discussion, even though only one side of the debate was supported by the editorial team. Unlike in the case of other problems raised by the young readers, Korczak certainly did not encourage independent opinion on the subject, if this opinion negated the value of Polish patriotism. A good illustration of this is his reaction to a letter received by the magazine that stayed in the file for almost a year. Celina wrote in her letter that, together with the whole school, she went to synagogue on the 11th of November. When rabbi Szor (as in the text) finished his sermon by an exclamation "Long live the Polish Republic, long live independence" she sat down and made a two-finger gesture, which was received with indignation by her friends. She asked "Mały Przegląd" why would anybody take children to that sort of services. Korczak's reaction was very harsh. He enumerated Poland's misfortunes, uprisings and wars, and concluded:

Who did you show your two fingers to? Silly, conceited, capricious, little Celinka. Do you think that if Poland erected a monument to this grave century, alongside the leaders and peasants, a worker and a priest, there wouldn't be a Jew? He has lived and died here, he is part of this soil and the sap of trees. [...]. If you are sincere about your admiration for and joy about Palestine rising from the ruins, you cannot be indifferent to the resurrection of Poland.³⁹

The message is unambiguous: in Poland one is not allowed not to be a patriot, Poland is also the motherland of the Jews and they should be happy about her regained independence. In this matter, Korczak did not respect any other opinions, and the correspondent was chastised by Korczak for being silly. Yet, the fact that such letters arrived at all and were published in the magazine was absolutely unprecedented. Other magazines would not even drop a hint that some Jews might not be Polish patriots.

However, somewhat in contrast to what has been said earlier, "Mały Przegląd" did not publish any texts on the occasion of national holidays and anniversaries, which were always present in all the other magazines for children, including the Jewish ones in the Polish language. This must have aroused astonishment, there were letters inquiring about this state of affairs and the editors had to explain why they did not publish such texts. The explanation provided was that young people read adult press but did not understand it. It was suggested that letters received by the magazine on the occasion of anniversaries and national holidays were just compilations of platitudes. "I know the beautiful and intelligent letters by children and youth all too well. I cannot but feel sorry about how adults spoil the sincere language of children with their falsehood,"⁴⁰ Korczak wrote. It is hard to say whether he accused the authors of the occasional letters of imitating adults' magazines or went even further to accuse adults of dictating the "fitting" messages to children. In an attempt to explain why he did not publish patriotic texts and poems, he also gave an example of a reader who first sent a poem about how he loved Poland and then about how he loved Palestine.

Yet, a year later, on the tenth anniversary of Poland's independence, there must have been many more letters, because the editorial team decided to publish some occasional texts. Korczak complained, as he had done before, that the received correspondence was more like school essays, sometimes even good ones, but lacking originality,

³⁹ MP, n. 58, 11, XI (1927), in: Korczak.

⁴⁰ Ivi, p. 316.

imitative, bringing nothing new, just repeating the contents of textbooks and lectures. Korczak also refused to publish poems, as he claimed that often even if a person's feelings were sincere, the whole thing sounded artificial. The greatest problem was, however, what could and what could not be published on such an important holiday. Thus it was decided to publish only those complaints that were "calm and non-vociferous".

In this way, the first texts praising Piłsudski were published. Similarly to the majority of Jewish Polish-language newspapers, he was perceived as an unquestionable hero, a model to others, a person who led his people out of captivity, and thus was also an example to Zionist Jews, dreaming of Palestine. The letters were about love of Poland, an unrequited love, and basically repeated the same messages but in different words.

I love Poland, its fields of corn, its green pastures, pine tree forests smelling of resin and the wide flowing Vistula. [...]. For this country I am a foreign nomad that has been wandering around the world for 2000 years. [...] Although I love this country, it does not love me back.⁴¹

The tenth anniversary of the revival of Poland is coming. I am happy about its rebirth. On this day I am thinking about Her – who else took us in, if not the Polish land? Yet, I also recollect the wrongs I had to suffer. We feel unpleasantly and uncomfortably, as we are unwanted here.⁴²

One of the boys wrote about denying official posts and places at state schools to Jews, about Jews being beaten by Christian boys. Yet he finished his letter with: "Despite everything I love my motherland and the very thought of leaving it makes me sad. Foreign countries seem to me misty, stifling and gloomy. I do not know why. I just know that my heart feels that way. I love Poland."⁴³ Other letters were even harsher, in some of them it was emphasised that not all Poles are anti-Semites, yet the attitude of the majority of Poles towards Jews was not a good one. The last claim is exceptionally interesting, because in the interwar period Jewish magazines consistently avoided writing about Poles as anti-Semites. Selected, well-defined groups were accused of anti-Semitism: supporters of the national democracy movement (*Endecja*⁴⁴), youth, hooligans – but never Poles as such. Yet, it seems that a true picture, unmarred by self-

⁴¹ Ivi, vol. 11, part. III, p. 210.

⁴² MP, n. 8, XI (1928), no 45, 3, ivi, p. 211.

⁴³ MP, 8 XI 1928, no 45, 3, ivi, p. 215.

⁴⁴ *Endecja* (from ND standing for National Democracy) was a Polish right-wing political movement.

ensorship, emerges from children's letters. Jewish children and youth believed that a large proportion of Poles were anti-Semites, not just some selected, well-defined groups.

After Korczak left, occasional articles started to be published to celebrate national holidays; they were as banal and full of platitudes as similar articles in other magazines. The admiration for Piłsudski was also growing. After his death, the cover page of the magazine's appeared in a black frame denoting mourning, but inside little attention was paid to Piłsudski himself. A year later grieving after the death of Piłsudski appeared less stereotypical and more authentic. He was promoted to the position of an almost mystical figure. His greatness made the places where he lived and worked very special. "We enter the Belvedere in silence as if it were a temple. [...] I had an impression that we were in some enchanted land. What a pity that this great Man is not here anymore."⁴⁵

Since the magazine was addressed to the youngest readers, the Polish-Jewish relations were analysed on the children's level. And in this context the topic of hostility and alienation in relation to Polish children – an issue that usually received very little attention – was raised on the pages of the magazine, but only during the periods, when the magazine was targeted at younger children. Even though this claim was never directly formulated, indirectly Korczak often emphasised that all children are the same. In a reply to a girl's letter he wrote:

You are absolutely right that 'non-Jewish children have got the same concerns, sorrows as well as games, they also have bad and good friends and teachers, fair and unfair marks, successful and unsuccessful walks'. I know and understand this, and try to make everybody else know and understand this.⁴⁶

This is a very interesting fragment, as it shows the phenomenon of alienation and stereotypes "from the other side". The Polish world clearly was not well known to Jewish children, and Polish children were seen in the same stereotypical way, as Jewish children were seen by the Polish side. The existence of stereotypes was usually carefully hidden by the Jewish Polish-language press.

⁴⁵ "Blimcia T., *Wycieczka do Belwederu*, MP, 15, IV (1938), p. 4.

⁴⁶ MP, 19, XI (1926), n. 7, 5, in: Korczak, pp. 92-93.

"Mały Przegląd" paid a lot of attention to anti-Semitism, just as all Jewish magazines did. Already in the second issue of the magazine Korczak wrote that he received letters with complaints about bad treatment of Jewish children. It is worth mentioning that this was the first issue raised by the correspondents. Jewish children were teased and bullied by their peers and sometimes also teachers. Korczak promised that "Mały Przegląd" would focus on this problem and not just in one issue, but will raise it in many articles and will be returning to this topic more than once. He did not promise any improvement or solution to this issue, apart from raising and discussing it. "A magazine for children has a duty to protect them; a magazine for Jewish children has a duty to protect children who were born Jews and suffer because of that fact".⁴⁷ Student brawls were described on the pages of the magazine. It is worth citing a longer fragment, as it makes one think that the article was not really addressed to children. It ridicules students' anti-Semitic attacks in a way that is understandable only for older readers, and does not give much information to those who did not know the issue well.

We will write little about this, because we are angry that Jews are not accepted as pupils in schools. Even though the schools are not good and some write that young people become more stupid there. Who knows, maybe Jews are so smart exactly because there is *numerus clausus*. Students put on masks and were walking down the streets and behaving terribly. [...] They were making a lot of noise. One screamed: 'Cock-a-doodle-do'. Another: 'Long live red tongue and sore throat.' And they screamed obscene things too: 'Long live diarrhoea'.⁴⁸

This sort of description is puzzling. Was the author's aim to avoid citing real anti-Semitic slogans and at the same time demonstrate to the older and adult readers that "Mały Przegląd" was aware of anti-Semitism?

What is more, there were dramatic accounts of not just anti-Semitic slogans but of Jewish children being teased and even beaten by their peers. In many letters from correspondents – both girls and boys from evening schools and gymnasiums – the same issue was raised: after leaving school they were attacked by students from other schools already waiting for them. Throwing stones, beating, name-calling were not just sporadic episodes but were so regular that some students preferred to take a roundabout route to avoid harassment. However, judging from the editor's replies it appears that these fights

⁴⁷ Ivi, MP, 15, X (1926), n. 2, 5-6, p.29.

⁴⁸ Ivi, MP, 12, XI (1926), n. 6, 5, pp. 29, 79.

were not always between Jewish and Christian children. Sometimes also Jewish children from other schools attacked their peers. Although elements of anti-Semitism were acknowledged, the emphasis was put on the antagonism between day and evening schools, the impact of the war on students' morale as well as just regular hooliganism.⁴⁹ This topic continued in several issues. Korczak referred to a Christian boy of his acquaintance, who stood up to defend an old Jew, whose hat was thrown off his head, and who had some trouble from his peers at school because of this. He also emphasised that scouts often intervene when they see Jewish children being harassed. "Besides, it is better now, some time ago everybody was harassed, now only children". He also cited a number of expressions of thanks from his wards to unknown persons who defended them against harassment and attacks.⁵⁰ In these texts there was no division into the good and the bad, into Jews and anti-Semites, or into Jewish victims and Christian attackers. There were just hooligans or thoughtless and demoralised people, and good people, irrespective of their nationality.

What was characteristic and unique for "Mały Przegląd"— out of all Polish-language Jewish magazines – was a critical approach to received complaints about anti-Semitism. Complaints were published, but in many cases they were underplayed. It was emphasised that there were also people defending Jews, and sometimes Jews themselves were blamed for exposing themselves to unpleasant situations being ashamed of their origin. The reasons for such a state of affairs could be multiple. First of all, there was the didactic role of the magazine: the aim was to avoid situations where children would send moving, but untrue stories just to see their name published.. Second, magazines for adults just ignored complaints that looked suspicious or untrue. A magazine that aimed to publish works by the readers only had to pay special attention to the reliability of their texts. Yet, there was always the danger of ignoring complaints that were dramatic in form but based-in-fact. Third, Korczak's position was that nationality was of no concern with regard to passing judgements about people, and that was what he wanted to pass on to his readers. Thus he often mitigated complaints about Polish peers.

Upon receiving complaints about anti-Semitism and harassment, the editorial team tried to check their reliability. One of the correspondents wrote that several years

⁴⁹ Ivi, MP, 28, I (1927), pp. 212-216.

⁵⁰ Ivi, MP, 11, II (1927), n. 42, 7, pp. 190-193.

earlier a nurse in a Christian hospital shouted at him: "Jew, Bejlis,⁵¹ you can't even cross yourself" and then shouted many times that he did not want to make the sign of the cross, and some boys, following her example, teased him a lot. The letter was published with a note that it probably was not a lie, but an exaggeration and that "the letter was not completely based on fact, but we know the hospital and remember some silly actions of nurses in reference not only to Jewish children but also Christian children."⁵² There were no such notes added to other letters when children wrote that nurses were kind. Also other letters and complaints often – and probably rightly so – were considered as exaggerated or simply made up and received harsh remarks. An ugly tale was sent by Towie from Sosnowiec. "“Hey, dirty Jew, sing a *majufes*”⁵³ – a man shouted. Then he kicked the Jew and spitted on him. The Jew was shedding large, hot and bloody tears. The man ordered to have him whipped 200 times so that he did not cry when singing.”⁵⁴

What was also characteristic was that the texts started to contain not only accusations directed at the Polish side, but also reflections upon improper behaviour of Jews themselves. Correspondents accused their friends of lack of dignity, turning to the enemy's side in attempts to look for acceptance, denial of Jewishness, unwillingness to learn the Jewish languages, ignoring religion and loyalty to the group. It was the way children were brought up that was to blame, as one of the correspondents wrote. Parents were bringing up children with a feeling of shame for being Jews as well as teaching them to remain non-ideological.⁵⁵

Even without references to anti-Semitism, there was criticism of Jewish society. A correspondent of "Mały Przegląd" complained that although Jews were believed to be gifted and smart, they were not punctual, and that those who spoke in Yiddish did nothing for sustaining Jewish honour and dignity. And Korczak agreed with this diagnosis. "Poverty, dear child, neglect, old habits, humiliation, disability, lack of good role mod-

⁵¹ The Jewish bricklayer Mendel Bejlis was the accused in one of the last trials for ritual murder that took place in Kiev in 1913. The trial gained international resonance as a symbol of anti-Semitic feelings and practices in Imperial Russia. Among those involved in Bejlis' defence was Maxim Gor'kij. Although found innocent beyond suspicion, the name Bejlis remained widely used by anti-Semites as a synonym for a Jewish murderer.

⁵² Korczak, MP, 11, II (1927), n. 42, 9, pp. 218-219.

⁵³ *Majufes* was a Jewish dance performed on the Polish stage.

⁵⁴ Korczak, MP, 22, IV (1927), no 29, 5, p. 290.

⁵⁵ Ivi, pp. 290-291.

els and friendly advice, distrust, irritation. [...] Love and forgive all along.”⁵⁶ It is worth remembering that the readers of "Mały Przegląd" were predominantly acculturated Jews, hence the complaints about one's own people in the attempt to make oneself similar to the majority.

However, selected complaints, "calm and full of dignity" were published rather regularly. This can be illustrated by the fact that the magazine started to receive letters asking the editors not to write about this anymore, as the readers had enough of all that in their everyday lives and that it was just plain boring. The editorial team replied that they did not want to either bore or distress the readers, yet somebody had to write about it, otherwise who else could Jewish kids complain to? Thus complaints about, first of all, the anti-Semitic acts of teachers and students were still published, often, however, with reservations that possibly this behaviour was not so wide-spread and was typical of only the school in question. What is more, sometimes this anti-Semitism was unambiguous – name calling, harassment, or in the case of teachers it could be giving lower grades to Jewish children or offending them. Whereas at other times, it was more about exclusion – not necessarily deliberate – of Jewish kids from the company of Christian children. One of the correspondents complained about school trips and excursions on Saturdays or organised meals at Christian restaurants.⁵⁷

As noted earlier, the texts regarding anti-Semitism and harassment of children, in particular at school, were published during the period when the magazine addressed itself to the youngest readers. Yet, some diametrically opposed opinions were also published. "Hela feels better at a Polish school than at a Jewish one," read one of the texts in the Current Affairs column in 1929.⁵⁸ In the same year an amusing and interesting article about fights between Jewish and Polish children in the Old Town was published. According to the correspondent, Jewish children had constant fights with Polish boys, which might have sounded ominous, but in fact was rather innocent and without any anti-Semitic undertones. "Sometimes we were fighting for real and sometimes just for fun. If there were too few Polish kids, they took a couple of Jews to their team, and if they were too many, they lent us some of theirs to defend us."⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Ivi, p. 88.

⁵⁷ *Nowy Sącz. Antysemityzm w szkole*, MP, 22, II (1929), p. 2.

⁵⁸ *Wiadomości bieżące*, MP, 4, I (1929), p. 4.

⁵⁹ *Ulica* MP, 10, V (1929), p. 2.

The most interesting theme with regard to the Polish-Jewish relations that was not mentioned anywhere else in the Jewish press in the Polish language, apart from "Mały Przegląd", was the claim that the lack of good contacts between both national groups was not just the effect of anti-Semitism, prejudice or, as some magazines claimed, mutual alienation, but it was also the result of deliberate self-separation of the Jewish society from the Polish society. The discussion on this issue started after a letter by a boy named Tadzio was published in mid-1927.

Jewish students should not avoid their Christian peers. I and another Jew live in complete harmony with our Catholic peers. We play with them, do homework together, and take part in different groups and self-help activities. But another Jewish boy's behaviour is entirely different to our lives. [...] He never plays with us, never talks, especially with Catholics.⁶⁰

This was followed by Tadzio's criticism of *chalats* (or *kapotes* in Yiddish) and other types of traditional Jewish dress. Partly the discussion, Korczak claimed, was exclusively repetition of received opinions, claims from articles in the press, etc., yet many children expressed their own ideas. There was a difference of opinions. Some correspondents unequivocally supported Tadzio's position. However, both sides had to look for an understanding, despite possible difficulties, as the future depended on that. They gave examples of their own schools, where children liked one another and made friends irrespective of whether they were Jewish or Christian.

An opinion was also expressed that the reason for hostility could be ascribed to the Jewish children themselves, who regarded all non-Jewish children in the same way, as a pack of urchins, whereas hooligans harassed not just Jewish children but all kids. This was not an isolated opinion. For example, a correspondent named Irka wrote that when she was younger, she met with anti-Semitism, but only from girls who harassed all others and were punished for this by teachers. One could assume that what other children regarded as bullying by school hooligans, Jewish children unambiguously interpreted as anti-Semitism. What is more, the same Irka believed that some Jewish children were harassed not because of anti-Semitism, but because of their objectionable behaviour. Poles regarded Jewish kids as dirty, noisy, ill behaved, and had reasons to believe so. Polish children were not as spoilt as Jewish ones. "I believe that if Jewish

⁶⁰ Korczak, p. 161.

children are well behaved, they will avoid hostility.”⁶¹ Jews also had to be proud and not ashamed of being Jewish. If they themselves were ashamed of their origins, how could Poles avoid viewing them with contempt?

Some correspondents argued with Tadzio. They pointed out the fact that it was Poles who threatened their children with the Jews and not the other way round. Some agreed that “Jews have a hostile attitude to Poland because they often suffer wrong doings here.”⁶² Another girl, Sulamita, expressed her doubt as to whether such close contacts with Christian kids were proper at all.

One has to live in peace with them, but not [...] impose oneself so importunately on them in their circles, unions and associations. We do not have to expose ourselves to being brushed off by Poles. We are attached to Poland because we were born and live here, but with regard to hatred, I have seen even three-year-old girls who, upon seeing a Jewish person, say with contempt ‘a Jew’.⁶³

Many children claimed that from their childhood Jews faced contempt, were talked into believing that they were worse than others, and their values learnt at home were negated. Thus, one should not be surprised that they were suspicious of Christians and did not want to have any social contacts with them. Many children were also outraged by the fact that Tadzio believed that Jews had to preserve their distinctiveness only in religion – why would they have to abandon their own identity or national feelings?

Although the majority of correspondents emphasised that good relations between Jews and Christians were desirable, there were also opinions that they were not realistic.

We can never come to terms with the idea that Christians believe us to be inferior beings, and that they may reject us [...] and persecute us. I am sure that not only in the countryside [...] but also in Warsaw a Polish boy will not let a Jew pass along the street [without harassment]. Why should we then be surprised if a [Jewish] boy does not want to play with Catholics? Should there be a quarrel

⁶¹ Ivi, p. 63.

⁶² Ivi, p. 64.

⁶³ Ivi, 16 XI (1928), n. 111, p. 164.

between a Jewish boy and a Polish boy, the latter will shout into his face "Jew, go to Palestine". That's the way things are and we have to accept it, with regret.⁶⁴

– wrote Szlamek. Basia described her own school experience – her girlfriends had been nice to her, until it turned out that she was Jewish. She believed that this was the result of not just the state of affairs at school or in the society, but of a broader phenomenon. "In fact we are not [considered to be] citizens of Poland, and this is reflected in our feelings. If everyone was treated in the same way, there would have been no hatred and disputes."⁶⁵ Olek's letter concluded the discussion: "They do not like us because their hearts are callous. Only a stupid and bad person can hate without any reason, anti-Semites hate poor and unfortunate Jews, but they avoid the rich, nice and handsome ones and do not pester them."⁶⁶

This whole discussion took place on the pages of "Mały Przegląd" in 1928, that is before the greatest outbreak of anti-Semitism in Poland. Anti-Semitism was a recurring topic in the following years. A description of an attack on one of the readers resulted in the censors' intervention. Similar opinions were expressed also later on. In 1929 we could read: "Bella believes that as long as Jews live in Poland, they should not create adversary camps."⁶⁷ During the period when "Mały Przegląd" was addressed to young people, it published long, sometimes page-long, articles discussing the issue of anti-Semitism or Jewish-Polish relations in general, rather than short letters describing individual problems. Anti-Semitism, at least before 1935, was mentioned rarely. It was difficult to find anything on the subject before 1932. In an article titled *The Jewish Question* the author claimed that the basic problem in the anti-Semites' way of thinking was the assumption that "only the people bearing the country's name can claim it as their own"⁶⁸ One has to remember that Poles also collaborated with the magazine, e.g. Maria Cabańska (who signed as Maria from Brwinów) or Kazimierz Dębnicki (Tadeusz B-ski). Their texts started to be published in "Mały Przegląd" during this particular period, as well as texts by other Polish readers, which demonstrated that some Poles were also against anti-Semitism. In her reply to a letter from a boy beaten up by national de-

⁶⁴ Ivi, pp. 165-166.

⁶⁵ Ivi, MP, 16 XI (1928), n. 111, t. 11, cz. III, p. 166.

⁶⁶ Ivi, p. 167.

⁶⁷ MP, 25, I (1929), p. 4.

⁶⁸ MP, 11, I (1935), p. 1.

mocracy supporters, Maria Cabańska wrote that she was persecuted because of her views and her writing for a Jewish newspaper, despite her being a Christian. She also stated that such people were not patriots and if King Bolesław Chrobry⁶⁹ saw them he would turn over in his grave, and they did not know what they were doing but were just thoughtlessly following older politicians. "They beat you up because they do not understand what motherland is – that Poland is not only the mother of nobility, but also the mother of a peasant and a Jew, who can be a good citizen."⁷⁰ The following excerpt from a letter by another Pole is also very characteristic: "With regard to the attitude of a certain sector of Polish society towards the whole of the Jewish society, it is first of all our duty, the duty of Christian youth to condemn anti-Semitism."⁷¹ More and more often during this period letters of Polish readers were published, in which they claimed that a true Catholic or true Christian not only could not be an anti-Semite, but on the contrary, he or she had a duty to defend Jews, since defending the weak was one of Christian principles.

These letters reflected the policy of "Mały Przegląd", which published letters by Poles critical of anti-Semitism also in the late thirties. It is hard to say whether "Mały Przegląd" had its own policy in respect of the publication of these letters or whether this was approved by the editors of the main newspaper or at least was adjusted to its editorial line. The latter is likely, as the criticism of Jewish society – just as was the case in the "Nasz Przegląd" – focused on the issue of assimilation, which was very badly perceived. In 1932 Abraham from Vilnius wrote: "In "Mały Przegląd" many children are signed as Mietek, Franek, Stefcia. But Mietek does not really sound nicer than Mojżesz".⁷² It is, however, characteristic that even assimilation stopped being part of the criticism of Jewish society and in 1936 was presented not as an erroneous choice, but rather as something Jews were compelled to do due to the lack of Jewish educational facilities as well as economic pressures.

Assimilation fulfils all the criteria of compulsion. A Jewish intellectual assimilates in this way, since if he, for example, was speaking his own language, he would be ridiculed and rejected. A

⁶⁹ Bolesław I Chrobry (967-1025), the first King of Poland.

⁷⁰ Maria z Brwinowa, *Do Leona*, MP, 8, VI (1934), in: Szalec, Szulecka, p. 14.

⁷¹ MP, 22, V (1936), p. 1.

⁷² Abraham z Wilna, *Mietek czy Mojżesz*, MP, 2, I (1931), p. 4.

Jewish child, [...] forced to study in a foreign and unintelligible language, assimilates in this way; and this has a detrimental impact on the intellectual abilities as well as comfort of a child.⁷³

Aron also complained about this, claiming that young people chose to assimilate "and try to justify the harm done to them by the 'principles of material development.'" ⁷⁴ Young people scorned the Jewish language and believed that a Polish-language school would be a "bridge" that would lead them to their careers. Instead, one ought to overcome self-interest and fight assimilation.

From the second half of 1936, that is when the magazine started to address itself again to the youngest readers, issues raised in the early years of the magazine's existence reappeared again. With one single exception, during this period there were a greater number of generalisations. More and more often children were not just describing individual cases, but rather complaining about the anti-Semitism of the Polish society, emphasising though that it did not refer to the entire society. An excerpt from a letter by Dora Cygańska from Włocławek is very typical: "These days it is hard to find a Christian who is free from prejudice against Jews. Yet, there are still people who do not succumb to the anti-Semitism plague."⁷⁵ Almost every issue contained some correspondence regarding a concrete case of persecution or physical violence. Moreover, earlier on the letters had usually described incidents involving one or several peers or teachers ill-disposed towards Jews. Now, non-anti-Semites were a rare exception, acts of violence were not spontaneous, but organised and brutal. "During breaks students plan fights against Jews and [...] when we leave school, they throw nails on ropes in our direction. It also happens that if a Catholic or a Protestant does something good for a Jew, then the reactions are: 'for a Jew?'"⁷⁶ As one can see, not only Jews were facing persecution, but also the people who stood up to anti-Semitism, and thus also formed a minority.

It is hard to say, to what extent the published letters reflected the changes in the way of thinking of the young generation of Jewish readers. One cannot forget that the number of letters received by the magazine was huge and the criteria of selection could vary. What is more, the editorial team appeared to edit considerably the original texts,

⁷³ MP 3I (1936), p. 2.

⁷⁴ Aron K., *Zadanie naszego pokolenia*, MP, 24, I (1936), p. 2.

⁷⁵ MP, 28 I 1938, p. 2.

⁷⁶ Benjamin z Izbicy Kujawskiej, *Marzą-pragną*, MP, 27 V (1938), p. 1.

often leaving only some fragments. Nevertheless, it is certain that what was published reflected the readers' opinions to a great degree, otherwise the magazine would not have been so popular and would not have survived until the outbreak of the war.

Translated from Polish by Anna Fomina, reviewed by Lena Stanley-Clamp

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po łach zadowolony. — Jedną z k...

żeł się płazę cół prawdziwego,...

ha to brat, ale trudno. Dawadł...

Młodzi współpracownicy.

Moje marzenie
rostać, adwokatem być
Lubię kogoś pocieszać!
Abram!

KUCYK
Chodzę do szkoły, a koletry...

PIESEK
Tata przyszedł mi pisać. Ja...

MOJE KOLEZANKI
Mam jedną koleżankę Litkę...

WIECZNE PIORO
Mój brat i siostra mają wiec...

W BÓŻNICZY
W naszej szkole jest bóżnica...

ZMARTWIENIE
Mam 6 lat. Nazywam się Mo...

NAJLADNIEJSZA
Mama miała siostrę ma 2 lata...

DRAPACZY OŚCIE
Mama kochała, czyzywa się...

SIOSTRA
Mam dobrą siostrę, ale ona...

MANUSIA WRÓCŁA
Nie umiem jeszcze pisać...

MADRY PIESEK
Dotarłam do tamtego małego...

W DOMU
Jestem przygotowana do wstę...

SKARBONKA
Mam skarbonek i słowem...

LENIWI EDEK
Mam dwóch braci. Mój brat...

W KENIE
Byłem w Kenie i widziałem...

WŁASNY ATRAMENT
Jaki raz chciałem pisać do...

22.XII. — Znowu odziesiął m...

22.XII. — Długo już woz...

22.XII. — Byłem u ciotki. P...

23.XII. — Długo już woz...

23.XII. — Byłem u ciotki. P...

23.XII. — Byłem u ciotki. P...

Skargi szkolne.

SKARGA NA CELOPCÓW
W naszej klasie są dwoje...

zabola. Jak pani może tak...

kuratnikowi nauczyciela?...

W naszej szkole jest bóżnica...

Mam 6 lat. Nazywam się Mo...

24.XII. — Długo już woz...

24.XII. — Długo już woz...

24.XII. — Długo już woz...

Mama miała siostrę ma 2 lata...

Mama kochała, czyzywa się...

25.XII. — Długo już woz...

25.XII. — Długo już woz...

25.XII. — Długo już woz...

Mam dobrą siostrę, ale ona...

Nie umiem jeszcze pisać...

26.XII. — Długo już woz...

26.XII. — Długo już woz...

26.XII. — Długo już woz...

Dotarłam do tamtego małego...

Jestem przygotowana do wstę...

27.XII. — Długo już woz...

27.XII. — Długo już woz...

27.XII. — Długo już woz...

Mam skarbonek i słowem...

Mam dwóch braci. Mój brat...

28.XII. — Długo już woz...

28.XII. — Długo już woz...

28.XII. — Długo już woz...

Byłem w Kenie i widziałem...

Jaki raz chciałem pisać do...

29.XII. — Długo już woz...

29.XII. — Długo już woz...

29.XII. — Długo już woz...

Znamy szablonki podzi...

— Nie! Ina, dopóki nie...

30.XII. — Długo już woz...

30.XII. — Długo już woz...

30.XII. — Długo już woz...

— Na, ha! Zostawem...

— Na, ha! Zostawem...

31.XII. — Długo już woz...

31.XII. — Długo już woz...

31.XII. — Długo już woz...

— Na, ha! Zostawem...

— Na, ha! Zostawem...

1.XI. — Długo już woz...

1.XI. — Długo już woz...

1.XI. — Długo już woz...

— Na, ha! Zostawem...

— Na, ha! Zostawem...

2.XI. — Długo już woz...

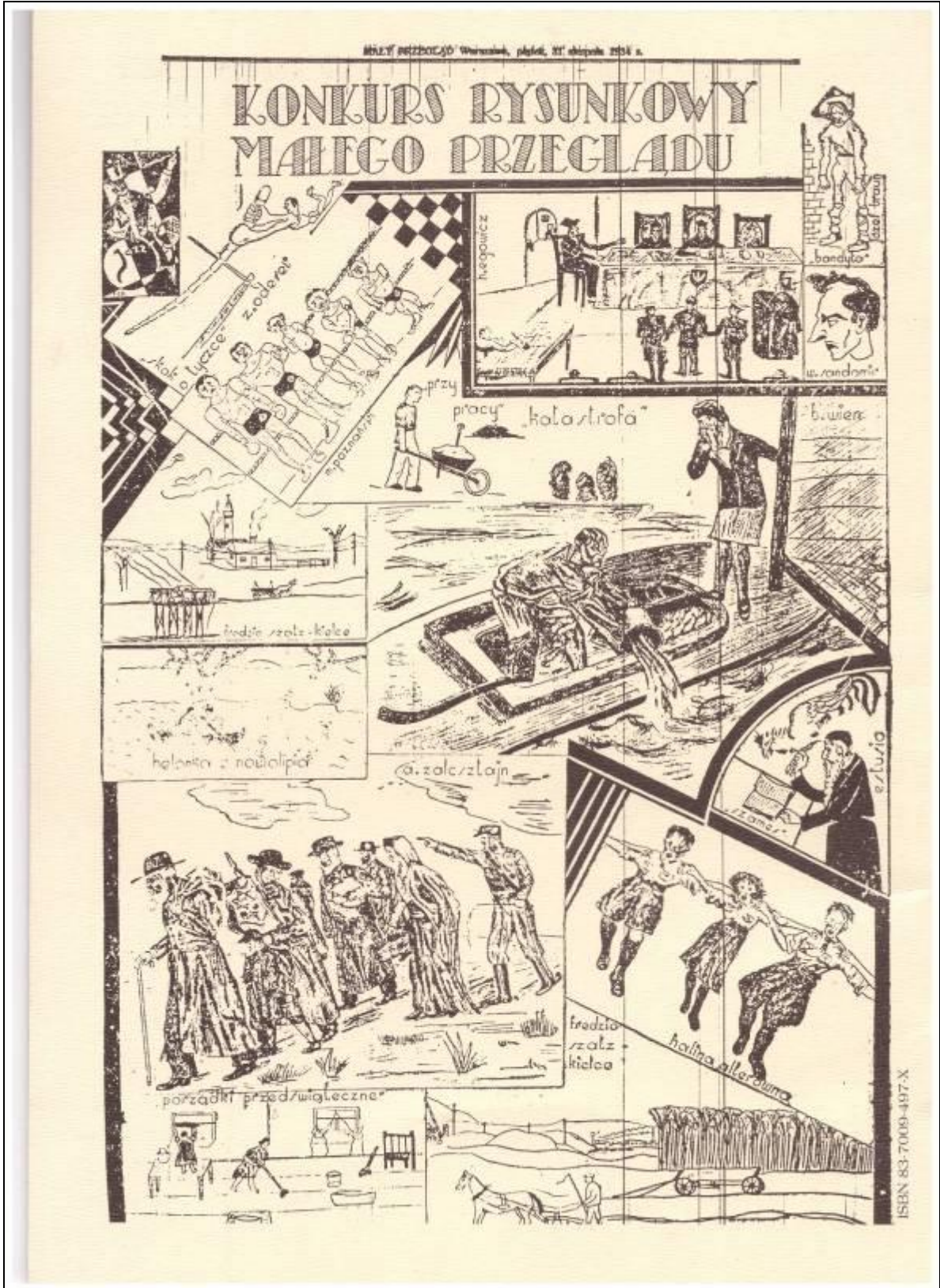
2.XI. — Długo już woz...

2.XI. — Długo już woz...

— Na, ha! Zostawem...

— Na, ha! Zostawem...

Una pagina del "Mały Przegląd". A caratteri manoscritti: "Il mio sogno è diventare avvocato, perché vorrei poter render contento qualcuno. Abram". La rubrica sulla sinistra è intitolata Lagnanze sulla scuola.



Un concorso di disegni del "Mały Przegląd".



Le intestazioni dei numeri che celebrano rispettivamente il quarto, il settimo e il decimo anniversario del "Mały Przegląd".



Mały przegląd

piśmi dzieci i młodzieży

zgodnie co piątek rano na korespondencje i materiały kierować należy do redakcji "małego przeglądu" nowolipski 7

TYGODNIOWY DODATEK BEZPŁATNY DO NR. 244 (5944) NASZEGO PRZEGLĄDU

J. TUNACZYRSKI

Korespondencja z Moskwy

W FU-DZIA-DZIANIE

Ki drzewo młodym drzewo
wzrósł się na 70 - dwa
dziesiątych, - dźwięki dzwoniły
Chłopca, - jakby on dźwięk
złoty, widać i wiele pod nie-
biażem lasowym drzewo, -
dźwięk i widać się na wie-
czernie, angła lasowy to
być - to widać fu - dwa
dziesiątych.

Pracownicy, więc kładli się
wzrost młodych drzewo, -
dźwięki dzwoniły i widać, -
Chłopca, - jakby on dźwięk
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Taka był dźwięk drzewo, -
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być - to widać fu - dwa
dziesiątych.

C. KARMAZYN

Auto-stopem na Riwierę

Wymiar.
Tęcza widać widać, -
dźwięki dzwoniły i widać, -
Chłopca, - jakby on dźwięk
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dziesiątych.

Na drodze Neapolca.

W drzewo młodym drzewo
wzrósł się na 70 - dwa
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Chłopca, - jakby on dźwięk
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La prima pagina dell'ultimo numero del "Mały Przegląd", datata 1 settembre 1939.

Janusz Korczak's "Mały Przegląd"



La targa commemorativa del "Mały Przegląd" apposta nel 1996 sul retro di Palazzo Mostowski in via Nowolipki, Varsavia (fonte: Wikicommons)