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Anti-Zionism as a Multipurpose Policy Instrument: The Anti-Zionist Campaign in Poland, 1967–1968

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This article outlines the anti-Zionist campaign in Poland between 1967 and 1968, in particular its evolution from a Cold War anti-Israel policy in reaction to the Six Day War into a domestic anti-Jewish campaign. It focuses on the factors that influenced the top decision makers in launching the campaign, and its images of the enemy. The campaign was a peculiar combination of two patterns of symbolic aggression that belong to historically hostile camps: communist hate campaigns and anti-Semitism of the nationalist right. Notwithstanding its irrational components (i.e. anti-Jewish resentments and prejudices which fed much of its dynamics), the campaign appears to have been an effective policy instrument that achieved desirable results for the decision makers and instigators.

Introduction: Anti-Zionism in Communist Poland before 1967

The noisy hate campaign that erupted in Poland in March 1968, known as "the anti-Zionist campaign," became the symbol of communist Poland's attitude towards the Jews and Israel.[1] However, before the campaign, the Polish communist regime had not displayed greater anti-Jewish or anti-Israel tendencies than other Soviet satellites; it had appeared even friendlier (or less hostile) than most of the regimes in the Soviet bloc, the Soviet one in particular.[2]

In the early postwar years, the new Polish government tolerated semi-legal Jewish emigration channels and acted favorably in the international arena; it even provided military training for Zionist organizations. In 1949–50 the Polish Politburo agreed to a request to allow an emigration scheme, which brought almost thirty thousand people to the new State of Israel.[3] The scheme was a favor (especially in the eyes of

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many non-Jews who wanted to leave but could not), but it also accorded well with the general drive of accelerated Sovietization that began at that time. This included centralizing and taking control of or liquidating Jewish institutions, restricting contacts with Jewish organizations in the West and diplomatic relations with Israel, and eventually discontinuing emigration under a broader non-exit policy.[4]

To many Polish Jews in the 1940s, the new regime was primarily a radical departure from the Polish regime of the 1930s, which had increasingly drifted towards the anti-Jewish positions of its opponents on the nationalist right. The Communists seemed to guarantee safety against Polish anti-Semitism. As Lucjan Blitt, a Jewish socialist, wrote: "One thing that every group of Jews who had decided to rebuild their lives in Poland [after World War II] was certain about was the conviction that as long as a communist regime was in power, official anti-Semitism would be out of the question."[5] While many of the regime's officials, especially at the lower level, shared some popular anti-Jewish prejudice, in the turbulent early postwar years the regime made efforts to combat (right-wing) anti-Semitism and to protect the Jews against attacks. Anti-Jewish resentment did not disappear from Polish society after the overwhelming majority of Polish Jewry perished in the Holocaust. Returning Jews often encountered hostility, whose bloody culmination was the Kielce pogrom in 1946.[6] The dark mystery of the hostility towards the Holocaust survivors requires further study and explanation, yet one of its factors was evident. This was the revival of the widespread stereotype of *Żydokomuna*, or Jewish communism: the conviction that Communists were mostly Jews, and vice versa. The conspicuous presence of Jews in the apparatus of the regime being brutally imposed on Poland, which was further exaggerated in popular perceptions, seemed to confirm the stereotype of *Żydokomuna*. The anti-Semitism of the time was largely tied to and symbiotic with anticommunism and anti-Sovietism; the new government fought against it quite sincerely.[7]

Obviously, Poland under the communist regime was not a paradise for the Jews. They were deprived of many basic rights and freedoms and exposed to terror, but as a rule not more so than others. This equality, although peculiar, was not unimportant, as Jews in prewar Poland (not to speak of the German occupation period) had felt acutely various forms of administrative and societal discrimination. A form of special discrimination against the Jews that marked the communist period was "thinning out comrades of Jewish origin"—that is, a kind of *numerus clausus* to avoid their "excessive concentration" in certain institutions such as the Foreign Service. This initially reflected the new rulers' desire to appear as a "genuine representative of the Polish people" and their awareness of the popularity of the *Żydokomuna* stereotype.[8] In practical terms, however, it was not so much these administrative measures that made the daily life of Polish Jews difficult as the persisting popular prejudice and resentment. These were, however, "relics of the past," believed to be destined to disappear in the process of building a new, Polish socialist society and culture.

The new regime's initial warm support for Israel did not last long. Israel soon became in the Soviet view an "agent of American imperialism in the Middle East"—that is, it took the wrong, Western side in the Cold War.[9] Consequently, pro-Israel attitudes among the inhabitants of the Soviet bloc became highly suspect. Zionism was not just bad as a form of nationalism but it now implied service to "imperialism" and "world capitalism," most

likely in the form of espionage on behalf of the CIA. Spying for imperialists was the major crime against one's country, socialism and peace, clearly deserving the death penalty, as confirmed by the fate of eleven of the fourteen defendants at the 1952 show trial of Rudolf Slánský and other "Trotskyist-Titoist, Zionist and bourgeois-nationalist traitors" in communist Czechoslovakia. Moreover, the trial introduced "anti-Zionism" into the official vocabularies of communist regimes as a code name for any anti-Jewish speech and action. The terms *Zionism* and *Zionist* no longer denoted Jewish nationalism, which the Communists, including Jewish Communists, had long opposed, but became labels to be freely applied to any person of Jewish origin whom the regime targeted for attack. They became part of the communist Orwellian "newspeak," their meaning flexible and threatening, their application ritual and instrumental, both determined by the party leadership. (For this reason, I will place the terms *Zionist, Zionism* and *anti-Zionism* in quotation marks whenever they are used within this particular, totalitarian language.) To be sure, "Zionism" was not the only term that communist propaganda used freely for such labeling of enemies, real or imaginary. For example, the epithet "fascist" could be applied to any political opinion or group so defined, socialists and conservatives included.

The Slánský trial had relatively limited consequences in Poland. While the media reported on it extensively and propagated its hate speech, it did not generate any local mutation, arrests and executions.[10] Jewish Communists in high positions in the party, administration and security apparatus were not removed. Although their influence seems to have gradually weakened, legitimate fears of an approaching anti-Jewish purge did not materialize. Such a purge again appeared most likely when the Soviet media announced in early 1953 the discovery of the "doctors' plot" to kill Soviet leaders. Fortunately, Stalin's actual death in March 1953 discontinued the campaign against the doctors who, as the organ of the Polish party claimed, "had been recruited by the international, bourgeois-nationalist Jewish organization Joint, a branch of the American intelligence."[11] In the sphere of international relations Poland also differed from the rest of the Soviet bloc. While in December 1952, Polish authorities declared the Israeli envoy a *persona non grata*, they did not sever diplomatic relations altogether. Thus, since February 1953 Poland remained the only country of the bloc that maintained relations with Israel. This proved helpful later, when Polish diplomats assisted in the renewal of Soviet-Israeli relations.[12]

The relatively early change in party leadership in Poland may explain why the Polish regime did not follow the Czechoslovak example of struggle against "Zionism" in 1952. The Slánský trial was a late case of the bloc-wide pattern of replacing the communist leaderships installed in the early post–World War II years as part of the intensified Sovietization process and the Stalin-Tito rift. This change took place in Poland in 1948 under the slogans of fighting "the right-wing [Polish] nationalist deviation." The losers were marginalized, some of them arrested, and at the time of the Slánský trial they were still awaiting their own trial. Three aspects of the campaign against the "right-wing nationalist deviation" deserve a mention here. First, the group that emerged triumphant and then led the Sovietization drive in the early 1950s included many Communists who had spent the war in the Soviet Union. Among those

"Muscovites," prominent Jewish Communists were unsurprisingly overrepresented (those Polish Jews who had spent the war in the USSR, including deportees to Siberia, constituted the majority of Polish Holocaust survivors). Second, the Communists who were targeted as "right-wing nationalists," including their leader Władysław Gomułka, survived the campaign.[13] This point is not just to note the surprising leniency of the change of Polish leadership (elsewhere in the bloc the losers lost their lives, not just positions). Those accused of the "deviation" returned to the political scene in 1956, having acquired popular sympathy as victims of the regime and Polish patriots who had tried to resist Soviet pressure. In 1968 some prominent supporters of the "anti-Zionist" campaign traced its origins to the 1948 crisis, and the campaign's favorite targets were Jewish Stalinists who had contributed to Gomułka's fall in 1948.[14]

The "thaw," or the relaxation of terror, and the political shakeup in 1956 that ended the Stalinist period, temporarily destabilized the Polish regime and brought another change of leadership. Gomułka returned to the highest party position, that of first secretary of the Central Committee (CC) of the Polish United Workers Party (PZPR, i.e., the Communist Party). Upon his return he faced a party leadership divided into two factions: the relatively reformist group, called Puławy (since some of its leaders lived and met on Puławska Street in Warsaw), included leading Jewish Communists; the other faction, known as Natolin (a palace in Warsaw's suburbs where its leaders met), did not hesitate to exploit the ethnic argument against its rival, in particular blaming the Jews for the crimes of the Stalinist period.[15] What is interesting here is the pattern of two opposing programs for renewal of the regime that emerged in this rivalry. Puławians tended to call for structural reforms, while downplaying personal responsibility (i.e. they focused on how the regime operated rather than who operated it); Natolinians downplayed structural deficiencies of the regime and tended to stress personal responsibility (of their opponents). Both the proposed solutions were of course partial and insufficient, and their alternative false, yet by being expressed publicly at the top party level they undermined a major taboo, opening the door for public criticism of the regime's rules or its rulers respectively. In 1968, the "personalist" Natolin way of thinking would emerge again, together with the claims that Jews were responsible for the cruelties of the Stalinist period.

In 1956 Gomułka tactically cooperated with the Puławy group, but after a time he put his own people in key positions and, under the slogan of fighting against (Marxist) 'revisionism,' weakened his ex-allies. The broader context of the political games was reconsolidation of the regime after the shock of 1956, the smothering of reform tendencies within the party, the return of cultural and economic policies to their former course (but with the significant exception of collectivization), and Gomułka's increasing autocracy. In the 1960s a rising new force appeared on the political scene, the Partisans, a rather loose group of party leaders and lower-level activists united by similar political backgrounds (particularly their wartime experience in the communist underground, hence their name), unappeased ambitions and a worldview combining nationalism and communism, under the unquestioned leadership of General Mieczysław Moczar (one of the "right-wing nationalist" losers of 1948). Moczar's

position consolidated as he gradually took full control of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MSW) with its secret services, where he defeated his chief (Jewish) rival, Antoni Alster. Similar processes of gradual elimination of (alleged revisionist) Jewish Communists from important positions or their marginalization occurred in some other key institutions of the regime: certain sections of the party apparatus, the Main Political Administration (GZP) of the army, and the military secret services.[16]

The expressions of popular anti-Jewish attitudes, suppressed during the Stalinist period, reappeared in 1956. Archival evidence confirms grass-roots prejudice, often including the *Żydokomuna* stereotype, as well as exploitation and encouragement of the prejudice in the factional struggle.[17] When the regime restabilized in 1957–58, the particular "Jewish question" of communist Poland (including the sensitive topics of wartime Polish-Jewish relations, the role of Jewish Communists, and so on) was again censored out of the public discourse—until 1967. In the 1960s Poland maintained relatively good relations with Israel. In 1962 the countries upgraded their diplomatic missions to embassy status, and trade increased. In 1966 Polish Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki invited his Israeli counterpart, Abba Eban, to Warsaw. Israel repeatedly expressed support for Poland on a most important issue: Poland's new western border, questioned by the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Reportedly, Israeli assistance proved helpful in acquiring American credits, while for Israel Poland appeared to be a good bridgehead for improving relations with the rest of the Soviet bloc, the USSR in particular.[18] Nevertheless, the secret services of the MSW (the intelligence and the political police—SB [Security Service]) were increasingly suspicious towards both Israel and Polish Jews, clearly not without the influence of their Soviet partners/masters.

The thaw of 1956 brought among other things a relaxation of the passport policy, resulting in a wave of emigration, which embraced more than half of the total number of Polish Jews. Notably, many of the Jewish emigrants had just repatriated from the USSR; this part of the "Gomułka wave" of emigration to Israel was an indirect migration from the Soviet Union. The authorities tightened the grip on emigration again in the late 1950s but the refusal rate among applicants for emigration permits to Israel was lower than to most Western countries. In 1966 as many as 67 percent of the applications were successful (78 percent in 1965), compared with 38 percent of the applications to France and the United States and just 19 percent to the FRG. Following the "Gomułka wave" and the limited emigration in the 1960s, on the eve of the Six Day War there remained probably some 25,000–30,000 Jews among Poland's more than 32 million inhabitants. The continuing outflow influenced the structure of the remaining Jewish population, as those less acculturated or adjusted to the sociopolitical regime were more prone to emigrate. Polish Jewry was thus decreasing in numbers, aging and assimilating, its younger cohorts tending to secular Polish identities. It had no qualified rabbi, but it had impressively developed secular institutions. However incomparable they were with the richness of the Jewish life before the war, these institutions were much more active and richer than the institutions of any other ethnic minority.[19] This was in large part the result of sizable

foreign assistance, renewed after 1956, which other ethnic groups did not enjoy. From 1958 until 1966 the American Joint Distribution Committee (Joint) earmarked almost six million US dollars for the Jewish community in Poland (which the MSW saw as clear evidence of subversive Western penetration).

The above outline shows how in the Polish People's Republic (Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa, PRL) various elements gradually accumulated that would contribute to the "anti-Zionist" campaign in 1967–68, including popular anti-Jewish prejudice and resentment; Cold War hostility towards Israel and suspicion towards any sympathy for Israel; subordination to Moscow that was to make Poland take the Arab side in the distant conflict in the Middle East; a (Soviet) ready-made vocabulary of "anti-Zionism," which enabled the popular anti-Jewish resentment to be mobilized and exploited under an orthodox Marxist-Leninist camouflage, and the implicit tendency to extend the attack on Zionists to "Zionists"; and the legacy of the intra-party struggles and their Jewish aspect. The biggest factor, and easy to overlook because of its size, was the communist regime itself: the Leviathan of the centralized bureaucratic party-state, which controlled and monopolized the political sphere, the economy and media, with thousands of obedient apparatchiks, vigilant police officers, and activists (*aktiv*) ready to show devotion to any cause set by the party leaders, as well as non-party opportunists, conformists and ordinary loyal citizens.

In particular, this machinery had been well trained in running hate campaigns. Communist rulers and their propagandists had for years invested heavily in relevant institutions and training, and mastered their skills of inciting hatred. Aggressive propaganda and mobilization of the party and masses against real or imaginary enemies were such pervasive features of the Stalinist period that it can be seen as a permanent campaign with changing objects: the anticommunist opposition and Tito, the Roman Catholic Church and "right-wing nationalist deviation," kulaks and the Marshall Plan, and so forth. These hate campaigns were local mutations of the Soviet model, which had developed during the great purges and show trials of the 1930s, when communist hate speech had acquired its most elaborate and distinctive forms. Reading and listening to this hate speech was a necessary element of education of young party activists in pre-1956 Poland. After 1956 the campaigns were less frequent and intense yet they also bore the imprint of their Soviet forebears. Just a year prior to the anti-Israel campaign of 1967, a wave of protests and public condemnations was carefully prepared and carried out in earnest against the Catholic episcopate. In 1968 the "anti-Zionist" campaign had not yet come to an end before the propaganda machine targeted the reform movement in Czechoslovakia.

June 1967: The Anti-Israel Campaign, Intra-Party Conflict and the 'Zionist Threat'

The Israeli-Arab Six Day War in 1967 marked a turning point in the policy of the Polish authorities towards Israel and the Jews in Poland. For several years, besides rather routine criticism of Israel's cooperation with "imperialism," both anti-Zionism and "anti-Zionism" had been largely absent from the public discourse. Diplomatic

representation was mutually raised to the embassy level, while Poland gave secret financial support to the Communist Party of Israel.[20] In June 1967 anti-Zionism openly returned, while "anti-Zionism" remained in the background for the time being.

Initially, the (party-controlled) media provided rather limited information about the war, and news commentary was cautious, thus not particularly aggressive towards Israel. On 6 June the Polish Politburo met to "exchange views about the events in the Middle East" and defined "directives for informational-propaganda work."[21] The next day the Polish government published a statement which, on behalf of the entire nation, condemned the perpetrators of the aggression and expressed complete support for the just struggle of the Arab countries. Immediately, the media filled with words of condemnation against the Israelis along with expressions of solidarity with the peace-loving Arab nations. Propaganda, although aggressive, still remained within the regular limits of presenting adversaries from the other side of the Iron Curtain and targeted the Israeli government, not the Jews in general.

On 9 June Gomułka and Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz went to Moscow for a summit of communist leaders devoted to the Middle East crisis. The summit decided in favor of military and financial support for the Arab countries and the severance of diplomatic relations with Israel (which Romania rejected). One of the Polish eyewitnesses recalled this meeting as "very dramatic": "Everything took place in a somewhat morose atmosphere. There was the feeling that our camp had undergone, in a certain sense, a military and political failure, and lost prestige.... During the meeting unsettling information [on Arab defeats] reached us, which put everyone in a discouraged mood."[22] Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev's secret speech to the Soviet Central Committee on 20 June reveals much about the atmosphere in the Kremlin during those days:

> The caution of the moment, the speed with which the situation changed, the necessity of making decisions literally in the course of a few hours, important decisions regarding the vital interests of our country, the fate of war and peace, put all of us under great stress. I must tell you, Comrades, that the Politburo was working around the clock during those days.... After receiving the report from Cairo describing the dramatic situation on the Egypt-Israeli front, we members of the Politburo met at one o'clock in the morning. We analyzed the possible options for assistance to the defeated UAR [United Arab Republic] army. On 8 June, in light of the existing situation, the leaders of the parties and governments of the European socialist governments agreed to meet without delay to discuss together the joint measures required to be undertaken in the current conditions. All this occurred, Comrades, very quickly, decisions were made by means of personal telephone calls to Central Committee Secretaries and heads of governments.[23]

Having returned to Warsaw, Gomułka shared with other members of the Polish Politburo his mood of pessimism:

> The tense situation ... will continue and the possibility of new and more dangerous events cannot be excluded. A pretext for new aggression can always be found. That is why Romania's position is that much more shameful .... The appetites of imperialism grow on local wars in which they can count on successes .... We need

> to be prepared for a variety of surprises. Nuclear war hangs in the air, since the situation is inching the world to war.[24]

Such dramatic thinking clearly contributed to Gomułka's angry reaction to the news of alleged pro-Israel attitudes among Polish Jews, which he was repeatedly receiving from the MSW. Already the MSW report of 6 June noted: "we observe expressions of support for Israel mainly among persons of Jewish origin." Other reports followed on the same note: "In the circles of the Jewish minority in Poland, and particularly among Jewish youth, there is a declared readiness to go to Israel to participate directly in the battle against the Arabs."[25] Indeed, in Poland one could hear opinions about the war that significantly departed from the official stance and tone conveyed by the media. Western journalists and other independent observers noted expressions of sympathy for Israel and praise of its military successes, not only on the part of Jews. One such well-known expression was the reported remark that "our Jews [from Poland] beat their [Soviet-backed] Arabs."[26]

Gomułka also learned that some Polish Jews had celebrated Israeli victories, sent greetings to the Israeli embassy and openly criticized the Polish and Soviet position on the conflict. His secretary recalled that this news greatly irritated the PZPR leader:

> I know that it hurt Wiesław [Gomułka] terribly, because he recognized that some of the comrades only formally [belonged] to our community in the sense of their feeling of [common] interest, threat, and the like . . . . That was very important for him, that certain comrades identified more with Israel than with the line of the party, in terms of international politics.[27]

His sensitivity to the issue probably also resulted from the fact that the groups and persons reported by the MSW as disloyal were often close to certain party leaders who had been increasingly irritating Gomułka for some time. Moreover, he learned that the news on disloyalty among Polish Jews had reached Moscow too. Thus, he had reasons of various kinds to react firmly.

After hearing Gomułka's account of the meeting in Moscow, the Polish Politburo confirmed the decision to sever relations with Israel and to give military assistance to the Arab countries.[28] When the Israeli ambassador left Warsaw several days later, a crowd of suspicious individuals, brought there undoubtedly by the MSW, made catcalls, which Polish radio described as "the spontaneous reaction of the people of Warsaw."[29] From then until the end of the communist period Poland kept in line with the general Soviet bloc's anti-Israel policy in the international arena, including in the United Nations. It was no longer Poland but Romania that was the liaison country between Israel and the bloc. This anti-Israel line was compatible with increasing political and economic cooperation with Arab countries. I do not know of any archival evidence of any discussion on the topic of Polish-Israeli relations, in either the party leadership or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, not to speak of the Polish media. Clearly, since Moscow had decided on such a line, it seemed to be a topic outside their capacity—*Roma locuta causa finita*. It was only 23 years later, when Poland restored its sovereignty, that the first noncommunist government of Poland renewed diplomatic relations with Israel.

After the Politburo meeting, the media were evidently urged to intensify the anti-Israel campaign, as in a few days a new wave of aggressive articles reached the Polish public. The press emphasized the suffering of the Arab population and the alleged brutality of the Israeli army. A notable feature of many articles was their comparisons of the Israeli army to the Nazi German army and news of the FRG's support for Israel. Their authors evidently enjoyed implying a perverse Nazi-Jewish affinity. This was not as shocking as it might seem today, as comparing Western (especially American) governments and policies to Nazi ones was by no means unusual. Party officials responsible for the media were also fond of this theme, as their later documents repeat the directive to keep stressing the German-Israeli cooperation.[30]

The media accompanied the wave of anti-Israel public protests organized throughout the country. Factory workers and employees of various offices and other institutions gathered at such meetings to express feelings and opinions entirely in accord with the party guidelines. They used very similar or indeed the same words and expressions: "We condemn the criminal aggression of Israel against the Arab nations. We condemn the barbaric methods used by the Israeli army against the civilian population," declared Henryk Szaniawski, a worker at the Paris Commune Plant, speaking on behalf of his crew, "the Israeli government became the tool of subjugation of other nations through British-American and West German imperialists." One thousand miners from the Staszic mine passed a unanimous resolution demanding the immediate withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the Arab lands. The employees of the Mechanic Works and the Transformer Factory in Łódź expressed their cordial support for the Arab people. A female worker of the Uroda Soap Factory said to her colleagues, "As a mother it hurts me to see thousands of Arab women and children suffering from the misfortune brought by the Israeli aggression against the Arab people." Israel's aggression was also severely condemned by the workers at the Beton-Stal enterprise and the Radio Factory in Warsaw, the teachers of Rzeszów province, the employees of the truck factory in Starachowice, and tens of thousands of others.[31]

This wave of meetings resulted from party mobilization as practiced for years. Its chronology shows the party *modus operandi* and its chain of command. First, the secretaries of Voievodship (Provincial) Committees (VC) and directors of Central Committee departments gathered at a conference in Warsaw where they listened to Gomułka's speech on the Middle East crisis, in which he condemned Israel as the "outpost of imperialist interests" in the region. Gomułka claimed, however, that "contrary to Arab nationalists we support the existence of the Israeli state. We think that the slogan of liquidating Israel is wrong."[32] Next the VC apparatus transmitted instructions for action to the lower levels. This is how a party report presented this operation in Warsaw:

> On 14 June a meeting was held by the members of the Warsaw Committee, the executives of the District Committees, the Secretaries of the Workplace Committees, the employees of the party apparatus, as well as the leadership of the Warsaw National Council [i.e., City Council], the trade unions, and youth organizations. The first secretary of the VC, Stanisław Kociołek described the genesis and

> development of the conflict, the position of the Polish government, and the political repercussions against Israel. Attention was called to the imperialist propaganda as well as the tasks of the party organizations. The present main task, resulting from the resolution of the 8th plenum of the Central Committee, is the summoning of meetings in party organizations, explaining the essence of the events in the Middle East, as well as the strengthening of active struggle with subversive propaganda and attempts to sow seeds of political chaos .... After conferences of secretaries of basic party organizations in the District Committees [that followed], meetings in the basic organizations began. Mass meetings take place in Warsaw workplaces and institutions, and provide a forum to express support for the PRL's position with regard to Israel's aggression in the Middle East and condemn Israel's aggressive, provocative, and imperialist policy in the Middle East, directed against the Arab countries.[33]

The party machine worked smoothly, producing the requested results, although a closer look at the photographs from the meetings reveals faces that are more tired or bored than angry.

The campaign's high point was Gomułka's appearance at the Trade Union Congress on 19 June. He delivered a twenty-page speech, mainly a lecture on the history of Israel and its entry into an "entente with British-American imperialists against the progressive Arab forces." This would have been just another of his long and boring speeches if it were not for a paragraph where he referred to the "fifth column"—a synonym for enemy infiltration:[34] "Israel's aggression in the Arab countries met with applause in Zionist circles of Jews—Polish citizens." The Polish authorities treat all citizens equally regardless of their ethnicity, he claimed, "but we do not want a fifth column to emerge in our country. We cannot remain indifferent towards people ... who support the aggressor." He also unambiguously urged that "those who feel that these words are addressed to them" should emigrate. The audience greeted these words with applause.[35]

A few of the Politburo members present—Edward Ochab, Eugeniusz Szyr, Stefan Jędrychowski and Adam Rapacki—were clearly surprised by and unhappy with precisely this fragment of the speech. Ochab put it bluntly: "You had no right to come forth with such a thesis, you had no right without the consent of the Politburo."[36] He was evoking an unwritten rule that the official speeches of the first secretary were passed among the members of the Politburo for their remarks. This was not a minor issue, as the rule expressed the "collective leadership" principle, which parties of the Soviet bloc had introduced following Nikita Khrushchev's critique of Stalin's rule, as a remedy against the "cult of the individual." The reason for departure from this rule, according to Gomułka himself and his secretary, was trivial and irrelevant to the controversial contents of the text: lack of time and the absence from Warsaw of the majority of the Politburo members before 19 June. Ochab did not believe this explanation, and there are good reasons to share his suspicion. He and other contenders must have been really angry, as under their pressure Gomułka agreed to alter the text of his speech for official publication. The sentence about the fifth column disappeared, while words moderating the tone of the fragment were added. This was

quite unprecedented: the authoritarian first secretary had agreed to censor a speech he had already delivered! As participants in the congress and those who had listened to the speech on the radio knew the original version, this extraordinary fact could not pass ignored.

In Moscow the 19 June speech was well received. The Soviet press published it (the amended version) and Brezhnev himself personally praised Gomułka, confirming that his evaluation of the events was consonant with that of the Soviet Politburo.[37] A comment is in order here that the Soviets praised the Polish leaders for their correct approach to "the problem of Zionism" and their determined action in March 1968 afterwards, but there is no evidence that they had encouraged them to such action in advance. In the notes from several Polish-Soviet meetings at the highest level that took place between June 1967 and March 1968, the topic of the Middle East was raised several times, but no mention was made (or at least recorded) about the domestic "Zionists."[38]

The speech opened an essentially new phase of the campaign. These few sentences by the first secretary introduced the word "Zionism," that had augured ill for Jews since the 1950s. The anti-Israel campaign became anti-Zionist, possibly "anti-Zionist," and the Cold War crisis in the Middle East acquired a local Polish-Jewish dimension. At the same time the clash between Gomułka and the outraged Politburo members crystallized a serious division inside the party leadership, which was not limited to that single issue. "A very important tension appeared at that point within the leadership . . . a very significant matter," as Gomułka's secretary later recalled.[39] What the issue was can only be surmised. The charisma that Gomułka had enjoyed in 1956 had long eroded. His authoritarian style of ruling and his economic and cultural policies had been increasingly difficult to accept for some members of the leadership. At the next Politburo session Gomułka defended his stance on the alleged disloyalty:

> Regarding the situation that existed in the country during the period of Israel's aggression and the dangerous symptoms, which were reported to us, I considered it appropriate to stand out against the germ of the fifth column. A very important problem has developed which we cannot overlook. These are matters that affect our entire country, our existence, and there must be clarity in these matters. With regard to people who have two souls and two fatherlands, conclusions must be drawn.[40]

In June 1967 the opposition in the Politburo prevented the unleashing of an open "anti-Zionist" campaign. The propaganda did not reproduce the sentence on the "fifth column" nor did it take up the theme of "Zionists in Poland." But behind the scenes, in fields and through channels outside the control of the opponents of the "anti-Zionism" theme, different messages started to circulate, which—as we know today—prepared the ground for a future campaign. Gomułka's words were a signal for those who had long been awaiting it, above all in General Moczar's Ministry of Internal Affairs. Having repeatedly provided party leaders with information on alleged Jewish disloyalty, they now received the desired feedback.

The MSW leadership had no doubts about the treacherous inclinations of Polish Jews. Some of its directors had for a long time pointed to the "Zionist threat." Their report, summarizing the reactions to the Six Day War in Poland, accused not only

individual Jews but Jews in the most general terms: "Polish Jews show solidarity with the Israeli aggressors, praise the Israeli army and the policy of the Israeli government," and worst of all they "express themselves critically and often inimically about the policy of the party and authorities of the PRL, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries."[41] The Security Service reported that 81 Polish citizens had volunteered for the Israeli army, while others had transferred savings and sent greetings of solidarity to representatives of the Israeli embassy. Among the 382 Jews allegedly displaying pro-Israel attitudes were 76 journalists and writers, 51 individuals in upper managerial positions in the administration, 46 scholars and 36 lawyers. The reports visibly tended to contrast the attitudes of the Jews with the rest of society: "the working class, the peasants, and the intelligentsia, as well as the non-Jewish ethnic minorities almost universally expressed support for the position of the party and the government . . . . Polish society generally responded in favor of the Arab side, against the Israeli aggressor." The reports strongly denied it could be otherwise and claimed that information about the pro-Israel sympathies of Poles, "spread by Zionists and enemy foreign agencies," were deliberate misinformation.[42]

Fragmentary evidence shows that the theory of a Jewish threat had been ripening inside the MSW for a few years. One may suppose that Soviet influence had contributed to its development. Well before June 1967, Vice-Minister Franciszek Szlachcic claimed that the "USA exploits three forces against the socialist countries: [Roman Catholic] clergy, the FRG and Zionism." He saw a Jewish conspiracy behind the ferment among the intelligentsia—for example, behind such dissidents as Jacek Kuroń and Karol Modzelewski there was an alleged "conceiving and instigating group" entirely composed of Jewish intellectuals.[43] The paranoid thinking of the security officers appears most clearly in their expressed conviction that pro-Israel attitudes among Polish Jews could not appear spontaneously but "undoubtedly [had their] origins in the resolutions of the World Jewish Congress in Brussels and the World Zionist Organization in Jerusalem . . . . In recent years the Jewish minority was actively penetrated by representatives of the international Zionist organizations and the Israeli embassy."[44] In seeking sources for the paranoid vision of the "Zionists" in March 1968, we need to take into consideration not only anti-Semitic stereotypes but also the secret police's partiality for conspiracy theories and a more widespread "detectivist materialism," which had found fertile ground in Soviet-dominated communist parties.

After the Six Day War and the clash inside the Politburo, such thinking found political support at the top party level. General Kazimierz Witaszewski, a hard-liner who supervised the MSW on behalf of the party authorities, now encouraged its directors to "get to the party leadership in order to set forth these issues once again" (that is, to make the 'Zionist problem' a top political issue), in order to help "our party purge itself of incidental and undesirable elements."[45] Whether this was his own initiative or whether he spoke on behalf of some party leaders remains unclear. Certainly raising the topic would contribute to weakening the position of Ochab and other Politburo members who had opposed Gomułka on 19 June, as well as those critical of the growing power of Moczar and his men.

Summarizing the discussion of the MSW directors on 28 June, Moczar defined the Jews as infected with dangerous "Zionism," indicated them as a collective object for particular scrutiny and gave the priority to the struggle with "Zionism" thus understood. The anti-Israel campaign, which Gomułka transformed into an anti-Zionist one, through Moczar's guidelines acquired a secret and clearly anti-Jewish dimension. The Security Service followed his order for "in-depth investigation of certain fields of our administration and economy. It must be discovered, for example, who is planted in such fields as the state reserves, nuclear science, the Polish Press Agency . . . and pressure must be put on the executives in these departments to get rid of undesirable people."[46] This was a recommendation to prepare for a purge. In fact such preparations had already begun, as shown by an MSW document of 26 June, which calculated the number of Jews in key government agencies (putting the figure at 700 out of 3,500 employees).[47] The minister reminded those assembled of the subordinate role of the MSW vis-à-vis the party: "It is the party leadership which decides who gets to go to which post. . . . [Nevertheless] we need to convince the comrades, the employees of the MSW that their work cannot be in vain, that if results do not come today, then tomorrow."[48] These words had the power of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The immediate consequence of the meeting in the MSW was the joint request of the MSW and the CC Administrative Department to the party authorities to block financial assistance from the Joint to Jewish organizations in Poland. The matter was quickly placed on the agenda of the CC Secretariat, which approved the recommendation with no objections.[49] The Jewish community lost its major source of income, which meant the inevitable elimination of a significant portion of its social, educational and cultural activity, and a serious blow to Jewish cooperatives. Simultaneously, a special party task force, supported by information from the MSW, evaluated the attitudes of a number of journalists with regard to the Middle East conflict. By 4 July it had examined 15 journalists in Warsaw and in the majority of cases recommended dismissals or party penalties.[50] The highest-ranking victim of this action was the executive editor of the party organ *Trybuna Ludu*, Leon Kasman, who most likely tried to protect his employees from charges of pro-Israel sympathy. In December 1967, when a special party delegation directly ordered him to fire his deputy and a few other employees, Kasman resigned.[51]

Yet the MSW's recommendations "to get rid of undesirable people" were not successful in every case. For example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, about which the MSW directors had spoken most critically, would not be purged until spring 1968. Another example of a "purge in suspension" was against the editors at the PWN publishing house, who were accused of downplaying wartime Polish suffering and disproportionate focus on the fate of the Jews in their *Great Universal Encyclopedia*. It may well have been the difficulties the MSW encountered in removing "Zionists" in some institutions in 1967 that contributed to its pressure for a general anti-Jewish purge in March 1968.

A separate current of the campaign in 1967 consisted of developments in the army. After the outbreak of the Six Day War, orders to increase political vigilance and the

official condemnation of Israel as a US-sponsored aggressor, there was naturally increasing suspicion towards Jews in the army. As the head of the military Main Political Authority (GZP) later reported, "party organizations exhibited political maturity, vigilance and an uncompromising attitude, and excluded from their ranks those who were for imperialism, against socialism." Sixty-three party members were given party penalties for pro-Israel attitudes, and of these 41 were expelled.[52]

During the anti-Israel campaign in the armed forces, the GZP sent to the garrisons to lecture on the conflict a group of speakers, who clearly incited anti-Jewish emotions and openly or implicitly accused Polish Jewish officers of dual loyalty. The atmosphere at some party meetings in the army was simply hysterical. For example, at the meeting in the Modlin base, certain participants claimed that Israel had received 100 million dollars from Polish Jews and that some top-ranking officials and officers had committed state treason. They demanded that the "two-faced individuals" be removed from state and military positions, and even proposed to turn to the Soviet Union for help in rebuilding the Polish army.[53] After a series of such meetings in the Air Defense Forces (Wojska Obrony Powietrznej Kraju, WOPK), officers-party activists organized something close to a mutiny, demanding dismissals of the allegedly pro-Israel officers, including their commander, General Czesław Mankiewicz. Their accusation of Mankiewicz was based on sheer rumors and the fact that he had a Jewish wife.[54] Reacting to this discipline crisis, the GZP sent a special commission to the WOPK, but instead of chastening the insubordinate ranks, the commission supported their demands. The key moment in these incidents was a late-night conference on 6 July, when Minister of Defense Marian Spychalski agreed to dismiss Mankiewicz, who was one of his most loyal colleagues. Experts on relations in the army at that time agree that the main promoters of the WOPK purge were Generals Teodor Kufel and Józef Urbanowicz, heads of the military counter-intelligence and the GZP respectively. Both men were intriguers, proponents of the struggle against "revisionist-Zionist elements" (i.e. Jews and supporters of reforms) and trusted in Moscow. Urbanowicz had been a Soviet officer who acquired Polish citizenship only in 1954. It might be more than a coincidence that the two institutions most involved in initiating the purge in the army, the military counterintelligence and the GZP, were also the two most closely supervised and (most likely) infiltrated by the Soviets.[55]

Dismissals in the WOPK began a broader purge in the armed forces, targeting people "holding political opinions divergent from the position of the PRL government as well as the party line, and for the loss of the moral-political values required of an officer of the People's Polish Army." Jews constituted only a portion of those dismissed under this systematic "review of cadres," which was the culmination of a long-standing trend of removing officers unreliable from Moscow's point of view. In total, some 150 officers of Jewish origin were dismissed from service in 1967–68. This meant almost all of them, since according to Colonel Michał Chęciński, the number of Jews in active service in 1967 was no more than 200, even according to the broadest criteria.[56]

The Campaign of March 1968

The full-scale "anti-Zionist" campaign began in March 1968. In Polish historiography the events of spring 1968 are often simply referred to as "March," and for many people the term is synonymous with an anti-Semitic witch-hunt.[57] The campaign that began in March included aggressive anti-Jewish propaganda, barely covered with the fig leaf of "anti-Zionism," mass mobilization against "the enemies of socialist Poland," and large-scale expulsion of Jews from the party, government posts and other positions. The campaign acquired these features in the course of just a few days, reaching its most intense period in two weeks, and continuing for the next few weeks, until the party leadership sought to restrain it and it began to lose impetus.

The "anti-Zionist" campaign was secondary to the main chapter of the March events, which consisted of a student rebellion and its pacification by the authorities. Street riots broke out when police and groups of the party *aktiv* armed with clubs brutally attacked a student rally at Warsaw University on 8 March. The students were protesting against the censoring of a drama by the great nineteenth-century Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz (some party hard-liners found the drama anti-Soviet), and in solidarity with their colleagues who had been dismissed from the university for initiating the protests a few weeks earlier. The brutal intervention at Warsaw University did not put an end to the rebellion but made it spread. In the following days in Warsaw and other academic centers, there were numerous protest meetings, student strikes and street riots, to which the authorities responded with police clubs, arrests, expulsions from the universities and conscription into the army. By 27 March the police had arrested 2,591 persons, including 597 students, while more than 600 students had been called up to the army and assigned to separate units in distant garrisons.[58] Repression continued for the next few months.

The "Zionists" appeared on the scene quite unexpectedly. Three days after the riots had begun, an article appeared in a minor newspaper accusing them of having instigated the rebellion.[59] From that point onwards the quantity and intensity of attacks against "Zionism" snowballed in the media and in public speeches. Of course no proof of any "Zionist conspiracy" behind the youth rebellion has been found. The claim was one of the factors endowing March with its murky, grotesque character. For its proponents, the undeniable proof was the relatively numerous participation of Jews, as defined by Nuremberg standards, among the leaders of the student protest. The opening of the MSW archives after 1989 has made it possible to trace this "Zionist explanation" to the Security Service. MSW reports evidently exaggerated the role of Jewish students and children of known party figures in the rebellion.[60] As in the case of the reports of June 1967, we cannot ascertain if this was an initiative of Moczar and his men, again intended to manipulate the party leaders against the "Zionists," or a manipulation requested by some members of the leadership. In any case, the reports provided a basis for decisions to launch a major hate campaign, with the "Zionists" among its principal targets. Propaganda connected them with "bankrupt politicians" who bore "the responsibility for errors and lawlessness of the Stalinist period" and were

trying to return to power. To make it even more frightening and detestable, this Zionist-Stalinist conspiracy was depicted as having strong international backing in the Israeli-West German secret deal to cleanse the Germans of their criminal Nazi past and shift the responsibility for the extermination of six million Jews onto the Polish nation.[61]

Together with the eruption of the hate speech in the media, a wave of rallies started "in support of comrade Gomułka, against the instigators of riots," organized by every voievodship party secretary as well as by hundreds of party organizations at the lower levels. Thousands of such meetings sent resolutions and letters to the leadership in an increasingly radical tone: "We swear in memory of those who died for power to the people, that we will clean from Polish soil, with our workers' fists, all the instigators and leaders of the coup against the working class and peasant government. We will not permit revisionist and Zionists rioters to accuse us of anti-Semitism," declared the workers from the Polfer factories, while the workers from the Baildon steel works demanded a purge of Zionist elements from party ranks, their removal from their positions, and the expulsion of their children from the universities.[62] The largest rally gathered a crowd reportedly numbering 100,000 people, brought to Katowice from the entire Upper Silesia, with banners bearing slogans such as "Down with Zionism—the Agent of Imperialism," "Writers to Their Pens, Students to Their Studies," "Purge the Party of Zionists," "We'll Cut Off the Head of the Anti-Polish Hydra." Edward Gierek, the party boss of Silesia, thundered: "It's not difficult to figure out who's behind the organization of the brawls in Warsaw and elsewhere in our country. It's the same frustrated and disappointed enemies of People's Poland . . . revisionists, Zionists—servants of imperialism . . . ."[63] The people he named as the enemies were a strange group made up of the Jewish Communists Roman Zambrowski and Stefan Staszewski, once powerful men in the party and vigorous Stalinists, and the Catholic writers Stefan Kisielewski and Paweł Jasienica, known for their independence and courage.

Gomułka appeared in public as late as 19 March at a meeting with a few thousand party activists in Warsaw, accompanied by all the Politburo members. Participants bore banners with slogans such as "Down with the Agents of Imperialism—Reactionary Zionism!" and "We Demand a Complete Unmasking and Punishment of the Political Instigators." Gomułka delivered a speech primarily attacking disobedient intellectuals, Kisielewski, Jasienica and Antoni Słonimski in particular; he devoted a relatively small fragment of his speech to the "Zionists" and denied that Zionism was a danger for Poland. He pointed to an alleged identity problem among Jews who were more attached to Israel than to Poland. "I presume that Jews in this category will sooner or later leave our country," he said. He also distinguished between cosmopolitans "who feel neither Poles nor Jews" and good "citizens of Jewish origin . . . for whom Poland is the only homeland." Gomułka reassured the audience that the party would "oppose with complete firmness every manifestation of anti-Semitism."[64] This declaration is of course difficult to square with so many hostile and openly anti-Jewish messages in the media and at the party-organized meetings. Clearly, in the spring of 1968 the party had other priorities than opposing anti-Semitism.

The massive verbal and symbolic attack in the media and at the meetings provided the background for a purge. Its first target was the most prominent member of the former Puławy faction, Roman Zambrowski, a man who had been a devoted Communist for forty years. A former key member of the Politburo, once serving as the Central Committee's powerful secretary, speaker of the Parliament and government minister, Zambrowski lost party membership and then his position by a decision (evidently inspired) of his local party cell, in his absence and following baseless accusations.[65] News of Zambrowski's dismissal sent a clear message: if such a prominent figure was defenseless, any "Zionist" could be attacked. Soon several other high-ranking Jewish officials lost their posts, and a nationwide purge of "Zionists," "revisionists" and other "alien elements" from the party and their positions quickly gathered momentum, descending from top government officials and editors-in-chief to university professors, bookkeepers in cooperatives, teachers in elementary schools and factory foremen. The unbearable atmosphere of a witch-hunt made many other Jews and Poles of Jewish origin decide to leave. Between 1968 and 1970, some 13,000 persons (i.e. half of the estimated total number of Jews) applied for emigration permits to Israel.[66] Gomułka's claim that "Zionists" would "sooner or later leave our country" was another self-fulfilling prophecy.

The "Zionist" was not the only enemy of the unfolding propaganda campaign, yet it appeared the primary one. As a distinguished analyst of the language of propaganda wrote: "Behind everything evil in the world, enemies of every kind, emerges the face of the Jew called a Zionist."[67] Notably, "Zionist" meant Jew even if the person so called was not Jewish by any standards; since the "anti-Zionist" campaign targeted some ethnic Poles as well, none could feel safe.

The "anti-Zionist" current of the campaign contained old anti-Semitic clichés, new 'socialist' charges or old ones recycled. The old accusations could have been (and sometimes actually were) copied from prewar anti-Semitic literature. As Mieczysław Rakowski, the editor of the relatively liberal weekly *Polityka*, noted in his diary: "If there is a hell, all Polish anti-Semites must be enjoying this moment. The Communists are doing what generations of Polish chauvinists had fought for."[68] The second kind of accusations reflected new types of crimes, such as Marxist revisionism or solidarity with a Cold War enemy. Muddy newspeak facilitated the translation of the old chauvinist charges against the Jews into new "socialist" accusations, for example by proving that "cosmopolitanism is not only anti-patriotism, but also and above all else, anti-socialism, since it opposes an explicitly classless society, in which there is no room for the bourgeoisie and ideological speculation."[69] In the absence of other good arguments, one could always be accused of lack of enthusiasm and insufficient support for the "anti-Zionist" campaign itself. Conspiracy theories spread freely and they seem to have found many receptive ears. "Zionist" plots in Poland were said to have some hidden connections with the Jewish conspiracy in the West, where the headquarters of the "World Zionist Mafia" was located. The Joint Distribution Committee, the World Jewish Congress and B'nai B'rith were in essence agents of the CIA, Israeli intelligence or the most secret "Zionist Center."

Paradoxically, probably the most powerful slogan of the March propaganda was the recycled claim of *Żydokomuna*—that is to say, accusing the Jews that they were zealous Communists, to blame for most, if not all, crimes and horrors of the Stalinist period. This accusation exploited and developed the popular stereotype: the Jews are not just Communists, they are the dark side of communism, responsible for whatever is wrong with communism. This claim both compromised the Jews and absolved other Communists from their crimes and misdeeds, as well as implying that ethnic cleansing of the party would make the regime better. Evidently, Jewish Communists were for the party the best scapegoat available. Externalizing evil onto the Jews was also a most welcome gift to all those who felt somehow uneasy serving the regime, which for many Poles (and maybe for themselves) was alien, imposed by the Soviets, atheist and stained with the blood of war heroes and innocent victims, or at least economically inefficient and full of absurdities.

Similarly, a most useful feature of the March enemy was his alleged elitist nature. He was presented as belonging to some kind of exclusive political, financial or cultural establishment; he was detached from the people and held the ordinary man in contempt. Clothing "anti-Zionism" in egalitarian costume, such accusations were instrumental in attracting to the campaign many such ordinary people, who had no special resentment against the Jews. In the March rituals that channeled discontent and aggression, the rulers let their subjects break certain taboos, which in ordinary times had been unthinkable. The Poles were permitted, even encouraged, to express loudly their dissatisfaction with and criticism of the regime and its functionaries, on condition, however, that they used the rhetoric of condemning "Zionists," revisionists, and so forth. This means that in 1968, after years of fearful silence, Poles were allowed to criticize the corruption and arrogance of the officials—not all of them, it is true, only the Jewish ones. They could even throw off submission to their superiors—but not all of them . . . . In this regard, the popularity of criticism of "Zionists" as members of the establishment seems to have been no accident. The egalitarian charges made against them, of alienation, arrogance, unjustified privileges and so on, were basically directed at the PRL establishment as a whole.

Therefore, the "anti-Zionism" of 1968 appears to have been more than a mere camouflage for attacking the Jews. Despite the brutal and unsophisticated methods of the campaign, "anti-Zionism" served as a complex and subtle code. Using its language was first of all a sign of obedience and loyalty to the party. Conspicuous "anti-Zionism" indicated a particular devotion or belonging to (or willingness to join) the victorious and hopefully rising group, as many observers in 1968 perceived the Partisans and their followers. At the same time, "anti-Zionism" could express frustration with and resentment against various features of the regime or the grim realities of everyday life in People's Poland. Furthermore, the favorite topic of "Zionist" plots and hidden Jewish agendas served, like other conspiracy theories, to alleviate the painful inability to understand the complex modern world.

The last but not least noteworthy feature of the image of the enemy was its chimeric quality, as Gavin Langmuir has observed in many demonic presentations of the Jews

since the Middle Ages.[70] The March enemy possessed certain traits that to a rational mind were incompatible: "Jewish nationalists" could be simultaneously "rootless cosmopolitans," and "Stalinists" could act as "agents of American imperialism." The Chimera of Greek mythology was an impossible beast with the body of a goat, a lion's head and the tail of a serpent, rather like the Stalinist agents of American imperialism. Clearly, the propaganda exploited old and deep-rooted images of the Jew, but the presence of the Chimera in the 1968 campaign can be explained not only through reference to the rich Polish (and European) legacy of Judeophobia. The 'Zionist' was not the only enemy whom Communists endowed with the traits of an impossible beast. Soviet propaganda at least since the 1930s, and then communist propaganda in Poland, had constructed many more or less chimeric images of the enemy: Trotsky and Bukharin, who were "lackeys of capitalists" and counter-revolution; leaders of the Home Army (Polish anti-Nazi underground), who were chauvinists and agents of the Gestapo; "fascist" social democrats, and so on. In view of both the content of the hate speech and the patterns of the campaign, the March campaign appears to be more a return of the ghosts of Stalinism than of right-wing anti-Semitism.[71]

Handy and Effective

The feeling of revulsion, which many observers and historians of the campaign have expressed, should not prevent us from asking whether the campaign was effective. Did those who initiated and ran the campaign achieve their objectives? Was it cost effective? It seems that they mostly did, and that they found the costs acceptable, at least in the short term. Given their cynicism, which many of them proved, claims that the campaign was morally reprehensible, aesthetically repugnant and in some respects outright criminal probably would not count for much. The choice of an "anti-Zionist" campaign as a policy instrument was therefore rational.

The campaign served several goals. Crushing any real Zionists was probably among the least important. First, the campaign was a reaction to the student protests and dissent among intellectuals. It was a tool for fighting the youth rebellion, through compromising its alleged instigators, leaders and goals as alien and perverse. Second, "anti-Zionism" was used to prevent the youth rebellion from spreading beyond the universities to broader groups, industrial workers in particular. At least since the autumn of 1967, when a series of strikes and other industrial protests followed a rise in food prices, the party leaders had been seriously concerned about the possible eruption of popular unrest. This seems the most important motive for allowing and maintaining the aggressive and demagogic campaign. Portraying the dissident students and intellectuals as aliens—Jews, bloodstained Stalinists or their sons, arrogant members of the establishment, and so forth—certainly contributed to alienating them from the masses. Although quite a number of young workers joined the student riots (as the police data on arrests shows), the authorities managed to prevent a major explosion. (Today we know that they managed only to postpone it.

In December 1970 violent workers' protests against a new rise in food prices led to a bloody confrontation and serious political crisis that eventually ended Gomułka's rule.) Notably, while after the campaign "anti-Zionism" largely disappeared from the media and public discourse and did not return, the MSW archives show that the Security Service continued to focus on Jews and use some of the anti-Jewish claims tested in March to fight the democratic opposition throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

The third main objective of the campaign was to change the political balance in the party leadership. Those who decided on the campaign never revealed this explicitly, but their behavior confirms what the answer to the question *cui prodest? s*uggests. The March attack on "Zionists" revitalized the conflict that had crystallized in the Politburo around Gomułka's speech of 19 June 1967. The new attack gave its proponents a strategic advantage over their adversaries, who were forced on the defensive and deprived of support from the *aktiv*. Within a few weeks, the latter realized their defeat. On 8 April the Politburo met for the first time since the beginning of the crisis, with the notable absence of Minister of Foreign Affairs Rapacki, who had requested release from his position after the anti-Jewish hunt began in his ministry, and the silent—that is, neutralized—presence of Marshal Spychalski, who had long been the object of intrigues (including anti-Semitic gossip). In the discussion on the campaign, Ochab, Jędrychowski and Szyr, who adopted a critical stance, faced Gomułka, Ignacy Loga-Sowiński, Ryszard Strzelecki, Zenon Kliszko, Gierek and Cyrankiewicz, who praised or justified it. The remainder supported the majority or refrained from taking a clear stand. In summarizing the discussion, which was the traditional way in which the first secretary expressed the party leadership's position, Gomułka could therefore legitimately approve the campaign thus far, with some minor reservations about its anti-Jewish excess.[72] Many years later, Edward Ochab published a short letter that he had handed to Gomułka in 1968:

> As a Pole and a Communist I protest with the deepest outrage against the anti-Semitic plot organized in Poland by various dark forces, yesterday's members of the Radical National Camp and their current mighty protectors. In the situation that has developed in our party, I am forced to convey my protest in the form of a resignation from my mandate as a member of the Political Bureau. Simultaneously I submit my resignation from the position of chairman of the Council of State, as well as chairman of the OK FJN [Front for National Unity].[73]

Thus, the March campaign enabled Gomułka to marginalize his opponents and reconsolidate the party leadership on his terms. In addition, the once powerful "bankrupt politicians" (Zambrowski in particular), who to some party leaders could still appear as potential challengers, were marginalized for good.

The hard work of Moczar's officers also proved to be not in vain. They had not only "helped the party," as they had been requested; they had also defeated their own political adversaries and muted their critics, as well as made thousands of Jews, whom they had so much resented and suspected, decide to leave Poland for ever. This article has focused on the political uses and abuses of the campaign—that is, its rationality—but we should not reduce participants and authors of the campaign to rational agents.

Poland in spring 1968 was the scene of innumerable expressions of the most irrational resentments and prejudices, which infused the words and deeds not only of the excited participants in the hate meetings but also of the officials and officers at the medium and upper levels of the state-party power structure. The pursuit of rationally defined political interests clearly combined with irrational impulses. Indeed, these different kinds of motivation combined well. Irrational anti-Jewish prejudice and resentment seem to have had a strange capacity to bring about quite rationally organized actions. Releasing and exploiting hateful emotions and opinions in 1968 obviously contributed to their invigoration and persistence well after 1968. Gomułka wanted to minimize this, a few times he warned against it, but clearly this was not the priority, and even less so for most of the party apparatchiks or police officers.

The above political objectives acquire greater weight in the context of developments in Czechoslovakia. As Gomułka claimed at the 8 April meeting of the Politburo, the radicalism of the campaign was well justified by the alleged preparations for counterrevolution in the neighboring country and its possible spread to Poland. If that was truly his perspective, then the brutal repression, the hate campaign and the mobilization of the party served as a preemptive strike against potential followers of the Czech path, as well as a means of consolidating the entire party, not just its leadership. A few months later the Polish army obediently participated in the Warsaw Pact forces' intervention in Czechoslovakia. Fresh memories of the March repression certainly contributed to intimidation of potential opponents to the intervention.

A result that the top decision-makers had not necessarily premeditated but accepted during the campaign was the beginning of a greater mobility of cadres, which enabled them to advance their own loyal people in particular. This was very important to many younger apparatchiks, whose frustration had been growing for several years at the old guard, who had held on to positions and blocked their career paths. To many such people, the purge offered a chance for upward mobility or at least a new hope for it. The personnel changes of 1968 began a major generational change that accelerated in the early 1970s, following the fall of Gomułka.

Playing the Jewish card was thus multifunctional and contributed to bringing about the desired or desirable effects. As for the costs, it is not clear to what extent the decision-makers could see or anticipate them at the time. Critics of the campaign warned Gomułka that it encouraged and rewarded immoral behavior and harmed innocent people, including devout party members, while promoting unscrupulous opportunists, and so forth. This was not pleasant to hear, but did not make Gomułka halt the campaign. Arguments that it was getting out of control and undermining the leaders' rule proved more important for the decision to end the campaign. For example, some high-ranking "non-Zionist" officials were dismissed without the required consent of the party authorities, which was a major breach of the principles of the *nomenklatura* system. Sometimes, excited participants in the hate meetings reached wrong conclusions (for example, if the "Zionists" had been responsible for economic shortages and rising food prices, the prices should decrease now…) or attacked the wrong people, such as Gomulka's right hand, Zenon Kliszko.

A costly consequence of the 1968 campaign, which the party leaders probably could not anticipate, was a profound disillusionment with the regime among those segments of the Polish intelligentsia who had sympathized with its socialist slogans. For many people who had dreamed of a "socialism with human face," the events of 1968—in Poland and in Czechoslovakia—were the final blow to such beliefs and left no doubts that the regime's officially declared ideology was dead. In particular, the experience of 1968 set many talented and courageous young people on a path towards open opposition. Later they significantly contributed to the development of dissident organizations in the 1970s and the Solidarity movement in the 1980s, and eventually to the regime's end.

None seem to have calculated the human capital loss due to the post-March emigration. It was the best-educated wave of emigrants from Poland ever. Several thousand members of the Polish intelligentsia, including many outstanding scientists, artists and writers, left the country. A long-lasting consequence of the campaign was its contribution to the image of Poland abroad as a country of incurable anti-Semitism, a problem that Poles and Polish governments were to face repeatedly, up to the present.

Notes

[1] For an extensive presentation and analysis of the "anti-Zionist" campaign of 1967–68, see Stola, *Kampania antysyjonistyczna*. The archival research for this study was made possible by a grant of the American Jewish Committee. On mass mobilization in the campaign, see Stola, "Fighting against the Shadows."

[2] On Jews in communist Poland, see Adelson, "W Polsce zwanej ludowę"; Cała, "Mniejszość żydowska"; Cała and Datner-Śpiewak, eds, *Dzieje Żydów*; Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead,* 46–52, 64–7; Chęciński, *Poland*; Grabski and Berend, *Między emigrację a trwaniem*; Lendvai, *Antisemitism*. On the early postwar years, see Szaynok, *Ludność żydowska*. On policies towards the Jews in the Soviet bloc, see Gitelman, "The Evolution"; Low, *Soviet Jewry*; Pinkus, *The Jews.*

[3] On Zionist activity in early communist Poland, see Aleksiun, *Dokęd dalej*; Adelson, "W Polsce zwanej ludowę," 412–17, 433–46; Cała and Datner-Śpiewak, eds, *Dzieje Żydów*. On early Polish-Israeli relations, see Chain, "Stosunek rzędów polskich"; Stankowski, "Poland and Israel."

[4] Adelson, "W Polsce zwanej ludowę," 476–77; Stola, "Zamknięcie granic."

[5] Lucjan Blitt, "Antyżydowska kampania we współczesnej Polsce," London 1968, Polish translation of a report for the Institute of Jewish Affairs, in the Archive of the PRL (Polish People's Republic), Warsaw (hereafter APRL), Starewicz collection.

[6] Adelson, "W Polsce," 400–4; Szaynok, *Pogrom*.

[7] Steinlauf, *Bondage*, 49–51; Kersten, *Polacy, Żydzi, Komunizm*, 76–88. Schatz, *The Generation*, 95–8, 150–2, 213–30. On the overrepresentation of Jews in the security apparatus, see Paczkowski "Jews in the Polish Security Service." Similar observations on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs appear in the "Notatka o stanie kadr MSZ" by Ostap Dłuski, 7 May 1953, in Archiwum Akt Nowych, collection of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (hereafter AAN, KC), file 237/XXII–41.

[8] Zaremba, *Komunizm*, 121–33.

[9] Kramer, *The Forgotten Friendship*; Gitelman, "The Evolution"; Low, *Soviet Jewry*.

[10] For a sample of the hate speech, see the brochure *Proces antypaństwowego ośrodka*. As Zaremba notes (*Komunizm*, 199–200), the anti-Jewish tone of the 1948 Soviet campaign against 'cosmpolitanism' had surprisingly no follow-up in Poland.

[11] *Trybuna Ludu*, 14 January 1953; other articles quoted by Cała and Datner-Śpiewak, eds, *Dzieje Żydów*, 136–41.
[12] Stankowski, "Zerwanie stosunków dyplomatycznych," 356.
[13] On changes in the party leadership in Poland and other Soviet satellites, see Paczkowski, *Pół wieku*, 219–22; Friszke, *Polska*, 160–1, 171; Zaremba, *Komunizm*, 180–90; Rothschild, *Return to Diversity*, 134–9.
[14] Werblan, "Przyczynek do genezy konfliktu"; interview with Gen. Moczar (12 April 1968) published by Osęka, in *Syjoniści*, 232.
[15] Paczkowski, *Pół wieku,* 298–303; Friszke, *Polska*, 214, 220–22, 225.
[16] Lesiakowski, *Mieczysław Moczar,* 218–35, 259–60; Zaremba, *Komunizm*, 287–99.
[17] Machcewicz, "Antisemitism."
[18] Stankowski, "Zerwanie stosunków dyplomatycznych," 357–58.
[19] Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead*; Cała, "Mniejszość żydowska"; Adelson, "W Polsce zwanej ludowę."
[20] Memorandum on financial assistance to the Poland-Israel Friendship League, 30 January 1962, AAN, KC 1721: 18–19.
[21] Politburo protocol, 6 June 1967, AAN, KC 1737.
[22] Interview with St. Trepczyński and W. Namiotkiewicz, 1983, APRL, K108: 61.
[23] Polish translation of Brezhnev's secret speech, "O polityce ZSRR w zwięzku z agresję Izraela na Bliskim Wschodzie," 20 June 1967, AAN, KC 2632: 358–408.
[24] Note of Gomułka's speech to the Politburo, 27 June 1967, AAN, KC 1738: 3–4.
[25] "Informacja nr 3 Departamentu III MSW o nastrojach w zwięzku z konfliktem na Bliskim Wschodzie," 7 June 1967, MSW Central Archive (hereafter CAMSW), MSW.II.3811.
[26] As confirmed by Professors Stefan Amsterdamski and Marcin Kula, eyewitnesses to the events. The MSW noted that in the city of Łódź there appeared leaflets proclaiming, 'We Support the Struggle of Israel against the Red Arabs'; see "Informacja Departamentu III MSW za okres 5.6–5.7.67," CAMSW, MSW.II.1976: 72.
[27] Interview with St. Trepczyński and W. Namiotkiewicz, 1983, APRL, K.108: 61–62.
[28] Politburo protocol, 10 June 1967, AAN, KC 1737.
[29] Eisler, *Marzec 1968*, 134.
[30] Tadeusz Walichnowski, an MSW officer who during the campaign advanced to the position of deputy director of MSW Department III, became the main expert on the Israeli-German conspiracy. In just 18 months his book *Izrael a NRF* (Israel and the FRG) ran into five Polish editions and eight in foreign languages, while his similar publications, *Israel-FRG and Poland* and *Around the Israeli Aggression*, were translated into seven and four languages respectively. See Podhorski and Majcher, *Bibliografia prac Tadeusza Walichnowskiego*. In spring 1968 the guidelines for the media campaign gave FRG-Israeli cooperation as one of the desired topics for publication ("Plan najbliższych publikacji w prasie", AAN, KC PZPR, 237/XIX-347: 3–9). See also Osęka, *Syjoniści.*
[31] *Trybuna Ludu*, 15, 16, 17 June 1967, etc.
[32] Minutes of Gomułka's speech at the conference, 12 June 1967, AAN, KC 237/V-706.
[33] "Informacja Wydziału Organizacyjnego KC," 20 June 1967, AAN, KC PZPR, 237/VII-5224.
[34] The term "fifth column" originated in Italy in 1922 to denote Mussolini's supporters in Rome when four columns of fascists marched towards the city for Mussolini's coup d'état. In Poland it was applied to disloyal ethnic Germans who supported the German invasion in 1939.
[35] Minutes of Gomułka's speech of 19 June 1967, Archiwum Ruchu Zawodowego (Trade Union Movement Archive), Warsaw, Wydział Organizacyjny CRZZ-file (no number).
[36] Torańska, *Oni*, 232. Of course the argument did not take place during the rally but immediately afterwards.

[37] Memorandum of conversation between Kliszko and Brezhnev, Moscow, 24 June 1967, AAN, KC 2642: 295.
[38] Minutes of the meetings of Gomułka, Cyrankiewicza and others with Brezhnev, Kosygin, Podgorny and others, 22 September and 7 December 1967, 12–14 January 1968, all in AAN, KC 6166.
[39] Interview with St. Trepczyński and W. Namiotkiewicz, 1983, APRL, K.108: 60; Torańska, *Oni*, 232.
[40] Note of Gomułka's speech to the Politburo, 27 June 1967, AAN, KC 1738: 5.
[41] "Ocena sytuacji w Polsce w zwięzku z konfliktem na Bliskim Wschodzie" (with enclosures), June 1967, CAMSW, MSW.II.51.
[42] "Informacje Departamentu III o sytuacji w kraju w zwięzku z konfliktem. . .," June–July 1967, CAMSW, MSW.II.1976.
[43] F. Szlachcic, "Tezy informacji dla aktywu Departamentu I," 27 November 1966; "Tezy informacji dla komendantów KW MO," 5 March 1966, APRL, Szlachcic collection, S.II.2.
[44] MSW Collegium protocol, 28 June 1967, CAMSW, MSW.II.51. An even stronger conspiracy theory is presented by a note of 1 July 1967, CAMSW, MSW.II.1976.
[45] MSW Collegium protocol, 28 June 1967, CAMSW, MSW.II.51.
[46] Ibid.
[47] "Zestawienie cyfrowe osób narodowości żydowskiej zatrudnionych w podstawowych resortach gospodarczych i innych instytucjach," quoted in Eisler, "Wydarzenia lat 1967–1968," 57.
[48] Ibid.
[49] "Notatka dot. zaprzestania przyjmowania środków Joint," 29 June 1967, and the protocol of CC Secretariat, AAN, KC 6522: 93, 108–13.
[50] "Sprawozdanie Zespołu Biura Prasy KC i KW PZPR," 4 June 1967, in Sołtysiak and Stępień, eds., *Marzec'68*, 29–34.
[51] "Notatka o zmianach w redakcji 'Trybuny Ludu,'" 4 December 1967, AAN, KC 2229: 415–17.
[52] Gen. Józef Urbanowicz's report on "events in certain military units in summer 1967," 12 December 1967, copy in author's files.
[53] Protocol of the party meeting in the military unit 2216, 14 July 1967. I am grateful to Leszek Gluchowski for a copy of this document.
[54] On events in WOPK, see Nalepa, "Rok 1967"; "Notatka służbowa GZP o naradach aktywu WOPK," 12 December 1967, copy in author's files.
[55] On 1967 in the army, see Chęciński, *Poland*; Pióro, "Czystki w wojsku." Notably, the classic books of Soviet 'anti-Zionism' (*The State of Israel* and *Danger: Zionism*) in the 1960s were published in Polish by the Ministry of Defense publishing house (Wydawnictwo MON), which the GZP supervised.
[56] Chęciński, "Ludowe Wojsko Polskie."
[57] On the events of spring 1968, see Kula, Osęka and Zaremba, eds., *Marzec 1968*; Eisler, *Marzec 1968*; Osęka, *Syjoniści, inspiratorzy, wichrzyciele*; Sołtysiak and Stępień, eds., *Marzec'68;* Rokicki and Stępień, eds., *Oblicza Marca 1968;* Fik, *Marcowa kultura*; Banas, *The Scapegoats*; Checinski, *Poland*; Rozenbaum, "The Background of the Anti-Zionist Campaign" and "The Anti-Zionist Campaign."
[58] "Dane statystyczne dot. osób zatrzymanych, ukaranych i wcielonych do służby wojskowej," supplement to the MSW Internal Bulletin 75/68, in Kula, Osęka and Zaremba, eds, *Marzec 1968*, 2:237–41.
[59] "Do studentów Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego," *Słowo Powszechne*, 11 March 1968.
[60] See a series of MSW "Internal Bulletins" (*Biuletyny Wewnętrzne*) from March 1968, in Kula, Osęka and Zaremba, eds., *Marzec 1968*, vol. 2.
[61] On the March 'anti-Zionist' propaganda, see Osęka, *Syjoniści*; interesting insights in Głowiński, *Marcowe gadanie.*

[62] Resolutions quoted in Mieszczanek, ed., *Krajobraz po szoku*, 43–46; Nowicki, "Mowi Warszawa": 116–17.
[63] Gierek's speech quoted in Andrzej Friszke, "Gwiazda Gomułki zgasła w marcu," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 19 March 1994.
[64] Gomułka, *Stanowisko partii*; Eisler, *Marzec*: 360–63.
[65] "Listy R. Zambrowskiego," 75.
[66] "Notatka w sprawie wyjazdów emigracyjnych," 29 April 1969, AAN, KC 1742: 475–88; "Migracje zewnętrzne: Informacja statystyczna Biura Paszportów MSW," 1979; M. Glanz, "Niektóre problemy emigracji z Polskiw ostatnim ćwierćwieczu," June 1971, AAN, KC 3048. For a detailed description of the post-March emigration, see Stola, *Kampania antysyjonistyczna*.
[67] Głowiński, *Pismak,* 63.
[68] Rakowski, *Dzienniki polityczne, 1967–1968*, 218.
[69] "Kosmopolityzm polski," *Zycie Literackie*, 15 October 1967.
[70] Langmuir, "Toward a Definition of Antisemitism," 109; Smith, "The Social Construction of Enemies," 203–39.
[71] On the 1968 campaign's affinity with earlier Soviet campaigns, see Głowiński, *Nowomowa;* Jedlicki, *Źle urodzeni,* 56–70.
[72] Notes from the Politburo session of 8 April 1968, AAN, KC 1739.
[73] Torańska, *Oni*, p. 234; Ochab's letter to *Polityka*, 11 July 1981.

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