

Alicja Maślak-Maciejewska

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2164-0344>

Institute of Jewish Studies, Jagiellonian University

SABBATH AND SUNDAY, PASSOVER AND EASTER, JUDAISM IN THE AFTERNOON: JEWISH TIME IN THE GALICIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL*

Abstract

The public elementary schools (in practice established due to educational reforms of the late 1860s and early 1870s) and secondary schools operating in Galicia were legally open to children of all faiths, including Jews. However, in practice, these schools adapted to the needs of Christian children. Most Galician Jews who received a secular education and fulfilled compulsory schooling requirements, which were increasingly more effectively enforced during the autonomy period, attended these schools. This article analyses how Jewish time functioned in these institutions. It examines three key issues: the rhythm of the week (respecting the right to observe the Sabbath), the religious education provided at school (scheduling of classes and the simultaneity of religious instruction for children of different faiths), and the school year's rhythm (particularly the religious holiday calendar according to which the school year was organised). Despite legislation allowing Jewish students to observe the Sabbath and religious holidays, living according to Jewish time proved challenging. The scheduling of religious instruction for Jewish students demonstrates their unprivileged position in the Galician school.

Keywords: schooling in Galicia, Jewish education, Jews in public school, time, religious education

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The universal education system, which began to take shape in the modern era, introduced new categories and frameworks of time into societal life related to school and the organisation of the school day, week, and year. School education integrated the child into unified time structures shared by a group of school children. However, 'school time' often clashed with other calendars observed by the community, which were tied to economic activities, the rhythm of the year, and the traditional activities assigned to each season. This was especially evident in rural areas, where life followed the agricultural calendar. In practice, this impacted the fulfilment of compulsory education, which varied throughout the year depending on the schedule of fieldwork.¹ At the same time, school time was often aligned with other aspects of community life – such as the liturgical calendar – allowing it to coincide with the periods of holidays celebrated in each community. With the rise of accessibility of education in a multi-ethnic society, the question of how school time aligned with the calendars of different religious groups became more prominent. Galicia is an example of a region where various religious groups coexisted in schools and functioned according to their calendars. In this article, I aim to analyse how Jewish time functioned within the reality of Galician schools.

EDUCATIONAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC PARTICULARITIES OF GALICIA

In the Habsburg Empire, of which Galicia became a part following the first partition of Poland, compulsory education had existed since the eighteenth century. However, in Galicia, public education developed in practice only after the educational reforms of the late 1860s and early

¹ This had a strong economic justification; the labour of rural children was commonly treated as an economic necessity. As a result, winter schools developed in rural areas (at that time, schooling did not interfere with field work). It also became customary not to send children to public schools, if such existed, except during the winter months. For example, see, Andrzej Kliś, 'Galicyjska szkoła w oczach dziecka wiejskiego', in Mięczysław Radochoński, Adam Horbowski (eds), *Problemy edukacji dziecka wiejskiego* (Rzeszów, 1996), 13–27. In general, school legislation adapted the rhythm of the school year to the agricultural calendar, see Renate Seebauer, *Kein Jahrhundert des Kindes: Kinderarbeit im Spannungsfeld von Schul- und Sozialgesetzgebung* (Münster, 2010), 176.

1870s, i.e. during the period of systemic transformation.² Previously, schools had been subordinated to religious institutions, but as a result of the reforms, schools were removed from the supervision of church institutions (except for oversight of religious education), Polish and Ukrainian were introduced as the languages of instruction, and the National School Council [Rada Szkolna Krajowa] was established as the highest authority of school administration, to which territorial units – district and local school councils – were subordinated.³ The legal mechanisms enabling the enforcement of compulsory schooling, increased funding for education, and the development of the network of schools, the number of which grew impressively – from around 2,500 in the late 1860s to 5,580 in 1911/12⁴ – meant that compulsory primary education became available to a growing number of children. However, this does not change that, even at the end of the autonomy period, access to education was significantly lower in Galicia than in those crown lands where a dense network of schools had developed earlier, even before the school reforms. Despite compulsory education, not all Galician children received it, partly due to the unavailability of schools. The level of illiteracy in Galicia was among the highest in the Habsburg Monarchy (it was higher only in Bukovina and Dalmatia).⁵

Galicia was home to several ethnic and religious groups. The two largest were Roman Catholic Poles, who lived primarily in Western Galicia and the cities, and Greek Catholic Ruthenians (Ukrainians), who were predominant in Eastern Galicia. Jews constituted about 10–11 per cent of the population, most of whom lived in cities and

² Throughout the article, when I use the term ‘school reforms’, I am referring to the reforms from the late 1860s and early 1870s mentioned here.

³ For a general discussion of the development of schooling in the empire, see Tomáš Cvrček, *Schooling under Control: The Origins of Public Education in Imperial Austria* (Tübingen, 2020); Helmut Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens. Erziehung und Unterricht auf dem Boden Österreichs*, iv: *Von 1848 bis zum Ende der Monarchie* (Wien, 1986); for Galicia, see for example, *Galicja i jej dziedzictwo*, 22: Jerzy Krawczyk, Julian Dybiec, Kazimierz Szmyd (eds), *Szkolnictwo i oświata w Galicji 1772–1918* (Rzeszów, 2015).

⁴ *Sprawozdanie c.k. Rady szkolnej krajowej o stanie wychowania publicznego w roku szkolnym 1911/1912* (Lwów, 1913), 9.

⁵ Michał Baczkowski, ‘Analfabetyzm w Galicji w dobie konstytucyjnej (1867–1914)’, in Artur Patek, Wojciech Rojek (eds), *Naród – Państwo. Europa Środkowa w XIX i XX wieku. Studia ofiarowane Michałowi Pułaskiemu w pięćdziesięciolecie pracy naukowej* (Kraków, 2006), 97–113.

towns. In many cities, Jews represented a significant proportion of the population – several dozen per cent – or were predominant in numbers.⁶ The six-year compulsory education, which had been in effect since the reforms, also included Jews, and they fulfilled it from the last decades of the nineteenth century at similar rates to Christians – the percentage of Jews in elementary schools reflected their proportion in society. In 1900, approximately 69 per cent of Jewish children required to attend school did so, which was the same proportion as in the entire society.⁷ That year, the last year for which such statistics were recorded, 78,000 Jewish children attended elementary-level schools (folk and departmental schools).⁸ Particular to Jews, and different from other faiths, was a predominance of girls among schoolchildren, which was due to the traditional nature of a segment of this community, where secular education was more widely accepted for daughters than for sons.⁹ Traditional Jewish cheders operated alongside public schools, and often, children (this was mainly the case for boys who by far predominated among those studying there) attended both institutions – a public school in the morning and a cheder in the afternoon.¹⁰ From the late nineteenth century, the number of Jews in secondary schools (gymnasiums, real schools) also increased significantly, with Jewish students making up one-fifth of the student body,¹¹ twice the

⁶ On the demographic structure of Galicia, see Krzysztof Zamorski, *Informator statystyczny do dziejów społeczno-gospodarczych Galicji* (Kraków–Warszawa, 1989).

⁷ I provide detailed calculations in another article, see Alicja Maślak-Maciejewska, 'Present! Jews in Public Schools in Habsburg Galicia', *East European Jewish Affairs* (forthcoming).

⁸ The general figures are provided by Jacob Thon, *Die Juden in Österreich* (Berlin–Halensee, 1908), 88.

⁹ For divergent models of education see Rachel Manekin, *The Rebellion of the Daughters: Jewish Women Runaways in Habsburg Galicia* (Princeton–Oxford, 2020); Iris Parush, *Reading Jewish Women: Marginality and Modernization in Nineteenth-Century Eastern European Jewish Society* (Brandeis, 2004). For gender ratios among Jews attending compulsory schooling, as well as a comparison between Catholic and Jewish communities, see Maślak-Maciejewska, 'Present!'.

¹⁰ This is corroborated by many memoirs; see, for example, Leopold Infeld, *Szkice z przeszłości. Wspomnienia* (Warszawa, 1961), 9.

¹¹ On average, in the overall perspective covering the whole of Galicia. In some gymnasiums, the percentage of Jewish students was much higher, see Mieczysław Jerzy Adamczyk, 'Młodzież żydowska w szkołach średnich Galicji 1848–1914', in Andrzej Ładożyński (ed.), *Tradycje a zmiany edukacyjne*, Series: Acta Universitatis

percentage of Jews in the general population. Specific to Galicia was the situation in which most Jewish children received their education in a non-Jewish environment. This was due to the history of education in the region. In a nutshell, very few secular Jewish schools (secular in the sense of offering instruction in general subjects) were operating in the pre-autonomous period and before the school reforms. Consequently, after compulsory education was implemented in the 1870s, Jewish children attended non-Jewish schools. As a result, for example, whereas Jewish children in Bohemia and Moravia often received a general education within the 'Jewish space' (as institutions established in the times of Herz Homberg persisted there, while they were closed down in Galicia in 1806) in Galicia, Jews mainly attended schools that did not have such character.¹² Public schools, funded by tax revenue, were, according to the law, open to all children, regardless of their religion (as stipulated by the Law of May 25, 1868).¹³ However, their position varied in practice, and children of different faiths were often not treated equally due to complex factors.

THE PROBLEM OF JEWISH TIME

The multi-denominational nature of students in the Galician public school certainly posed a major challenge for political and educational authorities. One problematic aspect was the differing religious calendars. This article explores this issue, aiming to answer the following questions: did the Galician school accommodate the Jewish calendar, and if so, to what extent? What challenges did Jewish children and youth attending Galician schools face in terms of organising their time?

Wratlaviensis, *Prace Pedagogiczne CXVIII* (Wrocław, 1996), 71–90. Cf. also Gary B. Cohen, *Education and Middle-Class Society in Imperial Austria 1848–1918* (West Lafayette, IN, 1996).

¹² Marsha L. Rozenblit, 'Creating Jewish Space: German-Jewish Schools in Moravia', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 44 (2013), 108–47; Alicja Maślak-Maciejewska, 'Shared Space. Jews in Public Schools in Galicia', *Pardes: Zeitschrift der Vereinigung für Jüdische Studien*, 29 (2023), 91–100.

¹³ Ustawa z dnia 25 maja 1868 r., mocą której wydaje się zasadnicze postanowienia względem stosunku szkoły do kościoła, ważna dla królestw i krajów, reprezentowanych w Radzie Państwa, in *Przekłady Ustaw, Rozporządzeń i Obwieszczeń z Dziennika Praw Państwa dla Królestwa Galicyi i Lodomeryi, tudzież Wielkiego Księstwa Krakowskiego*, 1868, part 2, no. 47.

With the arrival of a large group of Jews among the students, was “Jewish time” to some extent also taken into consideration? Did the minority group succeed in effectively negotiating (either individually, e.g., through negotiations between the student or parent and the teacher, or collectively through the actions of the Jewish community) to meet their needs regarding the organisation of studies? It should be noted that while Jews were a religious minority in Galician society, in schools – after all, most developed in the cities – they often constituted several dozen per cent of the student body. I will examine both elementary education institutions (folk and departmental schools) and secondary schools.¹⁴ Before the school reforms, all elementary schools were confessional, which makes accommodating different calendars, which are the subject of our considerations, less relevant. For example, in Homberg schools, the school year was structured around the Jewish calendar – the winter term began after the holiday of Shemini Atzeret and ended before Passover. The summer term began after Passover and ended before Rosh Hashana. Jewish holidays were days off from school.¹⁵ Education was also organised according to the Jewish calendar in secular Jewish schools, while in Christian schools, it followed the Christian calendar. Jewish students attending Catholic institutions (a right they had, and which some exercised) conformed to the Christian calendar.¹⁶

I will examine the issue of ‘synchronising’ times, negotiating, and respecting the needs of the Jewish community in the public school on three levels: the rhythm of the week, the scheduling of religious education classes, which were organised separately for each denomination, and the structure of the school year. The research that forms

¹⁴ The public elementary school, seen as an institution maintained from public funds and open to children of all denominations, was in fact established in Galicia as a result of the above-mentioned school reforms carried out in the late 1860s and early 1870s. The secondary schools, on the other hand, which I also classify as public institutions, were organised according to different legal norms, and became more widely accessible to Jews from the mid-nineteenth century, but in practice, Jewish students did not attend them in significant numbers until later. These trends therefore define the chronological framework of this analysis. Considering them together is due to the fact that many issues concerning school time were universal and applied across institutions of various levels.

¹⁵ Sadowski, *Haskala*, 168.

¹⁶ This issue requires further research.

the basis for the article draws on archival sources (school, Jewish communal, and municipal records), ego-documents, the press, and legal and official sources. The examples presented in the article were chosen for their representativeness.

The three issues mentioned above, which are the subject of my reflection, are not the only topics related to the category of time in the Galician school; however – from a broader perspective – they seem to be most significant and impactful on Jewish experiences of the Galician school. This article focuses on the public school, so I do not explore in detail another issue important from the perspective of the individual experience of time by Jewish children, which was their actual functioning according to two school calendars – those of the cheder and the public school.

Of course, in terms of challenges related to the calendar and time, the experiences of Jewish children in the Galician school were not unique in the sense that Jewish students faced similar challenges wherever they constituted a religious minority in the school. Why, then, is it worth analysing the situation in Galicia when considering ‘interfaith’ time? First, the Galician classroom may simply serve as an example of a situation in which it was necessary to develop a way for a multi-faith school community to function. The second reason is related to the size of the Jewish community, the largest in Cisleithania (the non-Hungarian part of the Habsburg monarchy) and the third largest in Europe, after the Russian and Hungarian communities. This vast Jewish community, which remained very traditional throughout the nineteenth century, faced from the last quarter of the nineteenth century the necessity (often truly unavoidable, especially in the cities – and these, after all, were where most Galician Jews lived) of subjecting their children to general education. In most cases, there were no alternatives to a non-Jewish public school (given the poorly developed network of Jewish schools). To what extent, then, could Jews attending these schools remain committed to their faith, including living according to their sacred time?

THE RHYTHM OF THE WEEK

In the Galician school, learning took place six days a week, with Saturday as a regular school day and Sunday designated as the day of rest. This schedule aligned with the religious calendar of Galicia’s

two dominant religious groups – Roman Catholics and Greek Catholics. The Jews, as the only religious group, followed a different structure of the week, with Saturday as a day of rest, free from work but filled with religious rituals starting Friday evening when the Sabbath formally begins.

One of the key activities undertaken by a student at school is writing. However, according to *halakha* (Jewish religious law), writing is considered work forbidden on the Sabbath. Due to religious principles, other activities typically associated with participation in school activities are also prohibited, such as carrying objects, which also apply to schoolbooks. How was this problem dealt with in a Galician school?

Since elementary education was compulsory, legislation had to confront the issue of Saturday schooling for Jewish children quite early on, as soon as schooling became mandatory for Jews. A circular of the National School Council [Rada Szkolna Krajowa, RSK], dated November 30, 1871, concerning this issue was, however, ambiguous in tone, as it stated that “it is not possible to strictly force Jewish youth to come to school on this day [Saturday]”, It was also added that attendance might improve if Jews “were not forced to write on Saturdays”, and therefore it was ordered that classes in schools should be organised in such a way that minimal writing was required on Saturdays and that Jews “were not forced to write on that day at all”,¹⁷ The provisions mentioned above, along with a subsequent circular of the National School Council from 1874 did not contain clear rules – while they recommended that Jews should not be forced to write on Saturdays and opened up the possibility of exempting them from learning as such, they did not explicitly order it.¹⁸

It is difficult to estimate the percentage of Jewish children who did not attend school on Saturdays, as the situation varied depending on the region and the policies of individual school administrations. The cited regulations were interpreted differently, and in areas with a significant Jewish population, they may have been irrelevant, as parents simply did not send their children to school on Saturdays,

¹⁷ *Zbiór najważniejszych okólników i rozporządzeń zasadniczych c.k. Rady Szkolnej Krajowej*, i, 4 (Lwów, 1888), 5–6.

¹⁸ RSK circular of 24 Nov. 1874. It indicated that on Friday afternoons and Saturdays, Jewish children should be exempted from “all schooling, or at least from writing”, see *Zbiór najważniejszych okólników*, i, 96–7.

without considering whether this was in line with existing legal norms. Kazimierz Bruchnalski, a school inspector who visited dozens of schools between 1909 and 1914, observed that schools were wholly deserted on Saturdays in some localities because Jewish children predominated among the students. These included, for example, schools in Baligród, Ustrzyki Dolne, Lesko, Dobromil and Bircza.¹⁹ There was no mention of penalising Saturday absences; it was a statement of the status quo. However, much depended on the specific circumstances of each school and the views of local school authorities, and in the sources, we find examples of penalising Saturday absences. Such a situation occurred in Nowy Targ, where the administration of the girls' school required Saturday attendance (although the girls were exempted from writing, drawing, and carrying books), and the District School Council upheld the decision to impose fines on the parents, even though they emphasised that they sent their children to school regularly on other days and sending them on Saturdays conflicted with their religious views and the rhythm of family routines. One of the penalised fathers wrote: "Like every decent person, I must observe the Sabbath, just as a Catholic observes Sunday, and I must raise my children in the spirit in which they were born".²⁰ The approach to Saturday absences among Jewish students might have fluctuated, influenced by various factors that are difficult to determine, as shown by the situation that occurred at the all-boys folk school in Podgórze (now a district of Cracow). In 1903, the administration of this institution, citing existing regulations, recommended that "Saturday hours should not be excused for Israelites", and two years later, citing the same regulations, they "pleaded that Israelites should not be forced to attend on Saturdays, and Saturday absences should be excused",²¹ The preserved records do not allow us to determine what caused this shift in approach, but it can be assumed that it was simply an acknowledgement of the factual situation: Jews did not send their sons to school on the Sabbath and not excusing their absences did nothing to change that.

¹⁹ Kazimierz Bruchnalski, *Obraz szkolnictwa ludowego w dwunastu powiatach Galicji w okresie pięciolecia 1909–1914* (Lwów, 1920), 103, 159.

²⁰ Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie [National Archives in Krakow] (hereinafter ANK), Okręgowa Rada Szkolna w Nowym Targu, file no. 29/3062/0/1/1, p. 157.

²¹ ANK, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 26 w Krakowie, file no. 29/3715/3, pp. 36, 117.

While the regulations allowed for various interpretations regarding Saturday school attendance, they were clear when it came to writing and drawing – Jews were not to be forced to do so. Nevertheless, such cases did occur. The Jewish press publicised such incidents.²²

There were public schools at the elementary level in Galicia where Jewish students predominated by far. This was due to the schools' location in Jewish neighbourhoods and, in some cases, also because they were established by converting a former private Jewish school into a public institution. In these schools, both Saturday and Sunday were designated as days off, shortening the standard school week by one day. To make up for this reduction, the school year was extended at the expense of summer holidays. One may question why in schools of this type, which had only a few Christian students, Sunday was a day off at all. This was likely due not only to the practical and symbolic privileges of Christianity in the Galician school but also to practical reasons – most teachers working in public schools, which also applied to institutions where Jewish children predominated, were Christian, so their days off were respected.

It should be noted that a similar solution was also applied in private Jewish schools, operating alongside public schools, including those established by Baron Maurice de Hirsch's foundation. These schools, mainly established in small towns in Eastern Galicia, followed the public school curriculum (attending them was, therefore, a fulfilment of the compulsory educational requirements) while adjusting to the Jewish calendar.²³

In the case of secondary schools – gymnasiums and *real schools* – there were regulations allowing for exemption from writing on Saturdays.²⁴ However, as numerous memoirs indicate, there was strong social pressure to write.²⁵ There were instances of assertive refusal

²² E.g., 'Nowa szkoła wyznaniowa we Lwowie', *Wschód*, 120 (1903), 9.

²³ On the Hirsch Foundation schools, see Kazimierz Rędziński, *Fundacyjne szkolnictwo żydowskie w Galicji w latach 1881–1918* (Częstochowa, 1997).

²⁴ Ordinance of 31 Jan. 1876, see *Sammlung der Normalien für den israelitischen Religionsunterricht an den Mittelschulen Österreichs*, ed. by Leopold Goldhammer (Wien, 1912), 6.

²⁵ This may be due to the fact that attending secondary school was optional, not mandatory. Although some students began their education there when they were of school age (thereby fulfilling their compulsory schooling requirements by going to secondary school), as a rule, these were schools for older youth. Until

to write or parents intervening to exempt their sons from this obligation, but they were presented as acts of civil courage and as an exceptional situation rather than the norm. This is well illustrated by the experiences of Soma Morgenstern, who came from a religious family. When he was admitted to a gymnasium in Lviv/Lwów, his father took steps to prevent him from writing on the Sabbath. He managed to obtain a certificate from the headmaster exempting him from this activity, which Soma had to paste into a book and show on the Sabbath to teachers who required him to write. It is worth noting how unusual (although fully in line with the law) this request was – the headmaster admitted that in the two decades of his work in this position, he had only been approached with such a matter once. At the same time, the fact that Soma had such a document aroused disbelief in his environment – he was even asked to show it to prove that he was telling the truth. It was considered an obvious and universally accepted thing that on the Sabbath, one not only attended secondary school but also wrote there.²⁶ Morgenstern's father's attitude is an example of a successful negotiation to respect Jewish time.

In some memoirs, there is even a thread of fighting with teachers for the right not to write on Saturday, and de facto to respect the right that Jews de jure possessed.²⁷ In certain cases – as Dov Sadan's memoirs show – the attempt at negotiation led to partial victory. For the profoundly observant Sadan, not writing on the Sabbath became a matter of honour, and he refused to do so. However, one of his teachers sarcastically brought up the issue every week.²⁸ The gymnasium in Brody was renowned for respecting the Sabbath in this regard, and some Orthodox parents were guided by this good reputation when sending their sons to it.²⁹ While legal norms allowed Jews to function

the late nineteenth century, secondary schools were intended only for men. Girls' gymnasiums were established at the end of the nineteenth century.

²⁶ Soma Morgenstern, *In einer anderen Zeit. Jugendjahre in Ostgalizien*, ed. Ingolf Schulte (Lüneburg, 1995), 210, 216.

²⁷ For example, Saul Raphael Landau, *Sturm und Drang im Zionismus, Rückblicke eines Zionisten, vor, mit und um Theodor Herzl* (Wien, 1937), 6.

²⁸ Dov Sadan, *Mi-Maagal haneurim: kitvei vidui ve-zikaron* (Tel Aviv, 1981). I use the electronic edition as part of the Ben Yehuda project, hence the lack of page numbers, <https://benyehuda.org/read/44744#ch3891> [Accessed: 9 Nov. 2024].

²⁹ National Library of Israel, Archion Jehuda Leib Landau, Otobiografia, file no. 4/798/02 7.1, Jehuda Leib Landau, 'Short autobiographical notes'.

according to their religious principles, social practices made it difficult, compounded by the attitude of some teachers who, for reasons identified as antisemitic even then, obstructed the implementation of this law.

Let us note, moreover, that this was solely a matter of not breaking halakha and not of mere attendance at lessons, which was an obvious requirement in the case of secondary school education, and thus unlike the case in some elementary schools. Jewish boys and girls who attended secondary schools – of whom there were around 10,000 before the outbreak of the First World War – lived according to the rhythm of the week determined by the Christian calendar.

THE RHYTHM OF THE DAY: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Jewish students attending public and secondary schools were expected to participate in the religious instruction of their denomination, similar to how Christian students attended catechesis. Jewish communities were responsible for overseeing Jewish religious education and teaching content. They also recommended teachers for the subject. These lessons were to be held at school, with the grade for religion recorded on the school transcript. The chronology of introducing these lessons was very complex and influenced by many factors, but from the end of the nineteenth century, the number of institutions offering them had increased significantly.³⁰

In an ideal scenario for Jewish students, their religious instruction took place concurrently with catechesis classes, and, in some schools, efforts can be seen to organise the schedule of classes accordingly.³¹ However, this arrangement was often not implemented. There were various reasons for this, which were the fault of the school, the Jewish communities, and a combination of several factors – for example, the problem of coordinating the schedules of teachers working in multiple

³⁰ I write about this subject in detail in the book *Poza chederem. Żydzi w galicyjskiej szkole publicznej*. Cf. also Maria Stinia, 'Dorobek wielokulturowego środowiska gimnazjalnego Krakowa w okresie autonomii galicyjskiej: nauczanie i nauczyciele religii mojżeszowej', in Stefania Walasek (ed.), *Wśród 'swoich' i 'obcych': rola edukacji w społeczeństwach wielokulturowych Europy środkowej (XVIII–XX wiek)* (Kraków, 2006), 203–12; Mirosław Łapot, *Religia mojżeszowa w szkolnictwie publicznym we Lwowie w okresie autonomii galicyjskiej (1867–1918)* (Częstochowa, 2019).

³¹ For example, ANK, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 26 w Krakowie, file no. 29/3715, p. 117.

schools, the small number of hours available to the teacher, which meant that lessons for several classes were combined, and the lack of an available classroom where such lessons could be held. In practice, it was typical for Jews to learn religion on Sunday³² or in the afternoon, which required them to come to school twice in one day³³ and which was also a less optimal time due to several other factors: a lower level of concentration, the diminishing prestige of these lessons, and conflicts with additional subjects offered in secondary schools. Organising lessons in this way, outside standard school hours, in practice also made it easier to limit Jewish time in school in another aspect: offering Jews one hour of religious instruction instead of the required two. This was a widespread practice, rooted in very complex factors, going back to decisions made at the government level in Vienna.

The different times of classes also meant that during catechesis, which was held twice a week for an hour, Jewish students had a free period. This posed a problem because, in many schools, there was no place where they could wait, or the school administration did not allow them to remain in the school building. Such a problem existed, for example at one of the schools in Przemyśl – Catholic religion classes were held between 10 and 11 a.m. and during them, according to a decree of the school administration, Jews had to leave the school building, which in winter affected particularly the poorest students, who usually lived in the suburbs, far from the school. *Głos Przemyński*, which publicised the problem, saw the reasons for such a distribution of classes in the antisemitism of the headmaster, who was reluctant to see Jewish students within the school walls.³⁴ When Jewish students of the St Hyacinth Gymnasium in Cracow asked the headmaster for “a shelter for an hour of Catholic religion lesson” (according to press coverage of the issue, it appears it was in winter when there was a 15-degree frost), the headmaster allegedly

³² On Sundays, religious education classes were held for Jewish students, such as those at the Gymnasium in Rzeszów, see Archiwum Narodowe w Rzeszowie [National Archives in Rzeszów], I Gimnazjum i Liceum im. ks. Stanisława Konarskiego w Rzeszowie, file no. 59/214/0/1.1/39, p. 428.

³³ For example, organising classes on Sundays or in the afternoon was necessary in Lviv secondary schools due to a shortage of teachers, see Central State Historical Archives in Lviv (hereafter: TsDIAL), Jewish religious community in Lviv, file no. 701/2/1544, p. 4.

³⁴ Note from *Głos Przemyński* reprinted in *Wschód*, 113 (1902), 10.

mockingly suggested that they go to the parliament.³⁵ Since catechesis was often held in the same classroom as other lessons before, Jewish children had to vacate the room before the class began, and – as some memoirs indicate – they should have done it quickly and efficiently. Hugo Steinhaus, a prominent mathematician, and a student at the elementary school in Jasło before the First World War, recalled the catechist, Count Wiśniowski, “an elegant priest with a pale face and black eyes”, who “entered the classroom punctually, and put the Jews, who did not manage to leave the classroom, on the front bench and beat them with a cane”.³⁶

It often happened that Jewish parents preferred that their child (and let us recall that small children from the age of six often attended school), attend Catholic religion classes rather than wander around during the free period. Many sources confirm that these classes were treated as a kind of ‘daycare’. The Jewish community viewed this as a threat, especially since there were instances of attempts to actively convert Jewish children attending catechesis (and thus not so much resulting from the child simply listening to the catechist’s teachings, but from deliberately building the lesson in such a way as to facilitate this goal; some priests were said to be eager to accept Jewish children, seeing them as potential converts). The issue was so prevalent that the Jewish teachers submitted a petition to the National School Council with a request to issue a recommendation to the school headmasters that, when drawing up the schedule, they pay attention to the fact that Jewish children do not attend Catholic religion lessons.³⁷ This systematic solution aimed to curtail practices that were convenient for Jews themselves (i.e., for some parents of school children).

Another solution advocated by the Jewish community to help eliminate the problem of free periods and better align the school calendar with Jewish needs was to schedule catechesis as the first or last lesson of the day. However, this was not always feasible for the reasons described above.³⁸

³⁵ *Moriah* (1908), 30.

³⁶ Hugo Steinhaus, *Wspomnienia i zapiski* (Wrocław, 2002), 17.

³⁷ J. Sarmacki, ‘W sprawie nauczycieli i nauki religii mojżeszowej. IV: Prywatne zakłady naukowe’, *Przyszłość*, iv, 13 (1896), 98 (‘J. Sarmacki’ is probably the author’s pseudonym).

³⁸ ‘Dochodzą nas z miasta...’, *Wschód*, 17 (1901), 6.

When religion lessons were organised simultaneously for children of several denominations, there was a problem of unavailability of classrooms, particularly acute in Eastern Galicia, where Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, and Judaism lessons were often offered at school. As a result, it happened that classes for Jewish children were held in rooms unsuitable for conducting lessons – in the vestibule, in the hall, in the gym.³⁹ The price of this simultaneity, which was beneficial from the point of view of the daily schedule, was, therefore, often an inconvenience, which was noticed and criticised by the Jewish community. The clear symbolic privilege of Roman Catholicism is evident in the fact that, in new school buildings built in Lviv in the first decade of the twentieth century, a separate room was designated for lessons in Judaism and Greek-Catholic catechesis classes. Under the guise of equality, there is a belief that Roman Catholics do not need a separate room, because they will stay in the one where other classes are held. However, here we touch on the issues concerning the symbolic significance of school space, which I explore in more detail elsewhere.⁴⁰

THE RHYTHM OF THE YEAR: THE HOLIDAY CALENDAR

In the Galician school, the school year was structured around the liturgical calendar of the dominant religion. Religious holidays were days off from school. The religious holidays of the dominant religious groups in Galicia – Greek and Roman Catholics – fell on different dates, while the calendar of the school year in folk schools was adjusted to align with the dominant religious group using a given school. Consequently, holiday breaks occurred at different dates in Western and Eastern Galicia. In the case of a school where the ratios of students of the two Catholic denominations were equal, holidays of both denominations were observed. In this situation, the summer holidays were shortened to increase the number of days in which children received instruction.⁴¹

³⁹ J. Sarmacki, 'W sprawie nauczycieli i nauki religii mojżeszowej', *Przyszłość*, iv, 11–12 (1896), 87. On organising Judaism lessons in the vestibule of the gym, see Łapot, *Religia mojżeszowa*, 172.

⁴⁰ Maślak-Maciejewska, *Poza chederem*.

⁴¹ The regulations regarding the organisation of the school year were detailed and distinct for localities with and without secondary schools. They were adapted

However, when planning the school year, only Christian holidays were considered (Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic, and in some schools both cycles). Jewish holidays were days free from classes only in private Jewish schools, i.e., privately maintained by the community, and in the case of public schools operating during the era of autonomy – only in some institutions, where Jewish students predominated due to their location in Jewish districts. However, only a minority of Jewish children attending Galician folk schools studied in such institutions, which existed only in a few larger cities, including Cracow, Lviv, and Tarnopol.⁴² Among secondary schools, the real school in Brody, which was established by transforming a Jewish institution founded in 1818, had a unique character.⁴³ Since at least the 1870s, holidays have been celebrated there according to three religious calendars: Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, and Jewish. As a result, the school year was much shorter than in other Galician institutions, lasting 183 days. Institutions that included holidays for two denominations had a 214-day year, while those with only one had 224 days. They tried to deal with this by accumulating a greater number of lessons on the days when classes were held.⁴⁴ This arrangement – Jewish holidays as days off – was, of course, the most beneficial option for Jewish students, who did not lose days of study at that time.

Based on my estimates, most Jewish students – about 75 per cent of those studying in elementary schools in 1900, and all Jewish students in secondary schools, except for those at the Brody institution, attended school where classes theoretically took place on Jewish holidays. In the case of schools located in towns, where the Jewish population was often

locally, for example, decisions regarding holidays were made after consulting the Local School Council, see *Księga ważniejszych ustaw i rozporządzeń Szkoły Ludowej w Stróżnej 1878–1894*, Archiwum Państwowe w Przemyślu, file no. 56/254/0/1/1, pp. 1, 4, 41.

⁴² For more on these schools, see Kazimierz Rędziński, *Żydowskie szkolnictwo świeckie w Galicji w latach 1813–1918* (Częstochowa, 2000); on respecting the Jewish calendar in Jewish schools in the period of the Republic of Cracow, see Anna Jakimyszyn, *Żydzi krakowscy w dobie Rzeczypospolitej Krakowskiej* (Kraków–Budapeszt, 2008), 212, 222.

⁴³ Börries Kuzmany, *Brody. Eine galizische Grenzstadt im langen 19. Jahrhundert* (Wien–Köln–Weimar, 2011), 188–203.

⁴⁴ Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych [Central Archives of Historical Records, Warsaw], file no. 1/304/0/-/416u, 1525–30.

predominant, the institutions were deserted during Jewish holidays, regardless of whether classes were held at that time. School inspector Bruchnalski observed a tendency that the first two months of the school year, September and October, were characterised by poor school attendance and that this was a period “lost for learning and school in general”. He attributed this to childhood diseases that affected children in lower grades in the autumn and, in the case of towns and cities – to the cycle of Jewish holidays in the autumn.⁴⁵ This phenomenon was therefore, analogous to the failure to send children to school on the Sabbath mentioned above – in the areas where the number of Jews was so significant, their sheer number could force the school to function according to the Jewish calendar in practice, even without official permission – if most of the children did not come, it was impossible to implement learning effectively. In such areas, there were no means that would allow for systemic enforcement of Jews to behave in a certain way. The situation was different in larger cities with well-developed school supervision and in places where Jews were a minority, which was likely the most typical statistically. To make it easier for these Jews to combine life following tradition with receiving school education, in 1893 the National School Council published a list of Jewish holidays “in which the religious regulations of the Mosaic faith forbid school youth from attending school”, which applied to both primary and secondary schools.⁴⁶ I have not come across earlier regulations of this type, although the list from 1893 was consequently referred to in subsequent years. The list included thirteen full days off and two half-days on Passover (the first two and last two days), two days of Shavuot and Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, the first two days of Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah, as well as two half-days: the morning of Hoshanah Rabbah and the afternoon of Yom Kippur. According to this regulation, students should have been excused for absences on these holidays, in other words – classes were held, but Jews should not be penalised for their absence; hours missed at then should not be recorded on the school transcript as unexcused. However, this recommendation was not respected – school headmasters excused themselves by claiming that a list of Jewish holidays was not available to them or by expressing

⁴⁵ Bruchnalski, *Obraz szkolnictwa ludowego*, 34.

⁴⁶ *Zbiór najważniejszych okólników RSK*, ii, 180–1.

concern that announcing these days off in classes could cause someone to consider the school Jewish.⁴⁷ Respecting Jewish holidays could depend on the vigilance and effectiveness of the Jewish religion teacher, who was usually the only Jewish employee at the school and who became a support for the Jewish youth.⁴⁸

The 1893 list was sometimes modified to accommodate better the practical needs of Jewish children, for whom – to cite one example – studying during Passover is problematic due to strict kosher rules on all days of the holiday, not just on the first and last two days – during Passover children could not eat anything in rooms that had not been cleansed of *chametz*.⁴⁹ The Jewish community in Lviv proved to be particularly effective in negotiating with the Lviv District Municipal Council that in the years when the dates of Passover and Easter did not coincide, Jewish children were exempted from school for the full eight days of the holidays.⁵⁰

Jewish students sometimes faced difficulties because of their holiday absences, particularly in secondary schools. It would happen, for example, that teachers deliberately tested them the day after the holiday on material covered during their absence, leading to poor grades. For example, a teacher from Berezhany/Brzeżany forbade other students from informing Jewish students about assignments given during their holidays, commenting on this instruction: “Kikes are celebrating, I will eradicate them”.⁵¹ The question of whether representatives of other religions who were a minority in a given school were treated in a similar way (or simply in a situation when the teacher and student were of different faiths) requires further research. Certainly, however – and this is important from the perspective of the Jewish experience of time at school in question – the lack of time for Jewish students to celebrate their holidays peacefully was identified by contemporary Jewish journalism, particularly the youth press that emerged in the first decade of the twentieth century, as a real problem

⁴⁷ J. Sarmacki, ‘W sprawie nauczycieli i nauki religii mojżeszowej’, *Przyszłość*, iv, 11–12 (1896), 88.

⁴⁸ See, for example, ANK, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 26 w Krakowie, file no. 29/3715, pp. 139–40.

⁴⁹ Chametz (Heb.) – leaven, fermented grains. During Passover, Jews do not eat these products, and rooms are cleansed of their remnants.

⁵⁰ TsDIAL, collection National School Council, file no. 178/2/4808, pp. 5, 9.

⁵¹ *Moriah* (1906), 325.

affecting students' school life. Some teachers who did not respect the right of Jews to observe their holidays used the excuse that they did not know the list of Jewish holidays. It is difficult to determine whether this was a convenient explanation used by antisemites, or more often it was about the fact that teachers indeed did not have this information. In such a situation, the ineffective dissemination of this type of information would reveal the low priority of this issue within the hierarchy of values in the Galician school.

In Galician schools, days off from classes were also established, beyond the main religious holidays, such as the feast day of the school's patron saint. On that day, Christian youth attended mass.⁵² For Jewish children, these were additional days without regular schooling, which did not coincide with their religious holidays. Jewish students had more days off than their peers of other denominations – by order of the National School Council, they were excused from classes on their holidays (even though classes were held at that time), and on Catholic holidays (of one or both rites), they did not receive education either, because it was not provided for anyone. From the students' perspective, having many days off might have, of course, appeared like an appealing prospect and not as a reduction in learning opportunities. As one former Galician student recalled: "Poles celebrated only their holidays, Greek Catholic [celebrated] theirs and ours, and Jews had the most time off, [because] they observed theirs and did not come to school on either ours or Greek Catholic holidays. We envied them very much".⁵³

CONCLUSION

The time in most Galician schools, including those institutions where several dozen per cent of students were Jewish, had a Christian character. This concerned both the daily schedule (which was more favourable for Christians who did not have free periods), the weekly schedule (with Sunday as a day off), and the yearly timetable (Christian holidays as a time when teaching is not conducted).

⁵² Alicja Puszka, 'Wychowanie chrześcijańskie i patriotyczne w szkołach państwowych Galicji w latach 1868–1914', *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, xlvii, 2 (1999), 199.

⁵³ Stanisław Giza, *Na ekranie życia: wspomnienia z lat 1908–1939* (Warszawa, 1972), 78.

There were attempts, sometimes successful, to negotiate a more Jewish-friendly school time. An example of such attempts, in addition to those discussed above, was, for example, the shift of classes at supplementary industrial schools in Lviv from Saturday afternoon to Sunday morning,⁵⁴ or the reduction of Saturday instruction at the secondary school in Brody. However, this concerned situations in which Jews practically dominated in nominally “non-Jewish” schools. In most schools, official concessions for Jews in practice amounted to exempting them from the obligation to conform to the Christian calendar and time. Such is the nature of the above-mentioned regulation of the National School Council, stating that Jews should not be forced to write on the Sabbath or indicate a list of Jewish holidays on which their absence should be excused. It is worth noting that, at that time, the ‘right to observe’ question was not limited to schools – a related issue was the debate over compulsory Sunday rest, which took place at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and continued into the interwar period. Jews who refrained from conducting business on Saturdays for religious reasons sought the right to resume it on Sundays.⁵⁵ These debates took place during a time when Jews were theoretically emancipated and had equal rights; however, this did not translate into equal opportunities, whether professionally or educationally, nor was the Jewish calendar respected.

The issue of the (non-)presence of Jewish time in the Galician school can be considered alongside other aspects of school life in which Jews were also in a subordinate position. This position resulted from the implicit, symbolically privileged position of Roman Catholicism for the educational and political authorities of the time (although this position began to face increasing criticism from the end of the nineteenth century, for example in socialist circles; Ukrainians also noticed this privilege), and from the fact that public schools were often treated as the *facto* Christian. Another significant factor was the attitude of individual teachers, who did not allow Jewish time to exist in a situation where it was permitted by legal norms, which, by the way, were ambiguous, and showed that the issue of regulating

⁵⁴ TsDIAL, collection Gmina wyznaniowa żydowska we Lwowie, file no. 701/2/1544, pp. 29–32.

⁵⁵ Małgorzata Śliż, *Galicjyjscy Żydzi na drodze do równouprawnienia 1848–1914: aspekt prawny procesu emancypacji Żydów w Galicji* (Kraków, 2006), 60.

school time in terms of considering Jewish needs was not a priority. The activities of Jewish communities were also important – some of them, such as the one in Lviv, effectively tried to have Jewish needs taken into consideration, while others, on the contrary, did not get involved in these matters at all.

The failure of schools to accommodate Jewish needs – particularly regarding the calendar and time, as well as other aspects such as textbooks and space – became increasingly evident as compulsory schooling was more rigorously enforced, and which is why it began to be fulfilled by children from more traditional families. The sense of inadequacy of the public school was overwhelming and fuelled the debate on denominational schools (establishing separate institutions for Jews and Christians). A portion of the Jewish society supported this as the only viable solution that would allow students to remain Jewish while receiving a secular education. The interwar period would see the flourishing of such institutions.

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Alicja Maślak-Maciejewska – Jewish history in Central Europe in the nineteenth century, with a focus on Galicia; assistant professor in the Department of Jewish History at the Institute of Jewish Studies, Jagiellonian University, and the head of the Centre for the Study of History and Culture of Krakow Jews at the Jagiellonian University; e-mail: alicia.maslak@uj.edu.pl