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HOW DO LOCAL CONDITIONS INFORM SOCIO-POLITICAL LANGUAGE? THE CONCEPT OF 'INTELLIGENTSIA' IN ŁÓDŹ PRESS BEFORE THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY*

Abstract

This article seeks to answer the question of whether the local conditions or determinants influence the socio-political language. Within the context of the nationwide discourse in the nineteenth-century Kingdom of Poland, an analysis follows how the concept of 'intelligentsia' functioned in the local press from the industrial city of Łódź. A source analysis leads to the conclusion that in the specific circumstances, of which the social mix was a constituent, certain notions of a defined meaning in the countrywide context may be interpreted in a manner divergent from the rule. As the social structure of Łódź was becoming more and more similar to that of Warsaw and other big cities, the differences in the definitions of the term 'intelligentsia' were gradually smoothening out.

Keywords: intelligentsia, social structure, history of ideas, Łódź, Warsaw, Poland

I INTRODUCTION

The history of ideas and concepts forms a research field in historiography, primarily oriented towards national languages and phrases or expressions used in the political life of a country.¹ This research pragmatics is reflected in numerous dictionaries of socio-political ideas/concepts, covering their evolution in individual countries and

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¹ Daniel Ciunajcis, 'O krytycznym zadaniu historii pojęć', *Sensus Historiae*, iii (2011), 55.

national cultures. However, Reinhart Koselleck himself warned against narrowing the optics when it comes to examining the history of concepts/ideas. As he argued, each idea is referred to its context.²

To my mind, this remark opens a broad field for non-standard depictions or concepts in the history of concepts and ideas, encompassing the broadening and restricting of the reservoir of sources as well as researching into socio-political language on a level lower than national, taking into account local and regional contexts. Koselleck has quitted the thought, popular as it was among the followers of the ‘linguistic turn’ in the humanities, that language should be treated as a unified whole, relatively independently of the social life. As he stressed, there are areas in the language which are not to be comprehended without understanding the society as its users.³ As Koselleck puts it, “the history of ideas must refer to the results of social history, so that in the field of its own vision it may preserve the diversity that can never be transformed into an alleged identity, in the outstretch between the bygone reality and its linguistic testimonies”.⁴

Some authors tend to emphasise that the history of ideas is closely associated with discourse analysis; despite the methodological differences accrued later on between adherents of the *Begriffsgeschichte* and the Cambridge School, Koselleck’s views are close, in many aspects, to John G.A. Pocock’s discourse theory.⁵ Discourse is, in turn – as David Howarth, discourse theoretician, puts it – a historically conditioned system of meanings that shapes the identity of various social actors.⁶

My research into the nineteenth- and twentieth-century press of Łódź have inclined me to consider the influence of local experience on the evolution of socio-political language, taking Łódź in its industrial blossom as an illustrative example. On the one hand, Łódź remained in the shade of the nearby capital city of Warsaw; on the other, it was itself a unique example (given the Polish and, perhaps, Central European context) of a very dynamic metropolitan development,

² Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History. Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (Stanford, 2002), 30–1.

³ Niklas Olsen, *History in the Plural: An Introduction to the Work of Reinhart Koselleck* (New York–Oxford, 2012), 182.

⁴ Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 37.

⁵ See Rudolf Valkhoff, ‘Some similarities between *Begriffsgeschichte* and the history of discourse’, *Contributions to the History of Concepts*, ii, 1 (2006), 83–98.

⁶ David Howarth, *Discourse* (Buckingham [UK], 2000), 9.

based exclusively on industrialisation. Hence, it forms an interesting framework for comparisons and analyses of broadly-understood local experiences and their impact on the worldview and linguistic awareness of people living in a concrete place.⁷

The question posed in this article is whether the peculiar position of Łódź intelligentsia actually translated into an understanding of specified ideas in the press and journalistic writing. To this end, I will analyse the concept of 'intelligentsia' in the Łódź press. Due to the differences in the social structure of the two cities, the concept comprises an area of potential differences between socio-political discourse in its Warsaw and Łódź forms. A positive or negative result of the comparison will hopefully bring us closer to answering the question about the sense of taking into account the local factor in examining the socio-political language used in the Polish lands in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLISH SOCIO-POLITICAL LANGUAGE UNDER THE PARTITIONS

Scholars dealing with the history of Poland in the age of the partitions have so far agreed that the nation's functioning in the realities of a country split between different state organisms – though nothing unique in this part of Europe – exerted an impact on the socio-political language as well as on the circulation of communication. What is most frequently stressed, though, is that Polish socio-political discourse evolved at that time in defiance of the partitions and the partitioners. In Tadeusz Łepkowski's opinion,

in the years of national bondage (1795 to 1918), the nationwide literary Polish language grew enormously enriched and resisted any splitting into partition-related, regional parlances. Polish literature produced its greatest works in the partition period; the conviction that they are one nation and have the right to their own culture was never cast out from the consciousness of Poles.⁸

⁷ See Agata Zysiak, Kamil Śmiechowski, Kamil Piskała, Wiktor Marzec, Kaja Kaźmierska, and Jacek Burski, *From Cotton and Smoke: Łódź – Industrial City and Discourses of Asynchronous Modernity 1897–1994* (Łódź–Kraków 2018), 17–36, 263–76.

⁸ Tadeusz Łepkowski, *Uparte trwanie polskości* (London, 1989), 29.

This statement virtually calls for no justification: those who have ever seen any Polish periodical published in the second half of the nineteenth century will quickly discover that for the publishers and editors-in-chief active at that time supplying new information from behind the frontier cordon was a matter of honour. The struggle for survival and reinforcement of the community went hand in hand with the traditional cultural rivalry between Warsaw, Cracow, and Lviv, the latter enjoying the status of the capital town of the autonomous province of Austrian Galicia. Łepkowski's observation that in the course of the rebuilding of Poland as a state, "severe Germanic and Russian [linguistic] imports faded out swiftly" seems no less interesting.⁹

Those authors who were tempted to write a nineteenth-century intellectual history of Poland, have perforce written a supra-partition history, based on the assumption that Polish socio-political discourse of the period was basically homogeneous, and pointed in parallel to a non-harmonious development of the national culture due to the different political conditions in tsarist Russia, the Habsburg monarchy, and the Wilhelmine Germany.¹⁰ As we can learn from such synthetic studies, 'organic work' was pursued in Poznań rather than in Vilnius; if we say 'Positivism', it must be the 'Warsaw' one; for the Young Poland artistic movement, Warsaw would always give way to Cracow; the peasant movement would have appeared in Galicia rather than Greater Poland [Wielkopolska]. It quickly turns out that 'intelligentsia' (for that matter) could have denoted something different for Greater Poland than for the Kingdom of Poland (1864–1918), as far as not the language but social structure was concerned. This was so, since the different political as well as economic and social conditions prevailing in the partitioner states translated into different social stratifications. Alternatively, we can learn that several new political ideas and intellectual fashions penetrated in the latter half of the nineteenth century into the Polish lands from the West of Europe not via Vienna or Berlin but via Petersburg or Dorpat.¹¹

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ One such example is *A History of Polish Intelligentsia*, co-authored and ed. by Jerzy Jedlicki, or, *Historia Polscy w XIX wieku*, ed. by Andrzej Nowak.

¹¹ Such regional differentiation is discussed in Magdalena Micińska, *At the Crossroads* (vol. 3 of *A History of Polish Intelligentsia*, ed. by Jerzy Jedlicki, transl. Tristan Korecki [Frankfurt am Main, 2014]), 67–8, 80–101, 150–5.

III AN INDUSTRIAL METROPOLIS

Suppose, we accept the view that there was one socio-political language functioning in the Polish lands in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In that case, the question still remains open regarding the importance of local experience in the perception of specific concepts and particular attributes given to them. A zoom on Łódź and Warsaw seems to foster the quest for differences denying any obvious categorisation. Of particular interest to us would be juxtapositions such as traditional vs industrial city, capital city vs provincial town (or 'second town'), bourgeois city or town vs workers' town, and so on. We will briefly describe each of these pairs. As Jerzy Jedlicki puts it, "in the middle of the century machines were England's centrepiece where cities were its shame, to put it bluntly. While the ethos of acquisitive capitalism appeared life-giving for the development of technologies, industries, and commerce, it proved death-dealing to the social environment of humans".¹² As a result, the "proliferating reserves of feral civilisation – Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds, Preston, or London's East End – became the prime material evidence in the great trial against the City". The ill renown of industrial cities in European literature and social criticism has produced extensive literature that showed it, on the one hand, as a source of fears and, on the other, as a place that inspired radical evaluations and projects for reform.¹³

The daemonic stereotype of the industrial monster city was quite emphatically exemplified in Łódź, whose image drawn "from the capital city's perspective" was continually overly black and pessimistic since the 1880s.¹⁴ This 'Polish Manchester', the 'Promised Land' (in a sarcastic sense) – in reality, a 'bad city' – yielded impressions and reflections which, apart from the worker-dominated suburbs of Warsaw, were hard to find in the capital towns of the provinces under partition. Łódź was a West European-style, *par excellence* industrial city that had emerged on a quiet agricultural soil of the former Congress Kingdom of Poland. To make things worse, it was an 'alien' city, dominated by the bourgeoisie of German and Jewish descent. It, therefore, was an

¹² Jerzy Jedlicki, *A Degenerate World*, ed. Elena Rozbicka, transl. Tristan Korecki (Frankfurt am Main, 2016) chap. 3: 'City on Trial', 69.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Zysiak, Śmiechowski, Piskala, Marzec, Kaźmierska, and Burski, 45–53.

instance of, ambivalently comprehended, the avant-garde of modernity in Polish lands, one in which diverse processes related to capitalism, industrialisation, and chaotic urbanisation were coming to light faster and more robust than elsewhere in the Kingdom of Poland, or even in the other partition areas. Łódź shocked observers from Warsaw and other cities; descriptions of trips to Łódź were ‘orientalised’ like accounts from faraway lands.¹⁵ Being an ‘up-and-coming city’, without some essential cultural functions whose arduous construction did not match up with dynamic growth of its population, Łódź tended to be overly harshly judged as a cultural desert, a ‘land of plutocracy’.¹⁶

The situation began to change in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, with a crystallised local intelligentsia milieu composed of individuals who associated their lives with Łódź as the city could offer more and more workplaces for educated and qualified specialists. Stefan Pytlas, a Łódź-based historian, wrote years ago, perhaps slightly exaggerating, that it was then that a process that can be described as the formation of the local civil society became visible.¹⁷ Physicians, bar-risters, salespeople and counter-jumpers, engineers, technicians, even journalists and artists from the capital city of Warsaw would frequently visit Łódź. Shaped amidst the realities of a great city, they would initially experience a cognitive shock, but afterwards made efforts to tame the industrial monster and give it a somewhat more ‘cultured’ flavour. At the same time, they never renounced their deep complex of the capital city: after all, Warsaw remained a natural point-of-reference for all the Kingdom’s urban centre. It would be banal to state that the differences between Warsaw and Łódź doubtlessly influenced the different personal experiences of intellectuals who resided and wrote their books or essays, in either of the two cities. As it seems, the contact with an industrial hub informed a reconfigured perception of various social problems and their related ideas in a remarkably more profound manner than travels to any other centres of Polish culture, which competed against Warsaw. The interesting studies by Marzena

¹⁵ See Agata Zysiak and Wiktor Marzec, ‘Journalists Discovered Łódź like Columbus. Orientalizing Capitalism in the Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Polish Modernization Debates’, *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, i (2016), 213–43.

¹⁶ Stefan Gorski, *Łódź społeczna. Obrazki i szkice publicystyczne* (Łódź, 1904), 9–10.

¹⁷ Stefan Pytlas, ‘Rola inteligencji w tworzeniu nowego oblicza Łodzi na początku XX w.’, in *Europa XX wieku. Główne kierunki rozwoju (ekologia, gospodarka, kultura, polityka)*, ed. by Edward Wiśniewski (Łódź, 2001), 207.

Iwańska and Lidia Jurek seem to confirm the statement that the Łódź 'intellectual colony', or 'intelligentsia colony', which gained in power and gained self-consciousness at the turn of the twentieth century, was getting formed apparently in opposition to the model provided by the capital city, assuming instead more practical and public-spirited, rather than literary and artistic, face.¹⁸

IV TROUBLES WITH (THE) INTELLIGENTSIA

Intelligentsia is, clearly, one of those concepts that have rarely been unambiguously defined in the language practice. As Marta Zahorska puts it, "it was never clear, and moreover, its meaning changed with time. ... There were usually several criteria that composed a socially discernible group referred to as an 'intelligentsia', of one sort or another. The most important among them were education, type of work performed – and, well, fulfilling a social mission".¹⁹ In her opinion, the same latter criterion, being the most subjective one, was the most common.

On the other hand, historiography has basically adopted the concept of intelligentsia as a social layer extending to the educated bourgeoisie in its entirety. The available sources attest its sublimation into a separate sociological category in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In its 1883 edition, the *Orgelbrand Encyclopaedia* wrote on the concept of *intelligence*²⁰ as follows:

Intelligence (from the Latin *intelligo* [actually, *intellegere*] = 'to understand') is opposite of *instinct* [see entry] ..., the urge that one does not realise. Man

¹⁸ Marzena Iwańska, 'Garść refleksji i postulatów badawczych w związku ze stanem badań nad inteligencją łódzką w dobie zaborów', *Rocznik Łódzki*, liii (2006), 89–115; *ead.*, 'W poszukiwaniu inteligentckiej tożsamości w XIX wieku. Przykład łódzki', in *Historia – mentalność – tożsamość. Studia z historii, historii historiografii i metodologii historii*, ed. by Wojciech Wrzosek and Karolina Polasik-Wrzosek (Poznań, 2010), 261–27; Lidia Jurek, 'Z badań nad inteligencją Łodzi przełomu XIX i XX wieku', *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Historica*, lxxxiii (2008), 57–68.

¹⁹ Marta Zahorska, 'Spór o inteligencję w polskiej myśli społecznej do I wojny światowej', in *Inteligencja polska XIX i XX wieku. Studia*, ed. by Ryszarda Czepulis-Rastenis, i (Warszawa, 1978), 188.

²⁰ The words *intelligence* and *intelligentsia* are homonymous in Polish [translator's note].

is regarded to be the only zone of the revelation of I.[= intelligence]. In philosophy, I.[= intelligence] is referred to as a scope of notions elaborated outside of sensual perceptions, by way of a logical process. ... In every-day life, intelligent is the one who ponders on the reasons and purpose of his action, whereas a moral one considers the nature of both, the good or bad one. An intellectual life or work is synonymous to mental one, as opposed to physical life or physical labour, and is frequently taken to be the same as the word spirit, spirituality.²¹

Two decades later, the so-called ‘Warsaw’ *Dictionary of the Polish Language* had no doubts that *intelligence/intelligentsia* was:

1. *ability to cognise and comprehend, teachableness, sharp-wittedness, acuity of reason or of wisdom, the ability of mind*: Man is gifted with intelligence which elevates him above the animals. The bachelor was listening with such intelligence that the artist invited him to visit her in Dresden. ... 2. *a being having the said ability, an intelligent or rational, clever-minded person*: Whatever we would say of him, he was primarily quite a brain, a mighty intelligence. Divine intelligence rules the world. 3. *arousal and development of intellectual life*: The nation has had its intelligence level diminished. 4. *resource of knowledge and education that makes one capable of expressing his independent opinion on things*: He does not lack gifts or talents, but he requires light, and his intelligence proves deficient. 5. *a class of educated, enlightened people*: This nation possesses a scarce intelligentsia. Being a spiritual aristocracy, the intelligentsia is the society’s forefront. In this movement, the genuine intelligentsia did not follow the mob.²²

However, as some authors have remarked, most of the texts on intelligentsia were focused on the duties or obligations it ought to fulfil in the society rather than on defining the concept itself. Divagations on the *intellectual* as the desired role model grew so enormous that no man would probably have been able to cope with these requirements. As Magdalena Micińska points out, the expectation was that the intelligentsia is like the epithets it was bestowed with – namely, the “pompous phrases and vivid metaphors” the intellectual elites so “willingly used”. As a result, in the second half of the nineteenth century, “descriptions such as the country’s ‘brain and the heart’, ‘the

²¹ *Samuela Orgelbranda Encyklopedia Powszechna*, v: *Granada–Japet* (Warszawa, 1883), 410.

²² *Słownik języka polskiego*, ed. by Jan Karłowicz, Adam Kryński, and Władysław Niedźwiedzki (Warszawa, 1900), 101.

flower of society', ... 'natural leaders of society', people 'marching in the leading ranks of Polish society', ... 'the priests of the nation's spiritual temple'" multiplied concerning the entire stratum and its merited members or exponents.²³ Obviously, quite many educated people would not identify themselves with such a honeyed catalogue of virtues. Particularly in the provincial areas, the requirements accruing from Warsaw could not stand the confrontation with everydayness, which manifested itself in a continuous and probably exaggerated, criticism of a 'malaise' and 'parochial Munchausen'.²⁴ In this context, it is interesting to observe that Łódź remained, possibly, the Kingdom's only provincial centre where condescending or patronising remarks from Warsaw were humbly received and, moreover, provoked polemics.²⁵ Particularly 'rebellious' was the *Dziennik Łódzki* daily, the first genuine Polish-language press organ published in the 'Polish Manchester' in the years 1884–92, edited by Henryk Elzenberg, a journalist and author associated with the Warsaw Positivist milieu.

It is no surprise, then, that this very periodical published, in 1885, a programmatic article concerning intelligentsia, possibly written by Elzenberg himself (and probably the first such in the local press).²⁶ Its author argued that intelligentsia was basically imperceptible in the city's life:

Among the diverse wants that almost readily strike the eye of the new viewer, the attitude of the local intelligentsia towards the other social milieus and its passive behaviour in the matters of the common good is not of the least importance. It is with the greatest astonishment that we often look at persons who, not only have not grown to meet the rank of the tasks they undertake, and who, owing to their intellectual qualifications,

²³ Micińska, *At the Crossroads*, 119.

²⁴ Andrzej Szwarc, 'Inteligencja warszawska i prowincjonalna w świetle własnych opinii z lat powojennych', in *Inteligencja polska XIX i XX wieku*, iii (Warszawa, 1983), 192–202.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 208–9.

²⁶ The appearance of the concept 'intelligentsia' in Łódź-based German-language press (*Lodzer Zeitung*) has not yet been studied in depth. It is symptomatic, though, that the voluminous anniversary editions of this daily from the years 1888 and 1913 never mention the concept. What is more, the literature emphasises that the periodical was signally bourgeois, and closer to the German, rather than Polish, conceptual network. See *Niemcy w dziejach Łodzi do 1945 roku*, ed. by Monika Kucner, Krzysztof Antoni Kuczyński, and Barbara Ratecka (Łódź, 2001), 209–33.

should have remained in eternal hiding, none-the-less make their debuts in public affairs of primary importance.²⁷

The argument went on:

The main defectiveness of the procedure hitherto practised in Łódź has consisted in a too-small number of intelligent individuals from the liberal professions taking part in the city's affairs overall. ... there still exists a whole, and quite considerable, group of social affairs to which the local intelligentsia might contribute, to the great benefit of the country. All the charity or credit institutions, such that call for pettier capitals, mutual aid associations, the industrial society, and so on – all this represents a cunning field of operation for the local intelligentsia. There is not a single narrow scope of action in which one would not possibly become useful. This will be an enormous benefit for the earlier dwellers of Łódź as well as for the intelligentsia, who are intensifying in number hereat, and who through their salutary influence shall add an incentive to the city's intellectual and social life, and who are, perhaps, capable of shaking a majority out of apathy, not without sheer will but without a direction. The faintest manifestations of collective life might be turned into public benefit if only the persons taking part in them be animated with a specific breath that is always generated, in such cases, by individuals. The point is that there should be a sufficient quantity of these individuals, everywhere, at each gathering, almost at each public recreation.²⁸

The above quotation contains the dominant understanding of intelligentsia, the group and its ethos. In light of the above remarks, one may conclude that the author sought to emphasise that by the middle of the 1880s, intelligentsia – conceptualised as a collectivity of educated people – lived and gathered steam in the industrial city, and to instil in the local soil the specific ethos which was demanded from this particular social stratum in the Kingdom's press discourse of the time. It can therefore be accepted that *Dziennik Łódzki's* dilatations are a proof that attempts were made to adapt the concept of intelligentsia to the social relations prevalent in the 'Polish Manchester', characteristic of which was taking some social initiatives by not appropriately prepared persons, which the author of the article found lamentable. Notably, the same author expected that the intelligentsia gains in importance

²⁷ For more on the intelligentsia's participation in public affairs, see *Dziennik Łódzki*, 65 (23 April 1865).

²⁸ *Ibid.*

in collaboration with (if not by the affair of) the bourgeoisie whose position was dominant in Łódź:

As we have already remarked, almost all the posts have already been occupied by people whose fortune is impressive, and the talents and tact of a few of these individuals, and the exemplary manner in which they run several institutions, do deserve general recognition. Let us add now that most of the other posts could be beneficially altered in the future, or, at least reinforced with a less tattered and intellectually stronger element. Since, however, the intelligentsia's wealth is anything but impressive, their pride must be respected – as the pride of relative paucity, which never makes the first step.²⁹

I think that a series of essential conclusions can be drawn from the thoughts expressed in the above-quoted text. As it seems, although the city attracted educated specialists, there was no intelligentsia in Łódź in the mid-1880s, as it was understood in the contemporaneous Warsaw press. What is more, the first local educated persons or members of the intelligentsia, who had arrived there from Warsaw, were aware of this position and solicited 'care' from the bourgeoisie, with a rather unimpressive result.³⁰

One opinion is worth evoking in this context: according to Witold Molik, until the 1970s, the view prevailed in historiography that the intelligentsia in Greater Poland was absorbed by the bourgeois strata. Albeit this indefatigable researcher of Wielkopolska's 'intellectual class' polemised with this view and identified the origins of Poznań intelligentsia in as early as the 1870s, he did admit that the relations prevailing in the region on the Warta River were characterised by considerable dissimilarity to the Kingdom and Galicia.³¹ However, while the distinctness of Greater Poland's intelligentsia consisted in its close associations with the Polish bourgeoisie, the dissimilarity of Łódź intelligentsia would have been based (at least, until the turn of the century) on a strong dependence, including financial, upon the local industrial bourgeoisie.³² In this context, it is worth to propose

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Still, a growing importance of experts was observable in the city's institutions (scarce as they were at that time), such as the Credit Society or the Christian Charity Society of Łódź.

³¹ Witold Molik, *Inteligencja polska w Poznańskim w XIX i na początku XX wieku* (Poznań, 2009), 13, 28–53.

³² Iwańska, 'W poszukiwaniu', 267–8.

the statement that the first generation of Łódź intelligentsia was much closer to the West European models than to the ‘missionary’ intelligentsia, characteristic of Eastern Europe.³³ The fundamental difference apparently rested in the nature of this group’s dependence on the culturally and ethnically ‘alien’ bourgeoisie, which prevented the shaping of relationships similar to those characteristics of the German *Bildungsbürgertum*.

V

THE BIRTH OF PROVINCIAL INTELLIGENTSIA

Once two competitive Polish-language daily papers, *Rozwój* (1897) and *Goniec Łódzki* (1898) started circulating in Łódź – a few years after *Dziennik Łódzki* was closed down – they had to assume their position concerning the intelligentsia and its social role. The first programmatic statements of both editorial teams attest to an excellent comprehension of the intelligentsia – the concept as well as the expected personal composition of this particular social stratum. In September 1898, *Rozwój* published an article entitled ‘Czyja wina?’ [Who Is to Blame?], in which the editorial board considered the problem of low activity of the Poles with the social institutions operating within the city; this fact was explained by the Poles’ inferior material situation compared to the Germans. In specific,

In Łódź, the Polish society [is] much worse-off. The group of Polish fabricants and merchants [is] small in this city. That doing-quite-well is a handful of intelligent people, and that is, doctors, barristers, regents, or the like, but apart from those, everybody-else are counterists [i.e. black-coat workers] working at factories, or scribes and clerks; for those, to pay a premium of 12 roubles per-annum in one [insurance] society and as-much in another, and something else in a third one, is already quite an amount. ... Meanwhile, in any case, to conquer these societies, deposit the alien elements from the posts they occupy, and replace them with Polish elements, is our number-one task.

Polonisation of these institutions is the thing we must have in our hearts, all the more so that a Polish Łódź ought to possess Polish institutions.

Therefore, these institutions, which every society seeks, ought in the first place to have with them the people who should be there, and that is, our wealthy fabricants, physicians, barristers, regents, pharmacists, merchants,

³³ See: Inna Kochetkova, *The Myth of the Russian Intelligentsia. Old Intellectuals in the New Russia* (London–New York, 2008), 11–21.

and all those who would not gravely feel the lack of money spent on the premium in their every-day budgets.

Secondly: office workers and clerks or scribes for whom the premium of a dozen roubles is overly burdensome. The number of Poles will considerably increase then, and after some time will rise to such a force that the steering wheel will certainly be passed over into their hands.³⁴

What is striking in this text is the broad, compared to the nationwide model, interpretation of the specified groups' affiliation to the intelligentsia. Although "doctors, barristers, regents, or the like" were considered 'intelligent people', it became apparent that the action of Polonising the city should also invite 'our' "fabricants, merchants, and intelligent proletariat" encompassing office workers. It is moreover very telling what sort of tasks these circles were expected to fulfil: namely, to 'Polonise' the city's institutions and replacing the Germans in them meant that the bourgeoisie would be deposed from the posts and its acting as the 'Polish Manchester's' elite denied – even if the new elite be composed of individuals not necessarily fulfilling the terms of membership of the 'intellectual class'. Quite similar premises were followed by the *Goniec Łódzki* editorial team who published, a year later, an article entitled 'Inteligencja prowincjonalna' [A Provincial Intelligentsia]. Interestingly, it was not an original text of one of the daily's publicists, but a summary of a letter published initially by the periodical *Echa Płockie i Łomżyńskie*.³⁵ This article deserves a detailed discussion.

In the progress of time, our society has been strongly differentiated; whilst the division of the three patriarchal estates [i.e. social classes] is fading, two estates are entering the auditorium of life: the intelligentsia, and the commons. Betwixt these two estates, a cultural difference is increasingly occurring in our place; the populace's transmission to the middle estate, the so-called intelligentsia, is still taking place by way of absorbing modern science and culture. And so, the gaps occurring in the ranks of the

³⁴ 'Czyja wina?', *Rozwój*, 224 (20 Sept. 1898).

³⁵ *Echa Płockie i Łomżyńskie* was an important newspaper published in the most rural gubernias of the Kingdom of Poland between 1898 and 1904. The fact that the article about the intelligentsia from *Echa* could inspire the Łódź newspaper, where the number of intellectuals and their opportunities were much more bigger, is very meaningful, see Lesław Sadowski, *Polska inteligencja prowincjonalna i jej ideowe dylematy na przełomie XIX i XX wieku: na przykładzie guberni łomżyńskiej, suwalskiej i Białegostoku* (Warszawa, 1988).

intelligentsia from the lineages of yore are being more-and-more frequently replaced by the intelligentsia from the commons; this is the new offspring, which shall bestow us with a sphere of healthier and more tenacious people, people with a firm hand and hotter heart, thanks to the newly-appearing slogans – people with brains, such who contribute to the life elements of ideals reaching further-on and, at the same time, taking into consideration the momentary needs of the place and time. We already have the makings of such an unfledged intelligentsia; but a few years are needed for it to get situated and effuse onto a broader field of activity – and then, oh!, no summoning to do work would undoubtedly be needed. In the name, therefore, of common democratising of concepts, let us search for people not of noted brand-names, and not necessarily amongst the so-called liberal trades (physicians, lawyers, engineers, etc.), but wherever such-ones can be encountered.

This is how the profile of civic sense appears to me, and this not only in the provincial regions but also in the large assemblages of ours. Hence, in my opinion, let us leave nicely alone those individuals of the intelligentsia who disdainfully shrug their shoulders at the summoning and let us, instead, target these new forces which are getting released these days spontaneously in the form of a battalion of petty industrialists, tradesmen, entrepreneurs, artisans, popular teachers, and sophisticated individuals of the commons. Not only shall this throng be supplying our collapsing collective-labour institutions, but it shall also give a possibly most abundant material to the local and general [i.e. countrywide] periodicals.³⁶

Whereas the appearance of the term ‘intelligentsia’ in *Dziennik Łódzki* in the 1880s marked an attempt to adapt it to the local conditions, the above-presented opinions seem to testify to a need to work out a concept of ‘provincial intelligentsia’, which amplified at the century’s turn. Given the existing local conditions, the concept would have meant compensation of social roles fulfilled by the intelligentsias in the large cultural centres of Warsaw, Lviv, and Cracow. This would explain, to my mind, the search (expressed in both these *dicta*) for forces that would supply the city’s educated elite in work to the benefit of the commonality: the so-defined ‘intelligentsia from the commons’, or ‘populace intelligentsia’, composed of individuals that formally were not members of the ‘intellectual class’, would indeed have more to do with the middle class than the traditionally conceptualised intelligentsia. It seems legitimate to mention in this

³⁶ ‘Inteligencja prowincjonalna’, *Goniec Łódzki*, 136 (29 Nov. 1899).

context that consideration of the mutual relations of the notions of 'intelligentsia' and 'middle class' are nothing new to historiography. In his analysis of the history of the intelligentsia in a supranational perspective, Denis Sdvizhkov argues that "in the continent's east, the middle stratum long coincided with the educated circles. Taking bourgeoisie into account was referred to, like among Warsaw Positivists, in the form of future-conjuring forecasts. The society's actual centre is easiest describable as 'inter-classness', which was not identical with middle-classness".³⁷

It seems that the sense of 'inter-classness' must have been strong for Polish intelligentsia, especially in the realities of Łódź, where the working class formed a majority of the city's inhabitants.³⁸ Hence the tendency for incessant searching of their own place on the social ladder, and the inclination for a broader understanding of the concept of 'intelligentsia' than publicists of Warsaw press organs, for instance, would conceive. How powerful the phenomenon was, seems to have been attested by the discourse that occurred after the Revolution of 1905, the time the Łódź intelligentsia finally grew crystallised, reinforced its self-identity and gained an array of opportunities to fulfil its potential, one of which it could have never dreamt before.³⁹ In parallel, it had to face the growing aspirations of the workers who, having marched into public life, were not eager to observe the rules prevailing in the bourgeois public sphere,⁴⁰ as well as the antagonisms between Polish residents and the German and Jewish bourgeoisie, which were emerging ever stronger.⁴¹

³⁷ Denis Sdvizhkov, *Das Zeitalter der Intelligenz. Zur vergleichenden Geschichte der Gebildeten in Europa bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen, 2007), 213.

³⁸ See Wiesław Puś, 'Struktura wyznaniowo-narodowościowa i społeczno-zawodowa łodzian do 1939 roku', in Marek Koter, Mariusz Kulesza, Wiesław Puś, and Stefan Pytlas (eds), *Wpływ wielonarodowego dziedzictwa kulturowego Łodzi na współczesne oblicze miasta* (Łódź, 2005), 17–40.

³⁹ See Marzena Iwańska, 'Inteligencja i rewolucja w Łodzi w latach 1905–1907', *Studia z Historii Społeczno-Gospodarczej XIX i XX wieku*, xv (2015), 65–98.

⁴⁰ See Kamil Śmiechowski and Wiktor Marzec, 'Pathogenesis of the Polish Public Sphere. The Intelligentsia and Popular Unrest during and after the 1905 Revolution', *Polish Sociological Review*, cxvii, 4 (2016), 437–57.

⁴¹ See Krzysztof Paweł Woźniak, 'Uwagi nad relacjami między społecznością polską a mniejszością niemiecką w Łodzi w latach 1918–1945. Stan i perspektywy badań. Egzemplifikacje', *Studia z Historii Społeczno-Gospodarczej XIX i XX Wieku*, i (2003), 192–212.

The year 1911 saw the publication of an article entitled *Inteligencja umysłowa* [The Intellectual Intelligentsia], by Jan Garlikowski, a 'progressive' editor of *Nowy Kurier Łódzki* daily, which argued that:

It has to be noted, in the first place, that the concept of intelligentsia is pervasive in our place. Anyone who distinguishes himself with the fashionable cut of his clothes against the much larger crowd of old workers considers himself an intellectual now.

Such 'intellectuals' frequently have knowledge in the brackets of the most primitive and elementary education, enriched with a few, or a dozen, volumes of pitifully translated sensationalistic French novelettes.

How many times it happens so that under the standard gasket of an artisan, or worker, a vivid and critical mind is hidden, one that is working on rendering his intellectual criterion even more sublime, a mind that verily stands out with its acumen, intelligence, and knowledge gained through further work – far more sublime than the mind of a pseudo-intellectual wearing an en-vogue frock-coat.

Therefore, the need arises to redefine the intelligentsia, for whom external features may by no means be the indicator or touchstone.

Only after such differentiation of the crowds trailing before our eyes has been carried out, we shall come to the conviction that we do not quite abound in intelligent strata; that the bugbear defined as overproduction of intelligentsia is nonsensical and cannot stand scrutiny.⁴²

As it seems, following the publication of this article, the editorial board seemingly set as a goal for themselves to seek an opportunity to redefine the term. An extensive essay by Mieczysław Brzeziński⁴³ entitled 'Kto jest inteligentem?' [Who Is an Intellectual?], published a year later, deserves minute analysis. The author states that after the 1905 Revolution, the traditional concept of intelligentsia could not withstand confrontation with life:

We usually include in the 'intelligentsia' people with a higher education, but even more often, with a higher consuetudinary culture. A doctor, counsel, fabricant, landowner, official, man-of-letters, clergyman, or artist: all these belong to the 'intelligentsia'. We usually associate with this word the idea of intellectual labour, more significant necessities, that is, of a higher level and, clearly, more considerable means.

⁴² Jan Garlikowski, 'Inteligencja umysłowa', *Nowy Kurier Łódzki*, 2 (17 Aug. 1911).

⁴³ Mieczysław Brzeziński (1858–1911) was the folkist politician and leader of *Polska Macierz Szkolna* – an educational and cultural mass organization in the Kingdom of Poland established after the 1905 Revolution.

We tend to contrast common folks against the intelligentsia, understanding by the former the poorer strata of the nation, doing physical labour, not-quite-enlightened, living a lower, and simpler life.

What we associate with the term 'intelligentsia' is external urbanity and knowledge of social forms of life; with the term 'commons' – roughness and crassitude.

A bigger perversion of a simple and clear thing would be hardly conceivable.⁴⁴

Education should not be regarded as the determinant of one's belonging to the intelligentsia, Brzeziński argued:

The one who has been positioned by the conditions in the rank of privileged persons is not an 'intellectual', as opposed to the one who intelligently understands, thinks, and feels. Not a parchment diploma or a golden badge on the frock-coat but spiritual content is what tells us about a man's belonging to the intelligentsia, rather than to simpletons.⁴⁵

Not the one who did not go to school is a simpleton but the one whose soul is churlish, insensitive to a wiggle of the society's thoughts and feelings.

Who, namely, is the possessor educated at the institutes, who looks with indifference at the poverty and ignorance of hundreds of peasant families with which the long years' tradition has associated him?

Who is that doctor, barrister, professor, man-of-letters, who, apart from his area of speciality, cannot understand the life of his society, feel the currents that are bothering it, and takes no part in its pains and enjoyments?

Is *this* the nation's intelligentsia? No! Those are spiritual hay-seeds.⁴⁶

Such 'false' intelligentsia was opposed against 'the nation's creative force' that was wishfully composed of individuals of diverse degrees of education, 'culture and wealth'. In this concept, the intelligentsia would basically mean the most active part of the society, encompassing a group diametrically opposed to the common concepts:

The intelligentsia of a society consists of people who are the spiritual and creative power of the nation.

The intelligentsias are as different as the degrees of spiritual creativeness can be.

⁴⁴ Mieczysław Brzeziński, 'Kto jest inteligentem?', *Nowy Kurier Łódzki*, 175 (2 Aug. 1912).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

A warrior of the spirit is an intellectual: in a word, the one who rouses the spirit of the society, and paves the way to great thoughts and mighty feelings, is an intellectual. But a humble countryside teacher, if he sows around him the grains of truth and good drawn from the masters, is also an intellectual.

[...]

All these people, apparently simple, often of low education, holding mediocre positions but having in their souls that grand social sparkle that, in the name of the common good, incites them to influence their environment spiritually, arouse in us reverence and gratefulness.

For it is only people of such a kind, regardless of their social position, or degree of culture and wealthiness, that we classify as intelligentsia – the nation's social force that is decisive about its spiritual value, its vitality, and development.⁴⁷

This, quite out-of-the-box, concept of 'intelligentsia' was (as it seems) characteristic of *Goniec Łódzki* and, then on, *Kurier Łódzki* and *Nowy Kurier Łódzki* – the local periodicals of liberal/leftist orientation. The right-wing *Rozwój* perceived the question more conservatively;⁴⁸ it published texts attesting to an incompatibility of the category 'intelligentsia' with the specific local conditions. Another 1911 article, 'Partykularyzm łódzki' [The particularism of Łódź], argued that:

'I do hate Łódź!'

This cry can often be heard from people belonging to the intelligentsia; doubtlessly, it escapes the throat of many a pauper.

Has Łódź not aroused attachment in anybody? Is there no such thing as a Łódź particularism?

This would be a black spot, disgracing the Kingdom's second-largest town in terms of size, population, industry and trade.

Fortunately, this is not so. ... The local Polish intelligentsia mostly consists of immigrants: it has been driven into this town by prospects of pro-tempore earnings; it has not grown into Łódź, and thus it is often longing for where it came from, feeling disgust toward Łódź. Yet, exceptions do, naturally, appear among its members: those who, having been born and brought-up in Łódź, having their closer and distant relatives there,

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ In fact, *Rozwój* was much more focused on the strengthening of the Polishness in the city than exploring social problems, see Marta Sikorska-Kowalska, 'Wybory do Dumy w cieniu rewolucji 1905–1907 roku w świetle łódzkiej gazety *Rozwój*', in Małgorzata Dajnowicz and Adam Miodowski (eds), *Polityka i politycy w prasie XX i XXI wieku* (Białystok, 2016), 118–20.

feel attached to the town. ... It is not difficult to demonstrate the two local patriotisms – the one of Polish artisans and petty-bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and that of Łódź industrialists, on the other – through the facts: the sacrifices they have made, according to their powers and capacities, to the benefit and grace of the town. The local patriotism, that is, the Łódź particularism, shall be conceived amidst Polish intelligentsia in a future, as it has to, and ought to be, conceived indeed. This is an inevitable, as much as desired, necessity. All the disadvantages of Łódź, all of its bad aspects, can be the most efficiently removed by those inhabitants who can feel inside them a filial attachment to it, like to their cradle.

May the living generation of our intelligentsia pose no barrage against these feelings by their conducts, and their cries.⁴⁹

The criticism of lack of 'local patriotism' present among the older generation of Polish intelligentsia in Łódź, juxtaposed with the attachment to the city, identified as characteristic of artisans, petit bourgeoisie, and fabricants (i.e. factory owners), perfectly fit a narration that had developed for years. At best, the argument was proposed that the intelligentsia was not satisfactorily involved in the city's affairs; at the worst, its usefulness was challenged, and visions unfolded of a 'genuine' intelligentsia, of a popular background, possibly including some members of the working class.⁵⁰

The Polish Second Republic (1918–39) did not change much in this trend, apart perhaps from the fact that the local patriotism postulated by the *Rozwój* editors grew increasingly conspicuous in the city that (for some unknown reason) housed no state tertiary schools but was promoted to the rank of a voivodeship's capital and was home to several buoyant press concerns competing with one another and publishing countrywide-range periodicals.⁵¹ While refraining from quoting the polemics of the time, let me just mention 1928 special (and extensive) edition of the *Giewont* journal, being a 'monograph' of the industrial city – namely, a collection of articles on Łódź and its social and cultural life. Almost the whole local cultural elite published

⁴⁹ 'Partykularyzm łódzki', *Rozwój*, 292 (22 Dec. 1911).

⁵⁰ True, it was a time when a number of politically involved workers, most of whom were affiliated with the Left, attained an education (be it informal) and *de facto* turned into intellectuals.

⁵¹ See Leszek Olejnik, 'Z dziejów prasy łódzkiej. "Kurier Łódzki" i "Echo" – wydawnictwa Jana Stypułkowskiego (1919–1939)', *Acta Universitatis Lodzianensis. Folia Historica*, lii (1995), 143–62.

their opinions in this periodical; the references to the intelligentsia seemed to confirm the expectations from before the Great War.

It was noted that an article on the city's social life emphasised the plight and sparseness of the city's Polish intelligentsia in the past century:

The social and cultural life of Łódź between 1827 and 1840 was none. Strenuous labour on the one hand, crystallisation of the immigrant intelligentsia on the other, the latter having moreover been differentiated by their caste hierarchy, emoluments, unassimilated with themselves or with the country based upon their nationality and, after all, indifferent to whatever exceeded the framework of tough daily work and of conquering, inch by inch, the alien territory of industry. The life was, essentially, one lived by colonists enclosed within the four walls of family and hearth-and-home.⁵²

The author(s) moreover remarked that the situation was only slightly improving in the subsequent years:

The social and cultural life of Łódź in the later years focused in the German zones, in the associations, guilds, singing societies, riflemen's societies, and the like. Down-trodden by the tsarist regime, the Poles experienced a hundredfold worse situation, whereas the narrow group of the intelligentsia formed a definite, and oppressed, majority.⁵³

Finally, it was highlighted that the 'paucity' of Polish intelligentsia adversely impacted the development of the city's socio-cultural life:

It was only in the year 1880 that, following Warsaw, the 'Lutnia' Singing Society (established in the latter city) – which had gathered amidst its sections also the enthusiast of amateur theatre, which gave performances from time to time at Sellin's⁵⁴ – and organised parties, concerts, spectacles, and so forth, reverberated more vividly in the Polish life in Łódź. Later on, the 'Lira' emerged, which offered quite a good hope, yet with an overly sparse handful of the intelligentsia, it proved difficult to support two Singing Societies with identical tasks and purposes; hence, 'Lira' soon quietened down.⁵⁵

⁵² 'Życie towarzyskie', *Giewont*, 3 (1928), 51.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁵⁴ Fryderyk Sellin (1831–1914) was a well-known confectioner and theatre entrepreneur from Łódź. The biggest of his theatres, built in 1901, had more than 1200 seats.

⁵⁵ 'Życie towarzyskie', *Giewont*, 3 (1928), 53.

An article regarding the city's development after Poland was re-established as an independent country, published in the *Republika* daily, reflects the maturing and crystallisation of the industrial town's intelligentsia. Its author, Czesław Nusbaum-Ołtaszewski, editor-in-chief, was positive that:

... the struggle for existence of an economic organism, the particular manufacturing interest, specific conditions of social development, genre significance of the city and its people, development of local-government activities, the impact of time, the growth of professional intelligentsia and labour – are these the factors that clearly aim at giving Łódź an appropriate psychological stigma and a cultural expression of its own?

One has to indicate, in the first place, that for a long time now, indifference concerning this very city has disappeared. Quite the reverse: any unbiased observer can see outstanding attention and concern there.

... These are, certainly, the germs of the city's individual development. In any case, they are there, and having objective data at hand, a regional political and cultural centre will be created there, like the economic one has been created. Łódź has every chance, and even the foundation now, to become one.

The birth of a 'local patriotism' has best proved that this is so indeed.⁵⁶

Further on, the text proposes what may be described as a creed of the 'Polish Manchester's' intelligentsia of the interwar period:

... we love Łódź, and are attached to it with our whole souls. We complain and cast curses at times – but that comes out of our hearts... And this is why we do not like, very much do not like cursing and scorning by someone who cannot see or feel things.

For Łódź – is nothing else but us, grown together with this city by every good and bad thing in us, by every nerve, every drop of blood, with all the being of industrious, practical, and by nowise callous, people of Łódź.⁵⁷

As it can be concluded, the interwar period saw a final crystallisation of a particular mature type of Łódź intelligentsia, whose form corresponded with the concept's lexicographical wording. This was directly reflected in the discourse in which divagations on who namely is an 'intellectual', or member of the intelligentsia, were replaced by precise pointing to the stratum's 'professional' character, which

⁵⁶ Czesław Ołtaszewski, 'Miasto naszych tęsknot', *Giewont*, 3 (1928), 142–3.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 143.

actually meant a narrowing of the concept to the group of brain/black-coated workers. This is how the period's local intelligentsia is defined in the literature.⁵⁸

VI

A DIFFERENT CITY, A DIFFERENT DISCOURSE

The problem of intelligentsia espoused Łódź once again right after the Second World War was over, under very different circumstances. The apparent factors were at work, primarily the annihilation of the city's multicultural character resulting from the occupation and the Holocaust, combined with the city's enormous cultural advancement in the aftermath of the destruction of Warsaw and altered frontiers of Poland. A working-class-dominated city in the interwar period, Łódź turned into a major centre of Polish science and culture; during a dozen post-war months, it informally acted as a sort of capital town of Poland. This advancement had severe consequences: once a 'regional political and cultural centre' in interwar Poland, Łódź became a place where a considerable part of Polish cultural elite settled and started working, at least by the moment Warsaw would be rebuilt. Thus, the city which since the late nineteenth century had been fighting its peripheral status, instead unexpectedly became a centre of a hectic socio-political life.⁵⁹

Under these new, how now-different, conditions, sociologist Józef Chałasiński – say, the most ardent critic of Polish intelligentsia – was made professor and second rector with the newly-established University of Łódź. At the opening ceremony of the academic year 1946/7, he delivered a lecture that has changed Polish debate on intelligentsia for good. The story on a 'social genealogy of Polish intelligentsia', repeatedly discussed and analysed in the literature, was part of a larger project oriented toward constructing a 'socialist university' in a worker-dominated town.⁶⁰ Some threads of the argument of this illustrious

⁵⁸ See Krzysztof Baranowski, *Inteligencja łódzka w latach II Rzeczypospolitej* (Łódź, 1996), 5–15 ff.

⁵⁹ Zysiak, Śmiechowski, Piskała, Marzec, Kaźmierska, and Burski, 161–70; Przemysław Waingertner, *Czwarta stolica. Kiedy Łódź rządziła Polską 1945–1949* (Łódź, 2019), 28–30.

⁶⁰ See Agata Zysiak, *Postwar Modernization and the University for the Working Classes in Poland*, in Victor Karady and Adela Hincu (eds), *Social Sciences in the Other Europe since 1945* (Budapest, 2018), 29–51.

sociologist, who associated himself with Łódź after the year 1945, sounded as if they followed up the discussion from before 1918 (the date Poland regained independence); as Chałasiński argued,

The singling out of intelligentsia into a separate social stratum based on an intellectual, or educated ghetto, is not necessarily rooted in the economic structure of modern society. On the contrary, it bears the character of an anachronistic, and transitory, phenomenon. It stems from hangover estate-related/aristocratic tradition of separation of thought from labour, theory from practice, the charms of life from its obligations and burdens, amateurishness from the profession, honour from coercion to do production work, 'spirit' from 'matter'. The more these traditions bear hard on the society, the more clearly intelligentsia is getting singled out as a separate stratum.

[...] I believe that to realise what the Polish intelligentsia is as a historical and sociological fact, to elaborate a scientific sociological theory of intelligentsia, means to create a necessary element of the social awareness of the intelligentsia, without which no step forward can be made on the road to the new social role of the intelligentsia in the people's society of the future.⁶¹

Ironically enough, the call for 'leaving the intellectual ghetto' and building an 'elite of the production classes' in an industrial city coincided in time with the transformations that made Łódź into one of the most important places to live and work for the Polish intelligentsia (as a traditionally understood concept). This paradox meant, in parallel, a fiasco of Chałasiński's own plans: his idea of a 'socialist university' soon came to grief because of resistance from the milieu and Stalinisation.⁶²

The change that affected the city resulting from the maelstrom of war and the political decisions of the late 1940s is best rendered by an extensive scientific publication *Łódź w latach 1945–1960* [Łódź in the Years 1945–1960] (1962), with a foreword by the philosopher Tadeusz Kotarbiński. The section 'Science – Education – Culture' opened with an essay by Aleksander Kamiński⁶³ entitled 'Łódź kulturalna – uwagi

⁶¹ Józef Chałasiński, 'Społeczna genealogia inteligencji polskiej', in *id.*, *Przeszłość i przyszłość inteligencji polskiej* (Warszawa, 1997), 80–1.

⁶² Kamil Piskała and Agata Zysiak, 'Świątynia nauki, fundament demokracji czy fabryka specjalistów? Józef Chałasiński i powojenne spory o ideę uniwersytetu', *Praktyka Teoretyczna*, ix, 3 (2013), 271–97; Rafał Stobiecki, 'Z dziejów pewnego projektu. "Socjalistyczny Uniwersytet w robotniczej Łodzi"', *Rocznik Łódzki*, lxi (2014), 158–63.

⁶³ Aleksander Kamiński (1903–1978) was an educationalist and author otherwise famous for his book on Polish heroic scouts during the Second World War (*Kamienie na szaniec*).

wstępne' [The Cultural Łódź: Initial Remarks]. These two names can in themselves be regarded as a persuasive testimony of the transition. Kamiński shared with the readers his observation that:

From time to time, one or another intellectual qualifies Łódź, in a public or intimate discussion, as a 'cultural desert'. In a tide of bitterness, this phrase is extended, at times, to our day. There is nothing that can outrage the natives of Łódź any stronger – the workers of science, arts, and education – than such statements. They consider them voices of ignorance, unaware of the development history of the city's scientific and cultural institutions. ... Neither the cultural-and-educational movement nor science, museology, theatres, or the philharmonic hall appeared in Łódź like Minerva jumped out of Jupiter's head: all of a sudden, unexpectedly. They were called into being by the memorable activists, and their development was at times low, but otherwise excellent on this thin soil of Łódź's intelligentsia and the fertile undisturbed soil of the worker masses.⁶⁴

Speaking on behalf of the Łódź “workers of science, arts, and education”, Kamiński – – gives the following punch-line:

Yet, albeit we can feel the inequality of Łódź amongst the cultural capitals of Poland: Warsaw, Cracow, and Poznań, we do realise, better than ever before, that over the fifteen years Łódź has made an enormous step forward in drawing level with these capitals. We are not yet equal to the three capital cities whose cultural tradition dates to several centuries ago. However, over recent years, we have been faster in cultural development pace terms. Nowhere else has the intelligentsia stratum – primarily, the creative intelligentsia – grown, comparing to the pre-war years, like in Łódź; and, nowhere else has the root-taking by the numerous new institutions of science, arts, and education proved more abundant.

The process of ingrowth of these institutions in the social life of an increasingly larger intelligentsia of Łódź and the transforming local working class has begun to normalise. Łódź is ceasing to be a large city with a unique, underdeveloped arrangement of social strata and cultural institutions. Instead, it begins to be a regular, comprehensively functioning urban organism, which vigorously and efficiently renders the status of its cultural life closer to the most primary cities in this country.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Aleksander Kamiński, 'Łódź kulturalna – uwagi wstępne', in Edward Rosset (ed.), *Łódź w latach 1945–1960* (Łódź, 1962), 268–9.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 274.

It is quite clear that there is no more room for divagation on who namely is a member of the intelligentsia, or for perceiving the intelligentsia as a middle class or – as Chałasiński would have wanted it – as an “intellectual elite of the generative strata” (i.e. production masses). The post-war intelligentsia of Łódź became a social stratum composed of people with an appropriate level of education and lifestyle: not even copying the ideas of the time, it basically cloned it.

This is, obviously, not to say that post-war communist Poland put an end to the local processes of conceptualisation of ‘intelligentsia’. What is more, some opinions published in Łódź periodicals during the post-Stalinist ‘Thaw’ seem to indicate that this particular sphere was continuously perceived awry; or, certainly, with a considerable dose of irony. For instance, the exquisite local weekly *Odgłosy* published in 1958 a column in which the term *intelektualistka*, i.e. (female) highbrow or bluestocking, was used in a context that might be named non-standard:

The holy idea of learning how to read newspapers, or learning various things resulting from reading newspapers, has been encompassing broader and broader masses.

As I have learned, having spent a nice evening with a certain female highbrow, a member supporting the members of the *Permanent Café-Goers Association – the Red-haired Kitty* from the corner of Piotrkowska and Tuwima Sts. – young working female highbrows read the [criminal] reports, with flushing cheeks ... To learn things, so to put it.

... Go learn things, young people!

Should you, however, feel insulted at my pushing Łódź around, considering it capable of wet works only, for six words – apologies! ... Where else, if not in Łódź, the sector of female highbrows doing, in some way, manual labour, use advertisements in newspapers to catch their clientele with: “A young... nice woman... is willing to meet... a man... purpose: social”? Or, where else, if not in Łódź, the best couple can be matched for marriage in a modern fashion, using a paper’s dating service?

Yet, my Dear Ones, the best thing to do is write feuilletons.⁶⁶

Intelektualistka is, clearly, not the same as *inteligentka* (an intellectual, educated woman), though in this particular case, the difference would not have been quite essential. In any case, this text was a not-too-sophisticated hoax – pretty characteristic of the intelligentsia, by the way.

⁶⁶ Belfer, ‘Nauki, rady, przestrogi’, *Odgłosy. Tygodnik Łódzki*, 2 (1958), 1–2.

VII CONCLUSIONS

Let us now resume the initial question about the influence of local determinants or conditions on the socio-political language. As Niels Åkerstrøm Andersen notices, the history of concepts or ideas is one of the discourse analysis strategies which, however – as opposed to Michel Foucault’s theory, for that matter – has never entered a debilitating dispute with the less-theorised historical sciences, and has even met with considerable recognition amidst traditional historians.⁶⁷ This was so definitely owing to the associations between the history of ideas/concepts and social history. In this context, the evolution of the concept of ‘intelligentsia’ in the Łódź periodicals ought to be considered in terms of the story of how the changes in the real social structure influenced the world of images or ideas constructed in the local discourse.

As I remarked above, Henryk Elzenberg’s essay on the intelligentsia’s participation in, or contributions to, public affairs attempted to adopt the concept to the local conditions. This means that observable in this article is the introduction of the concept, its reference to the local conditions, and giving it a meaning that would be legitimate or justifiable in the existing social structure. The differences that occurred between Łódź and the other urban centres cause that such adaptation met with specific difficulties. Hence the instability of the concept, characteristic of the discourse formulated before the First World War and manifesting itself in denying its lexicographic scope. For one thing, the intelligentsia was perceived as a middle class; for another, an ‘elite of virtues’ was sought in it, not necessarily based upon the aspect of education. In my opinion, rather than being merely rhetorical devices, these discourse threads were an emanation of the real problem of the intelligentsia and its place in the ‘Polish Manchester’s’ social environment. Significantly, the more the group that could be described as the designate of the concept ‘intelligentsia’ revealed itself in the city’s social tissue, the less frequently the local press pondered on ‘who is a member of the intelligentsia’. After the Second World War, such considerations were virtually over as the publicists had basically accepted the dominant understanding of the concept.

⁶⁷ Niels Åkerstrøm Andersen, *Discursive Analytical Strategies. Understanding Foucault, Koselleck, Laclau, and Luhmann* (Bristol, 2003), 33.

Obviously, these arguments can be criticised, in at least three aspects. First, the resource of publications used in this essay may be undermined. The selection, based on the expertise stemming from the author's experience, simply cannot replace a cross-sectional search that would enable to build a resource consisting of all the instances of the use of the term 'intelligentsia' in Łódź periodicals. Hence, it appears evident that this text is a sort of research reconnaissance. Hopefully, its validity is considerable owing to the position of the sources herein used: these are programmatic statements of periodicals representative of the local discourse under analysis.⁶⁸

Second, 'intelligentsia' is a concept whose defining involves a considerable degree of discretion. Even the two dominant definitions, 'intellectual elite' and 'white-collar worker stratum', are immeasurably divergent, which leads to multiple complications even if they are in use in modern public debate.⁶⁹ All the more so, the fluidity of the concept in question in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries needs to be emphasised. On the other hand, the tendencies expressed in the above-quoted dictionary entries, combined with the concept's evident instability in its use in Łódź periodicals of the period concerned, point out to an essential role of the local conditions. I should think that the fact that intelligentsia tended to be diversely interpreted in Łódź, in a context that pointed to the impact of the city and its related experiences on how the concept was perceived (which was convergent with Koselleck's postulates), was even more important than such divergent interpretations possibly appeared in the Warsaw press.

Thirdly, a project to analyse the local socio-political language undoubtedly should provide for references to other related concepts, primarily if the local context might have essentially influenced their understanding. In the case of Łódź, a city that was so different from the other Polish urban centres, owing to its developmental trajectory, such potential is, I believe, to be discovered mainly in concepts related to social issues – such as 'progress', 'exploitation', 'class', etc., along with those directly referring to the city's status – such as 'province'.

⁶⁸ Some arguments in support of my proposition are put forth in Maria Wojtak, *Gatunki prasowe* (Lublin, 2004), 78 ff.

⁶⁹ See Piotr Kulas, 'Młodzi intelektualiści wobec inteligencji', *Kultura Współczesna*, lxxxviii, 4 (2015), 65–6.

Answering the title question, with all the above-sketched reservations taken into account, one may argue that a local context may essentially affect the understanding of socio-political ideas or concepts, if it directly stems from a disparateness between the social realities of the specific place and the nationwide discourse. For Łódź, in both the nineteenth and twentieth century, this will practically mean essential structural differences compared to Warsaw – which, particularly after the partitions, assumed the role of a cultural hegemon within the national discourse – as well as Cracow and (until 1939) Lviv. Indeed, the intelligentsia of Łódź was not much ‘different’ as it was problematized by the local press, but the uncertain social status of educated people living in this industrial city made their path to the self-identity very winding.

transl. Tristan Korecki

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