

ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE JEWS

APPENDIX II

Salomon Czortkower: A Biographical Note

Born in Lwów in 1903, the son of a well-to-do orthodox Jewish family long settled in that city, Salomon Czortkower entered the Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów after completing the period of his military service and obtaining a commission as lieutenant in the 6th Podhale Rifle Regiment. Originally he intended to study medicine but, for some technical reason, having failed to be admitted to the Medical Faculty, he started to study anthropology and prehistory; very soon he became captivated by these two disciplines and forgot all about his earlier plans.

• He obtained the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1931 for his dissertation *Prehistoric Spain in the Light of Anthropology*. Owing to his meticulous care in details and a general synthetic approach, this work in its final version appeared in print as late as 1936 in the form of a monograph, *Racial Character of the Prehistoric Population of the Iberian Peninsula*. This monograph gave a general picture of the changes in the anthropological structure of the population of that region so closely connected with the Mediterranean sphere of the African continent. The most important result of this work was to show that a specific characteristic of the Spanish population is a frequent occurrence of an Oriental component which is a characteristic feature of the Hamito-Semitic people, a feature which began in the neolithic age, grew stronger in the bronze age and was weakened in later times. The concentration on the Oriental component brought Czortkower to an intensive preoccupation with the anthropology of the Jews. This preoccupation delayed the completion of his dissertation and obtaining his doctorate. Before publishing his dissertation, Czortkower wrote an analytical essay surveying the field of the anthropology of the Jews. It was published in the German journal *Anthropologischer Anzeiger* in 1932 under the title 'Anthropologische Struktur der Juden'. This paper was later completed by detailed analytical surveys of the Jews in Caucasia, Yemenite Jews, various groups of Polish and Lithuanian Jews, American immigrant Jews, and Polish and Crimean Karaites. Czortkower also published many essays devoted to the question of the origin of blond Jews and on the anthropological elements influencing the stature of the Jewish population. Working incessantly, Czortkower travelled all over Poland gathering observational material. He also received grants to go abroad, but his work there did not yield the expected results. He could not obtain the support of the Jewish communities in Denmark or Holland. He had to give up his plan to write an anthropological study of the European Diaspora. The material he was able to gather and work out analytically was intended for the 'habilitation' thesis which was to secure for him the Chair of Anthropology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. This was promised to him during one of his visits to Vienna where he gave an account of his researches. He was regarded abroad as one of the most authoritative anthropologists among those who took an interest in the racial problems of the Jewish people. In the publication of the Czech Academy devoted to the problem of equality of all European races, Czortkower was asked to write the eighth chapter, devoted to Jews. The eminent Czech Slavist, Lubor Niederle, there wrote about Slavs in general and I myself on the Polish population.

In addition to the preparatory work for his 'habilitation' thesis Czortkower undertook other scientific studies. Taking an interest early in his studies in the problems of archeological anthropology, he shifted his interest to the problems of early history and prepared another work on this subject, of which he published only a small fragment devoted to the crania from Ulwówek, which was published in the memorial volume to the very eminent Czech anthropologist, Jindřich Matiegka, as well as an essay about the Dniester Crania dating from the historical period. The main theme of this substantial work was to be an analysis of the crania of the population of the Czechy-Wysocko culture collected by Czortkower during the excavations undertaken by Professor Tadeusz Sulimirski. However, he did not succeed in the analysis of these crania, as it required painstaking conservational measures which were interrupted by the outbreak of the war. The crania were excavated in a stage of considerable decay having been buried for a long time. The only information about the anthropological structure of the present inhabitants of Wysocko village where the excavated

prehistoric cemetery was found is given in my book *Man in Time and Space*. In the same manner other analytical fragments from his work were saved as, for example, those referring to the Basques of the bronze age, the people of the string culture at Gross-Tschernosek, Ossetes of Caucasia, Jews buried in the Prague cemetery of the seventeenth century, the present Polish population from the neighbourhood of Olkienniki in Lithuania, the crania of alleged Goths from the Black Sea from the third century C.E., as well as those of Greeks from the ancient colony at the mouth of the Dnieper, excavated in Maricyn village.

In the thirties Czortkower worked voluntarily at the Institute of Anthropology at the University of Lwów and as an assistant at the Stomatological Clinic, being at the same time a Secretary of the journal *Polska Stomatologia*. He published a number of papers on the margins of anthropology and stomatology; to mention only a few: an assessment of the age of a cranium on the basis of the state of its dentition, a general survey of anthropological researches in the field of stomatology published in the journal *Zeitschrift fuer Stomatologie*, with an extensive summary in *Wiener Klinische Wochenschrift*, a longer paper on heredity as an element in the creation of various anthropological and constitutional types, and a shorter paper on heredity. Besides his purely scientific and research work, Czortkower wrote many popular articles in the field of anthropology. They were published in the literary and scientific supplement of the most popular Polish daily, *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny* in Cracow. Written in a vivid, popular, and interesting style, they contributed in no small measure to the popularizing of the research work of the Lwów school of anthropology and contributed to the wide interest in it among our intelligentsia. The popularity of anthropological publications which maintained a high scientific standard was to a very large measure the result of Czortkower's popularizing activities. The outbreak of the war found Czortkower in Lwów. I managed to secure for him the position of lecturer in Statistics and Anthropology at the University in spite of the rather unfriendly attitude of the new University authorities. For example, they did not allow Czortkower to deliver a lecture at a scientific session of the University on the anthropology of Jews. However, until the German occupation we were allowed to work more or less peacefully. The Germans closed the University and we were prohibited from entering the library and laboratory of the Anthropological Institute.

In the first period of the German occupation, after twenty-six professors and lecturers had been murdered on the night of 3 and 4 July 1941, Czortkower took the position of Director of the Statistical Office of the Jewish Kehilla. For the time being I maintained contact with him. He was in a depressed state of mind, and once in the summer of 1942 he asked me to convey his farewell to the Institute of Anthropology with which he had been connected for so many years of his scientific activity. In spite of our efforts to take him out of the ghetto, he insisted on staying for the sake of his parents and sisters, whom he loved dearly. His wife, who was non-Jewish, obtained permission from the Germans to live in the ghetto to share the fate of her husband.

Salomon Czortkower was 'liquidated' some time early in the spring of 1943.

List of the main scientific works of Salomon Czortkower

- 'Anthropologische Struktur der Juden', *Anthropologischer Anzeiger*, 1932, Vol. IX, pp. 250-63.
- 'Lebky z Ulwówka', *Anthropologie* (Prague), 1932, Vol. X, pp. 212-18.
- 'Podłoże rasowe Żydów kaukaskich', *Archiwum Lwowskiego Towarzystwa Naukowego*, 1933, Vol. VI, pp. 143-76.
- 'Ustalenie wieku czaszki', *Polska Stomatologia*, 1935, Vol. XI, pp. 325-34.
- 'O dziedziczności progenii', *Polska Stomatologia*, 1935, Vol. XII, pp. 207-16.
- 'Hiszpania przedhistoryczna pod względem rasowym', *Przegląd Antropologiczny*, 1934, Vol. VIII, pp. 97-109.
- 'Z badań nad problemami rasowymi Żydów', *Miesięcznik Żydowski*, 1934, Vol. IV, pp. 510-49.
- 'Żydzi Amerykańscy—Studenci pod względem rasowym', *Przegląd Antropologiczny*, 1935, Vol. IX, pp. 97-109.
- Die Rassen Zentraleuropas, VIII. Die Juden*. Symposium of the Czech Academy in Prague, 1935.

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- 'Naddniestrzański czaszki historyczne', *Wiadomości Archeologiczne*, 1936, Vol. XIV, p. 91.
- 'Ergebnisse anthropologischer Untersuchungen in der Stomatologie', *Zeitschrift fuer Stomatologie*, 1936, Vol. XXIV, pp. 577-93; summary in *Wiener Klinische Wochenschrift*, 1936, Nos. 31-2, pp. 980-3.
- 'Charakter Rasowy przedhistorycznej ludności półwyspu Pirenejskiego', *Archiwum Lwowkiego Towarzystwa Naukowego*, 1936, Vol. X, pp. 359-454; summary in *Sprawozdania z posiedzeń Towarzystwa Naukowego we Lwowie*, 1937, Vol. XVII, pp. 180-2.
- 'Wzrost Żydów jako funkcja rasy i środowiska.' *Almanach Zdrowia Tozu i Szpitala Żydowskiego*, Lwów, 1937; separate offprint, pp. 1-37.
- 'Die Herkunft der blonden Juden', *Przegląd Antropologiczny*, 1938, Vol. XII, pp. 521-532.
- 'Skład Rasowy Żydów z Jemenu', *Przegląd Antropologiczny*, 1938, Vol. XII, pp. 521-32.
- 'Pochodzenie i Struktura Rasowa Karaimów', *Przegląd Antropologiczny*, 1938, Vol. XII, pp. 678-80.
- 'Dziedziczność jako czynnik powstawania typów antropologicznych i konstytucyjnych ze stanowiska stomatologicznego', *Polska Stomatologia*, 1938, No. 4, pp. 127-44.