Chapter 8
Black Warsaw

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Being a conservative white homogeneous society, Poland addressed the murder of George Floyd with increasing incidents of intolerance toward People of African Descent (PAD) and Persons of Color (PoC). Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests in the streets of major cities such as Warsaw, Krakow, and Poznań highlighted the various manifestations of racism, xenophobia, intolerance, and discrimination at both societal and institutional levels that affect every aspect of Black life in Poland today, including unequal access to education and employment, racial abuse and violence in public places (for example, on public transport), restrictions of movement due to overzealous policing, and hate crimes, among other instances.

The major BLM protests occurred in Warsaw on two different dates. The first BLM event, which was organized by a local non-governmental organization (NGO), Przychodnia Skłot, took place in front of the US embassy on May 31, six days after the incident. The second demonstration took place on June 4 and was organized by No Justice No Peace-Poland.[1] Among the protesters was Bianka Nwolisa, a young girl carrying a sign saying "Stop calling me *Murzyn*." Her actions were part of a larger campaign by Black women in Poland to address racial discrimination (Mecking and Terry 2020). The term has long been used to refer to Black people in Poland and has its roots in the English word "Moor." As argued in Chapters 1 and 4, it is outdated and offensive, but it is also symbolic of the attitude of the white majority society toward Blackness in the country.

1 "Black Lives Matter in Poland", *Detroiter in Poland*, July 29, 2020 (https://v8mile.wordpress.com/2020/07/29/black-lives-matter-in-poland/)

While "*Czarny*" means "Black," "*M....n*" has a disparaging social connotation. It is used to replace the N-word. As the status of white Poles is often perceived as inferior by other Europeans in the West, using the term for Black people allows them to feel better about themselves, since Black people are considered to be inferior in every aspect. In a widely published scandal in 2014, involving top government officials, central bankers, and ministers, among others, Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski was reported to have said that the mentality of Poles in general is suffering from "*Murzyńskość*" – a derogatory and racially loaded term to mean thinking "like a Negro." He continued to allege that Poles suffer from a lack of pride and low self-esteem, referring to the Polish–American alliance, which he described as worthless and harmful (Omolo 2017: 77).

In the same year, Janusz Korwin-Mikke, who led Poland's small New Right Congress party during the European parliamentary elections, affirmed that the minimum wage should be "destroyed." He claimed that "four million N*s" lost their jobs in the USA as a result of President John F. Kennedy signing a bill on the minimum wage in 1961. He also asserted that 20 million young Europeans were being treated as "N*s" as a consequence of the minimum wage (Omolo 2017: 78). The list of examples goes on. In 2012, Law and Justice Party (PiS) MP Marek Suski was overheard in parliament referring to Nigerian-born John Godson, then a member of Civic Platform and Poland's first ever Black MP, as "your N*" (ibid.). And in early 2016, Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski said on national television that Poland's new government had shed the country's "N* mentality" when it came to relations with the USA (ibid.). These discourses create a particular image of Black people – or, rather, a precise image associated with the term. Even though the term is regarded as contentious, for many it remains a justifiable and uncontroversial depiction of Black people in Poland.

Even though the Black community has been outspoken about the myriad manifestations of racism, their outcry has been muted by unfolding events. A recent exhibition at the Polish State Museum, for example, clearly confirms the insensitivity that Blacks say is part of mainstream culture. A white Danish provocateur, Uwe Max Jensen, was invited to perform during the opening of the exhibition. During the performance he waved a Confederate flag, stripped naked, painted his body black with the help of another artist, and dragged himself on the floor as he repeated the words "I can't breathe!" – not only George Floyd's but also Eric Garner's last words (Gera 2021). But some

continue to deny these realities. Polish right-wing politicians and social critics, for example, openly ridiculed BLM, distancing Polish reality from such actions.

Despite the uproar about systemic injustices, most Poles were concerned with the defacing of a statue of Andrzej Tadeusz Bonawentura Kościuszko (1746–1817), a Polish general, recognized as the ultimate freedom fighter in the Russo-Polish War of 1792. From 1776 to 1783, Kościuszko also fought for the USA in the American War of Independence. A statue of him was erected in Washington DC and another one in Warsaw. The letters BLM were written on both statues, an action condemned by Polish President Andrzej Duda and other prominent political leaders, brushing over the potential legitimacy of the protests, or the possible link between their cause and Kościuszko himself. The writing was swiftly removed, and protesters warned not to repeat the offense. The country's BLM movement, however, has not yet recognized that Kościuszko was, in fact, a great ally to the cause. He is considered one of the country's greatest national heroes. Although unequivocally a symbol of Polishness, at the same time he represented the ideals of the Enlightenment and supported the worldwide abolitionist movement (Klajn 2020).

Kościuszko opposed the ideology of racial subjugation and white supremacy. Based on his speeches and correspondence, as well as on his last will, he was an avid abolitionist, condemning enslavement and racial prejudice. In one instance, for example, when he was rewarded with an enslaved African for his military achievements, he immediately set him free. According to experts, Kościuszko not only fought for the rights of white peasants in Poland, but, when dealing with Thomas Jefferson, he insisted on the ransom and liberation of enslaved people in the USA. He was also an advocate for the Jews worldwide (Brzezinska 2017). Kościuszko's legacy carries a clear sociopolitical relevance to the BLM movement, even though this particular aspect of history remains widely unrecognized by many Poles and appears especially overlooked by the nation's current political leaders.

The defacing of the Kościuszko statue, however, did present an opportunity to question the lack of monuments to Afro-Polish historical figures, such as the associate of Kościuszko, Jean Lapierre. Lapierre was Kościuszko's own valet and confidante. As a Black man with an unclear country of origin, he was nicknamed "Domingo," a clue that he may have come from the island of Saint-Domingue in the Caribbean. He immigrated to Poland in 1796, and, with his aptitude for languages and accounting, he became a bookkeeper for

a Polish nobleman. He was later at the commander's side as he led a revolt to try to free white serfs enslaved by feudalism. His portrait can be seen at the Polish military museum in Warsaw (Boston 2021).

African Immigration to Warsaw

The history of Africans in Poland is characterized by three types of immigration that play key roles at various stages: education, asylum seeking, and family reunification. Asylum-seeking immigration is minimal and covers very few African countries, such as Somalia, Eritrea, Central African Republic, and Libya. Family reunifications are also small in number due to the many restrictions of the Polish government and the Polish embassies in Africa. The majority of immigration from the African continent came through educational immigration, mostly under the communist regime during a period when the country supported the anticolonial movements in Africa as a part of the Soviet strategy (Pędziwiatr and Balogun 2018). Back then, many African students, mainly men, came to Poland through exchange programs between Poland and socialist African countries.[2] During this time, the incoming African students integrated well with the local population, becoming pioneers of the emerging African community. They lived among Poles, shared houses and apartments with them, even married white Polish women, and established NGOs promoting African culture (Omolo 2017).

As a show of solidarity with some of these African states, the communist leaders of the Polish People's Republic promoted socialism as they embarked on a path to independence. Between July 31 and August 14, 1955, Poland hosted the 5th World Festival of Youth and Students in Warsaw. This event was attended by 30,000 delegates from 114 countries. Among them were 911 delegates from then colonized territories in Africa. The gathering was organized by the anti-imperialist and left-wing World Federation of Democratic Youth, an international youth organization founded in London in 1945 with the aim of uniting youth from the allied West with those of capitalist and socialist nations (McDuffie 2011: 247). For many Poles, it was their first

2 In his book *Strangers at the Gate: Black Poland* (2017), James Omolo documents the number of students from different African countries present in Poland between 1976 and 1977, almost 3,000 in total.

contact with Black people and PoC after the destruction of the Second Polish Republic, which had been more multicultural, during World War Two. The festival offered images for Polish press photographs that showed PAD beyond racist stereotypes; these were showcased at the exhibition "Afro PRL," curated by Polish photographer Bartosz Nowicki at the Cultural Institute of Warsaw in 2018 (Greenhill 2021).

However, the presence of Africans at the world festival was limited to a few diplomats or students on scholarships. Back then, students needed to return to their countries of origin upon completing their studies. Official statistics from this period show that the number of African graduates in the country increased steadily from just over 200 in the 1960s to almost 400 in the 1970s, rising to more than 700 during the 1980s (Pędziwiatr and Balogun 2018). It was only those who graduated at the time of the collapse of the Berlin Wall who had the opportunity of seeking a livelihood in Poland and stayed (Omolo 2017).

Despite the small number of Africans who settled in Poland, Black people have become a permanent feature of Polish reality. In large cities, seeing PAD is no longer considered exceptional, although they are by no means a common sight. Contemporary figures such as Professor Killion Munyama, a former member of the Polish parliament who came to Poland during communism as a student, demonstrate the progress made by Africans in the country. Professor Munyama stands out even though he is a Polish citizen. One of the country's African political stars, Munyama has been living in Poland for almost 40 years. He is an economist and academic lecturer who served as a local government councilor in Grodzisk (2002–6) and as regional councilor in the province of Greater Poland (2007–10). He was also a member of parliament from 2011 to 2021, and he sat on several committees, such as public finance and the foreign affairs committee. Munyama resigned in June 2021 to take a job in Brussels as an envoy at the European level on EU–Africa relations.

Still, the political landscape in Poland, as in other countries in Europe, has contributed to the negative image of immigrants, characterizing them as a problem and a risk to Polish culture. This has generated an upswing in attacks on PAD and panic among these distressed communities and groups. Without doubt, the current government – a right-wing conservative Catholic government – legitimizes nationalistic and fascist groups. With the mushrooming of these groups across the country, political discourse and narrative

openly embrace and express hate speech and propagate negative, prejudicial, and stereotypical information about PAD and other groups of color. The intolerant discourse is facilitated by the use of social media and a variety of internet sites and portals that fan the flames of hatred and intolerance across all sectors of society (Omolo 2020).

For Mamadou Diouf, a Senegalese journalist and cofounder of the Afryka Another Way foundation,[3] who has lived in Poland since 1983, othering is a part of life for Black people in the country. The use of racist terms is commonplace, he says, describing how the words "bamboo" and "asphalt" are widely used when referring to Blacks. As a young student he recalls that he and others had to take an AIDS test although Polish students did not. And in 2015 he heard talk circulating about viruses and bacteria crossing the Mediterranean in the bodies of refugees (Gutfrański 2019). In 2010, Diouf published a book on Africans in the city, titled *Africa in Warsaw: The History of the African Diaspora on the Vistula River*, in which he highlighted Black war hero August Browne's story (to be discussed later). Today, he publishes a blog about life in Poland for Africans. He says that Poland is now home and that you do not need the permission of locals to feel that way (ibid.).

Meanwhile, data on Black people living in Poland is for the most part unavailable. The only existing information is collected and published by the office of foreign affairs. The primary downside is the fact that data is available based on country of birth, but not on acquired citizenship or naturalization. The population of the African diaspora or PAD living in Poland is therefore tentative. Official statistics are based on Africans living in Poland, but they do not include persons of the second or third generation who were born in Poland. It is estimated that there are between 4,000 and 5,000 Africans in the country. Yet, the size and geographical distribution of the African diaspora and the population of individual areas are also uncertain. The African diaspora is spread across the country, from small villages to big cities. The main areas of residence are the metropolises of Warsaw, Kraków, Poznań, Łódź, and Gdańsk, where there are better job opportunities and earning potential.

Unlike other countries in Europe, Poland does not have a well-structured public housing system. Therefore, a majority of Black people are absorbed in

3 "Fundacja „Afryka Inaczej"," *Anna Lindh Foundation Euromed* (https://www.annalindhfoundation.org/members/fundacja-afryka-inaczej)

the private housing sector with no particular area of concentration for the Black community. Similarly, data on the level of education of PAD in Poland does not exist. There is, however, some information on Africans who are registered at education institutions in Poland. African embassies have statistics for their respective citizens who register with them, but unfortunately many Africans do not register at their embassies at all. Most of the students enroll in Polish language schools for one year, after which they join Polish universities. Fields of study vary from journalism, law, economics, and business to social sciences, natural sciences, engineering, medicine, and health sciences, among other subjects.

Churches play a central role in the lives of PAD in Poland. Church communities are among the few Black institutions in the country with robust frameworks. The distribution of PAD in Poland based on denomination is not known precisely; however, in major cities, especially in Warsaw, the Anglican Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Seventh-Day Adventists are the main churches providing spiritual connection to Africans. There are also a number of churches led by Africans, such as the Redeemed Christian Church of God and Imago Dei Ministries, among others. These churches are not only a place of worship; they also engage in social and cultural activities that connect them with the local community. In addition to their religious functions, religious leaders provide social, psychological, and moral support in the everyday lives of their members.

Honoring Two Africans for the Warsaw Uprising

Black Poles had not been considered prominent heroes of national history until summer 2020, when Polish and international media picked up and covered the stories of Józef Sam Sandi and August Agboola "Ali" Browne, two Africans who played significant roles in the Warsaw Uprising. Lest we forget, the two memorials honoring these men are not just commemorative sites of their involvement, but also symbols that encourage the Black community to feel a sense of national pride and, thus, that they contribute significantly to Black Polish identity.

The first, a 1.2 meter-high monument, is the brainchild of Jarema Dubiel, the director of the Freedom and Peace Movement Foundation. It was unveiled by the Warsaw mayor Rafał Trzaskowski in August 2019, and commemorates

August Agboola Browne (1895–1976). At the time, Dubiel said the honor was a reminder that Poland has a tradition of granting citizenship and national rights to anyone willing to shed their blood for the country.[4] The tribute to the legendary Black insurgent stands at the intersection of Chmielna and Zlota streets in the Polish capital, where the Nigerian-born jazz musician settled with his family before becoming a soldier in 1944. Its sloping top bears the inscription in both Polish and English:

> In honor of Augustine Agboola Browne. Nom de guerre, Ali, a jazz musician and participant in the Warsaw Uprising of African origin. Poland was the country he chose to live in.

Figure 8.1: A plaque to August Agboola Browne in Warsaw. Photograph: afryka.org

Browne arrived in Warsaw in 1922, after a stay in London and the free city of Danzig, where he had played drums in local clubs. Although his marriage failed, Browne had arranged for his two sons and their mother to seek refuge in England at the outbreak of the war while he remained in Poland to fight for the resistance. His second daughter from his second marriage, his only surviving child in Britain, was born in 1959 and brought up in London, where Browne died in 1976 when she was just 17 (Boston 2020). However, it took until August 2, 2019 for Warsaw city council to commemorate the national

4 "Warsaw Rising black insurgent commemorated," August 3, 2019 (https://polandin.com/43789422/warsaw-rising-black-insurgent-commemorated)

hero, as Browne's story lies only in the margins of the 1944 Warsaw Uprising's mainstream narrative.

The Nigerian immigrant became part of the history of Warsaw not only as a talented musician, but also as a participant of the Warsaw Uprising – the largest underground military operation in German-occupied Europe. When Hitler attacked Warsaw in the so-called *Blitzkrieg*, Browne was ready to fight for his host country. When Germany invaded Poland in 1939, he participated in the resistance and five years later he also fought during the Uprising. In exile in London, he enlisted as a member of the "Iwo" Battalion of the Armia Krajowa (Home Army), the largest resistance army at that time. He served in the home army primarily by relaying intelligence. The Uprising resulted in over 300,000 casualties, mostly civilians. Browne survived the war and in the late 1940s embarked on playing music again.

Figure 8.2: A plaque honoring World War One hero Józef Sam Sandi. Photograph: James Omolo

As Dr. Zbigniew Osiński, an archivist at the Warsaw Rising Museum describes, Browne was a charismatic individual who assimilated very well in society (Karski 2015). Recently, his story has gained popularity. And while he is not featured among prominent Polish heroes, his recognition with a plaque and portrait at the museum has made him part of national history. Browne's story is a great inspiration and resonates with the realities of many Black people in the country today.

In the western part of Poland, in the duchy of Warsaw, a second plaque – this time to a Cameroonian insurgent – also reminds us of Black Polish history. It commemorates Józef Sam Sandi and reads:

> African, citizen of the Republic of Poland. A soldier of the forming Polish Army fighting for the creation of Polish borders. A boxer, wrestler, 'Iron Man' and a loving father.[5]

Sandi came to Poland with the French army during World War One. As a German prisoner of war, he landed in one of the camps in Greater Poland, from where he was freed by the Poles. Grateful to them, Sandi offered his help in the fight against the common enemy. As a result, the Cameroonian was given a Polish uniform and assigned to one of the units that were to fight the Germans. Since Sandi showed a willingness and had a skill that was not very common at the time – namely, being able to drive a car – he joined the insurgent ranks as a driver (Zaradniak 2018).

From then on, Sandi took an active part in the Greater Poland uprising that broke out in Poznań on December 27, 1918. The *Kurier Poznański* newspaper later described him as an exemplary soldier and patriot who was liked by his colleagues. When the war was over, Sandi left the military and started a civilian life, trying to find happiness in Warsaw. He provided English tutoring to ladies in high society and drove taxis, but neither job brought in the expected earnings – perhaps a Black teacher and taxi driver might have been too unusual at the time. In search of another source of income, Sandi started boxing and, after gaining enough weight, eventually picked up wrestling. In 1929, the Staniewski brothers bought a circus on Ordynacka Street and expanded their repertoire to include wrestling fights, which were soon to become popular. It is there where Sandi found a steady income, as the audience became more attracted to and curious about his race. Thus, his fights started to gather larger crowds over time.

After the Polish–Bolshevik wars, at a time when interracial marriages were unheard of, Sandi married his former language student, the 18-year-old Lucia Wozniak. This led to Lucia's family disinheriting her, as they could not accept their daughter marrying a Black man, despite the fact that Sandi was baptized, had adopted the Polish name Józef as his first name, and was fluent in Polish, English, and French. However, their love bloomed, and their two daughters were born – first Gabrysia and then, four years later, Krys-

5 "Sam Sandi (1885-1937)" (https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/people-global-african-history/sam-sandi-1885-1937/)

tyna. It was only when Sandi's income increased that Lucia's family eventually accepted him (Neybaur 2019).

After moving to Gniewkowo and ending his employment with the circus, Sandi found a job in one of the restaurants in Poznań in the mid-1930s. He was officially employed as a cloakroom attendant, but it is highly probable that he also acted as a bouncer to ease any disputes between the guests.[6] In 1935, his older daughter, Gabrysia, fell seriously ill and died. Sandi never came to terms with her death. Depressed, he also began to have health problems, and he died unexpectedly on April 29, 1937, while out on the street in Poznań. The cause of death, cerebral hemorrhage, was most likely linked to his past of wrestling and boxing. Today, the descendants of the Black Polish wrestler live in cities in Poland and Germany (Neybaur 2019).

Józef Sam Sandi's funeral took place on May 1, 1937. He was buried in the Górczyński cemetery. Unfortunately, his grave was lost over time. However, in painter Leon Prauziński's engraving, *The Colonial Army*, three insurgents were depicted: the Chinese Zdzisław Chen Defu, the German Paul Krenz, and the Black Pole Sam Sandi. The three insurgents aroused the interest of radio and TV journalists Małgorzata Jańczak and Aleksander Przybylski, who started looking for them one by one. Chen Defu was quickly and easily found, because his Polish path had already been documented. However, with Sam Sandi it was more complicated. The first leads were through an open letter on the internet written by Sandi's great-granddaughter saying that she would be very happy to get information about him. A search of the archives began and Sandi's story slowly unfolded.

After getting approval, the journalists started fundraising for a plaque and managed to raise enough money with the support of the city council. On Saturday, December 22, 2018, a plaque in honor of Józef Sam Sandi, the Black Greater Poland insurgent, was unveiled at the Górczyński cemetery in Poznań. With the support of Filip Suś from the Society of Hipolit Cegielski,[7] Jańczak and Przybylski also hope to install a bench at Powstańców Wielko-

6 "Zelazny czlowiek dandys i diabel rogaty." Sam Sandi pokochal Polske i Polke" (https://tvn24.pl/magazyn-tvn24/zelazny-czlowiek-dandys-i-diabel-rogaty-sam-sandi-pokochal-polske-i-polke,151,2656)

7 The Hipolit Cegielski Society grants awards and lays a foundation for the quality of Polish cultural, economic, and social life. (https://www.thc.org.pl/PL-H74/hipolit-cegielski-society---its-concept-and-objective.html)

polskich Street once city hall accepts its design by Rafał Hodyra (Zaradniak 2018).

Organizing Blackness: Where Africans and Poles Meet

PAD have founded and been active in organizations in Poland for decades. Their aim is to secure assistance in socioeconomic areas and preserve their cultural identity in the context of discrimination and marginalization. They face significant forms of racism, from overt micro-aggressions to more insidious examples such as hate crimes and institutional racism. And although racism and discrimination lie squarely within the context of race and phenotypical categorization, especially in derogatory words such as those mentioned above and monkey chants prevalent in everyday life, the social concept of race is hardly present in Poland. Recently, a famous priest, Tadeusz Rydzyk, made a public remark on national television asking Poles not to marry people from other cultures, especially Africans, because they have to preserve the "white race," referring to a biological categorization.[8]

Living in Poland, it becomes obvious that Polish people have little contact with Africans, considering that Africans constitute about 0.001 percent of the entire population. Therefore, little was known about Africa in the past, or about what constituted the stereotypes surrounding the continent and its people. This gave rise to the establishment of NGOs to tackle these issues, including the Afryka Connect Foundation, established in 2012. Its initial goals were to serve as a platform where Africans and Poles can interact and get to know each other and gain knowledge of Africa. It also strives to provide the African community with engaging activities that can integrate them in society. The cultural, economic, and educational gaps between Poland and Africa are bridged, through seminars, workshops, consultancy, and educational exchange programs. And although the foundation is based in the capital, these activities are held across the country. In 2016, it planned to build an African Center in Warsaw, as a vital space for the wellbeing of the Black community in Poland, a space for participating in social activities such as

8 "O. Rydzyk odradza słuchaczom zawierania „małżeństw mieszanych"."To są dramaty"" December 11, 2018 (https://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/7,114883,24266810,o-rydzyk-odradza-sluchaczom-zawierania-malzenstw-mieszanych-to.html)

after-school programs. However, it failed due to a lack of funds, and so there are still no focal points for Black people to gather, other than a few African restaurants and churches that act as meeting places.

Later, the foundation started prioritizing human rights issues on the premise that integration is only viable when the environment is conducive. The organization has been at the forefront in advocating on behalf of PAD on social and human rights issues both in Poland and at the international level. The objective of Afryka Connect Foundation is social change leading to a concentration on activities related to sustainable development and integration. Empowerment and capacity building have been cornerstones of its activities, especially those focused on racial discrimination and hate crime. The most effective way to make people more aware of socioeconomic issues is to involve them directly and to encourage them to work together.

At the time of writing, Poland is experiencing the highest rate of intolerance in the country's history. Even though far-right groups exhibit the worst forms of hatred, the problem is more deeply rooted. The current administration of the Law and Justice party is aggravating the situation. In early 2015, the government disbanded an official body for combating racism, the Council Against Racial Discrimination and Xenophobia. The Council had been established in 2013 by the former prime minister and former president of the European Council Donald Tusk. This work is now assigned to the adviser on civil society and equal treatment, who holds the mandate to monitor the work of civil society and NGOs and also to advise the government on particular areas of interest where funding should be channeled. This implies that organizations whose activities do not serve the interests of the current administration are likely not to receive funding. Later in the year, the government also disbanded the department of hate crime control in the ministry of the interior, reducing its autonomy and sending a symbolic message to already susceptible minorities that the government is not concerned about their issues. This department was mandated to monitor and supervise police investigations of hate crime. Defunding the department implies that there will no longer be supervision of the police or measures against hate crime.

Consequently, the objectives of Afryka Connect Foundation are implemented against a backdrop of human rights, immigration, education, and international cooperation. Activities range from awareness raising to advocacy initiatives dealing with problems of racism and xenophobia. The foundation is building a broad and inclusive movement against racism, hate

crime, and discrimination and is advocating for inclusivity and diversity by facilitating an equitable share for PAD in education, employment, and economic activities in order to ensure their advancement.

Promoting educational exchange between African universities and their Polish counterparts is also an important part of its work. For many years, prior to the outbreak of Covid-19 in 2020, annual African diaspora conferences were organized with the main objective of bringing together Africans and Poles from different sectors to talk about politically relevant topics and to network. Afryka Connect Foundation has also been actively engaged in conducting nationwide roundtable meetings that address racism and hate crimes in Poland. The organization is entirely run by volunteers, and the activities are project based.

In the panoply of PAD organizations, patterns that are regionally, ethnically, and nationally oriented and that relate to origin form the basis of engagement with the local community as well as with other organizations. Over the last decade, a moderate number of African organizations founded by Africans have been established. The majority are based in Warsaw, with a few spread across the country. African diaspora organizations in Poland are categorized based on their aims and objectives, as noted earlier: cultural organizations; development organizations; student associations and professional organizations. Among the most well known are the Foundation for Somalia and Afryka Another Way, both founded in 2007. The latter conducts training for various Polish groups, including government officials and the police. Its founder, Mamadou Diouf, believes that if members know more about Africans and their culture it may help them interact better (Łazarewicz 2010). Other foundations include Harambi, Adulis, and Omenaa. Cultural organizations such as Afryka Connect Foundation constitute the biggest group, with a total of 12. A number of African diaspora groups fiercely connect to their national identity, and they are often set up along geographical lines. However, while national and cultural affiliation play a role in the organizations, PAD do not necessarily rule out interaction with others in their social lives.

Besides cultural organizations, there are also groups whose role is to undertake development initiatives in Africa. There are very few of these – in fact, in Warsaw there are only two that could be classified as partly development oriented: Foundation for Somalia and Omenaa Foundation. However, the majority of African-based development organizations are run by white

Poles. For example, the East–West Africa Economic Foundation (Fundacja Ekonomiczna Polska–Afryka Wschodnia) is run by a white Pole who has been active in the region, engaging in infrastructure development in Kenya and Tanzania. African student associations exist in an informal setting and are often affiliated with other community or country-based organizations. Regrettably, there is no single umbrella African student association that could actively address students' issues. It is also important to note that there are no African-based organizations engaged in politics in Poland. There is a reluctance among PAD to take an active part in the political sphere, partly because the majority do not have Polish citizenship, a prerequisite to voting rights.

Although the PAD population is very small and there are few organizations, the work of documenting Black contributions and histories continues to be pursued. The increased visibility of the Black Polish experience points to opportunities to address long-standing inequalities and to educate both the white majority and the Black community itself. Yet, with Poland's open hostility toward Black people, the task of writing Black Polish history remains challenging.

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