

Catholicism and the Jews in Post-Communist Poland

Joanna Michlic

RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

Antony Polonsky

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

Roman Catholicism has long been a central element of Polish national identity. This phenomenon is deeply rooted in the Polish historical experience and is closely linked with the country's collective identity. As a result, in Polish Catholicism, national ideals have become intertwined with Christian values and national identity has often taken precedence over universal principles. This has led to the widespread identification of Polishness with Catholicism, as summed up in the phrase *Polak katolik*. The dominant model of religiosity has been conservative, traditional, and "folkish," with relatively little stress on the spiritual and intellectual development of faith.¹ In the eyes of its leaders, Polish Catholicism was the most effective bulwark of Polishness against both the 19th-century partitioning powers and the 20th-century totalitarian forces of Nazism and Soviet Communism.

Political groups such as the National Democrats (Endecja), the principal exponents in Poland of ethno-nationalism and antisemitism, attempted from the end of the 19th century to exploit the identification of Polishness with Catholicism. However, in interwar Poland, political Catholicism was unable to attain a hegemonic position in political life. Especially after the seizure of power in May 1926 by the charismatic military hero Józef Piłsudski, political forces advancing a Catholic agenda, whether of a Christian Democratic or of a National Democratic character, were marginalized. The relations between the Church and the authorities were correct but hardly cordial, and a significant portion of the Episcopate, or Church hierarchy—though not the primate, Cardinal August Hlond (appointed in June 1926)—retained its sympathy for the National Democrats. Among parish priests, too, support for the Endecja was widespread.²

With regard to the Jews, the position of the Church was typical of pre-Second Vatican Council Catholicism. Hlond articulated this position in a pastoral letter of 1936:

The Jewish problem is there and will be there as long as Jews remain Jews. . . . It is a fact that Jews are in opposition to the Catholic Church, that they are freethinkers, the vanguard of godlessness, Bolshevism, and subversion. It is a fact that they exert a pernicious influence on public morality and that their publishing houses are spreading pornography. It is true that Jews are swindlers, usurers, and that they are engaged in fostering immoral earnings. It is true that the effect of the Jewish youth upon the Catholic is—in the religious and ethical sense—negative. This does not apply to all Jews. There are very many Jews who are believers, honest, righteous, merciful, doing good works. The family life of many Jews is healthy and edifying. And there are among Jews [individuals who are] morally quite outstanding, noble and honorable people.³

This was the mainstream position, with its classic statement of anti-Judaism coupled with its grudging concession that not all Jews could be held responsible for the negative behavior of the majority. There was also within the Church a more strongly antisemitic element that espoused essentially racist positions derived from populism and nationalism, which were best represented by the periodical *Rycerz Niepokolanej* and the daily *Mały Dziennik*. Since Catholic papers accounted for nearly a quarter of the entire Polish press and the Church had great influence on the minds of the population, particularly on the peasantry, it must be seen as one of the major forces behind the spread of antisemitism in interwar Poland.⁴ In contrast, those circles within the Church that espoused progressive and humanistic attitudes, such as the center at Laski near Warsaw, which published the periodical *Verbum*, and the Association of Catholic University Students (*Odrodzenie*) in Lublin were inevitably small, isolated, and not influential. Moreover, although the *Odrodzenie* opposed and condemned the antisemitic violence of the *Endecja*, it was not always free of anti-Jewish prejudice.⁵

During the Second World War, the Church was savagely persecuted by both the Soviets and the Nazis. Monasteries and convents were closed, many members of the clergy were imprisoned, and as many as 20 percent of their number were murdered. Under such circumstances, the Church emerged from the war with its moral authority greatly strengthened.

Given its views and the harassment to which it was subjected, it is not surprising that the Church as an institution did not provide much support for Jews under the Nazi occupation. The only initiative it adopted in the first years of Nazi rule seems to have been intervention on behalf of converts. (This intervention was not always efficacious: a list of converts was handed to the Gestapo so that the converts could be exempted from wearing the identifying Star of David. When the Warsaw ghetto was established, the Gestapo made use of the list to ensure that all those on it were confined within the ghetto walls.) Throughout the implementation of the genocide, the Catholic hierarchy in Poland made no public statement on the fate of the Jews.⁶ However, other Catholic groups, both political and social, did express opposition. As a rule, they condemned the Nazi extermination of the Jews as a barbaric, anti-Christian act and sympathized with the Jewish tragedy in generally human terms. Some members of these organizations, especially those belonging to the Front for the Rebirth of Poland, were also involved in rescue activities. At the same time, when discussing pre-1939 Polish society and the postwar future of Poland, they continued to refer to the Jews as opponents of Poland and of Catholicism. Such

statements, whether mildly worded or more harsh in tone, could also be found in the various publications of the Labor Party and the Christian Democratic Labor Party.⁷

One area in which many individual priests and nuns were active was the rescue and placement of Jews in convents. In all, two thirds of the female religious communities in Poland took part in hiding Jewish children and adults. The fact that this took place on a large scale may suggest that it had the support and encouragement of the Church hierarchy.⁸ It may also suggest that the ethos of providing aid to the most needy was a fundamental Catholic principle, regardless of the ideological position and political sympathies held by the individual or the hierarchy.

The transition to the postwar situation was fraught with its own set of issues. The Church's initial reaction to the establishment of Communist rule was hesitant and even confused.⁹ Given the exhaustion of Polish society after 1945, it sought to avoid outright conflict with the new rulers of the country, aware that certain Communist reforms, including land reform, nationalization of industry, banks and commerce, and the annexation of the formerly German western and northern territories, were popular. Indeed, this period of accelerated social and economic change was difficult for the Church, with Polish society becoming increasingly secularized and many upwardly mobile peasants and workers appearing to leave the fold. At the same time, the Church succeeded in retaining much of its traditional influence, which it was able to employ in helping to stabilize the regime of Władysław Gomułka after 1956 and in performing a similar role for Edward Gierek after 1970. This strategy, the brainchild of Poland's extremely astute primate, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, preserved for the Church a central role in Polish public life:

The Church . . . was transformed from a victim into a mediator, and thus became an actor in the politico-historical processes, a co-creator of change in society, its consciousness and its bonds with prewar Poland. As circumstances developed, by continuing this role of mediator it became ever more and more the partner of the authorities.¹⁰

The Church retained its influence by relying on its traditional base. It did not favor new initiatives such as rethinking its position on controversial topics, including its attitude toward the Jews. Moreover, it soon became clear that the war had neither brought an end to antisemitism nor seriously compromised the Church's anti-Judaic ideology. Since the Nazis had persecuted the Polish radical Right as fiercely as they did all other manifestations of Polish resistance, the Church's anti-Judaic tradition was not tainted by "Germanism" and emerged almost unscathed from the war. After the worst outbreak of anti-Jewish violence in postwar Poland—the pogrom in Kielce in July 1946, in which 42 Jews were killed by a mob—a Jewish delegation went to see Wyszyński, then bishop of Lublin. After asserting that popular hatred had been kindled by Jewish support for Communism, which had also been the reason why "the Germans murdered the Jewish nation," Wyszyński went on to comment that the question of the use of Christian blood by Jews had never been completely clarified, thus lending a kind of credence to the ritual murder rumors that had accompanied the pogrom.¹¹

As is clear from Wyszyński's remarks, the war also strengthened the association of Jews with Communism in the eyes of Church dignitaries.¹² It is true that, in

1967, Wyszyński prayed publicly for the safety of Israel and protested against the anti-student campaign (with its strong anti-Jewish themes and aims) that had been orchestrated by Mieczysław Moczar, the leader of the nationalistic faction in the Communist party. But in general, the Church in Poland was little affected by the major efforts made by the Vatican during the pontificates of Pope John XXIII and of Pope Paul VI to transform its relations with Jews and Judaism.¹³ The Polish Church's failure to implement the principles of Vatican II was an outcome of a deliberate policy pursued by Wyszyński. Although he had been a member of the pre-1939 Association of Catholic University Students, Wyszyński was not primarily interested in pursuing internal Church reforms, in developing a more progressive Church, or in adopting new approaches to individualistic and intellectual forms of religiosity. Instead, he concentrated his efforts on the preservation of the Church as an autonomous institution within the Communist system. Thanks to this strategy, the Polish Church succeeded in maintaining both its moral authority in society and its position as Poland's key national institution. However, a certain tension developed between Wyszyński and members of the group of progressive Catholic intelligentsia associated with the weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*, who were much more open to the reforms introduced by the Vatican in the 1960s.¹⁴

With the growth of anti-communist opposition in the late 1970s, the Church's influence increased. As Gierek's promises of economic well-being proved empty and the government's popularity fell, the tide of secularization began to recede. The Church offered an ideology that was philosophically and morally richer, broader, and also more profound, being rooted both in the national traditions of Poland and in the culture of the West. Thus, religious observance and loyalty to the Church became increasingly widespread, not only in the traditionally Catholic countryside but also among the bulk of urban workers. Yet this was not only the result of disillusionment with the materialism fostered by the Gierek regime; it also reflected a more deep-seated rejection of Communism, precisely among those people who were expected to be its strongest supporters. Wyszyński's strategy bore fruit, and the Church became an important element in the growing opposition to the regime.¹⁵

The position of the Church was greatly strengthened by the election to the papal throne of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła in October 1978. This event had an electrifying effect on Poles. They had long thought of themselves as the stepchildren of Europe, the exponents of Western beliefs and values in a difficult geographic situation, who had been let down in 1939 and abandoned by the West in 1944–1945. That one of the principal institutions of the Western world (for many Poles, *the* principal institution) had elected a Pole as its first non-Italian head in nearly 450 years seemed an unprecedented act of reparation and a clear legitimization of the Poles' own view of their historical role. National self-confidence increased dramatically, as did the belief that major political change was now inevitable. In the summer of 1979, Pope John Paul II visited his homeland and was met with almost hysterical rejoicing. More than 1.5 million people attended an open-air mass at the national shrine, the Jasna Góra monastery in Częstochowa. For the two weeks of the pope's visit, it was as if the Communist authorities had ceased to exist. A submerged Poland—

Catholic, national, and self-assertive—demonstrated that it had the support of the overwhelming majority of the nation.

This was one of the principal factors in the emergence in 1980 of the first Solidarity movement, which mounted what became the most serious challenge to Communist rule since its establishment. Compromise between the popular movement and the weak and discredited government proved impossible, and martial law was imposed in December 1981. During the period of repression, the Church attempted to mediate between the government and the underground opposition, playing a key role in facilitating the round-table talks that brought about the negotiated end of the Communist regime in 1989. The Church's role as a powerful force behind both the anti-communist political opposition and the downfall of Communism itself was unquestionable. A new alliance emerged between the Church and the left-wing secular intelligentsia, including Solidarity leaders of Jewish origin such as Adam Michnik and Jan Lityński.¹⁶ The religious revival and the new religious interest of the intelligentsia was noted in Church circles. Cardinal Józef Glemp, Wyszyński's successor as primate, has described this process in a characteristic way:

Before the Second World War, the intelligentsia adopted mostly an unfavorable, indifferent, or opportunistic stance. There were also in that group some who sympathized with Communism.

After the war the new generation of intelligentsia surrendered relatively easily to Marxist ideology. They joined the party without playing a leading part. The disappointment came only later. Many then protested against the methods of the system. Later the adherents of the Marxist ideology joined Solidarity. Others preferred to stay apart and simply turned in their party cards. Embittered, they regarded their life, or at least a considerable part of it, as wasted. This applied, above all, to the creative intelligentsia who did not know the Church or knew it simply from folk traditions. Against that background, there appeared a new attitude on the part of the intelligentsia toward the Church. This was expressed in respect for its deeper spiritual life and for its role in maintaining patriotic attitudes.¹⁷

The “Closed” versus the “Open” Church

After 1989, with Poland now a democratic republic, the divisions within the Church, formerly masked by the need to preserve unity in the face of the Communist authorities, came into the open. These differences were also reflected in the clearly antithetical positions taken on such issues as antisemitism and conducting dialogue with Jews and with Judaism. In 1985, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, then a leading figure of both the Solidarity movement and the Catholic progressive intelligentsia (and later, prime minister), presciently raised a number of problems that he felt the Church would soon have to face. Among them was “the question of whether th[e] rendezvous of Polishness and Christianity will be shaped into a kind of Polish-Catholic triumphalism and narrowness, or whether it will be a meeting of open Polishness with open Catholicism.”¹⁸

Mazowiecki's description of the two poles of Catholicism in Poland was widely accepted in the 1990s. In liberal Catholic circles, these poles came to be described as the "open" Church and the "closed" Church.¹⁹ The two groups differed widely on a number of issues, including the modernization of the Church, its position within the state, and its relations with other Christian and non-Christian religions. Advocates of the "open" Church have strongly criticized traditional forms of religiosity, claiming that, to some degree, such Catholicism lacks universal Christian values. Furthermore, they have frequently condemned the nationalist orientation of the "closed" Church as a deformation of Christian principles, accusing traditionalists of making the Church into a "besieged fortress." On a number of occasions, particularly with regard to Jewish issues, they have also accused the "closed" Church of failing to reject the anti-Judaic traditions condemned by Vatican II. For its part, the hard core of the "closed" Church has described the "open" Church as its internal enemy, one that has betrayed Catholic principles and is run by left-wing Catholic groups along with Jews, Freemasons, and those who serve them.²⁰

While the "closed" Church is seen by its critics as a backward-looking body that represents, to varying degrees, the traditional, conservative, and folkish type of religiosity based on the pre-1939 model of Polish Catholicism,²¹ it considers itself to be the true defender of the faith and of Polishness. It is characterized by its great reluctance to accept any criticism, which it views, by definition, as an attack on both the Church and the Polish nation. Antisemitic motifs can be found in its pronouncements, although these have decreased in number since 2000, perhaps as a result of Vatican influence.²²

The views of the "closed" Church are expressed most strongly and frequently in a number of periodicals, including *Niedziela*, *Ład*, *Słowo-Dziennik Katolicki*, and the widely circulated *Nasz Dziennik*.²³ It also owns radio stations such as Radio Niepokalanów and Radio Maryja. Its most outspoken representatives among the bishops have been Edward Frankowski, Sławoj Leszek Głódź, and Ignacy Tokarczuk. Other well-known priests who can be considered representatives of the "closed" Church are Father Henryk Jankowski, chaplain of the Solidarity movement in the 1980s (and a former close personal associate of Lech Wałęsa) and Father Tadeusz Rydzyk, a Redemptorist, who is the founder and director of Radio Maryja. The "closed" Church also has a significant foothold at the Catholic University of Lublin—previously a stronghold of liberal views—as well as in some of the new private Catholic institutions of higher education that have mushroomed since the early 2000s.²⁴

In contrast to the "closed" Church, the "open" Church is a more easily identifiable body. It consists mainly of the lay Catholic intelligentsia and some members of the higher and lower clergy. Former Prime Minister Mazowiecki and Bishop Tadeusz Pieronek, the ex-secretary of the Polish Episcopate, are among its leading representatives. Its main forums are lay Catholic journals such as the weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* and the monthlies *Znak* and *Więź* and the network of Catholic Intelligentsia Clubs, with the exception of that in Lublin, which is a stronghold of the "closed" Church.²⁵ The Jesuit monthly *Przegląd Powszechny* can also be considered as representing its views, as is true of the Dominican monthly *W drodze*.

The position of the hierarchy, in which there are representatives of both groups as well as some who take a middle position, has been to maintain the unity of the Polish Church while at the same time upholding the basic principles of the Second Vatican Council, affirming the need to update the Church and to supersede its anti-Judaic traditions. It has been reluctant to take action against conservatives within the Church on the grounds that this might jeopardize its unity; for the most part, it has regarded the activity of the liberals as a provocative and unnecessary irritant.

In the remainder of this essay, we will examine the position of these different sections of the Church on a number of key issues of Jewish interest. First is the developing dialogue with Jews and Judaism. Second is the need for the Church to articulate a view on its anti-Judaic past and on antisemitic manifestations within both the Church and wider Polish society. Third is the controversy aroused by Jan T. Gross' scholarly account of the massacre of the Jews of Jedwabne by their Polish neighbors in the summer of 1941. Finally, there is the debate aroused by the showing in Poland of Mel Gibson's film, *The Passion of the Christ*.

Dialogue With Jews and Judaism: Achievements and Failures

The creation of formal institutions for Catholic-Jewish dialogue predated the end of Communism, since it was in 1986 that the Episcopal Sub-commission for Dialogue with Judaism (later renamed the Episcopate Committee for Dialogue with Judaism) was established. The objective of the dialogue, which was modeled on earlier frameworks set up in Western Europe and in North America, was to reshape Catholic attitudes toward Jews and Judaism and to eliminate anti-Jewish prejudices. This was a belated application to Polish conditions of the theological principles of the Second Vatican Council, which upheld the view that Jews were Catholics' "elder brothers in spirit" with whom "Christianity has a special bond." In the words of the papal encyclical *Nostra Aetate*, "Jews are the people of God who have not been disowned by the new election and the new covenant . . . [and] are not burdened with the responsibility for the death of Christ."²⁶

As might have been expected, the liberal elements in Polish Catholicism were strong advocates of the establishment of this dialogue. They had long championed the concept of ecumenism and dialogue with agnostics and non-believers, as well as with other Christian and non-Christian religions. The best-known participants in dialogue with the Jews and Judaism are Archbishop Henryk Muszyński, Archbishop Józef Życiński, and Bishop Stanisław Gądecki; other outspoken champions of dialogue are Prof. Rev. Michał Czajkowski, and the late Stanisław Musiał, a Jesuit priest. Other, less-known names that are nonetheless worthy of note are Dr. Rev. Grzegorz Ignatowski and Father Stanisław Obirek (also a Jesuit).

Those identified with more conservative positions in the Church have had much greater reservations about this dialogue. For the most part they have ignored it. This was the position adopted in the 1990s by the weekly *Niedziela*. Published in Częstochowa, this important and widely read publication has a significant readership among the higher clergy; dialogue with Jews and Judaism has hardly been

mentioned in its pages. Even the visit to Israel by Pope John Paul II in the spring of 2000 was reported in the margins, without any positive commentary regarding either his visit to Yad Vashem or his various meetings with Israeli Jewish officials.²⁷

Members of the “closed” church have also expressed hostility to dialogue on theological grounds. According to *Nasz Dziennik*, a daily that is closely connected to Radio Maryja:

In liturgical texts we now often hear the word “Israel” cited in all possible versions. “Jesus in the synagogue” now replaces the term “Jesus in the Temple.” In a recent television program, the “privileged spokesman” Rev. Michał Czajkowski described Jewish religious law as the foundation of our celebration of the Sabbath. Don’t we Catholics have our own religious laws? Do we really need to refer to the Jewish laws?²⁸

It should be stressed that, given the tiny number of Jews currently living in Poland, the Christian-Jewish dialogue is hardly that of equals. Inevitably, the Jewish voice is very weak in comparison to that of Catholics. In addition, members of other Christian churches have also contributed to this dialogue, particularly the Evangelical Church, whose priests have regularly participated in conferences and other religious activities concerning Jews and Judaism. Indeed, on March 19, 2000, the Tenth Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church issued its own mea culpa for anti-Jewish prejudice (“Polish Lutherans view acts of intolerance of and prejudice against Jews from their own perspective, that is the perspective of a minority that has also experienced prejudice and intolerance”).²⁹

The Christian-Jewish dialogue in Poland has been accompanied by a number of important initiatives. These include the organization of a conference titled “Jews and Christians in Dialogue,” held in Krakow in April 1988; the setting up in 1991 of the Polish Council of Christians and Jews; the establishment of the Institute for Catholic-Jewish Dialogue, affiliated with the Catholic Theological Academy in Warsaw; the exchange of lecturers in 1994 and 1995 between theological colleges in Poland and the United States, set up by Archbishop Muszyński and Rabbi A. James Rudin, director of interreligious affairs of the American Jewish Committee; and the establishment of a “Day of Judaism” on January 17 of each year whose aim is to “promote the recognition of the connection between Judaism and Christianity” by means of prayers and liturgical texts (including a special prayer dedicated to victims of the Holocaust) that are circulated each year to every Polish parish.³⁰

To date, what has this dialogue achieved? In terms of the “rediscovery of the elder brother” in institutions of Catholic higher education, there have been some tangible achievements, such as the introduction of a new program in Jewish theology and ethics. In theological universities and seminaries, students and future priests now learn about Judaism as a religion with its own religious trends, spiritual insights, and integrity. This no doubt will result in growing interest in Israel and other Jewish communities.

Also in the last decade, a significant number of Christian and Catholic writings, including Vatican documents on Jews and Judaism, have been translated into Polish. Furthermore, a number of important publications by Polish priests have appeared, including *Lud Prymierza* by Rev. Czajkowski and two collections of essays by Rev.

Ignatowski, *Kościół wobec antysemityzmu* and *Kościół i Synagoga*, in addition to the semi-autobiographical work by Rev. Romuald Jakub Weksler-Waszkinel, *Błogosławiony Bóg Izraela* (Blessed God of Israel).³¹ All these works have emphasized the permanent values of Jews and Judaism.

In addition, anti-Judaic views condemned by the Second Vatican Council have been eliminated from new catechisms and religious textbooks. This does not mean that all new religious textbooks (intended for both the clergy and the lay Catholic communities) have been written according to the Vatican II recommendations. As Lucylla Pszczółowska has shown, many catechisms and religious textbooks published in the 1980s, while not reprinting anti-Jewish views, nonetheless failed explicitly to criticize them. This, she notes, is also true of many sermons.³²

Certainly the dissemination of ideas aimed at reshaping Catholics' attitudes toward Jews and Judaism is the most difficult task facing advocates of the Christian-Jewish dialogue. This is a task that can fully be realized only when the traditional long-term negative patterns of thinking about Jews and Judaism are successfully challenged. In his comments concerning the third annual celebration of the Day of Judaism in 2000, Bishop Gądecki conceded that it was not celebrated at all in some dioceses, indicating that "there are problems with the transformation of the thought patterns of Catholics and there is a visible lack of understanding" of the day's objectives.³³

Although it addresses the problem of antisemitism, the Christian-Jewish dialogue has tended (following the directives of Vatican II) to define it in religious and theological terms—that is, as a sin against God and Christianity—rather than as an ideology with damaging impacts not only on Jewish communities but also on intercommunal relations between Jews and non-Jews. One such statement reads: "Antisemitism is a betrayal of Christian faith, the defeat of Christian hope and the death of Christian love. It is a mortal sin. It is a blow against Jesus the Jew, the son of God and Redeemer of mankind."³⁴ As the Canadian scholar Iwona Irwin-Zarecka notes, such an interpretation inhibits the critical examination of the Polish Catholic Church's anti-Jewish legacy, particularly issues such as the historical role of the Church in disseminating anti-Jewish attitudes and prejudices and the role of religious antisemitism in provoking anti-Jewish violence. In her opinion, referring to antisemitism in the "religious language of sin and atonement may very easily lead to the closing of the critical inquiry" into the causes and nature of the sin.³⁵

To be sure, self-critical inquiry has been advocated by some of the participants in the dialogue, among them the late Stanisław Musiał (1938–2004). In "Blood-thirsty Jews" and "The Path of Crucifixion of the Jews of Sandomierz," Musiał examined the ritual murder accusation in the Polish context.³⁶ He also expressed indignation concerning frescos depicting an alleged ritual murder that were (and are) still on display in the Cathedral and the Church of St. Paul in Sandomierz.³⁷ "There is no room for iconography depicting alleged ritual murder in Polish cathedrals and churches," he wrote. "As a Catholic and a priest, I wish to belong to a Church that does not tolerate lies in its chapels."³⁸

Another positive development is the emergence of a new theme in the dialogue, namely, Christian moral responsibility for the Holocaust. The soul-searching on this subject that is often found in Western Christian writings has generally been

absent in Poland, although Musiał and Ignatowski have displayed it in their writings.³⁹

The Struggle against Antisemitism in the Church and Beyond

Certainly, in spite of the efforts of those engaged in dialogue with Jews, other elements within the clergy and even in the Church hierarchy have evinced far less concern about the still widespread antisemitic stereotypes. Thus, during a press conference of the Polish Roman Catholic Delegation in Paris in April 1990, Cardinal Glemp claimed that “antisemitism in Poland is a myth created by the enemies of Poland.”⁴⁰ Similarly, Józef Michalik, then bishop of Gorzów (and now chairman of the Bishops’ Conference), declared during the election campaign of September 1991 that “[a] Catholic should vote for a Catholic, a Muslim for a Muslim, a Jew for a Jew, a Freemason for a Freemason, and a Communist for a Communist”—a remark that seemed to indicate that Catholics had no business voting for a non-Catholic candidate.⁴¹

The hierarchy was also slow to react to manifestations of antisemitism in the lower clergy. The most notorious case involved the former Solidarity chaplain, Father Henryk Jankowski of St. Brigida Church in Gdańsk, tarnished by his provocative, ultra-right-wing views. In April 1995, the traditional Easter decoration of Jesus’ grave in his church included the Star of David along with the swastika, as well as emblems of the Soviet secret police (NKVD), the Polish Communist secret police (UB), and various past and contemporary left-wing Polish political parties. When the leaders of two of these parties (the Social Democratic Labor Party and the Union of Labor) protested, Cardinal Glemp claimed that this constituted an attack on the Church and an infringement of freedom of speech.⁴² The Polish primate apparently saw nothing offensive or inappropriate in equating the Star of David with symbols of Nazism, Stalinism, and Communism. Although the display itself was dismantled, photographs of it were sold during Easter in the Church shop.⁴³

In a sermon he gave the following year, on July 29, 1996, Jankowski again made use of an antisemitic theme. He claimed that American Jewry constituted a major threat to Poland and criticized Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, the incumbent prime minister, for apologizing to the Jewish people during the official ceremony commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Kielce pogrom, which had been held earlier that month. A year later, at a Mass held on August 26, 1997, Jankowski asserted that “the Jewish minority cannot be tolerated within the Polish government.” These observations were repeated two months later, when he called on the Poles “to keep a watchful eye on the hands of the Jewish minority, which wants to gain full control over the Polish government.”⁴⁴

In November 1997, following protests by various Western and domestic organizations and media, Jankowski was forbidden to deliver sermons by his superior, Archbishop Gocłowski, on the grounds that he had introduced too many political elements into his religious addresses. This ban did not refer to his open incitement

of antisemitism. Attempts to prosecute him on grounds of inciting interethnic hatred were unsuccessful. However, in the summer of 2004, Jankowski was accused of misconduct and the corruption of young parishioners; in November, he was dismissed from his position.⁴⁵

Another focal point of right-wing and antisemitic agitation within the Church is Radio Maryja, established in December 1991 by Father Tadeusz Rydzyk, which soon became the fourth-largest private radio station in Poland. According to available data, the adult audience of Radio Maryja represents 14 percent of the population. This is no ordinary radio station. Affiliated with Radio Maryja is an extensive network of social and religious activities, including the recently established Institute of National Education in Lublin and the College of Social Culture and Media Studies in Toruń. Radio Maryja also enjoys the support of mainstream Catholic politicians, among them thirty MPs and senators.⁴⁶

In the period of 1995 to 1997, when Jankowski was most active, the number of anti-Jewish statements broadcast on Radio Maryja also reached its peak. Jews were portrayed as a serious threat to the Polish state, nation, culture, and spirituality. Well-known foreign entrepreneurs such as George Soros were included on the list of Jews wishing to destroy Poland and Christianity, and various Polish politicians and public figures were frequently labeled as either Jewish or as “servants of the Jews.”⁴⁷ In 1995, the station also came out strongly against the presidential candidacy of Aleksander Kwaśniewski, a politician affiliated with the former Polish United Workers’ Party, going so far as to claim that Kwaśniewski’s mother, who died at the time, should be denied burial in a Catholic cemetery because her family was actually Jewish.⁴⁸ In the fall of 1997, Rydzyk was finally criticized by Cardinal Glemp for the overly political content of his radio station. As in the case of Jankowski, the primate failed to criticize or condemn the specifically anti-Jewish character of Radio Maryja’s broadcasts.

There is disagreement as to the influence of this station on the Catholic community at large, with some claiming minimal social impact and others pointing to its potentially damaging social consequences.⁴⁹ Those who claim that Radio Maryja has a marginal impact because it appeals to older, impoverished, and uneducated members of society ignore the fact that, in the context of Polish family life, many members of this social group are directly involved in bringing up children and young people, hence the influence of their worldview reaches beyond their own generation.

The failure to react more strongly to these phenomena is a clear indication of the ambivalent position of some Church officials and members of the higher clergy with regard to dialogue with Jews and Judaism and their lack of commitment toward the eradication of anti-Jewish prejudice within their own institution. It also implies that the perceptions of the Jews held by Jankowski and Rydzyk cannot be viewed as being marginal; rather, such views are, to a certain extent, deemed acceptable among some members of the clergy. For example, two bishops openly and publicly supported Jankowski: Bishop Michalik stated that Jankowski’s views were the exemplification of patriotism, Polishness, and Catholicism, whereas Bishop Marian Kruszyłowicz termed the press reports on Jankowski’s antisemitic sermons to be a

provocation directed against the Church.⁵⁰ Jankowski also received a number of supportive letters from clergy, which were later published in two books by Peter Raina.⁵¹

Perhaps the most disturbing case of support for Jankowski was that of Waldemar Chrostowski, a renowned expert in the theology of Judaism and one of the co-founders of the Polish Council of Christians and Jews. Chrostowski has claimed that, “in the name of truth, objectivity, and justice,” Poles of Jewish ethnic origin cannot be trusted and therefore should not play an active role in public life. Moreover, in the context of Polish-Jewish relations, he asserted, the Jews are themselves to blame for antisemitism, since they were responsible for the imposition of Communism upon the Polish people.⁵²

Public condemnation by clergymen of Jankowski’s statements and of the activities of Radio Maryja was limited. In fact, Bishop Pieronek, then secretary of the Episcopate, was the only senior Church official who condemned them explicitly for their antisemitic character, whereas Archbishop Józef Życiński indirectly criticized Radio Maryja. In his various sermons, Życiński called for “respect for others and dissociating oneself from those who, in the name of religion, incite ethnic hatred against the others.”⁵³ Życiński also denounced “searching for Jewish blood in people’s biographies” as a sign of “neopaganism.”⁵⁴ Outright condemnation of Jankowski’s antisemitism was left to the redoubtable Musiał.⁵⁵ In his articles, he also castigated Church officials for their lack of a proper reaction to antisemitic incidents and claimed that anti-Jewish statements were widely tolerated. Musiał was highly praised as “the voice of conscience” by some Polish intellectuals, including Jan Nowak-Jeziorański and Piotr Wandycz, as well as by members of the Polish Jewish community. However, his voice did not elicit significant response from the clergy. In reply to his articles in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, one reader, a nun from Toruń, described Musiał as a lone voice sounding opinions that many other clergymen were afraid to express, for fear of jeopardizing their own standing.⁵⁶ Yet these voices have gradually become louder. Father Tomasz Dostatni, chief editor of the Dominican publishing house *W drodze*, has acknowledged the strength of anti-Jewish views within the clergy,⁵⁷ as has Catholic journalist Jarosław Gowin.⁵⁸

One factor strengthening the position of those opposed to antisemitism in the Polish Church has been pressure from the Vatican and from the late Pope John Paul II. Several years ago, as the millennial year 2000 drew near, the Vatican issued a number of statements expressing remorse for anti-Jewish prejudice and actions—or inaction, as in the case of widespread Catholic passivity during the Holocaust. Condemnation of all forms of anti-Jewish prejudice was accompanied by calls for a new and positive relationship between Jews and Christians. On August 25, 2000, following the lead of the Vatican and emulating other national churches, the Polish Bishops’ Conference issued a letter “on forgiveness and reconciliation with the Jews, the adherents of non-Christian religions and non-believers,” which was read out in all of Poland’s parishes (more than 10,000 in number) during Mass on Sunday, August 27. This letter asked the Jews for “forgiveness for the standpoint of those of our members who despise those of other religions or who tolerate antisemitism”—the first unequivocal condemnation of antisemitism by the Polish hierarchy.⁵⁹ This followed an earlier Episcopal letter of January 20, 1991 that por-

trayed the Jews in accordance with the guidelines of the Second Vatican Council, which began with the following affirmation:

Poles are linked by special ties with the Jewish nation, since, as early as the first centuries of our history, Poland became the homeland for many Jews—the majority of Jews living all over the world at present derive from the territories of the former and present Republic of Poland. . . . [T]he Pope, the Holy Father, [has] said . . . : “There is one other nation, one other special people, the people of the patriarchs, Moses and the prophets, the legacy of the faith of Abraham. These people lived with us for generations, shoulder to shoulder on the same land that somehow became the new land of the Diaspora. Horrible death was inflicted on millions of sons and daughters of this nation. . . . The murderers did this on our soil, perhaps in order to defile it. But earth cannot be defiled by the blood of innocent victims, earth becomes a holy relic as a result of such deaths.

The letter went on to discuss the fact that many Poles saved Jewish lives during the war, enumerating the number of trees planted in their honor in the Avenue of Righteous Gentiles at Yad Vashem. Nevertheless, it continued:

We are aware that many of our compatriots still nurse in their memory the harm and injustice inflicted by postwar Communist rule, in which people of Jewish origin participated as well. But we must admit that the source of inspiration for their actions cannot be seen in their Jewish origin or in their religion but came from the Communist ideology from which Jews, too, suffered much injustice. We also express our sincere regret at all cases of antisemitism that have occurred on Polish soil. We do this because we are deeply convinced that all signs of antisemitism are contrary to the spirit of the gospel and, as Pope John Paul II has recently underlined, will remain totally contrary to the Christian vision of human dignity. . . . We Christians and Jews are united by the belief in one God, the Creator and the Lord of the whole Universe who created man in His own image, we are united by the ethical principles that are embodied in the Decalogue, which may be reduced to the commandment of the love of God and the love of one’s fellow man. We are united by our veneration for the Old Testament as the holy scripture and our common traditions of prayer. And we are united by the hope for the final coming of the Kingdom of God.⁶⁰

The Jedwabne Controversy

The Episcopal letters and their condemnation of antisemitism changed the climate within the Church, their effects being evident during the complex and often acrimonious debate surrounding Jan T. Gross’ *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne*. When published in Polish in 2000, this work brought to widespread attention the facts regarding the massacre of the Jewish community of a small town in northeast Poland in the summer of 1941.⁶¹ Gross’ book prompted the most profound discussion on Polish-Jewish relations and antisemitism in Poland since the end of the war. This discussion is still underway; to date, the Church hierarchy has attempted to hold fast to the positions articulated in *Nostra Aetate* and in the bishops’ letter while at the same time endeavoring, not very successfully, to keep more anti-Jewish elements in the Church under control.

Apart from Czajkowski and Musiał, who, as seen, consistently voiced the strongest attacks against Church-tolerated antisemitism, the liberal ranks of the Polish Church include Archbishop Życiński (the Metropolitan of Lublin) and Archbishop Muszyński (the Metropolitan of Gniezno). In the matter of Jedwabne, they expressed sympathy for Czajkowski and Musiał's views, in contrast to Cardinal Glemp, whose stated opinions often approximated those held by Poles who stress German responsibility while downplaying Polish guilt. Życiński set out his position in an article characteristically titled "The Banalization of Barbarity." In it, he argued that the massacre of Jedwabne demonstrated that the barbarism of Nazism could infect those who were not German:

The drama of Jedwabne bears a bitter lesson of truth about mankind. It is particularly bitter for those who consider the barbarity of Nazism as nothing other than a local variety of genocide, horrifyingly alien to the commendable remainder of humanity. It transpires that the truth about human nature is much more complex. The victims of barbarous aggression can easily grow accustomed to it, and end up applying new aggression against the innocent. The spiral of evil knows no ethnic restrictions, and we cannot consider any environment to be immune to the radiation of primitivism. This bitter truth affords protection against ideological delusions whereby some people attempt to extol blood ties or cultural affinities. These values cannot be worshipped as contemporary deities because human susceptibility to evil transcends all the borders of the categories we hold dear.⁶²

He concluded by stressing the need for an act of expiation:

Today, we need to pray for the victims of that massacre, displaying the spiritual solidarity that was missing at the hour when they left the land of their fathers. In the name of those who looked upon their death with indifference, we need to repeat David's words: "I have sinned against the Lord,"⁶³ regardless of whether any protest from the onlookers might have been efficacious in that situation.

Similar views were expressed by Muszyński in an interview with *Tygodnik Powszechny* in March 2001, in which he admitted that "some Polish residents of Jedwabne" were indeed "direct perpetrators of the crime" [the words of the interviewer]. Muszyński noted that "those who are connected to [the direct perpetrator] by religious or national ties—though they bear no personal guilt—cannot feel themselves to be free of moral responsibility for the victims of this murder" and expressed the hope that efforts toward finding "a proper and dignified way of memorializing this shameful slaughter will be found, as will some form of redress for the evil that was done."⁶⁴

Both Życiński and Muszyński were greatly influenced by Michael Schudrich, the American-born rabbi of the Jewish communities of Warsaw and Łódź, who played a major role in keeping down the emotional temperature and who went out of his way to be mindful of Polish sensitivities. In an interview with the Catholic Information Agency, published in *Rzeczpospolita* on March 14, 2001, he explicitly rejected the concept of collective guilt:

The guilty party in a murder is the person who committed the murder. It is he who should be judged, if not in this world, then certainly in the next, and it would be better for him if it were in this world than in the next, for there it will be worse. But there

is the Jewish concept of *'eglah 'arufah* [cf. Deut. 21:1–9]. Why should the elder of the nearest town pray for the man who perished at the hand of an unknown assailant? It wasn't even in his jurisdiction, and yet, though not guilty, he takes on the responsibility for what has happened. There is a shadow and it falls on everyone. The person who committed murder is individually responsible for the act. However, another person can seek forgiveness and this does not mean he bears the same guilt as the perpetrator.

Schudrich stressed the primary responsibility of the Germans for the Holocaust, asserting that it “was planned and carried out from beginning to end by the Germans, in which representatives of other nations participated,” and further arguing that Polish antisemitism was neither as strong as Jews sometimes believed nor as marginal a phenomenon as was believed by many in Poland. Asked by his interviewers, “Do you believe that Jews should apologize to the Poles for the sins of their Jewish ancestors?” he responded:

Humans must apologize for every committed wrong. That is also the duty of Jews. We must recognize that we were not only victims, but that we had amongst us people who wronged others. The Jews currently must open their eyes wider regarding their own history in the last few decades. . . .

We Jews must admit that there were Jews who actively worked for the Communists and even the Hitlerites and who committed crimes against Poles, and also against Jews. They never claimed, however, that they were acting in the name of the Jewish nation. Nonetheless the time has come that if we Jews want the Poles to feel and understand our pain, then we must understand and feel the pain of the Poles.

Schudrich also made a number of suggestions regarding how the memorial service on the 60th anniversary of the massacre could be conducted, calling for joint prayers that would commemorate the victims and lead to a request for forgiveness.

Poland's primate, Cardinal Glemp, did not rise to the occasion. From the outset, he ruled out a commemorative service of the sort proposed by Schudrich. In an interview on Warsaw's Radio Józef on March 4, 2001, he remarked sarcastically that “toward the end of February, in the course of several days, a number of high-ranking politicians contacted me with virtually identical proposals: on such-and-such day, the Catholic Church should undertake massive prayers in Jedwabne in repentance for the crimes and ask for forgiveness for the genocide, lest we incur anger.” Although Glemp proposed a joint service in Warsaw with representatives of the Jewish community (as had also been suggested by Schudrich), the provocative stance he took in a subsequent interview worked against his proposal. In this interview, conducted on May 15 with representatives of the Catholic Information Agency, Glemp took issue with Muszyński's claim that the situation of Jews often worsened during Easter week. “This statement strikes me as improbable,” Glemp said. “The first time I ever heard about this rise in anti-Jewish feeling was in Mr. Gross' book. Clearly, the book was written ‘on commission’ from someone.”⁶⁵

Glemp then went on to make a number of pointed observations:

Before the war I had no contact with Jews, because there were very few where I lived. Polish-Jewish conflicts did occur in those times, but they had an economic basis. Jews were cleverer, and they knew how to take advantage of Poles. That, in any case, was the perception. Another cause of dislike for Jews was their pro-Bolshevik attitude. This

was a very basic resentment, but it did not stem from religious motives. In Poland before the war, matters of religion did not play any significant role as far as dislike for Jews was concerned. Jews were disliked because of their odd “folk customs.” The same sort of dislike based on folk customs can be found today, for example, among fans of different soccer teams in the city of Łódź.⁶⁶ Is there any point in looking for religious motives in this?

Moreover, Glemp said,

I also cannot understand why Poles are unceasingly slandered, especially in the American press, and why we are constantly accused of antisemitism, as though it were somehow different in form from what it is in other countries. In all this, Jews continually exhibit their dislike toward Poles. I cannot really understand why they do so. For—in comparison with Europe—Jews had relatively the best situation with us, here in Poland. They felt at home here. Why therefore are there so many unjust accusations today? Think how this hurts Jews who genuinely love Poland and who live in friendship with Poles!⁶⁷

In conclusion, Glemp accused “Jews” of causing harm to Poles by closely cooperating with the Bolsheviks and made reference to their allegedly prominent role in the Communist secret police.

As could be expected, this interview prompted a sharp response from Musiał:

It seems to me that the case of Jedwabne, and the moral responsibility that Catholics have incurred toward Jews in history, can be fully stated on half a page of a school-child’s notebook. One can say simply: “This is the way we were. There is nothing we can say to justify it. We apologize to you and to God for all of this with all our hearts and all our souls. We want to change. We ask you: help us to be better.”

That’s all. Plus a large number of penitential psalms.⁶⁸

Like Glemp, Bishop Stanisław Stefanek of the Łomża diocese (to which Jedwabne belongs) failed to rise to the occasion. In his sermon on March 11, 2001, delivered in Jedwabne, he referred to what he described as the “unusual attack on Jedwabne” and the “aggressive, biased modern campaign, which has reached wide circles.”⁶⁹ A similar position was taken by the local priest of Jedwabne, the late Rev. Edward Orłowski, who became the chairman of the Committee to Defend the Good Name of Jedwabne and who was responsible for calling upon the local population not to take part in the official commemoration of the Jedwabne massacre, which was held on July 10, 2001.⁷⁰

Recent Developments

Since 2001, the divisions revealed in the Jedwabne debate have continued to plague the Church. In January 2003, for instance, Rabbi David Rosen of Jerusalem appeared as a guest speaker at the sixth annual Day of Judaism ceremony, which was held in Białystok and Tykocin under the patronage of Archbishop Wojciech Ziemba. Rosen, who spoke on the topic of “Covenant and Mercy” in the Jewish tradition, was followed by Father Henryk Witczyk of the Catholic University of Lublin, who addressed the same topic from the Christian perspective. Witczyk

posed the question of whether and in what manner “all Israel” would be saved, calling on Jews to pay attention to three relevant sections of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans (Rom. 11: 25–32). This talk aroused protest, particularly in the pages of *Tygodnik Powszechny*. One writer, Father Romuald Jakub Weksler-Waszkinel, characterized Witczyk’s lecture as a return to the practice of calling for the conversion of the Jews.⁷¹

Theological disputes of this sort are perhaps an inevitable concomitant of a more open dialogue, and other encouraging developments should also be noted. One of these was the publication in the United States of “Dabru emet” (Speak truth), a declaration by some of the leading American Jewish theologians supporting inter-faith dialogue, who called upon the adherents of each faith to respect each other’s beliefs and interpretations of Scripture. Rabbi Michael Signer of Notre Dame University, in explaining the significance of this document to Sławomir Żurek of *Tygodnik Powszechny*, emphasized the point that, for those who signed it, Christians “are devotees of the God of Israel who believe that the Hebrew Scriptures, which they share with Jews, contain a partial revelation. Jesus is for them the Messiah sent by the God of Israel. I am deeply convinced that they remain in a covenantal relationship with the God of Israel, even though they are not Jews. In a word, they are the beloved children of God and I feel a close relationship with them.”⁷²

Another positive event was the publication of Czajkowski’s “What Unites Us? An ABC of Christian-Jewish Relations,” an eloquent plea for genuine dialogue between the two faiths. “The two religious communities, the Christians and the Jews, are linked to each other and are intimately dependent on each other,” he wrote. “He who cuts himself off from Judaism cuts himself off from his Christian faith and destroys in it something essential.”⁷³ This was not the only such publication in the new genre of writing about the Christian-Jewish dialogue; similar works by Musiał and Gądecki were also published in the early 2000s.⁷⁴

In November 2002, the Episcopate endorsed a resolution to restore and preserve monuments of Jewish culture. One of the first fruits of this initiative was the restoration and return of Jewish gravestones to the Jewish cemetery in Sobienny Jeziory, near Warsaw. The local priest, Rev. Dr. Roman Karwacki, had discovered that, during the Second World War, the Nazis had made their local headquarters on church premises and had repaved a road using the gravestones. With the help of parishioners and the Social Committee to Commemorate the Memory of the Jews of Otwock and Karczew (headed by Zbigniew Nosowski of *Więź*), Karwacki transferred the gravestones to their original location.⁷⁵

To date, efforts to rein in Radio Maryja have been only partially successful. Both the commission established by the Episcopate and attempts on the part of Cardinal Glemp to attain some degree of control over the “Rydzik empire” have had little impact. In fact, with the inauguration in September 2003 of an affiliated television station known as Trwam (“I endure”), this group seems stronger than ever.⁷⁶ The establishment of a rival radio station (Radio Józef) under the auspices of the Episcopate, and the attempt to counter Rydzik’s organization by building up the Polish branch of Catholic Action (reestablished in 1996, it today has only 35,000 members), have not accomplished much.⁷⁷ Radio Maryja continues to receive kid-glove treatment both from the Church and from state authorities who have, over the years,

overlooked its numerous infractions of the law. To a certain extent, Radio Maryja's "immunity" reflects the fact that there are those in the Church hierarchy who see some positive value in the station's activities.

The latest example of support for Radio Maryja by representatives of the upper clergy is the position taken by Bishop Głódź in the February 2005 dispute between Lech Wałęsa and the radio station. In a letter published in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Wałęsa had criticized Rydzyk for spreading allegations that many former Solidarity members, including Wałęsa himself, had collaborated with the Communist regime. Wałęsa called upon the Church to take Rydzyk to task. Bishop Głódź, however, attacked Wałęsa for his criticism of Radio Maryja.⁷⁸ The following month, the Bishops' Conference failed to take a firm stance on Father Rydzyk in spite of Wałęsa's call, and despite Archbishop Życiński's earlier public condemnations of Rydzyk as a propagator of antisemitic and anti-Christian values.⁷⁹ At this conference, it became apparent to what extent Głódź's positive attitude toward Rydzyk had influenced others in the Church.

The worst recent case of failure to deal with antisemitism within the Church has been the bookshop—located in the crypt of All Saints' Church in Warsaw—that is operated by the right-wing publishing house "Antyk" (its name means "anti-communist"). Antyk was established in 1997 by Marcin Dybowski, a right-wing politician and publisher who unsuccessfully ran for the senate in that year. In a message placed on his internet site, Dybowski informed the public of his intention to publish "the works of Feliks Koneczny [a prewar antisemite], old papal encyclicals against Freemasonry, modernism, and liberalism, as well as books of a patriotic character that defend Polish traditions, Latin civilization, and the Catholic Church." The bookshop sells prewar and contemporary antisemitic tracts, including *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Reports on the bookshop were carried in *Rzeczpospolita*, *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Więź*, and an attempt was made to prosecute the owner on the grounds of inciting racial hatred.⁸⁰ In addition, a young theology student, Zuzanna Radzik, waged an unsuccessful campaign to have the bookshop relocated—a matter that was eventually taken up by *Tygodnik Powszechny*.⁸¹ According to its editor, Father Adam Boniecki: "That the location [of the bookshop] is a cause for scandal, that it throws a shadow on the good name of the Church, that it undermines the credibility of Catholics in dialogue with Judaism—is obvious. . . . We have to pose the question—would the matter be handled with such delicacy and tolerance if the tenant, for example, was selling pornography?"

Boniecki's criticism was directed against the diocese of Warsaw. The diocese initially refused to deal with the matter; its chancellor, Father Grzegorz Kalwarczyk, rhetorically asked whether the citizens of Krakow (where *Tygodnik Powszechny* is published) might not have more serious matters with which to concern themselves. In June 2003, the Warsaw district prosecutor's office decided against prosecuting the bookshop owner, on the grounds that antisemitic opinions expressed in books published before the Second World War "arose in a specific situation in which, inter alia, the demographic structure and the prognosis of its further development was unfavorable for persons of Polish nationality." Such opinions, in other words, had "a patriotic character." With regard to a number of vitriolic publications attacking Jan Gross' work on Jedwabne that were sold in the store, the prosecutor's

office held that, although the language used in these works may have been extreme, it did not constitute incitement. This decision was upheld on appeal in October 2003.⁸²

Soon thereafter, an open letter signed by a number of prominent lay and clerical Catholic figures, including Boniecki; the former foreign minister, Władysław Bartoszewski; Tadeusz Mazowiecki; Leon Kieres; and Jan Nowak-Jeziorański was sent to Cardinal Glemp. It referred first to Pope John Paul II's condemnation of anti-semitism and then continued: "We do not understand how the propaganda of hatred can be allowed on holy ground. We are shocked at the toleration of its presence, which can only be understood as Church approval for the content of this material."⁸³ Glemp responded that the matter "has been investigated by the procurator, and I do not want to impose my will by limiting the freedom of the press." A firmer position was taken by Archbishop Życiński: "The sale of antisemitic literature in churches is repugnant to the Church and Christ. When Christ drove the money changers from the Temple, it was not because their activity was in conflict with the law. . . . He did it because it was incompatible with the sanctity of a holy place."⁸⁴

Dybowski's claim was that he could not be expected to be familiar with the contents of every book that he published. Furthermore, he was merely selling books that "arouse and foster patriotism, support Catholicism . . . books critical of the EU, books critical of the plundering of the finances of Poland and the destruction of the economy."⁸⁵ The local priest, Father Zdzisław Król, claimed that he was disgusted by antisemitism but was not conscious of "any excesses" in the bookshop. He had accepted money from the bookshop to renovate the crypt and would be happy to take action if someone would reimburse the church for losses due to the closure of the store. He subsequently claimed (incorrectly) that the antisemitic books had been removed. An offer of financial assistance from *Tygodnik Powszechny*, whose editor quietly went about raising money to meet the cost of the renovation, was also turned down.⁸⁶

The Debate over *The Passion of the Christ*

Differences of position on Jewish issues were also revealed by Mel Gibson's 2004 film, *The Passion of the Christ*, which had its European premiere in Poland and attracted an audience of several million. The film was less shocking to Polish religious sensibilities than to those in Western Europe and the United States because of the essentially Counter-Reformation character of Polish Catholicism, which accommodates rather graphic images of the death of Jesus. Scenes very similar to those depicted in the film can be seen at many Polish sites of pilgrimage—a good example is the Stages of the Cross at the shrine in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska near Krakow. One perceptive Polish reviewer saw the film as an attempt to return to a visual-based or iconic version of Christianity that was characteristic of the Middle Ages and the Counter-Reformation, in preference to the text-based Christianity originating in the Reformation and, in our day, to the changes introduced into the Catholic Church by the Second Vatican Council.⁸⁷ Similarly, Gibson's film could

be regarded as a return to a folk-based rather than intellectual version of Christianity. In any event, even many “open Church” Catholics were deeply moved by the film. Among them were former prime minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Adam Szostkiewicz. The latter regarded *The Passion of the Christ* as stressing an essential element in Christianity, namely, “that one cannot ignore the Cross—the symbol of suffering, but also of redemption . . . the issue is not violence, but sin, whose consequence is violence.” Szostkiewicz also argued that the violence in the film “is artistically justified and is not more extreme than in many other films that have been widely praised.”⁸⁸

The Church hierarchy, for its part, saw the film as an important tool for evangelization in the face of the perceived inroads of secularization and mass culture. Bishop Wiesław Mering of Wrocław, interviewed in *Tygodnik Powszechny* on July 3, 2003, observed: “I have not the slightest doubt that this film is—in the positive sense—an inspirer of religious feeling . . . I have no doubt that Gibson’s film can bring believers nothing but benefit.” Gibson, he claimed, had no “intention of arousing hostility to the Jews. . . . I saw nothing in the film that could offend Jews.” Many bishops described viewing the film as “compulsory.” The Catholic Information Agency strongly promoted the film, and leading Polish biblical scholars cooperated in providing the Polish subtitles.

In this, of course, they were only following the lead of the Vatican. Cardinal Dario Castrillon Hoyos, Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy, did criticize some aspects of the film in an interview with *La Stampa*. Yet he asserted that all priests should see the *The Passion of the Christ*, which was “a triumph of art and faith” that “brings people closer to God,” and he denied that it was antisemitic.⁸⁹ Although another cardinal, Walter Kasper (president of the Papal Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews), later stated that Hoyos was only expressing his personal opinion, it was generally believed that the film had been approved by Rome.⁹⁰ Such a view was strengthened by the report that, after seeing the film, the pope himself had commented: “This is how it was.” Though later denied by the Vatican, the denial was not widely credited.⁹¹ Lending further endorsement to the belief that the Vatican approved the film was the pope’s beatification, in September 2004, of Anna Katharina Emmerich, whose gory visions of Jesus’ last hours of suffering had provided Gibson with his main inspiration in making the film.

Both *Tygodnik Powszechny* and *Więź* opened their pages to serious discussion of the film, partly because they were concerned about its antisemitic potential. *Tygodnik Powszechny* organized a debate after its first showing in Krakow. Among those who participated were the paper’s editor (Boniecki), the film-maker Agnieszka Holland, the co-chair of the Polish Council of Christians and Jews (Krajewski), and the philosopher Władysław Stróżewski. The debate appeared in the paper on March 14. In response to a question as to whether the film “restores the weight and burden of the Cross,”⁹² Boniecki replied that it was “difficult to deny” that the film showed how Jesus “was crucified, died and was buried, martyred under Pontius Pilate.” At the same time, he said, it placed at its center “the appalling character of [his] tortures [which it presents as] the mystery of our faith, the mystery of the death of the Christ, the Son of God. The burden and uniqueness of the Cross of Christ does not lie in the fact that He was subjected to atrocious tortures.” Boniecki

continued: “The call to organize ‘Retreats with Gibson’ or to treat watching the film as a religious experience alarms me enormously. . . . We are dealing here with a mystery that cannot be portrayed literally on the screen.” Finally, Boniecki was greatly disturbed by the antisemitic potential of the film:

The Church has reflected for two millenia on the texts [which describe the Crucifixion] and the culmination of these reflections was Vatican II. I don’t know if Gibson is attended by the Holy Spirit, but I believe that the Church is so attended and that this is what led to the formulation “God is faithful to the covenant with his people.”⁹³

Holland, the film-maker, condemned the film even more strongly. Although she did not expect much from it, “I honestly did not expect it would be as bad as it is. It is a film filled with evil energy. The problem is not so much that it is kitsch, because kitsch is a recurring phenomenon that also characterizes many religious works of art. The danger lies in the fact that *The Passion* reveals an abyss of force, misunderstanding, violence, which in my view is far from the content of the Gospels.”⁹⁴

Three reviews appeared in the April 2004 issue of *Wież*. The most favorable was that of Tomasz Wiślicki, who, after criticizing some of the “kitschy elements” in the film, concluded: “Mel Gibson has brought before us an exceptionally important and frequently . . . neglected aspect of the Martyrdom of Our Lord: its appalling, cruel, bodily literalness. . . . This is sufficient for me to regard his film as especially important and necessary.” Katarzyna Jabłońska was more doubtful. On the one hand, she praised the portrayal of Mary and did not see any “antisemitic tendencies” in the film, expressing concern that the controversy over it would “create more hostility toward certain Jewish circles than its actual content.” On the other hand, the film left her cold, not so much because of its “escalation of cruelty” or its emphasis on the mystery of Good Friday rather than Easter Monday, but rather because “Gibson has made of the Passion a great Hollywood-style spectacle.” She was also troubled by some of the statements in support of the film (“Those who criticize this film are criticizing the Gospels”; “Everyone gets from this film what he deserves, what he is able to take in”). “I am willing to believe Mel Gibson when he says that he made *The Passion* as an act of faith,” Jabłońska wrote. “I cannot accept the statement that it was made by the Holy Spirit.”⁹⁵

The most hostile review was that of Czajkowski. His piece was titled “I prefer the Gospel,” and it started by asserting boldly: “The film *The Passion* is not the Gospel of Jesus Christ—it is the Gospel according to Mel Gibson and Katharina Emmerich.” He was convinced, moreover, that the film would increase antisemitism:

If all my knowledge of the martyrdom of Jesus and the responsibility for his death was derived from this film, I would be in no doubt: some Roman mercenaries were cruel, but without the Jews these cruelties would not have occurred, this dreadful flagellation, this long road to the cross, the death on the cross . . . I regard this film as damaging and insulting to Jews. Some of them have compared it to Passion Plays that have also brought them many misfortunes, their own, centuries-long Passion. After the Shoah, Jews are entitled to be sensitive to such matters. We Christians should also look at this film through the eyes of the descendants of the victims of the Shoah.⁹⁶

In contrast, *Nasz Dziennik* and *Niedziela* not only strongly endorsed the film but also attacked its critics in tones that were clearly antisemitic in connotation. One extreme case was an article published in *Niedziela* by Włodzimierz Rędzioch, who claimed that critics of the film represented anti-Catholic forces, organized by anti-Christian Jews, and that Jewish filmmakers and producers from Hollywood regularly made “anti-Christian” movies such as Martin Scorsese’s 1988 film, *The Last Temptation of Christ*, and Antonia Bird’s controversial film of 1995, *Priest*. In fact, Rędzioch argued, the offended and injured party in the debate over Gibson’s movie were the Christians and their faith rather than the Jews and their faith.⁹⁷

The Passion of the Christ has had an undeniable impact in Poland and has strengthened the position of conservatives in the Church. Thus, when the “Monty Python” parody *The Life of Brian* was released on DVD in Poland (its reissue was clearly a riposte to Gibson’s film), Chrostowski darkly referred to it as a “conspiracy of certain circles”—a code phrase for “liberals” and “Jews.”⁹⁸ And in May 2004, Gibson—together with Tadeusz Rydzyk of Radio Maryja—was awarded the first Julian Kalenty prize for “multi-media in the service of evangelization,” presented by the Catholic Film Association. Gibson won the award for “using the most modern methods of expression that contemporary cinematography has at its disposal to mobilize people at the beginning of the twenty-first century to understand again the significance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.” Rydzyk received his award for his “outstanding contribution to the work of evangelization through the uses of the most modern and varied means of social communication: radio, television, the press, the internet, and through his creation of the Higher School of Social and Media Culture.”⁹⁹

Conclusion

While the Polish Church of the early 1990s at first displayed visible discomfort with the country’s new democratic system, it also showed considerable skill in turning the fledgling democracy to its own advantage. It has learned much from its initial political mistakes. In the early years of democracy, the Church antagonized some Poles by its demand to restore religious education to the public schools, by its pronounced opposition to abortion, and by its attempts to enshrine its own status in relations with the state in some form of concordat.¹⁰⁰ It also unsuccessfully threw its weight behind Lech Wałęsa’s presidential campaign in 1995, warning the electorate against “choosing for highest positions in the fatherland people who during the period of the totalitarian state were involved in exercising power at the highest party-governmental level.” Its defeats in these areas have inspired new cautiousness; as the new head of the Catholic Information Agency, Marcin Przeciszewski, explained in July 2001:

I do not see in the Polish Bishops’ Conference any particular desire to engage in political life, as was the case under the totalitarian system and in the first half of the 1990s. But then there came the cold shower of the electoral catastrophe of 1993 and

the victory of Kwaśniewski and then came the experience of what was happening on the right of the political spectrum. The main involvement of bishops in politics today is at the diocesan level, perhaps because they can exert much more influence on local politics, and that is what counts.¹⁰¹

What this has meant is that the hierarchy has valued unity above all in dealing with social and political problems. It regards the expression of critical views, whether on the Right or the Left, as dangerous to this unity and at best an unnecessary irritant. The selection of Archbishop Michalik (now Metropolitan of Przemyśl) as Chairman of the Bishops' Conference in March 2004 has strengthened this caution. Michalik was identified in the early 1990s with the "closed" Church. He has recently attempted to moderate his position by distancing himself from his earlier opinions, criticizing the activities of Radio Maryja and of Rydzyk, and appealing for the cooperation of "both believers and nonbelievers." He has also stressed the need for unity within the Church. Speaking after his election, he observed: "Christians must aspire to unity with Christ and with their fellow man. . . . We are not following a common path, we are divided, at odds, we divert each other from the good path. The lack of unity is the greatest contemporary challenge for the Church and the nation."¹⁰²

Yet Michalik also described the liberal *Tygodnik Powszechny* as a threat to the Church in Poland—as dangerous as Radio Maryja—and he did not take part in the discussion of Poland's entry into the European Union because, as he put it, he was not prepared to take either side in this dispute. Moreover, in an interview published in *Niedziela* on April 4, 2004, he restated his full support of and attachment to the "folkish" traditional form of Polish Catholicism, although he also acknowledged the possibility of making such religiosity more sophisticated and spiritual.¹⁰³

Michalik's deputy is Bishop Gądecki, a more liberal figure representing the "open" Church, who has been a consultant for the Papal Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews as well as chairman of both the Council for Religious Dialogue and the Committee for Dialogue with Judaism (the last group is affiliated with the Polish Bishops' Conference). One bishop described the choice of these two men as "an attempt to marry fire and water," while others simply note that the selection indicates the existence of two opposing forces within the Church, with the outcome of this encounter still unknown.¹⁰⁴

The desire to preserve the status quo is also reflected in the decision to allow Cardinal Glemp to retain the office of primate after he reaches the normal ecclesiastical retirement age of 75. Glemp has succeeded, even if only partially, in restricting the activities of Radio Maryja.¹⁰⁵ But he has not been able to create effective press organs of its own for the hierarchy.

Describing the Episcopate, Adam Szostkiewicz wrote:

The clash between the conservatives and the liberals, which is beloved by the media, is overplayed. Appearances to the contrary, the bishops have views that are very close on important matters. . . . We are talking here of a traditional Church—perhaps the only one of its type in Europe. There are no open disputes in the Polish Episcopate about doctrine, politics, or the teachings of the pope. There is loyalty toward the pope, one's

superiors and the state authorities (provided that they do not harm the vital interests of the Church).¹⁰⁶

This strategy has been successful in the short run. At a time when economic difficulties and corruption scandals have undermined the faith of many Poles in conventional politics, the Church has retained its hold on society. The positive assessment of the Church has risen from 55 percent in 1997, while the negative assessment has fallen from 35 percent. Moreover, in the most recent poll, 60 percent of those interviewed expressed trust in their local parish priest, which indicates the importance of the Church in individuals' daily lives.¹⁰⁷ In addition, a poll conducted in October 2003 revealed that 56 percent of the respondents felt that the government should follow the social teachings of the Church.¹⁰⁸

The lessons that the Church had learned from its earlier mistakes were clearly evident in the referendum over Polish entry into the European Union, in which the Church was able both to maintain its unity and to marginalize the anti-European elements within its ranks.¹⁰⁹ What this means with regard to Jewish issues is that while one can expect the Church hierarchy to uphold the teachings of Vatican II, it cannot be expected to take strong action against manifestations of antisemitism within its ranks; moreover, it will continue to show little understanding or sympathy for more liberal positions.

The liberal Jesuit Father Stanisław Obirek, talking about Poland's entry into the European Union, wrote optimistically about the Church's future, saying: "I believe that membership in the EU will cleanse Polish religiosity and strip it of the dangerous triumphalism incited not only by Radio Maryja but also by a section of the hierarchy intoxicated by the sociological success of the Church." A much more pessimistic view was expressed by the conservative Marcin Król in an article in *Respublica Nowa*. In his view, the Polish Church resists the fact that it exists in the modern world. It can change this world, he wrote, but not with the methods of the past. In the meantime: "The Church has been unable to leave the comfortable quiet of [the] curiosity shop."¹¹⁰

That is why the Church has such difficulty in dealing with phenomena such as Radio Maryja. In Król's view, its position is the result of the continued belief of many Polish Church faithful in a simple folk version of Catholicism, in which there is less interest in eschatology and more in the efficacy of belief and prayer. "In a period when an ever-growing number of people are educated and think for themselves," he reiterated, choosing to base the Church's position on "simple faith" is ultimately shortsighted.

The continuing link between traditionalist religion and right-wing nationalism was evident in the official welcome extended recently to Roman Giertych, the right-wing leader of the nationalistic League of Polish Families, at the renowned religious and national shrine at the Jasna Góra monastery in Częstochowa, despite Archbishop Życiński's previous statements condemning any political activities at the shrine.¹¹¹ Another worrisome sign were the voices raised against the proposal to bury Czesław Miłosz either in the crypt of poets at the Wawel or in the crypt of honor at the Pauline Church on the Rock (na Skalce) in Krakow following the Nobel laureate's death in August 2004. Opposition to burying him in a national

shrine was voiced by *Nasz Dziennik*, Radio Maryja, and the reestablished right-wing Catholic and nationalistic All-Polish Youth organization. Although not as loud and widespread as the clerical opposition in interwar Poland against the official burial of Stefan Żeromski, the well-known socialist writer, the portrayal of Miłosz as an irreverent poet with a dark Communist past, who had dared to brand the interwar Catholic newspapers *Mały Dziennik* and *Rycerz Niepokalanej* as antisemitic, suggests that the heritage bequeathed from the past is difficult to eradicate in some segments of the Church and among its followers.¹¹²

In the short run, one has to be skeptical about any significant changes in the present situation. The death of Pope John Paul II on April 2, 2005 has introduced new challenges and anxieties for the Church in Poland. Lay members of the “open” Church such as Stefan Wilkanowicz of the monthly *Znak* and representatives of the upper clergy such as Bishop Pieronek are concerned about the strength of the legacy of John Paul II and its future in the Church in Poland, and have voiced their criticism of the current theological and intellectual trends in the Catholic clergy.¹¹³ Only further passage of time will tell whether Father Obirek’s optimistic prognosis will be fulfilled.

Notes

1. The strong connection between Polish, Catholic, and national identities and its impact on contemporary religiosity were pointed out in important sociological studies published in the early 1990s. See, for instance, Ewa Nowicka (ed.), *Religia a obcość* (Krakow: 1991); Lucjan Adamczuk and Witold Zdaniewicz (eds.), *Religijność Polaków 1991* (Warsaw: 1993).

2. On the close links between the Endecja and the Roman Catholic Church, see, for example, Witold Mysłek, *Kościół katolicki w Polsce w latach 1918–1939* (Warsaw: 1966), 201–205; Ronald Modras, *The Catholic Church and Antisemitism: Poland, 1933–1939* (Chur: 1994), 79–87.

3. Quoted in Bohdan Cywiński, *Z dziejów Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce niepodległej* (Warsaw: 1980), 210.

4. Data concerning the percentage of the Catholic press in interwar Poland is cited in Andrzej Paczkowski, *Prasa polska 1918–1939* (Warsaw: 1980), 222–223.

5. On Odrodzenie and its attitudes toward Jews and Judaism, see the pioneering study of Michał Jagiełło, *Próba rozmowy: Rodowód*, vol. 1 (Warsaw: 2001), 140–150. The presence of anti-Jewish perceptions among members of this group has also been discussed in the progressive lay Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*. See the interview with the late Stefan Swieżawski, a leading member of the prewar Odrodzenie, *Tygodnik Powszechny* (special section) (Dec. 1997), 5. On the history of the center at Łaski, where the dominant religious and spiritual trend was shaped by the writings of Jacques Maritain and St. Thomas, see the collection of essays edited by Tadeusz Mazowiecki, *Ludzie Łasek* (Warsaw: 1987).

6. Until recently, historians had not found any Church documents pertaining to attitudes toward Jews that were issued during the Second World War. The first such document, “The Church Report of June and July 1941,” was discovered in the archives of the Polish government-in-exile in London by the historian Krzysztof Jasiewicz. An excerpt appears in his book, *Pierwsi po diable: Elity sowieckie w okupowanej Polsce 1939–1941* (Warsaw: 2002); also in the historical journal *Karta*, no. 40 (2004), 150–153. This unsigned report (which was most likely sent to the Polish government-in-exile by a member of the Catholic hierarchy) depicts the Jewish population as the enemy of Poland and Catholicism. In tone, it closely resembles the position of the most radical sections of the pre-1939 Church.

7. For excerpts about Jews from various Catholic publications during the Second World

War, see Paweł Szapiro (ed.), *Wojna żydowsko-niemiecka: Polska prasa konspiracyjna 1943–1944 o powstaniu w getcie Warszawy* (London: 1992).

8. This is the view of Ewa Kurek-Lesik in *Gdy Klasztor znaczył życie* (Kraków: 1992).

9. There is a new and growing literature on the history of Church-state relations in the Communist period. Among the most important works are Antoni Dudek, *Państwo i Kościół w Polsce 1945–1970* (Kraków: 1995); Antoni Dudek and Ryszard Gryz, *Komuniści i Kościół w Polsce, 1945–1989* (Kraków: 2003).

10. Jan Jeršhyna, “The Catholic Church, the Communist State and the Polish People,” in *Polish Paradoxes*, ed. Stanisław Gomułka and Antony Polonsky (London: 1990), 89–90.

11. Michał Borwicz, “Polish-Jewish Relations, 1944–1947,” in *The Jews in Poland*, ed. Chimen Abramsky, Maciej Jachimczyk, and Antony Polonsky (Oxford: 1986), 195.

12. Letter to the *Times Literary Supplement*, 28 March 1997.

13. For the Jewish perspective on the Roman Catholic Church’s efforts to transform its relations with Jews and Judaism, see, for example, Norman Solomon, “A Critical Commentary on the Common Bond,” *Jewish-Christian Relations* 18, no. 3 (1985), 67–73.

14. The majority of works about Wyszyński emphasize only the positive sides of his legacy; see for example, Peter Raina, *Kardynał Wyszyński*, 2 vols. (Warsaw: 1999). For a more critical evaluation of Wyszyński’s legacy that depicts both his achievements and his weaknesses, see, for example, Roman Graczyk, “Kardynał Wyszyński—sam wobec historii,” *Gazeta Wyborcza* (25 May 2001), online at <http://wyborcza.gazeta.pl/info/arttykul.jsp?xx=288672&dzial=0101201016>.

15. Jeršhyna, “The Catholic Church, the Communist State and the Polish People,” 92.

16. Perhaps one of the most important accounts of the rapprochement between the Church and the secular intelligentsia is Adam Michnik’s *Kościół, lewica, dialog* (Warsaw: 1998).

17. Quoted in “Droga Kościoła w Polsce Ludowej,” *Przegląd Katolicki* (24 May 1987).

18. Tadeusz Mazowiecki, “Questions to Ourselves,” *Dialectics and Humanism* no. 2 (1990), 13. This essay was originally published in *Przegląd Powszechny* 6 (1985).

19. Jarosław Gowin, *Kościół w czasach wolności, 1989–1999* (Kraków: 1999); idem, *Kościół po komunizmie* (Kraków: 1995); Joanna Michlic, “‘The Open Church’ and ‘the Closed Church’ and the Discourse on Jews in Poland between 1989 and 2000,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 37 (2004), 461–479. See also the following essay in this volume by Geneviève Zubrzycki.

20. On the position of the “closed” Church toward the “open” Church, see, for example, Jan Turnau, “Arka Noego,” *Gazeta Wyborcza* (17–18 Jan. 1998), 21.

21. Gowin, *Kościół w czasach wolności*, 344–350.

22. According to Stanisław Obirek, chief editor of the Jesuit journal *Życie Duchowe* (which endorses the principle of dialogue with Jews and Judaism), the efforts of Pope John Paul have been conducive to reducing anti-Jewish statements among some segments of the Catholic clergy in Poland. Obirek’s claim is cited by Michał Okoński, “Żeby istniał żal,” *Tygodnik Powszechny* (9 April 2000), 3.

23. *Ład* and *Słowo-Dziennik Katolicki* have recently ceased publication.

24. See Gowin, *Kościół w czasach wolności*, 335–343.

25. In its various activities, the Catholic Club in Lublin, chaired by Ryszard Bender, disseminates antisemitic and populist political views. In December 2004, Archbishop Życiński denied this club the right to use the adjective “Catholic” in its name and strongly condemned both its activities and its chairman. See the report by Tomasz Nieśpiał, “Porozumienie Kik-ów poparło abp. Józefa Życińskiego,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, <http://srwisy.gazeta.pl/kraj/2029020,34317,2562722.html>.

26. See Piotr Królikowski, “Jewish Culture, Religion and History in the Teaching and Religious Instruction of the Catholic Church of Poland,” *From the Martin Buber House* 21 (1993), 35–36.

27. See issues of *Niedziela* from March and early April 2000.

28. This statement, originally published in *Nasz Dziennik*, was cited in *Polityka* (8 April 2000), 114.

29. Cited in *Tygodnik Powszechny* (26 March 2000), 2.

30. On the importance of the connection between Judaism and Christianity as expressed in the celebration of the Day of Judaism, see Grzegorz Ignatowski, *Kościół i synagoga* (Warsaw: 2000), 52–66.

31. Michał Czajkowski, *Lud Przymierza* (Warsaw: 1992); Grzegorz Ignatowski, *Kościół wobec antysemityzmu* (Łódź: 1999); idem, *Kościół i synagoga*; Romuald Jakub Weksler-Waszkinel, *Błogostawiony Bog Izraela* (Lublin: 2000). Similar messages could also be found in earlier articles written by Father Jacek Salij, “Mroki egocentryzmu,” *Tygodnik Solidarność* (12 April 1991), 15, and “Did the Jews Crucify Jesus?,” *Więź* (special English-language issue titled *Under One Heaven—Poles and Jews* [1998]), 111–118.

32. Lucylla Pszczółowska, “Antisemitism and Religious Formation,” *Więź* (special issue 1998), 118–123. This article originally appeared in Polish as “Antysemityzm a formacja religijna,” in *ibid.* (June 1988), 142–145.

33. Bishop Gądecki’s statement was reported in *Tygodnik Powszechny* (25 May 2000), 2.

34. Michał Czajkowski, “The Sin of Antisemitism,” *Więź* (special issue), 150.

35. Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Neutralizing Memory: The Jew in Contemporary Poland* (Oxford: 1989), 181.

36. Stanisław Musiał, “Żydzi żądni Krwi,” *Gazeta Wyborcza* (29–30 July 2000), 22; idem, “Droga krzyżowa Żydów Sandomierskich,” *ibid.* (5–6 Aug. 2000), 21–22; both articles were recently republished in a collection of essays authored by Musiał, titled *Czarne jest czarne* (Krakow: 2004).

37. For a discussion of the presence of iconography depicting ritual murder by Jews in the Cathedral and the Church of St. Paul in the Sandomierz diocese, see “Sąd nad obrazem,” *Gazeta Wyborcza* (27 Oct. 2000), 18–19; Andrzej Oseka, “Troska o mord rytualny,” *ibid.* (10–12 Nov. 2000), 25; Anna Landau-Czajka, “The Last Controversy over Ritual Murder? The Debate over the Paintings in Sandomierz Cathedral,” *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 16, *Focusing on Jewish Popular Culture in Poland and its Afterlife*, ed. Michael C. Steinlauf and Antony Polonsky (London: 2003), 483–490.

38. Musiał, “Droga krzyżowa Żydów Sandomierskich,” 22.

39. See Stanisław Musiał, “Ciężar antysemityzmu,” *Tygodnik Powszechny* (29 March 1998), 9; Ignatowski, *Kościół i synagoga*, 66–96.

40. This statement was issued on April 15, 1990 and reported in *Gazeta Wyborcza* (16 April 1990), 2.

41. Reported in *Gazeta Wyborcza* (30 Sept. 1991). During the presidential election campaign in September 2000, Michalik made a political statement with a similar, but less explicit, content. This was done despite the official Church’s line of distancing itself from any political involvement in the presidential election. See *Tygodnik Powszechny* (10 Sept. 2000), 2.

42. Rafał Zakrzewski, “Fakt, który nie zaistniał: prymas odpowiada ministrowi Żochowskiemu,” *Gazeta Wyborcza* (19 April 1995), 1.

43. For reports of Jankowski’s anti-Jewish statements in the Polish press, see, for example, Roman Daszczyński, “Skandalista Henryk Jankowski,” *Gazeta Wyborcza* (31 Oct. 1997), 4; Grażyna Borkowska, “Obelgi ks. Jankowskiego,” *ibid.* (29 July 1996), 2. See also *The World Report of Antisemitism 1996* (London: 1996), 192–193.

44. These remarks were mainly directed against the Union of Freedom (Unia Wolności) party, and particularly against one of its members, Bronisław Geremek, who was at that time appointed foreign minister.

45. During the months prior to his dismissal, Jankowski charged that an Israeli-Jewish-Communist conspiracy in the media was out to destroy him. See, for example, “Homilia wygłoszona w niedzielę, 8 sierpnia przez księdza prałata Henryka Jankowskiego w bazylice sw. Brygidy w Gdańsku,” *Nasz Dziennik* (13 Aug. 2004), 12.

46. Krzysztof Olejnik, “Utopia Rydzka,” *Wprost* (8 April 2000), 36.

47. See, for example, Mikołaj Lizut, “Kto się boi Sorosa?,” *Gazeta Wyborcza* (14 May 1997), 17; idem, “Rozmowy nie dokończono,” *ibid.* (24 Oct. 1997), 3.

48. *The World Report of Antisemitism 1996*, 194.

49. On the phenomenon of Radio Maryja and different interpretations of its impact on society, see, for example, Gowin, *Kościół w czasach wolności*, 373–390; Jacek Kurczewski, “Polska partia Rydzyka,” *Wprost* (11 May 1997), 26–28; Ewa Wilk, “Rodzina ojca Rydzyka,” *Polityka* (13 Dec. 1997), 116–120; interview of Archbishop Życiński in *Gazeta Wyborcza* (14 May 2004), online at <http://serwisy.gazeta.pl?wyborcza/2029020,34474,2074696.html>.

50. See the report by Marek Beylin, “Moja Gazeta Wyborcza,” *Gazeta Wyborcza* (7 Nov. 1997), 5; Gowin, *Kościół po komunizmie*, 300.

51. Peter Raina, *Ksiądz Jankowski nie ma za co przepraszać* (Warsaw: 1996), 20–25; idem, *Ks. Jankowski znów atakuje* (Warsaw: 1998), 45–50.

52. Waldemar Chrostowski, “Tęcza malowana na czarno,” *Tygodnik Powszechny* (11 Jan. 1998), 8. For other anti-Jewish comments, see the collections of conversations with Chrostowski titled *Rozmowy o dialogu* (Warsaw: 1996) and *Rozmowy, dialog w cieniu Auschwitz* (Warsaw: 1999).

53. This comment was made in a sermon preached to a group of pilgrims in the national Marian shrine at the Jasna Góra monastery in Częstochowa. See the report in *Gazeta Wyborcza* (10–11 Nov. 1997), 5.

54. Quoted in *Tygodnik Powszechny* (25 Jan. 1998), 2.

55. Stanisław Musiał, “Czarne jest czarne,” *Gazeta Wyborcza* (15–16 Nov. 1997), 20–21; idem, “Grzech antysemityzmu,” *Tygodnik Powszechny* (11 Jan. 1998), 9.

56. See a sampling of public responses to Musiał’s first article in *Tygodnik Powszechny* (6 Dec. 1997), 4.

57. Interview by Ewa Berberyusz in *Gazeta Wyborcza* (16–17 May 1998), 29.

58. Gowin, *Kościół w czasach wolności*, 345.

59. Adam Boniecki, “List o przebaczeniu i pojednaniu,” *Tygodnik Powszechny* (3 Sept. 2000). For lengthy excerpts from the Bishops’ Conference letter, see, for example, *ibid.*, 2.

60. Bishops’ Conference letter, *ibid.*

61. Jan Gross, *Sąsiedzi: Historia zagłady żydowskiego miasteczka* (Sejny: 2000); the English version, published by Princeton University Press, appeared a year later.

62. Józef Życiński, “Banalizacja barbarzyństwa,” *Więź* (March 2001). This article was also published in English in a special issue of *Więź* (2001) titled *Thou Shalt Not Kill: Poles on Jedwabne*, ed. William Brand.

63. A reference to David’s responsibility for the death of Uriah (II Sam. 12:13).

64. Muszyński’s interview appears in translation in *The Neighbors Respond: The Controversy over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland*, ed. Antony Polonsky and Joanna Michlic (Princeton: 2003), 155–165.

65. The interview with Glomp appears in translation in *ibid.*, 166–172.

66. A reference to the fact that the fans of one of the town’s soccer teams refer to those of the other as “kikes” (*żydy*).

67. Glomp interview in Polonsky and Michlic (eds.), *The Neighbors Respond*.

68. Response by Musiał, *ibid.*, 173–178.

69. Stanisław Stefanek, “Moralny obowiązek dochodzenia do prawdy,” *Nasz Dziennik* (13 March 2001), 4–5. In his editorial column of the important Catholic weekly *Niedziela*, Michalik frequently presented a position similar to that of Stefanek; see Józef Michalik, “Piromani ‘Wyborczej,’” *Niedziela* (24 June 2001), http://www.geocities.com/jedwabne/piromani_z_wyborczej.htm

70. Joanna Michlic, “Coming to Terms with the ‘Dark Past’: The Polish Debate about the Jedwabne Massacre,” *ACTA 21* (Jerusalem) (2002), 18.

71. Witczyk’s comments led to the discussion about how to conduct Christian-Jewish dialogue in *Tygodnik Powszechny*. See Stanisław Krajewski, “Dzień przewycięzania judaizmu?” *Tygodnik Powszechny* (26 Jan. 2003), 4; idem, “Ponad dyplomacją,” *ibid.* (9 Feb. 2003), 4; Henryk Witczyk, “Dzień poznawania judaizmu,” *ibid.* (2 Feb. 2003), idem, “Pomieszanie poziomów,” *ibid.* (23 Feb. 2003), 5; Michał Czajkowski, “Pomieszanie z poplątaniem?,” *ibid.* (2 March 2003), 1; and Romuald Jakub Weksler-Waszkinel, “Dzień przeproszenia Żydów,” *ibid.* (9 Feb. 2003), 4.

72. Ibid. (12 Oct. 2003). For a discussion of “Dabru emet” and the shaping of Jewish-Christian relations with the participation of priests and members of the Jewish community in Poland, see “Bóg Sema i Jafeta,” *Znak* (Jan. 2003), 65–84.

73. Michał Czajkowski, *Co nas łączy? ABC relacji chrześcijańsko-żydowskich*, (Warsaw: 2003); idem, *Nie wstydź się Ewangelii: Z ks. Michałem Czajkowskim rozmawia Jan Turnau* (Kraków: 2004).

74. See Stanisław Gądecki, *Kto spotyka Jezusa spotyka Judaizm: Dialog chrześcijańsko-żydowski w Polsce* (Gniezno: 2002); Stanisław Musiał, *Dwanaście koszy ułomków* (Kraków: 2002).

75. Tomasz Urzykowski, “Oddaję, co nie nasze,” *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Stołeczna), (14 July 2003), 2; Maja Jaszewska, “Trzecie pokolenie sprawiedliwych,” *Tygodnik Powszechny* (27 July 2004), 5.

76. On the “Rydzik empire,” see Janina Blikowska and Agnieszka Pukniel, “Telewizja Maryja,” *Wprost* (27 April 2004), 30; Cezary Gmyz, “Gdzie jest ‘Dwuzydzian Polaków,’” *ibid.* (1 Feb. 2004), 22–25.

77. According to Bishop Piotr Jarecki, one of the main leaders of the reestablished Catholic Action, the organization does not wish to support the nationalistic vision of the Pole-Catholic. See Andrzej Goszczyński, “Front katolików,” *ibid.* (16 Dec. 2001), 38–39.

78. See the report by Reverend Tomasz Słonimski, “Radio Maryja źle uczy modlić,” *Gazeta Wyborcza* (27 Feb. 2005), online at <http://serwisy.gazeta.pl/kral/2029020,34474,257513.6.html>; see also Lech Wałęsa’s letter (addressed to “bishops and the faithful of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland”), *ibid.* (23 Feb. 2005), online at <http://wiadomosci.gazetapl/2029020,55670,2567404.html>.

79. See Jan Turnau, “Najwyższa pora na ojca Rydzyka,” *ibid.* (10 March 2005), online at <http://serwisy.gazeta.pl/wyborcza/2029020,34474,2593456.html> and Grzegorz Józefczyk’s report, “Abp. Zyciński Radiu Maryja,” *ibid.* (25 Feb. 2005), online at <http://serwisy.gazeta.pl/kraj/2029020,34317,2571480.html>.

80. See, for example, Maciej Geller and Jerzy Jedlicki, “Z nadzieją—mimo wszystko,” *Tygodnik Powszechny* (6 April 2004); letters to the editors, *ibid.* (13 April 2004); Marcin Dzierżanowski, “Podziemie antysemitki: Antyżydowskie publikacje w księgarni przy warszawskim kościele,” *Życie Warszawy* (23 July 2003).

81. See Zuzanna Radzik, “Pewnice wciąż gniją,” *Tygodnik Powszechny* (30 March 2003), 3.

82. Krzysztof Burnetko, “Antyk—ciąg dalszy nastąpił,” *Tygodnik Powszechny* (30 Nov. 2001), 11.

83. The letter was published in *Gazeta Wyborcza* (3 Dec. 2003).

84. See the report “Lekceważenie miłości bliźniego,” *Gazeta Wyborcza* (5 Dec. 2003), 4.

85. *Tygodnik Powszechny* (2 Aug. 2004).

86. *Ibid.* (27 June 2004).

87. Adam Krzemiński, “Witajcie w średniowieczu,” *Polityka* (13 March 2004).

88. “Adam Szostkiewicz: to więcej niż film,” *Polityka* (13 March 2004).

89. Quoted in *Tygodnik Powszechny* (28 Sept. 2003).

90. Quoted in *Polityka* (6 March 2004).

91. *Tygodnik Powszechny* (7 March 2004).

92. *Ibid.* (14 March 2004) (question posed by Joanna Petry-Mroczkowska in *ibid.* [7 March 2004], 1).

93. *Ibid.*, 17.

94. *Ibid.*

95. Katarzyna Jabłońska, “Naturalistycznie zamiast realistycznie,” *Więź* (April 2004), 116.

96. Michał Czajkowski, “Wolę ewangelię,” *ibid.*, 120.

97. Włodzimierz Rędzioch, “Film antysemitki czy antykatolicka krytyka? Amerykański Rabin Daniel Lapin broni filmu Gibsona,” *Niedziela* (7 March 2004), 13. For an extremely positive evaluation of the film (without references to Jews or Judaism), see, for example,

Adrian Galbas, "Pasja czyli o miłosierdziu pokonującym każdą samotność," *Niedziela* (28 March 2004), 11.

98. Quoted in *Polityka* (29 May 2004).

99. *Tygodnik Powszechny* (23 May 2004).

100. See the interview with Tadeusz Mazowiecki, "Na początku jest pustka," *Gazeta Wyborcza* (17 Sept. 2004), online at <http://serwisy.gazeta.pl/wyborcza/2029020,34474,2291717.html>.

101. *Polityka* (14 July 2001), 7.

102. *Tygodnik Powszechny* (28 March 2004), 1.

103. *Niedziela* (4 April 2004), 12.

104. Cezary Gmyz, *Wprost* (28 March 2003); Mikołaj Lizut, "Abp Michalik następcą kardynała Glempa," *Gazeta Wyborcza* (18 March 2004), online at <http://www2.gazeta.pl/info/elementy/druk.jsp?xx=1973969&plik=&tablica=document>.

105. A call for more consistent and more effective dealings with Radio Maryja on the part of the hierarchy was voiced by Adam Boniecki in his article "Przypadek Savonaroli: Dziesięciolecie Radia Maryja," *Tygodnik Powszechny* (16 Dec. 2001), 4.

106. Quoted in *Polityka* (13 March 2004), 5.

107. See Mikołaj Lizut, "Jak oceniamy polskich księży," *Gazeta Wyborcza* (10 August 2004), <http://serwisy.gazeta.pl/kraj/2029020,34308,2220807.html>.

108. *Ibid.*

109. For the statement of Polish bishops on Poland's entry to the European Union, see "Słowo biskupów polskich w sprawie wejścia Polski do Unii Europejskiej," *Niedziela* (1 June 2003), 8.

110. Marcin Król, "15 lat za wolności: Kłopot z kościołem," *Respublica Nowa* (Feb. 2004).

111. See Kaja Malecka, "Dorobkiewicz partyjni pouczają Kościół," *Rzeczpospolita* (16 Aug. 2004), A5.

112. See the short note about Miłosz's death in *Nasz Dziennik* (16 Aug. 2004), 2; see also Zubrzycki, "'Poles-Catholics' and 'Symbolic Jews,'" 79–80.

113. See Stefan Wilkanowicz, "Jego trudny testament," *Wprost* (3 April 2005), online at [http://www.wprost.pl/drukuj/?\)=75315](http://www.wprost.pl/drukuj/?)=75315) and Roman Graczyk's interview with Bishop Tadeusz Pieronek, "Pieronek: kościołowi w Polsce brakuje wizji," *Gazeta Wyborcza* (9 April 2005), online at <http://serwisy.gazeta.pl/wyborcza/2029020,34474,2645765.html>.

THE AVRAHAM HARMAN INSTITUTE
OF CONTEMPORARY JEWRY
THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY
OF JERUSALEM

JEWES, CATHOLICS, AND THE
BURDEN OF HISTORY

STUDIES IN
CONTEMPORARY
JEWRY
AN ANNUAL
XXI

2005

Edited by Eli Lederhendler

Published for the Institute by

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS