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# THE CLANDESTINE EDUCATIONAL AND SELF-EDUCATION MOVEMENT IN WARSAW IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY: THE SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARY AND READING ROOM, CZYTELNIA NAUKOWA, AS REFLECTED IN MEMOIRS AND PRESS MATERIALS

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## ABSTRACT

The paper presents the results of research into the history of lending libraries and reading rooms in Warsaw between 1890 and 1906. These institutions offering periodicals and scholar books were created by members of a clandestine self-education and educational movement. Political repression from the authorities of Tsarist Russia made them work in two dimensions: officially, as commercial lending libraries with reading rooms and clandestinely, as grassroots self-help initiatives. My research has focused on Czytelnia Naukowa [Scholarly Reading Room], whose resources became the nucleus for the Warsaw Public Library created in 1907. Due to its partly underground character there is a shortage of archival material related to the Czytelnia Naukowa. The research has made use of memoirs written by members of the self-education and (general) educational movement, as well as announcements, advertisements and articles in the Warsaw newspapers from the

studied period. Copious press materials have allowed to supplement and verify information found in the memoirs. The research has confirmed the hypothesis that the women's self-education movement, especially its organizers and students of clandestine academic courses for women, called the Flying University, played a significant role in the creation of reading rooms equipped with non-fiction scholarly books.

**KEYWORDS:** lending libraries, reading rooms, clandestine social libraries, self-education, Warsaw, 19th century

### INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, approximately 700,000 people lived in Warsaw. There were several schools of higher education and many commercial and cultural institutions, such as theatres and concert halls as well as a flourishing, dynamic publishing industry, but no independent public library.<sup>1</sup> The lack of a public library had been criticized in the press since the 1870s, but the authorities of Tsarist Russia blocked the creation of such an institution. The ban on establishing Polish cultural institutions was part of the repression in the Russian partition of the Polish territories after the fall of the January Uprising of 1864 and also a result of the general Russification policy introduced in the Russian Empire in the 1880s.<sup>2</sup> It was only in 1907 that a public library was created

- 1 The library of the Imperial University of Warsaw also served as a public library. However, the scope of its services for the public outside the University remained very limited. Potential users of the University of Warsaw library's public reading room were discouraged by inconvenient opening hours, limited access to the latest purchases and rigorous access rules to its collections. O. Błażejowicz, *Dzieje biblioteki uniwersyteckiej w Warszawie 1871-1915*, Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 1990; J. Szczawińska Dawid, *O potrzebie założenia Publicznej Biblioteki w Warszawie*, Warszawa 1897, pp. 9-10.
- 2 About Russification and the imperial policies of tsarist Russia, see T. R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863-1914*, Northern Illinois University Press, DeKalb 1996; T. R. Weeks, *Across the Revolutionary Divide: Russia and the USSR, 1861-1945*, Wiley Blackwell, Chichester 2011; R. Malte, *Imperial Russian Rule in the Kingdom of Poland 1864-1918*, trans. C. Klohr, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh 2021.

in Warsaw. Its establishment was made possible by the reforms introduced after the 1905 revolution, which liberalized the tsarist cultural-educational policy. Before 1905, when it was not possible to open legal public libraries in Warsaw, a grassroots, non-institutional library movement developed. It was related to clandestine self-education and popular education movements which developed since the 1880s and whose primary goals, apart from self-education, were resistance to russification and developing the Polish language and culture.<sup>3</sup> These movements enjoyed support from progressive-patriotic circles of the Warsaw intelligentsia.<sup>4</sup> People engaged in these movements used the infrastructure of legally functioning institutions, such as philanthropic societies, trade and industry associations, or commercial companies to set up lending libraries and reading rooms associated with them.<sup>5</sup> Self-help libraries and reading rooms were created under the guise of commercial lending libraries and reading rooms, for which it was easier to obtain permissions. Czytelnia Naukowa [The Scholarly Reading Room] was this kind of institution, officially a private lending library with a reading room on the premises; unofficially, a grassroots initiative undertaken by people involved in Warsaw's educational and self-education movement. In 1907, Czytelnia Naukowa's collection of 3000 titles was handed over to the Public Library Society and became the foundation of the book collection of Warsaw's first public

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3 See footnote 2.

4 The following publications present the wider socio-political context of the origin of the self-education and popular education movements: B. Cywiński, *Rodowody niepokornych*, Editions Spotkania, Paris 1985; M. Micińska, *Inteligencja na rozdrożach 1864-1918*, Instytut Historii PAN - Wydawnictwo Neriton, Warszawa 2008; "Tajne nauczanie w Królestwie Polskim w świetle dokumentów władz rosyjskich", in: *Studia z dziejów edukacji*, J. Miąso (ed.), Żak, Warszawa 1994, pp. 199-234.

5 There is no comprehensive study of the Warsaw library movement. Partial descriptions of initiatives in this area may be found i.a., in: K. Świerkowski, *Rodowód Towarzystwa Biblioteki Publicznej w Warszawie*, in: *Z dziejów książki i bibliotek w Warszawie*, S. Tazbir (ed.), Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1961, pp. 106-130; J. Krajewska, *Czytelnictwo wśród robotników w Królestwie Polskim 1870-1914*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1979; S. Michalski, *Stanisława Michalskiego autobiografia i działalność oświatowa*, H. Radlińska, I. Lepalczyk (eds.), Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich - Wydawnictwo PAN, Wrocław - Warszawa - Kraków 1967.

lending library. This was important not just so much for the Public Library itself which, as a legal institution, developed rapidly thanks to help from society and book sponsors, but from the point of view of survival of the memory of Czytelnia Naukowa, this unusual institution which owed its existence to clandestine activities of Warsaw's progressive circles.<sup>6</sup> The Archives of the City of Warsaw Public Library hold a small collection of documents related to the activities of Czytelnia Naukowa.<sup>7</sup> Two remembrances of Czytelnia Naukowa were published, one in 1908 in a collection of materials related to the founding of the Warsaw Public Library and the other in 1947 in a collection of texts issued for its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Otherwise, Czytelnia Naukowa appears in many mentions in memoirs of people engaged in the Warsaw self-education and popular educational movements and in the Polish independence movement. The 19<sup>th</sup> century press is an important but so far little-used source of information on Czytelnia Naukowa. Thanks to digitization and full-text search capabilities offered by the Polona digital library, it was possible to find information about Czytelnia Naukowa scattered in Warsaw dailies and periodicals. Press materials made it possible to reconstruct the various stages of Czytelnia Naukowa's functioning between the years of 1890 and 1906. A comparison of recollections and press materials showed that from 1890 to 1898 two separate reading rooms existed which in later times were referred to by the same name. One of them was Czytelnia Naukowa, located at 34 Nowy Świat Street (1890-1898) which offered mainly access to periodicals; the other was Czytelnia Dziej i Pism Naukowych (The Reading Room for Scientific Books and Journals) (1893-1898) which offered both books and periodicals both to borrow and to read on site. In 1898 they were merged into Czytelnia Naukowa which in 1907 became the nucleus of the Warsaw Public Library.

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6 In the organizational meeting minutes of the Public Library Society in Warsaw we can find information about donations of scholarly book collections for the newly created public library. „Zebranie Organizacyjne Towarzystwa Biblioteki Publicznej w Warszawie”, *Przegląd Biblioteczny*, 1908, 1, pp. 27-30.

7 Archives of the City of Warsaw Public Library (A.106-A.110).

## THE SOCIAL CONTEXT: THE WARSAW SELF-EDUCATION MOVEMENT AND THE FLYING UNIVERSITY

Since the 1880s, a clandestine self-education movement developed in Warsaw and other cities of the Polish Kingdom. University and secondary school students set up self-learning circles to study subjects inaccessible in russified schools and the russified Imperial University of Warsaw.<sup>8</sup> This movement also brought forth women's self-education circles which were set up as well, and in the mid-1880s evolved into an entire system of clandestine higher courses for women called the Flying University. Stefania Sempołowska, one of the movement's leading activists recalled it like this: "We would meet in small groups, read social books and brochures and discuss. Young men who were more fortunate because between secondary school and the start of waged work, they dedicated years to acquiring university knowledge, shared these achievements with their disadvantaged female companions - giving lectures on social and natural sciences in women's circles. The dream of these young people, hungry for knowledge, was universities, libraries, laboratories abroad."<sup>9</sup>

One of the main factors in the development of the women's self-education movement in Warsaw was an unequal access to education between men and women. In the Kingdom of Poland, women not only had no access to universities but also received an inferior secondary education.<sup>10</sup> As Sempołowska noted, until the 1880s only a few exceptionally talented and extremely determined women went to study abroad. "So far, only exceptional, gifted, talented, strong individuals, towering over the average crowd of women, have acquired knowledge, overcoming thousands of obstacles

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- 8 Polish history and literature, as well as progressive liberal works and socialist literature were studied in these circles. The Polish self-education movement in the 19th century is described by D. Tomaszewska, *Drogi wyboru. konspiracyjny ruch samokształceniowy na ziemiach polskich w końcu XIX i na początku XX wieku*, Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, Łódź 1987.
- 9 S. Sempołowska, "Uniwersytet Latający", *Spółczesność*, 1910, no. 11.
- 10 J. Hulewicz, *Sprawa wyższego wykształcenia kobiet w Polsce w XIX wieku*, Polska Akademia Umiejętności, Kraków 1939.

and difficulties - the rest had to make do with low-level, superficial school education, often hurrying on to waged work straight from the classroom."<sup>11</sup> Warsaw's progressive-liberal press had promoted the idea of women's access to universities since the 1870s. News about women studying abroad was disseminated rapidly, and more and more girls dreamed of higher education.<sup>12</sup> As mentioned earlier, only a few of them could afford to travel and study abroad.<sup>13</sup> Despite efforts made in the 1880s to launch higher education courses for women in Warsaw the Russian authorities did not authorize them.<sup>14</sup> In the early 1880s, self-help circles preparing young women for studies abroad appeared in Warsaw. The organizers of these circles included male students who had previously set up their own self-education circles.<sup>15</sup> In the mid-1880s, these circles developed into an entire network of clandestine higher education courses for women, and women themselves took over their organization. Information about the courses was disseminated through informal means. For security reasons, the circles had loose, horizontal structures. Elected representatives of individual circles were responsible for contacting professors and determining

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- 11 S. Sempłowska, *Uniwersytet Latający*.
  - 12 Women in the Russian Empire did not have access to universities but in the 1960s they belonged to the first women who started studying at universities in Switzerland and France. Beginning in the 1870s, higher courses for women appeared in some big Russian cities. D. Neumann, *Studentinnen aus dem Russischen Reich in der Schweiz (1867-1914)*, Verlag Hans Rohr, Zurich 1987.
  - 13 Less wealthy but very determined women worked as teachers to pay for their studies abroad and prepared for them in self-education circles. In the press of this period, we find reports about the difficult economic situation of Polish female students abroad. Female students and their situation started to be mentioned in the late 1870s. *Gazeta Polska*, 1879, no. 24; *Kurjer Warszawski*, 1879, no. 56. A longer article was published in the first issue of a progressive periodical for women. „Studentki-Polki”, *Świt. Pismo Tygodniowe Ilustrowane dla Kobiet Wraz z Dodatkiem Wzorów Robót i Ubrań Kobietych*, 1884, no. 1, pp. 7-8.
  - 14 In the Russian empire, women's access to higher education was treated as a political issue, not least because the first female students were active in anti-tsarist movements and organizations. R. Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia. Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism 1860-1930*, Princeton University Press, Princeton-New Jersey 1991; J. Hulewicz, *Sprawa wyższego wykształcenia kobiet...*
  - 15 L. Krzywicki, „Wykłady latające”, in: *Ex Litteris Libertas. Jednodzielnia studentów Wolnej Wszechnicy Polskiej w Warszawie*, Warszawa 1923, pp. 13-16.

the time and location of the lectures which took place in private homes or laboratories. The clandestine aspect of these activities caused frequent changes of venues, even at short notice; that is why the underground courses were called the Flying University. The secrecy of the Flying University's activities is also the reason why no written documentation has survived. Knowledge about it is found mainly in recollections, which are corroborated by reports of the Tsarist secret police.<sup>16</sup> Teachers at the Flying University came from Warsaw's progressive-liberal intelligentsia; they were scholars who could not obtain employment at the russified University of Warsaw.<sup>17</sup> For holding lectures they received a wage which was paid out of dues collected from female students. From the police archives we know of the existence of secret program catalogues.<sup>18</sup> The Flying University existed unofficially from approx. 1885 to 1905 and was very popular among young women; some of the lectures also attracted progressive male students from higher education institutions in Warsaw. According to various estimates, between 1.000 and 2.000 women attended clandestine courses at the Flying University. Most of them were teachers at private boarding schools for girls or in private homes or were active in underground people's education. Some women who attended the Flying University continued their studies abroad. Some of them, like Maria Skłodowska-Curie, achieved significant scientific success.

The female students of the Flying University engaged in various social activities in addition to attending courses. Some belonged to suffragist circles; others were involved in underground popular education circles or belonged to socialist and/or patriotic groups.<sup>19</sup> They also took part in activities on behalf of Free of Charge Read-

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16 J. Mackiewicz - Wojciechowska, *Uniwersytet „Latający”. Karta z dziejów tajnej pracy oświatowej*, Warszawa 1933; J. Miąso, *Tajne nauczanie w Królestwie Polskim...*, see subsection „Uniwersytet Latający”, pp. 214-226.

17 B. Cywiński, *Rodowody niepokornych...*; J. Miąso, *Tajne nauczanie w Królestwie Polskim...*, p. 215.

18 J. Miąso, *Tajne nauczanie w Królestwie Polskim...*, p. 216.

19 B. Cywiński, *Rodowody niepokornych...*; C. Walewska, *W walce o równe prawa. Nasze bojownice*, Warszawa 1930.

ing Rooms organized by the Warsaw Charitable Society. Despite different views and political orientations, they shared the goal of acquiring knowledge and the belief in learning and education, which reflected the overall spirit of the late 19th century. These women who did not have access to universities and university libraries were particularly affected by the lack of access to scientific and specialized books. That is why the self-help activities undertaken by the female students of the clandestine courses to procure educational materials inspired the creation of reading rooms with scientific journals and books.<sup>20</sup> Jadwiga Szczawińska Dawid, also known as the Flying University's main organizer, was one of the principal initiators and co-founders of Czytelnia Naukowa.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE SOURCES

The Archives of the City of Warsaw's Public Library hold several collections of documents referring to Czytelnia Naukowa, namely, the hand-written and undated Catalogues of Czytelnia Naukowa listing approx. 2,500 titles (A.106, A107); the receipt books of the Reading Room of Scientific Books and Journals, documenting the names of people borrowing books and paying security deposits for the loans (A. 108); a collection of documents entitled *Akta Czytelni Naukowej w Warszawie* which contains, among other things, a document from 1904 about the change of ownership of Czytelnia Naukowa as well as printed forms for people supporting Czytelnia Naukowa in 1904-1906. Documents referring to Czytelnia Naukowa's activities in 1904-1907 also figure among archival collections related to the Society for the Public Library in Warsaw, which took over Czytelnia Naukowa in 1907. The collection of documents entitled *Akta Towarzystwa Biblioteki Publicznej w Warszawie* (A.162) contains, among other things, an unpublished manuscript of recollections about Czytelnia Naukowa with a note attributing

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20 D. Wawrzykowska -Wierciochowa, „Udział kobiet w tajnym i jawnym ruchu społeczno-kulturalnym w Warszawie w latach 1880-1914”, in: *Z dziejów książki i bibliotek w Warszawie*, S. Tazbir (ed.), Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1961, pp. 283-319.



its authorship to Ignacy Radliński, handwritten notes with data on titles of books and journals, as well as a note related to usage statistics of Czytelnia Naukowa from January 1907.

As mentioned earlier, Czytelnia Naukowa, whose collections ended up in the Warsaw Public Library, was created from a merger between Czytelnia Naukowa, founded in 1890, and the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals, founded in 1893. According to recollections, the merger took place in ca. 1898.<sup>21</sup> These sources use the name Czytelnia Naukowa for both reading rooms. It originated in the earliest published recollection entitled “the Czytelnia Naukowa,” published anonymously in 1908 in the first issue of *Przegląd Biblioteczny*, a periodical published by the Public Library Society in Warsaw.<sup>22</sup> The author was Ludwik Krzywicki, a leading figure in the self-education movement and one of the most popular lecturers of the Flying University. Krzywicki was a member of the founding group of the Reading Room of Scientific Books and Journals and was one of the people who deposited their private book collections in it. Krzywicki’s text is short, only four pages, and treats many issues in general terms. Despite gaps in the coherence and chronology of events, Krzywicki’s recollection became the main reference point for later recollections and mentions. Józef Dąbrowski referred to it in his 1925 book of recollections, *Czerwona Warszawa*, published under the pen-name Jan Grabiec.<sup>23</sup> Dąbrowski also participated in the secondary school and university students’ self-education movements and, like Krzywicki, was involved in socialist and patriotic underground activities. Stanisław Stempowski refers to both these texts in his recollections published in the journal *Bibliotekarz* in the issue cel-

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21 Receipt books preserved at the Archives of the City of Warsaw’s Public Library, which document the deposits for the loans of books in 1893 -1911, contain the name “Reading Room of Scientific Books and Journals.” They were used with that name for several years after 1898, i.e., after the name had been changed to “the Czytelnia Naukowa.”

22 L. Krzywicki, „Czytelnia Naukowa (Wspomnienie)”, *Przegląd Biblioteczny*, 1908, no. 1, pp. 31-35.

23 J. Dąbrowski (Grabiec), *Czerwona Warszawa przed ćwierć wiekiem*, Poznań 1925.

celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Warsaw Public Library.<sup>24</sup> Stempowski repeats the main narrative reported in the earlier published recollections, completing it with additional information from the late 1890s when he was head of Czytelnia Naukowa.

Unfortunately, no recollections were left by Jadwiga Dawid née Szczawińska, the initiator and co-founder of both reading rooms who was also head of the Reading Room of Scientific Books and Journals for several years from 1893 to 1898 and was responsible for the entirety of organizational work in it. We learn about her contributions mainly from texts written by others like the manuscript of Radliński's recollections mentioned above. Radliński too deposited his book collection in the Reading Room of Scientific Books and Journals and also collaborated closely with Władysław Dawid, Jadwiga's husband, as editor of the periodicals *Przegląd Pedagogiczny* and *Głos*. In his recollections, Radliński writes about the couple's participation in activities related to the reading room and particularly highlights Jadwiga's merits.<sup>25</sup> Information about Jadwiga Dawid's involvement in the organization of the reading room specialized in scholarly books appears in publications by Dionizja Wawrzykowska-Wierciochowa, an author of popular books on women's history. Wawrzykowska-Wierciochowa collected recollections of women engaged in the self-education, education, and feminist movements in which there are also mentions to the found of women's involvement in the creation of reading rooms with scientific literature.<sup>26</sup>

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24 S. Stempowski, „Bajeczne Dzieje Biblioteki Publicznej”, *Bibliotekarz*, 1947, no. 11-12, pp. 190-192.

25 Radliński might have written the memoirs at Krzywicki's request, with whom he remained in close contact. This interpretation is supported by the fact that some information contained in it appeared in Krzywicki's text from 1908. Close relations between Krzywicki and Radliński are witnessed by Krzywicki's introduction to Ignacy Radliński's posthumously published autobiographical book. L. Krzywicki, „Przedmowa”, in: I. Radliński, *Mój żywot*, Łuck 1938, pp. III-VII.

26 D. Wawrzykowska-Wierciochowa, „Udział kobiet w tajnym i jawnym ruchu społeczno-kulturalnym w Warszawie w latach 1880-1914”, in: *Z dziejów książki i bibliotek w Warszawie*, S. Tazbir (ed.), Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warsaw 1961, pp. 283-319.

As mentioned earlier, the Warsaw press of that period has proven to be an important but so far little-used source of information on Czytelnia Naukowa in its various stages and incarnations. Press materials provide a complement to the memoirs and allow their verification. During the period in question (1890-1906), Warsaw daily newspapers and periodicals published many advertisements and announcements which can be used to fairly accurately date the opening of the individual reading rooms to the public, confirm their addresses and provide general information about their collections, opening hours, and fees. Quite often, these advertisements and announcements appeared in two Warsaw dailies, *Kurier Warszawski* and *Kurier Codzienny*. Usually, even before a reading room was opened, there would be advertisements announcing its opening and, later, confirming that the reading room had just been opened. The latter would be published repeatedly for the first month or two, and later as reminders. Such reminders would appear mainly in the fall, in October and November, when the summer vacations were over and students were returning to school and university. Before the vacations however, there were announcements that it was possible to borrow books for more extended stays in the countryside. From time to time, there would also be announcements about new acquisitions of books and periodicals. Press advertisements or announcements also informed about changes of address or opening hours. They also contained the names of the official owners of the reading rooms, that is, the persons in whose name the authorization for its opening had been given.

In addition to the advertisements and short announcements, newspapers and periodicals carried longer texts about the reading rooms and even short reports from visits to these institutions. Most of these materials were published in periodicals: *Przegląd Pedagogiczny*, *Głos*, and *Przegląd Tygodniowy*. These were progressive journals staffed by people involved in the self-education and popular educational movements. However, these texts did not include detailed information out of fear of repression from the tsarist police.

The projects that led to the creation of Czytelnia Naukowa had a hybrid character. Officially, they operated as commercial lending libraries and reading rooms registered in the name of fictional owners, usually women. Unofficially they operated as grassroots volunteer projects. Press advertisements and announcements rather referred to the official dimension, even if allusions to their social character may also be found in longer mentions or press articles.

#### CZYTELNIA NAUKOWA AT 34, NOWY ŚWIAT STREET (1890-1898)

An analysis of the available recollections and press materials leads to the conclusion that the people who contributed to the founding of Czytelnia Naukowa were directly involved in the Flying University and in the clandestine Polish educational movement. Some sources indicate that the idea of a reading room with scientific periodicals and books was prompted by the needs of female students of the Flying University. According to memoirs collected by Wawrzykowska-Wierciochowa, “[a]ready in 1885-86, women attending lectures at the Flying University experienced an acute shortage of scientific books. Therefore they began to pool their money and buy specific books and foreign journals. Jadwiga Szczawińska seized on this initiative and immediately came up with a concrete project, namely introducing a small fee for purchasing necessary books and journals for the common reading room to be paid by women attending the courses.”<sup>27</sup> Many other sources confirm that the initiator and co-founder of Czytelnia Naukowa was Jadwiga Dawid née Szczawińska, and also her husband Władysław Dawid. They were both involved in the creation of the Flying University, she as the main organizer, and he as a lecturer in education.<sup>28</sup> In an article published in *Głos* in 1901, Jadwiga Dawid wrote that she founded

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27 D. Wawrzykowska - Wierciochowa, *Udział kobiet w tajnym i jawnym ruchu społeczno-kulturalnym ...*, p. 313.

28 Władysław Dawid was a known educator and the editor-in-chief of *Przegląd Pedagogiczny*.

the reading room in collaboration with several people.<sup>29</sup> Krzywicki mentions that in addition to Jadwiga and Władysław Dawid, the management board of the reading room included Józef Piasecki, Antoni Pilecki, and Tadeusz Zalewski. Pilecki was a Warsaw lawyer and writer who was a proponent of positivism and popularized its ideas in his articles which were published in many periodicals. He was also a regular contributor to *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, a periodical supporting the idea of giving women access to better education and university studies. Unfortunately, the available sources do not provide much information about Piasecki. He may have also been a lawyer because someone of the same first and family name figures on the list of law students at the University of Warsaw. This interpretation seems to be supported by the fact that Dąbrowski mentioned the lawyers Piasecki and Pilecki who were involved in the education movement and the activities of the Reading Rooms Department of the Warsaw Charitable Society.<sup>30</sup> From information published in *Przegląd Tygodniowy* in 1890 and 1892 we learn that a reading room with scientific journals was founded by a group of people who cared about “scientific progress” and were keen to ensure access to adequate sources for “knowledge workers.”<sup>31</sup>

Czytelnia Naukowa was inaugurated in November 1890, at 34, Nowy Świat Street. *Przegląd Pedagogiczny* informed of the opening plans already in early 1890.<sup>32</sup> The editors announced that the planned library would feature a reading room with all monthlies and other periodicals in Polish and other languages.<sup>33</sup> It was announced that fields of knowledge of general interest such as philosophy, natural sciences, history, and social sciences, would be represented in the reading room. An important position was

29 *Głos. Tygodnik Literacko-Społeczno-Polityczny*, 1901, no. 10.

30 J. Dąbrowski, *Czerwona Warszawa ...*, p. 153.

31 *Przegląd Tygodniowy Życia Społecznego Literatury i sztuki*, 1890, no. 48, vol. 25, p. 574; *Przegląd Tygodniowy* 1892, no. 16, vol. 27, pp. 191-192.

32 *Przegląd Pedagogiczny. Czasopismo Poświęcone Sprawom Wychowania Szkolnego i Domo-wego*, 1890, no. 8, vol. IX, p. 32.

33 *Przegląd Pedagogiczny*, 1890, no. 8, vol. IX, p. 32.

also to be occupied by pedagogy so that teachers could familiarize themselves with the most important literature in the field: both with the theory of education and with textbooks that could be used to support lectures. The editors emphasized that the new institution sought to meet one of the most important needs of people working scientifically and would also encourage users to read more scientific literature. The announcement in *Przegląd Pedagogiczny* did not contain any information about the people involved in the project but said that the required permission had already been obtained from the authorities and expressed hope that the institution “would quickly come into life.”<sup>34</sup>

In early November another announcement in *Kurier Codzienny* informed about the impending opening of a scholarly reading room on Nowy Świat Street in Warsaw which would offer “an abundance of periodicals with scientific content”: philosophical, economic, pedagogical, and other, in Polish, Russian, French, German, English.<sup>35</sup> One day before the reading room opened on November 25, another announcement was published in *Kurier Codzienny* which informed that starting the next day there would be a scientific reading room on 34 Nowy Świat Street.<sup>36</sup> The announcement said that in the reading room it would be possible to read all Polish national and major foreign periodicals. In time, the reading room would become the scholarly library about whose lack scholars had been complaining. The institution would be open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Tickets would cost seven kopeks for a single entry and 75 kopeks for a whole month. A similar announcement was published in *Kurier Warszawski* on the same day. On Sundays and holidays the reading room was to be open from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.<sup>37</sup> The opening of the reading room was also announced in the weekly *Głos* which emphasized that the Czytelnia Naukowa was the first institution in Warsaw to offer periodicals.

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34 Ibidem.

35 *Kurjer Codzienny*, 1890, no. 304.

36 *Kurjer Codzienny*, 1890, no. 326.

37 *Kurjer Warszawski*, 1890, no. 326.

At the beginning of December, a large note about Czytelnia Naukowa appeared in *Gazeta Sądowa Warszawska* [Warsaw Court Gazette]. It explained that the reading room served the cause of learning and higher education and also described the offer in more detail. Apart from dailies and weeklies from Warsaw and the province it promoted periodicals bound in sewn volumes, such as *Ateneum*, *Biblioteka Warszawska*, *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, and *Wiśła*.<sup>38</sup> It also informed about titles which might be particularly interesting for readers of Warsaw Court Gazette: German, French, and Russian periodicals from the areas of law and political economy.<sup>39</sup> An increase in the number of titles in the section of the economy was announced. In mid-February 1891, more than two months after the opening of Czytelnia Naukowa, *Kurjer Warszawski* informed that the reading room offered 80 predominantly scholarly periodicals.<sup>40</sup> In late May 1894, the same newspaper informed that Czytelnia Naukowa at 34 Nowy Świat had recently acquired, among others, Aristotle's *Opera Omnia*, Hegel's *Werke*, Thomas H. Huxley's *La place de l'homme dans la nature*, Jacob Grimm's *Über den Ursprung der Sprache*, *Nouveaux Éléments de physiologie humaine comprenant les principes de la physiologie comparée et de la physiologie générale* edited by Henri-Étienne Beaunis, Otto Behaghel's *Die deutsche Sprache*, Julius V. Carus' *Geschichte der Zoologie*, Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* in Polish translation, Hippolyte Taine's *La Philosophie de l'Art* in Polish translation, Karl Vogt's *Bilder aus dem Tierleben*, as well as historical volumes of *Kurier Warszawski* (1826-1829; 1832-1865) and *Revue de Deux Mondes* (1848-1855; 1865-1875; 1876-1883).<sup>41</sup>

The press announcements also provide insight what kind of readers Czytelnia Naukowa was trying to attract. They invited any-

38 *Gazeta Sądowa Warszawska*, 1890, no. 49, vol. 18, p. 782.

39 The article mentioned Schmoller's *Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft im Deutschen Reiche*, whose editor-in-chief was, among others, Gustav von Schmoller); Conrad's *Jahrbücher (Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik*, published by Johannes Conrad); *Yuridicheskii Vestnik, Revue d'économie politique*.

40 *Kurjer Warszawski*, 1891, no. 47.

41 *Kurjer Warszawski*, 1894, no. 146.

one interested in reading scholarly journals and non-fiction books. In particular, the offer was addressed to intellectuals, researchers, teachers, journalists, writers, and other people working in the liberal professions. Some press publications about Czytelnia Naukowa emphasized the need for an institution of this kind in Warsaw. A news item published in the weekly *Biesiada Literacka* complained about the generally disadvantageous situation regarding public access to scholarly book collections in Warsaw, pointing out that the library of the University of Warsaw, which served as a public library, was not accessible to working people because of its opening hours, and that there was no universal access to private libraries.<sup>42</sup> Most of the press materials concerning the Czytelnia Naukowa were short announcements with informational content. Longer promotional texts appeared mainly in periodicals associated with the progressive current of the Warsaw press or connected to the organizers of the Czytelnia Naukowa, like *Przegląd Tygodniowy* or *Przegląd Pedagogiczny*, whose editor-in-chief was Władysław Dawid.

Negative or critical pieces were rather the exception. An author using the initials G. Cz. expressed a critical opinion about the announced opening of Czytelnia Naukowa in the fashion and literature weekly *Tygodnik Mód i Powieści*.<sup>43</sup> The journalist noted that the purported intention of providing readers with books from all branches of knowledge and in “all civilized languages” was hardly realistic because such an enormous task would be difficult to accomplish even for the largest public libraries. The *Przegląd Tygodniowy* from November 29 immediately polemicized against such criticism in its column *Echa Warszawskie*,<sup>44</sup> accusing the author of the critical comment of ill will and failure to understand the simple fact that even large undertakings have slow beginnings, step by step, and explaining that due to their limited resources, the organizers would initially offer only scholarly journals and, over

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42 *Biesiada Literacka. Pismo Literacko Polityczne Illustrowane*, 1891, no. 4, v. 31, p. 59.

43 *Tygodnik Mód i Powieści*, 1890, no. 46.

44 *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1890, no. 48.



time, planned to broaden the offer by adding “the most important scientific sources and the most eminent works in the domain of knowledge.” The polemic expressed regret that Warsaw’s mainstream literary circles either remained silent or foolishly criticized a beneficial grassroots initiative. Indifference or scepticism towards the planned reading room, as in the case of *Tygodnik Mód*, was explained by the fact that reading room’s organizers did not have any connections and support among Warsaw literary elites, the latter disliking undertakings organized without their participation.

Some press reports indicate that during the first months after the opening, the number of people coming to Czytelnia Naukowa was not entirely satisfactory. In mid-April 1892, the editors of *Przegląd Tygodniowy* reminded readers about Czytelnia Naukowa in the column *Echa Warszawskie* at the same time, expressing disappointment that journalists and writers, who in the past lamented the lack of such an institution, now, while it was created with considerable efforts of its founders, did not make use of it at all.<sup>45</sup> The editors highlighted that the reading room, for starters located in a “not too splendid place,” was well equipped with periodicals, which should be interesting for journalists. Shortly after, the weekly *Kraj* published an article which corrected the findings of *Echa Warszawskie* two months earlier and wrote that Czytelnia Naukowa was doing well, fulfilling its useful role for society and developing well. The article assured readers that the rooms of the reading room were never empty and often even packed. The article indicates that women were the reason for this development as they constituted “a significant proportion of visitors.”<sup>46</sup>

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45 The text includes an ironic comment that writers and journalists lack the time to refresh their knowledge which should be their primary goal. On the other hand, the text noted that the sterility of articles and newspapers reflected the weak development of scholarly reading rooms. *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1892, no. 16, vol. 27, pp. 191-192.

46 *Kraj. Tygodnik Polityczno-Społeczny*, 1892, no. 24.

In November 1892, just before the second anniversary of the founding of Czytelnia Naukowa, *Kurier Codzienny* published an article directly inviting women to visit the reading room, particularly those close to the ideas of emancipation.<sup>47</sup> It addressed women who spent the evenings alone while their husbands were out playing cards. It suggested that instead of spending the long November evenings alone, they should visit Czytelnia Naukowa on Nowy Świat Street where they would spend their time in a pleasant atmosphere reading interesting material, while a friendly female clerk could be consulted on the selection of texts. In the reading room, women would not be subjected to disapproving male stares or cigar smoke like in cafes.

The reading room operated at 34, Nowy Świat Street until July 1897. *Kurier Warszawski* of July 4 of that year reported that the reading room would move to 11, Mazowiecka Street on July 8.<sup>48</sup> A lending library called the General Reading Room (Czytelnia Powszechna) had already operated at the same address since 1893. I could not find any information confirming that Czytelnia Naukowa continued its operation at 11, Mazowiecka Street. According to Dąbrowski, in 1898 Czytelnia Naukowa was merged with the Reading Room of Scientific Journals and Books, and the institution resulting from the merger took over the name Czytelnia Naukowa.<sup>49</sup>

Press announcements indicate that the official owner to whose name Czytelnia Naukowa was registered was Stanisława, Maria Dowgiałło. The name Dowgiałło appears in two announcements. *Biesiada Literacka* on January 23, 1891, mentioned Stanisława Dowgiałło, and *Kurjer Warszawski* of November 5, 1893, published

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47 *Kurjer Codzienny*, 1892, no. 308.

48 The text of the announcement was as follows: "The scholarly reading room located at 34, Nowy Świat Street since 1890 will be moved to 11, Mazowiecką Street on July 8. *Kurjer Warszawski*, 1897, no. 182, vol. 77. This information was confirmed in the same paper in an announcement published on September 19 of the same year, which stated that the reading room located at 34 Nowy Świat Street for seven years had moved to a new location at 11 Mazowiecka Street. *Kurjer Warszawski*, 1897, no. 259.

49 J. Dąbrowski, *Czerwona Warszawa ...*, p. 167.

a letter by Maria Dowgiałło.<sup>50</sup> None of the texts however provides more detailed information about the founder. Most probably, she was only the so-called figurehead registered as a founder and owner in official documents while in reality more people were involved in organizing and maintaining the reading room. The person whose name appeared in the press announcements, once as Stanisława Dowgiałło and once as Maria Dowgiałło, could have been Stanisława Maria Dowgiałło, one of the first female students of pharmacology at the Jagiellonian University, who studied at the Flying University in 1890. Memoirs and documents indicate that she used the first names alternatively, Stanisława privately but Stanisława, Maria in official documents.<sup>51</sup> Her close friend Jadwiga Klemensiewiczowa recalls that Dowgiałło, hailing from Livonia, lived in Warsaw at least from early 1890 until 1894 when she began her studies in Cracow.<sup>52</sup> From 1890 to 1893, they both completed a pharmacy internship in Warsaw and, starting in 1894, studied pharmacology at the Jagiellonian University of Cracow. While Klemensiewiczowa does not write anything about her friend's possible participation in the organization of Czytelnia Naukowa she describes her as a very helpful and discreet person which would not exclude such a possibility. "Being rather well-off, she was exceptionally modest for herself but did not hesitate to provide financial assistance to institutions and individuals who needed it; she did that in such a tactful and truly Christian manner that the left hand didn't know what the right hand was doing, and nobody

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50 This letter stated that contrary to rumors Czytelnia Naukowa at Nowy Świat Street, owned by Maria Dowgiałło, had nothing in common with another scholarly reading room whose opening had been announced at 21 Jerozolimskie Street. *Kurjer Warszawski*, 1893, no. 306.

51 The name Stanisława, Maria Dowgiałło appears in an application for admission to studies at the Jagiellonian University (June 26, 1894). J. Hulewicz, „O podłożu społeczno-ekonomiczne walki kobiet o dostęp na uniwersytety”, *Przegląd Współczesny*, 1937, no. 2, pp. 138-144, (p. 142).

52 J. Klemensiewiczowa, *Przebojem ku wiedzy. Wspomnienia jednej z pierwszych studentek krakowskich z XIX wieku*, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1961.

could feel offended or humiliated by her help.”<sup>53</sup> Dowgiałło most probably did not run the reading room herself, since, as Klemensiewiczowa remembered, the pharmacy internship they were attending together filled their days entirely.<sup>54</sup>

Zofia Dygasińska-Wolterowa provides some information in her memoirs on how the operation of Czytelnia Naukowa at 34 Nowy Świat was organized: The board was in charge of general oversight, while day-to-day operations were run by female clerks (called cashiers) who received a small salary.<sup>55</sup> Dygasińska-Wolterowa writes: “Thanks to Mr. Teodor Paprocki I hold a permanent position at Czytelnia Naukowa, located at 34 Nowy Świat Street, in Boye’s building. I became a clerk (cashier) working rotating shifts with Miss Teofila Kotarbińska,<sup>56</sup> one day from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and the next day from 4 to 10 p.m.”<sup>57</sup> This recollection of the work in the reading room is confirmed by the correspondence of Zofia’s father Adolf Dygasiński, a writer and essayist. In a letter to his wife dated January 1, 1893, Dygasiński asks: “And how about Zosieńka? Did she get to work as a substitute in the reading room? The poor thing is so eager and willing - let her work there for a while if only for her own satisfaction.”<sup>58</sup> We do not know when exactly Zofia Dygasińska began working at Czytelnia Naukowa. Her father’s let-

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53 Ibidem, p. 161

54 Ibidem, p. 195.

55 According to Z. Dygasińska-Wolterowa, the reading room’s board included Antoni Pilecki (a writer and lawyer), Teodor Paprocki (a bookstore owner and publisher), Dr. Antoni Natanson (a physician), K.[azimierz] Olszowski (a lawyer), Stanisław Rodkiewicz (a lawyer), and someone named Weryho. By this last name, Dygasińska Wolterowa probably meant Maria Weryho, who studied natural sciences at the Bestuzhev Higher Courses for Women in St Petersburg in 1877-1885 and since 1885 had been working in Warsaw as a teacher for clandestine pedagogical courses organized at Henryka Czarnocka’s boarding school for girls. Z. Dygasińska-Wolterowa, „Ze wspomnień o ojcu”, in: A. Dygasiński, *Listy*, T. Nuckowski (ed.), Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk 1972, p. 161.

56 Probably the daughter of Józef and Teofila née Hermanowska, a teacher, sister of Cracow-based writer and theatre director Józef Kotarbiński, and painter Miłosz Kotarbiński. She died in Warsaw in 1903, aged 45. *Biesiada Literacka*, 1903, no. 36.

57 Z. Dygasińska-Wolterowa, *Ze wspomnień o ojcu*, p. 860.

58 A. Dygasiński, *Listy*, p. 333.

ter to her, dated August 3, 1894, shows she already worked there. The father tries to convince his daughter not to return to her job at Czytelnia Naukowa after the vacation. “My Zosieczka, when you come back to Warsaw, in my opinion you should not return to service in this reading room. Maybe you have come to realize yourself that this is not a good place for you where one has to deal with idiots all the time. Also, do you need this miserable salary so badly? Really, I would rather give you an allowance myself. And what does Mama think?”<sup>59</sup> Dygasińska-Wolterowa own memoirs indicate that she rather did not share her father’s opinion about the job at the reading room and that the salary was not her main motivation to work there. She wrote:

“Working at the Czytelnia Naukowa was great: you could read a lot, meet many interesting people, almost all of the contemporary and later activists.”<sup>60</sup> Dygasińska-Wolterowa listed a series of people from the educational and patriotic movement whom she met while working at Czytelnia Naukowa. She was also involved in clandestine education herself. In Wawrzykowska-Wierciochowa’s books based on memoirs and interviews with women active in the self-education and educational movement, Czytelnia Naukowa on Nowy Świat Street figures as a scholarly reading room for women. It may be reasonably assumed that the reading room was one of the meeting points for female students of the Flying University and members of patriotic and educational, as well as emancipatory women’s circles. Wawrzykowska-Wierciochowa refers to now-lost memoirs by Józefa Bojanowska and Helena Ceysingerówna. The former was one of the main organizers of the Polish feminist movement, the latter was a well-known figure in the clandestine patriotic-educational movement. The reading room for women was reported to be located at Nowy Świat Street, near Blikle’s pastry shop, which would match with the address of 34, Nowy Świat, opposite the popular pastry shop. Dygasińska-Wolterowa’s recol-

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59 Ibidem, p. 377.

60 Z. Dygasińska-Wolterowa, *Ze wspomnień o ojcu*, p. 861.

lection about one of the regular readers confirms that women liked the atmosphere at the Czytelnia Naukowa: “Ms. Zofia Grabowska, whom I already mentioned more than once was a habitu  of the reading room. She worked there for entire days, writing and translating. It was difficult to imagine the reading room without her. Most of the time, we would leave together in the evening, taking Chmielna Street.”<sup>61</sup> Maria and Jadwiga Zaborowska, who also managed a lending library called the General Reading Room at 11 Mazowiecka Street, were probably also involved in running Czytelnia Naukowa.<sup>62</sup> Dąbrowski’s memoirs mention this. He writes: “The reading room of scholarly journals at Nowy Świat operated under a fictional ownership; it was managed by a group of radical intellectuals, including Maria and Jadwiga Zaborowska, and a meeting place of not fully orthodox people.”<sup>63</sup> According to Wawrzykowska-Wierciochowa, in 1891-1894 the reading room on Nowy Świat street was considered “a meeting place for organizers of patriotic manifestations, a distribution point of proclamations.”<sup>64</sup>

It is not sure whether Bojanowska and Paulina Kuczalska Reinschmit, the leaders of the Warsaw emancipation movement, were involved in the organization of Czytelnia Naukowa at 34 Nowy Świat street to the extent which Wawrzykowska-Wierciochowa suggests in her publications. On the other hand, it is very likely that they were meeting there, as may be confirmed by the press article mentioned above inviting feminists to the reading room.<sup>65</sup>

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61 Ibidem.

62 According to press announcements the Czytelnia Powszechna at ul. Mazowieckiej 11 was created in 1893. It is not known whether the Zaborowska sisters managed it from the beginning.

63 J. Dąbrowski, *Czerwona Warszawa ...* p. 167.

64 D. Wawrzykowska-Wierciochowa, *Udział kobiet w tajnym i jawnym ruchu społeczno-kulturalnym ...*, p. 310.

65 Warsaw suffragettes might have met at the Czytelnia Naukowa before they found other places. In 1894, Bojanowska and Kuczalska Reinschmit created the Delegation of Working Women within the Society for the Support of Industry and Commerce. Starting from 1898, they managed their own reading room for women which they bought from Maria Chojecka.

### THE READING ROOM OF SCHOLARLY BOOKS AND JOURNALS (1893-1898)

The Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals, like Czytelnia Naukowa, was founded by people active in the self-education and educational movement. Again, both Jadwiga and Władysław Dawid were among the main initiators and founders who had withdrawn from the board of Czytelnia Naukowa described above shortly after its inauguration for reasons not entirely known.<sup>66</sup> Several Flying University Lecturers and other members of the Warsaw intelligentsia joined the Dawids in establishing the new reading room. These people also deposited their book collections in the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals.<sup>67</sup> The student organization Bratnia Pomoc [Fraternal Aid] also deposited its library; in exchange, its members were to benefit from a reduced fee for using the reading room.<sup>68</sup> The Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals was opened in November 1893, which was widely publicized in the press. *Kurjer Warszawski* of October 23, 1893, reported: “On November 1, a new reading room specifically devoted to scholarly literature will join the number of reading rooms already existing in our city. The reading room is designed to assist scholars or people interested in more serious literature. The new institution will initially contain approx. four thousand works of mainly the newest scholarly writing, in the areas of philosophy, history, literary criticism, natural sciences, law and economics, anthropol-

66 One of the reasons for the Dawids’ withdrawal from activities in the Czytelnia Naukowa might have been a conflict between women organizers of the Flying University in ca. 1890. J. Mackiewicz-Wojciechowska, *Uniwersytet “Latajacy”...*, p. 11.

67 Dąbrowski writes that the reading room at Marszałkowska Street received private book collections belonging to Ks. Krupiński, Bronisław Chlebowski, J. Wł. Dawid, Ludwik Krzywicki, Ms. Kirkorowa, St. Mieczysławski. Krzywicki also lists A. Dygasiński. According to Ignacy Radliński’s memoir, he deposited his own collection as did Józef Piasecki, Jan Popławski, Seweryn Jung, and Napoleon Hirszbard. Dąbrowski, *Czerwona Warszawa*, p. 166; L. Krzywicki, *Czytelnia Naukowa* 1908, p. 35.

68 Dąbrowski writes that this was a rich book collection. According to Krzywicki, the students deposited their library because they wanted a place which was safe from police visits. *Czerwona Warszawa*, p. 166; Krzywicki, *Czytelnia Naukowa* 1908, p. 32.

ogy and linguistics, psychology, pedagogy, etc., of course in all European languages.” *Głos* of October 28, 1893, also informed about the opening of a “Reading room of scholarly works.” The editors wrote: “Despite the long-recognized need, until now, there was no reading room in Warsaw properly catering to the needs of people working intellectually. In some reading rooms, one can find more serious books, but in very small numbers and collected randomly, without selection. There is also one reading room offering scholarly journals but there are no books whatsoever. However, soon, that is in early November, a so highly desired and properly organized reading room of scholarly books will open. In addition to journals, the reading room will hold a relatively large number of books (currently ca. 2,500 works) available for reading on site or taking home. The more popular, more widely read titles will be available in two or even three copies. The reading room will procure all new publications in scholarly literature at the request of its subscribers.”<sup>69</sup> The reading room opened on November 18 under the name “Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals,” as *Kurier Warszawski* informed two days in advance.<sup>70</sup> Announcements about the opening of the reading room were run repeatedly by *Kurier Warszawski* until the end of November. They contained basic information about the address, opening hours of the reading room, fees, and general information about the collection. The reading room was open daily from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.; a single-entry ticket cost five kopeks, while a monthly pass was 50 kopeks. The announcements or ads also appeared in other newspapers e.g. in *Gazeta Polska*, and in several liberal-progressive periodicals such as *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, *Głos* and *Przegląd Pedagogiczny*.<sup>71</sup> Later, they appeared less frequently, mainly

69 In the announcement quoted above, the reading room with scholarly journals but without books most probably referred to the the Czytelnia Naukowa at 34 Nowy Świat Street. *Głos*, 1893, no. 43, vol. 8, p. 510.

70 *Kurjer Warszawski*, 1893, no. 317.

71 *Kurjer Warszawski*, 1893, no. 293. The announcement in *Kurier Warszawski* and *Gazeta Polska* was repeated many times after the opening of the reading room. In late 1893 and early 1894, there were announcements or ads in many other Warsaw newspapers and periodicals. They informed about the number of avail-



in the fall, as a reminder for people returning from summer vacation, or before the holidays, informing about the possibility of borrowing books for the summer. They were also published on such occasions as, for example, changes in the reading room's address or the opening hours.<sup>72</sup>

There were several more extended mentions of the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals in the press. One of them was an article published in *Przegląd Tygodniowy* on November 27, 1893, that is, shortly after the opening of the reading room. The article described a visit there. It said that the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals was located at 21 Jerozolimska in a secluded building without an entrance gate and without flashy signs or reflecting window panes. Inside it was warm, bright, and tidy. There was a "serious silence, a friendly atmosphere making one want to sit down voluntarily for several hours and read more serious literature in the intelligent company of both genders."<sup>73</sup> The article also gave a detailed description of what the reading room and its furnishings looked like. It consisted of three rooms: a vestibule where visitors could leave their overcoats and two halls. One featured shelves with books and two tables: a smaller one for the cashier and a larger one for readers. In the second hall, there were three reading tables which were lighted with lamps, including one table for periodicals. The author also mentioned a book for requests where readers could write down titles they needed but could not find among the four thousand available volumes. The author de-

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able works (ca. 4,000), the fee for a single visit (5 kopeks), the opening hours (11 a.m. - 10 p.m.) as well as the address (21, Jerozolimskie Avenue). Among others, announcements or ads appeared in: *Przegląd Pedagogiczny*, 1893, no. 24; *Gazeta Handlowa. Pismo Poświęcone Handlowi, Przemysłowi Fabrycznemu i Rolniczemu*, 1893, no. 276; *Kurjer Warszawski*, 1893, no. 326; *Gazeta Sądowa Warszawska*, 1893, no. 44; *Gazeta Polska*, 1894, no. 22.

72 In February 1895, for example, *Kurier Warszawski* advised that, at the request of working people, the reading room would also open on Sundays between 4 a.m. and 10 p.m., and that the Sunday fee would be fixed at 3 instead of the standard 5 kopeks. The lower fee was explained with the wish to make the reading room more accessible. On the other hand, the opening hours on Sundays were shorter. *Kurier Warszawski*, 1895, no. 47.

73 *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1893, no. 49.

scribed the atmosphere in the reading room and its female and male readers using analogies to heroines and heroes from Bolesław Prus' novel *The New Woman* [*Emancypantki*] which was being published in instalments at that time. Miss Howard, a suffragette in the novel, was closely reading *Przegląd Pedagogiczny*, Madzia Brzeska, the heroine dreaming of becoming a teacher, pondered over *Jeździec i Myśliwy*,<sup>74</sup> while others read the *Revue de Revues* or a book on architecture. Alluding to *The New Woman* was probably intended to signal that the reading room was used by women who believed in equal access to education and connected to the emancipation movement. The author praised the reading room as a place of “intellectual work or respite,” contrasting it with Warsaw tea shops, which, in his opinion, had become “exchanges for grain or actors.” During the author's visit, 23 people were using the reading room.

Approx. Seven months after opening the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals was transferred to premises at 127 Marszałkowska Street.<sup>75</sup> At this last address it operated until 1898. Books and journals available in the reading room were publicized in press announcements or ads similar to the ones for Czytelnia Naukowa. In early December 1893, the weekly *Głos* advertised that the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals owned four thousand volumes of scholarly literature and 80 journals.<sup>76</sup> The advertisement listed the reading room's new acquisitions which, during the first month, were accessible only on-site. These were scientific works from the areas of social sciences, pedagogy, psychology and sociology, freshly published in 1893 in France and Germany, as well as the latest Polish translations of works by Charles

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74 It refers possibly to a sports biweekly published since 1891.

75 In late June 1894, *Kurjer Warszawski* advised about the move of the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals to larger premises at 127 Marszałkowska Street, planned for July 8. On the same occasion, the ad announced that the reading room lended books for vacation in the country. The monthly subscription costed 50 kopeks and allowed borrowing two books. The ads for new premises for the reading room appeared in the fall, after the summer vacation. *Kurjer Warszawski*, 1894, no. 178; *Kurjer Warszawski*, 1894, no. 289.

76 *Głos*, 1893, no. 50.

Gide or Bernard Perez.<sup>77</sup> In mid-January, *Gazeta Sądowa* published an advertisement stating that the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals offered five thousand volumes and over a hundred periodicals. Nineteen titles of new acquisitions were listed, mainly scholarly works in French, German, English, and Italian, as well as in Polish translations. Next to scholarly literature, there were also literary texts of leading contemporary Polish writers, among them Bolesław Prus' *The New Woman* and Eliza Orzeszkowa's *Dwa bieguny [Two Poles]*.<sup>78</sup>

In March 1894, *Przegląd Pedagogiczny* informed that the reading room had six thousand scholarly books and over one hundred periodicals.<sup>79</sup> In October 1894, a year after the opening of the reading room, *Kurier Warszawski* mentioned the resources of the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals in its current news column.<sup>80</sup> At that time, the reading room was reported to have approximately eight thousand scholarly books as well as works of fiction and children's books. The news item informed that the scholarly book collection was being added to on an ongoing basis.<sup>81</sup> In June 1897,

77 Among new acquisitions, the following titles published in 1893 were listed; Robert Rocquigny *Syndicats agricoles et le socialisme agraire*; Alfred Fouillée *La psychologie des idées-forces*. Vol. 2; Émile Durkheim *De la division du travail social*; Gabriel Tarde *Les transformations du droit : étude sociologique*; Paul Hoensbroech *Mein Austritt aus dem Jesuitenorden*; Minna Wettstein-Adelt *3 1/2 Monate Fabrik-Arbeiterin. Eine praktische Studie*; Ludwig Hammerstein *Das Preußische Schulmonopol mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Gymnasien*; Karl Gneisse *Schillers Lehre von der ästhetischen Wahrnehmung*; Fritz Schultze *Deutsche Erziehung*. Polish translations were also listed: Ch. Gide *Principes d'économie politique* (Polish title: *Zasady Ekonomii społecznej*, published in 1893); Bernard Perez *Le Caractere de L'Enfant A L'Homme* (Polish title: *Charakter dziecka i człowieka*). *Głos*, 1893, no. 50, vol 8.

78 Some of the titles were listed above in the previous footnote. Additionally mentioned were Sidney J. Webb *A plea for an eight hours bill* (1890); Louis Bridel *Le Droit Des Femmes Et Le Mariage* (1893); Gabriel Compayre *L'évolution intellectuelle et morale de l'enfant* (1893). Ernest Lavissee and Alfred Rambaud *Histoire générale du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle à nos jours*, Theobald Ziegler *La question sociale est une question morale* (1893), *Report of the Smithsonian Institution for 1890-1; Report of the Commissioner of Education in the United States for 1888-89*; *Gazeta Sądowa Warszawska*, 1894, vol. 22, no. 4.

79 *Przegląd Pedagogiczny*, 1894, no. 7, vol. 13, p. 100.

80 *Kurier Warszawski*, 1894, no. 274.

81 Most recent acquisitions were to include further volumes of Lavissee and Rambaud *Histoire générale du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle* and the latest publications of the Smithsonian Institution and the Office of Education in Washington. Additionally, the reading

*Przegląd Pedagogiczny* invited to visit the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals and informed that readers would find all Polish periodicals published in Warsaw and in the provinces, as well as a selection of periodicals in other languages.<sup>82</sup>

The offer of the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals was addressed to female and male visitors similar to those of Czytelnia Naukowa. Its most frequent users were male students of Warsaw's higher education institutions and female students of the Flying University. According to the receipt books, women accounted for approximately one third of all people borrowing books.<sup>83</sup>

The Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals operated according to principles similar to those of Czytelnia Naukowa. Unofficially, it was managed by a board composed of several people and had a fictional owner, a woman under whose name the reading room was registered as a private company. The first board of the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals consisted mainly of people involved in the Flying University.<sup>84</sup> It also included representatives of the Bratnia Pomoc [Fraternal Aid] student association, who had deposited their library in the book collection of the reading room. The Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals was registered to Bronisława Szczawińska, Jadwiga Dawid's moth-

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room provided encyclopedias, dictionaries, and over a hundred scholarly journals, which, in addition to Polish publications, included foreign ones in English, French, German, and Russian. *Kurjer Warszawski*, 1894, no. 274.

82 Examples of over a dozen available titles were quoted, the French including: *Revue des Deux Mondes*, *Revue des Revues*, *Revue internationale de Sociologie*, *Revue d'Economie politique*, *Revue Scientifique*, *Revue Bleu*, *Revue philosophique*; the Russian ones including: *Russkie Vedomosti*, *Vestnik Yevropy*, *Russkaya Mysl'*, *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, *Luts'*, *Varshavskiy Dnevnik*; the German ones including: *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik*, *Ethische Kultur*, *Zeitschrift für Schulgesundheitspflege*, *Illustrierte Zeitung*; the English ones including: *Popular Science Monthly*, *Nineteenth Century*, *Review of Reviews*. *Przegląd Pedagogiczny*, 1897, no. 12, vol. 16, p. 216.

83 Archiwum Biblioteki Publicznej, Kwitariusze (A. 108).

84 According to Krzywicki, initially the board of the reading room consisted of Jadwiga and Władysław Dawid, Bronisław Chlebowski, Piotr Chmielowski, Dr. Zofja Daszyńska, Ludwik Krzywicki, Miłgaj Malinowski and two representatives of university students. Almost all of them were involved in the Flying University. *Czytelnia Naukowa*, p. 33.

er.<sup>85</sup> In 1893-1898, Jadwiga Dawid took care of all organizational things. As Krzywicki said in his memoir: “Fundraising, collecting books, organizing lectures, concerts and balls for this cause were the exclusive responsibility of Jadwiga Dawidowa, who withdrew from these activities in 1898.”<sup>86</sup>

The circumstances of Jadwiga Dawid’s departure, or removal, as Krzywicki called it, remain unclear. Dąbrowski wrote in his memoirs published in 1925 when both Dawids were no longer alive: “In 1897 or 1898, Czytelnia Naukowa [actually, the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals] began to decline, and at the same time, there were misunderstandings between Mrs. Dawid and students who accused the board of unsatisfactory and negligent management and even of misappropriation.”<sup>87</sup>

In 1897, Jadwiga Dawid wrote and published a pamphlet *O potrzebie założenia biblioteki publicznej w Warszawie* [About the Need to Establish a Public Library in Warsaw].<sup>88</sup> In the text, she presented the deplorable situation of Warsaw’s inhabitants, especially the less wealthy, regarding public access to books and scientific and popular science periodicals. She pointed at examples of other cities, including cities in Russia, where well-equipped public libraries were operated thanks to municipal and/or private financial support. In the pamphlet, she mentioned the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals as an institution that, to a certain extent, fulfilled the function of the missing public library. She also wrote that in spite of huge interest from readers the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals was not able to survive without additional financial support from society, and she called for that support. As mentioned above, shortly after the publication of this text, Jadwiga Dawid left the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and

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85 J. Dąbrowski, *Czerwona Warszawa*, p. 166.

86 L. Krzywicki, *The Czytelnia Naukowa*, p. 34.

87 Dąbrowski uses the term “Czytelnia Naukowa,” but applies it at that time to the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals. J. Dąbrowski, *Czerwona Warszawa*, p. 166.

88 J. Szczawińska Dawid, *O potrzebie założenia Publicznej Biblioteki w Warszawie*.

Journals.<sup>89</sup> According to Radliński's memoirs, she left the reading room exhausted by constant fundraising activities and disappointed by the lack of understanding from society.<sup>90</sup>

#### CZYTELNIA NAUKOWA (1898-1907)

After Jadwiga Dawid withdrew from her organizational work at the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals, Józef Kochanowski and Przemysław Rudzki, representatives of the student association, temporarily took over supervision. They began seeking financial support and a new figurehead, i.e. a new fictional owner under whose name the reading room could be registered.<sup>91</sup> Bronisław Natanson, a social activist and sponsor involved in financing clandestine education, agreed to contribute funds needed to rebuild the reading room. The new stage was launched by a change of premises and a name change to "Czytelnia Naukowa."<sup>92</sup> Stanisław Stempowski, a friend of Natanson's from the university, became the reading room's manager. Natanson's financial assistance allowed to rent new, comfortable premises and employing two female librarians, one of whom also became a figurehead.<sup>93</sup> The new management also talked to people who had deposited their book collection in the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and

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- 89 In the news item published in April 1898 in the periodical *Głos*, the author, signed with initials "kz," informed that the circumstances of the reading room, which went recently through a crisis and even almost failed, improved after a new board took over the control. He wrote that the necessary upgrades were implemented, mainly in the required increase in the number of available journals and books. He also added that opening hours were extended. The reading room was to open daily from 10 am to 10 pm and on Sundays from 10 am to 6 pm. *Głos*, 1898, no. 17.
- 90 Archiwum Biblioteki Publicznej, Akta Towarzystwa Biblioteki Publicznej w Warszawie (A.162), leaves 78-80.
- 91 J. Dabrowski, *Czerwona Warszawa*, p. 166.
- 92 The detailed circumstances of these changes are unknown. It is possible that the change of name and premises was necessary because of the conflict with Jadwiga Dawid.
- 93 According to Stempowski, the figurehead was Jadwiga Skąpska, a teacher and activist in the clandestine educational movement. She also worked as a half-time librarian and lived in the apartment next to the reading room, which was supposed to lend credibility to her being the owner. S. Stempowski, "Bajeczne Dzieje Biblioteki Publicznej", *Bibliotekarz*, 1947, no. 11-12, p. 191.

Journals. According to Stempowski, almost all of them renounced their ownership of the deposits and donated them to Czytelnia Naukowa. Thanks to Natanson's financial support Czytelnia Naukowa was moved to comfortable premises consisting of a large reading room, a storage room, and an office and an apartment for the librarian. The reading room also started renewing the collection, including making subscriptions to foreign periodicals.<sup>94</sup> Natanson's financial support for Czytelnia Naukowa did not last long however, that is, until 1901, when it was withdrawn due to him falling seriously ill. After losing Natanson's contribution, it became impossible to further maintain Czytelnia Naukowa at the same level.<sup>95</sup> The collection was moved to more modest premises at 62 Nowy Świat. According to Krzywicki's and Stempowski's memoirs, from 1901 to 1904 Czytelnia Naukowa had to deal with many problems due to the lack of funds. Most of all, the organizers could not afford suitable premises, therefore the collection was frequently moved, and access to it had to be temporarily suspended.

According to Stempowski, during that period Czytelnia Naukowa was supervised by Aleksander Heflich, a known activist in the self-education movement who wrote popular self-study guides and was also involved in the organization of the Warsaw Philanthropic Society's free reading rooms, Stanisław Posner, a lawyer and social activist who also wrote articles on readership and libraries, Ludwik Krzywicki, and Józef Kochanowski as a student representative.<sup>96</sup>

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94 Still, it may be concluded that Natanson's support was not enough to purchase all periodicals because, according to Stempowski, students "went begging for suscriptions of national periodicals for free or at a significant discount." S. Stempowski, *Bajeczne Dzieje Biblioteki Publicznej*, p. 192.

95 Ibidem.

96 Krzywicki described the composition of the board of the Czytelnia Naukowa in a similar way. According to him, in 1898-1899, the board included Bronisław Natanson, Aleksander Heflich, Józef Kochanowski and Stanisław Stempowski, while from 1899 to 1901 the reading room was managed by Aleksander Heflich and Stanisław Posner, and for the next three years until 1904 the board included Ignacy Bendetson, Józef Kochanowski, Ludwik Krzywicki and Stanisław Posner. Krzywicki, *the Czytelnia Naukowa*, p. 34.

In 1904, an unregistered private contract transferred Czytelnia Naukowa's book collection and assets to a group of prominent figures from Warsaw's literary, scholarly, and financial circles. Members of this group were Samuel Dickstein, a professor of mathematics, Adam Count Krasiński, a writer, educational activist and editor of *Biblioteka Warszawska*; Leopold Baron Kronenberg, a financier; Stanisław Leszczyński, a well-known lawyer and long-standing president of the Department of Free Reading Rooms at the Warsaw Philanthropic Society, as well as Henryk Sienkiewicz who was already a famous writer.

The transfer agreement indicates that in 1904 the Czytelnia Naukowa was in severe debt.<sup>97</sup> The buyers acquired it for a sum which covered debts and obligations to the amount of 1139 rubles and 25 kopeks. To raise money, they wrote an appeal asking for support of the development of the Czytelnia Naukowa in which they asked for declarations to pay annual dues of 50 rubles for three years.<sup>98</sup> The Acts of the Public Library Society hold financial records of Czytelnia Naukowa dated from December 1906, listing forty three dues-paying supporters.<sup>99</sup>

Once again, the next stage in the development of Czytelnia Naukowa began with a change of official ownership. The new managing board recruited Celina Sielska as the new nominal owner and moved the collections to new premises at 41 Żurawia Street.<sup>100</sup> Czytelnia Naukowa was handed over to the new board in June 1904, and in July the press wrote about the move to new premises.<sup>101</sup>

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97 Archiwum Biblioteki Publicznej, Akta Czytelni Naukowej w Warszawie (A 110).

98 Over a dozen prints are preserved which ask for contributions to the development of the Czytelni Naukowej. Archiwum Biblioteki Publicznej, Akta Czytelni Naukowej (A 110).

99 Archiwum Biblioteki Publicznej, *Akta Towarzystwa Biblioteki Publicznej w Warszawie*, (A 162).

100 According to Krzywicki's memoirs, the new board of the Czytelnia Naukowa obtained a "regular subsidy offered by a group of benefactors, and that was how they ensured the continued existence of an institution in decline because of a lack of funds." L. Krzywicki, *Czytelnia Naukowa*, p. 34.

101 "The Czytelnia Naukowa which until now was located at 86 Jerozolimska Ave has been moved to 41 Żurawia Street." *Gazeta Polska*, 1904, no. 212.



In September, *Kurier Warszawski* published an announcement inviting to visit the new premises at 41 Żurawia Street.<sup>102</sup> The announcement encouraged a visit to the reading room by praising its large selection of scholarly books and Polish periodicals. According to the announcement, the reading room was open from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. and a single-entrance ticket still costed five kopeks. In early October, the same newspaper printed a longer text which said that Czytelnia Naukowa which had existed in Warsaw for the previous 15 years had recently moved from Jerozolimskie Ave to 41 Żurawia Street.<sup>103</sup> The premises included a large and well-lit room for reading on site. Like the September announcement, this one too mentioned the considerable collection of books which could be borrowed and taken home as well as the Polish periodicals on stock. It also said that the reading room subscribed foreign periodicals.<sup>104</sup> The following year, *Kurier Codzienny* systematically reminded readers about Czytelnia Naukowa at 41 Żurawia Street.<sup>105</sup> The reading room was open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekdays, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sundays and holidays, except for the holiday period in July and August when opening hours were shortened and the reading room was closed on Sundays and holidays.<sup>106</sup> An advertisement of October 1905 informed that the reading room had many foreign language periodicals on top of the Polish ones and also carried the most recent publications. Students were being lured by a 50% fee reduction.<sup>107</sup>

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102 *Kurjer Warszawski*, 1904, no. 270.

103 *Kurjer Warszawski*, 1904, no. 274.

104 In the Acts of the Public Library Society in Warsaw there is a list dated November 16, 1904 of titles of Polish and foreign periodicals preferred for subscription. The list spans several areas of knowledge: natural sciences and mathematics, philosophy, pedagogy, ethnography, geography, history, literature. Archiwum Biblioteki Publicznej m.st. Warszawy, Akta Towarzystwa Biblioteki Publicznej w Warszawie. (A 162).

105 In 1905, *Kurier Codzienny*, had announcements in the following issues: 67, 69, 70, 87, 109, 113, 115, 148, 171, 176, 196, 204, 205, 211, 261, 262.

106 *Kurier Codzienny*, 1905, issues: 176, 196, 204, 205, 211

107 *Kurier Codzienny*, 1905, no. 261.

In the Acts of Public Library Society, there is a small collection of invoices from bookstores in Poland and abroad for ordered books and periodicals relating to the time between 1904 and 1906.<sup>108</sup> There are also handwritten lists of titles of books and periodicals planned to be ordered for the Czytelnia Naukowa. These documents indicate that Dickstein was the person who approved purchases and subscriptions of titles.

When tsarist authorities consented to the creation of the Public Library Society in 1906, Czytelnia Naukowa was transferred to this Society as stipulated by the contract signed in 1904.<sup>109</sup> At the organizational meeting of the Society, which took place on February 2, 1907, Dickstein, who was one of the founding members, announced that the Society had taken over the ownership of Czytelnia Naukowa with a book collection counting ca. 3000 volumes and become “the first and principal foundation of the future Public Library.”<sup>110</sup>

The last stage of Czytelnia Naukowa’s activities, once the involvement of influential people from the cultural elites and the organization of broader financial support had freed it from debt and brought it back to an active life, was, in a sense, the realization of the project which Jadwiga Dawid had drafted in 1897. It was also a bridge between Czytelnia Naukowa’s history as a grassroots self-help organization of the progressive self-education movement and the official project of a public library in a large city with active involvement of the city’s cultural and financial elites.

### SUMMARY

The transfer of Czytelnia Naukowa to the Public Library Society ended the institution’s underground history whose creation in the

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108 Archiwum Biblioteki Publicznej, Akta Towarzystwa Biblioteki Publicznej w Warszawie. (A 162).

109 Krzywicki writes that attempts to obtain a permit for the opening of a public library in Warsaw began in 1904 and succeeded in 1906. L. Krzywicki, *Czytelnia Naukowa*, p. 34.

110 Zebranie organizacyjne Towarzystwa Biblioteki Publicznej w Warszawie, *Przebieg Biblioteczny*, 1908, no. 1, p. 27-30.

period between 1890 and 1906 had actively involved many women and men who together had created the politically diverse clandestine educational and self-education movement. The history of Czytelnia Naukowa is, above all, the history of people who fought for the right to education and intellectual freedom in politically oppressed Warsaw. Czytelnia Naukowa, in its various branches and stages, was a typical grassroots endeavour with a broad reach. It was made possible by the involvement of many people: those who deposited their private or collective libraries in it, those who paid membership dues, those who, like Jadwiga Dawid, contributed to its existence through pro bono organizational work, and also readers of both genders who added their small entrance fees to its budget and gave it its basic goal and *raison d'être*. The reading rooms with periodicals and scholarly books, which led up to the creation of Czytelnia Naukowa, were an important educational support structure and a space for intellectual exchange for women studying at Flying University. Not only did they provide access to the most recent scholarly publications but they were also a place for meetings and discussions. This space was particularly important for women because it gave them access not just to knowledge but also to a place where they could work, meet, and become active together. In a publication about the Flying University, Janina Mackiewicz-Wojciechowska wrote that “probably all women attending the Flying University and all progressive elements of Warsaw of that time passed through Czytelnia Naukowa, one of the few intellectual centers of the capital.”<sup>111</sup> Memoirs and press materials indicate that mainly women went to Czytelnia Naukowa, founded in 1890, at 34 Nowy Świat Street. Receipt books from the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals show that women accounted for a significant proportion of the people who borrowed books from that reading room. Women were also highly involved in organizational tasks. They were the so-called figureheads, women who lent their names to register the reading room as a com-

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111 Janina Mackiewicz-Wojciechowska, Uniwersytet „Latający”, p. 21.

mercial entity. Women also attended to readers of both genders, working pro bono as volunteers or for a small salary.

Many of the readers at Czytelnia Naukowa, especially at the incarnation which originated from the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals, were men studying at higher education institutions in Warsaw, especially those involved in the student self-education movement. The student association Fraternal Aid not only deposited its library at the Reading Room of Scholarly Books and Journals; its members participated in organizational work and fundraising and tried to negotiate better purchasing conditions for periodicals and books from Warsaw book dealers. In addition to the organizers and lecturers of the Flying University and student self-help organizations, many other people from the progressive Warsaw intelligentsia were involved in the creation of the Czytelnia Naukowa: authors, publishers, and lawyers. People connected with the Department of Free Reading Rooms of the Warsaw Philanthropic Society and leading figures of the Warsaw self-education movement, like authors of self-study guides were instrumental in saving of the economically failing Czytelnia Naukowa.

Krzywicki wrote that “the history of the reading room is the history of a struggle of the most progressive segment of our activists with the lack of books and the absence of a collection of scholarly journals.”<sup>112</sup> Most of all, they were struggling with the challenges of financing such an ambitious endeavour. “We constantly had to struggle with the lack of money which did not allow us to renew subscriptions of periodicals, purchase new books, and thereby generate revenue. For this reason, one of the most important issues was finding people who would be willing to pay annual dues.”<sup>113</sup> Krzywicki explained in his memoirs that “in normal political conditions, such an institution would have been subsidized by the city or maintained through open fundraising - however, those times

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112 L. Krzywicki, *Czytelnia Naukowa*, p. 35.

113 Ibidem, p. 32.

forced people to gather funds secretly, putting the fundraisers at the risk of administrative fines. It was a thorny road, involving both a lot of work and the danger of arrest.”<sup>114</sup>

For a scholarly library, the Czytelnia Naukowa was a relatively modest endeavour with several thousand books mainly from private deposits and with a number of periodicals not exceeding, in the best of times, about a hundred titles. For Warsaw’s male, and especially female students, it was an important place where, at an accessible price which was lower than those at typical commercial reading rooms, they had access to important Polish and foreign titles, including those containing the newest and most progressive ideas. Titles of periodicals and books were selected by specialists, mainly lecturers at the Flying University or activists in the self-education movement. These titles were not available at the university library or at secondary school libraries in Warsaw.

*Translated by Elżbieta Olechowska*

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114 Ibidem, p. 33-34.