

**'Ethnic Nationalism and the Myth of the Threatening Other: the Case of
Poland and Perceptions of its Jewish Minority, 1880-1968.'**

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Abstract of Thesis

This thesis is a socio-historical analysis of the ways in which the myth of the Internal Threatening Other influences national politics and culture and inter-ethnic relations between the majority group (the dominant ethnic nation) and the minority (perceived as the foremost Threatening Other). The case-study under examination is that of the Polish Jewish minority vis-a vis the Polish ethnic majority from the rise of fully-fledged Polish exclusivist ethno-nationalism in the 1880s up to the year 1968 which marks a final watershed in the history of Polish Jews - the purge and exile of most of its post-war remnants.

The thesis examines the multi-faceted structure of the myth, its persistence and adaptability to different historical and socio-political conditions, and the variety of its uses in political culture: such as the purification of the state and dominant nation from the influence and presence of an ethnic minority; its role in anti-minority violence; in raising national cohesion; and in the delegitimation of political enemies.

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter explores some theoretical issues which underlie the analysis of the thesis; the second chapter examines the roots of the myth, its nascent pre-1880 forms and its development as a fully-fledged myth from the 1880s up to 1939; the third chapter examines the impact of the myth on the rationalisation and justification of anti-Jewish violence between 1918 and 1939; the fourth chapter examines the presence of the myth within the underground state and society during the Second World War; the fifth chapter examines the presence of the myth within political elites and non-elites in the early post-war Communist period 1945-1948 and the last chapter examines the use of the myth by the Communist state between 1967 and 1968.

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Table of Contents

Chapter I. General Causes and Functions of Myths of the Threatening Other.	5
Chapter II. The Myth of the Jew as The Threatening Other from its Roots up to 1939.	34
Chapter III. The Myth and Anti-Jewish Violence in the Inter-War Period, 1918- 1939.	103
Chapter IV. Perceptions of Polish Jews in the Time of the German Occupation , 1939-1945.	128
Chapter V. Old Wine in a New Bottle: the Jews as Perceived in the Early Post- War Period, 1945-49.	196
Chapter VI. 'Party Free of Jews, Poland Free of Jews.' The Fusion of Communism and Exclusivist Ethno-Nationalism, 1967-1968.	228
Overall Conclusions	256
Abbreviations	259
Bibliography	260

Chapter I.

General Causes and Functions of Myths of the Threatening Other.

The central issue addressed in this thesis is that of our understanding of the impact of the myth of the Threatening Other on national communities in the modern era. Although the problem of antagonism towards Others is among the most studied in the disciplines of sociology and history, the impact of the myth of the Threatening Other on nations and on inter-ethnic relations between majority nations and minorities seems relatively unexplored. One of the reasons for the marginalisation of this subject may be the fact that the notion of the Threatening Other manifests itself in multifarious forms and intensities, and that its role fluctuates from one national community to another.¹ Perhaps this explains the reluctance of scholars to investigate why the myth of the Threatening Other is so central to some national communities and yet completely irrelevant to others.

It can generally be agreed that, for many national communities, the Threatening Other is a marginal phenomenon that attains public importance only at the time of an actual threat, e.g. invasion by an External Threatening Other (neighbouring nations), or irredentism from an Internal Threatening Other (ethnic minorities). Otherwise, their national discourse is free from references to the Threatening Other. For other nations, particularly ethnic nations, the Threatening Other has a more permanent impact on their national discourse. In this latter group, mythologies of the Threatening Other are constructed and used for a variety of ends such as raising national cohesion and for social and political mobilisation by the in-group's nationalist elites. This phenomenon can continue regardless of the reality of the threat posed. In some cases, continuous dissemination of such mythologies may lead in times of political and social upheavals to what has been described as a 'moral panic' towards the Other. One of the most extreme manifestations of such 'moral panics' are attempts to purify the nation from the Internal Threatening Other when the ethnic/national minority in question represents in fact an insignificant percentage of the population and poses no real threat to the nation-state and its people. Such phenomena are sometimes referred to as

¹See Leonard W. Doob, Patriotism And Nationalism. Their Psychological Foundations (New Haven and London, 1964), 256-257. Hereafter Doob, Patriotism.

'paranoid' or 'pathological' forms of ethno-nationalism, descriptive terms which are not helpful from an analytical point of view.²

Statement of Aims

This study is concerned with questions of the ways and extent to which the myth of the Internal Threatening Other influences national politics and culture, and inter-ethnic relations, between the majority nation and the ethnic/national minority, in a nation based on a matrix of ethno-nationalism.³ The main questions posed here are as follows: What are the main beliefs encoded in the myth of the Internal Threatening Other? What is the impact of such a myth on attitudes towards and treatment of an ethnic minority categorised as the Threatening Other? And what is the impact of this myth on the political culture of the majority nation whose ethno-nationalist elites construct and disseminate such a myth?

The case-study under examination is that of the Jewish minority in Poland. The period in question starts with the rise of modern Polish exclusivist ethno-nationalism in the second half of the nineteenth century and ends in the year of 1968, a date which constitutes the final watershed in the history of this minority - the purge and exile of most of its post-war remnants. I shall, however, have to go back briefly to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to trace the roots of Polish ethno-nationalism and its attitudes to Jews in Poland.

I have chosen to examine this particular case firstly because it can provide interesting insights into the following three issues:

1. The development, persistence and longevity of the myth of the Internal Threatening Other.

2. The damaging impact of this myth on the ethnic minority perceived as the Threatening Other.

3. The damaging impact on the majority nation, a significant segment of whose elites and non-elites upholds such a myth as 'social truth'.

²See, for example, John Crowley, 'Minorities and Majoritarian Democracy: the Nation-State and Beyond,' in: Keebel von Benda-Beckman and Maykel Verkuyten eds., Nationalism, Ethnicity And Cultural Identity In Europe (Utrecht, 1995), 155.

³I recognise that in practise real-world nationalisms usually combine ethnic and civic claims. However one type of nationalism is usually dominant in the process of the conceiving of modern nations. For a general historical development of modern civic and ethnic nations see, for example, Liah Greenfeld, Nationalism. Five Roads to Modernity (London and Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1992), 89-184 and 275-386.

After all the Jewish presence can be shown to have constituted a permanent element of the Polish collective memory and one that has been continuously evaluated in a Polish collective mind in strongly negative terms in the national context.⁴ The extreme version of this evaluation is sometimes referred to as 'anti-Jewish paranoia,' an obsession with Jewish omnipresence and omnipotence, and an accusation of Jewish harmfulness to the ethnic Polish community.⁵ It has also been referred to as 'antisemitism without Jews' since its presence has continued well into the post-1945 period, characterised by the gradual decline of the remaining Polish Jewish community into an insignificant number and by a correspondingly high level of Jewish acculturation to Polish culture. The most recent term used to describe the contemporary and extreme version of this phenomenon is 'antisemitism without antisemites,' since the dissemination of anti-Jewish statements is frequently accompanied by denial of any anti-Jewish prejudice on the part of those individuals disseminating them.⁶ Such a situation in itself suggests the need for a scholarly investigation

The second reason I have chosen to examine this case is that very little research has actually been carried out in this area, although continuity of anti-Jewish themes in Polish national discourse has been indicated in a substantial bulk of literature on Polish-Jewish relations.⁷ The importance of such research for an understanding of the actual impact of anti-Jewish themes on Polish national discourse has been suggested by Frank Golczewski in his article 'Antisemitic Literature in Poland Before the First World War' :

⁴See Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, Neutralising Memory. The Jew in Contemporary Poland (New Brunswick and Oxford, 1989), 1-15. Hereafter Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, Neutralising.

⁵On this issue see, for example, Andre W. M. Gerrits, 'Paradox of Freedom: the 'Jewish Question' in Post-Communist East Central Europe.' in: Ian M. Cuthbertson and Jane Leibowitz, eds., Minorities: The New Europe's Old Issues (Prague, 1993), 88-109. Hereafter Gerrits, 'Paradox.' and hereafter Cuthbertson and Leibowitz, eds., Minorities.

⁶The expression 'antisemitism without antisemites' was put forward by Polish journalist Jerzy Sławomir Mac, 'Antysemityzm bez antysemitow,' Wprost, 27 February, 2000, 38-39.

⁷See, for example, Yisrael Gutman, 'Historiography on Polish-Jewish relations,' in: Abramsky, Jachimczyk, Polonsky, eds., The Jews in Poland (Oxford, 1986), 179. Hereafter Gutman, 'Historiography.'; Marcin Kula, 'Problem postkomunistyczny czy historycznie ukształtowany polski problem?' Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego w Polsce, No. 4, 1991, 22-23. Hereafter Kula, 'Problem.' and Konstanty A. Jeleński, 'Od Endekow Do Stalinistow.' Kultura, No. 9, 1956, 14-15 (émigré journal based in Paris). Hereafter Jeleński, 'Od Endeków.'

'Playing down the anti-Jewish theme in Polish political thinking limits our understanding of some crucial aspects of Polish history. Twentieth-century antisemitic measures were explained merely as peculiar peripheral acts of unimportant personalities, although these phenomena were in fact a response to a quite important tradition in Polish political thought. At whatever point you look at modern Polish history, a specific 'Judeocentrism' (not always the same as antisemitism) can be observed - most of all in the National Democrats, but in other political groups as well.'⁸

This thesis aims to investigate this neglected area of study by conducting an analysis of the myth of the Jew as the foremost Threatening Other in its historical context. This myth, an independent variable, constitutes the conceptual framework of this investigation. I shall establish its presence in ethno-nationalist press, political programmes and writings, various state documents and interviews. The decision to examine the impact of the myth over different historical periods is in accordance with the general proposition that such a myth once accepted as 'social truth' can be persistent, long-lived and difficult to challenge and eradicate.

My main objective is to examine the myth's origin, its multifarious elements and themes, and its social functions. Concerning the latter I concentrate on the four particular aspects most crucial, in my opinion, in terms of the impact of this myth both on the Jewish minority and on Polish ethno-nationalist political culture:

1. The use of the myth in the rationalisation of the project of purification of the Jewish minority from the realm of the Polish nation (by means of emigration).

2. The use of the myth in the rationalisation and justification of anti-Jewish violence.

3. The use of the myth in the raising of national cohesion and political and social mobilisation.

4. The use of the myth in the discrediting of political opponents.

Analysis of the myth is conducted in chronological order and concentrates on the following six distinct historical periods;

1. the seventeenth century to the 1880s - a period of the origin of the myth.

⁸Frank Golczewski, 'Antisemitic Literature in Poland before the First World War,' *Polin*, Vol. 4, 1989, 88. Hereafter Golczewski, 'Antisemitic.'

2. the late pre-independence period, 1880s -1918 - a period of emergence of modern ethno-nationalist movements and parties, and of the myth in its fully-fledged form.

3. the post-independence period, 1918-1939 - a period of intensified support for ethnic nationalisation of the Polish nation-state;

4. the Second World War, 1939-1945 - the period of German occupation of the Polish state .

5. the early post-war Communist period, 1945-1949 - a period of consolidation of power by the Communist camp supported by the Soviet Union.

6. 1967- 1968 - a period of intensified fusion of Polish extreme ethno-nationalism and Communism.

Although this thesis focuses mainly on the presence of the myth among ethno-nationalist elites of various kinds and intensities, some of the cited data and issues raised here support the inference that the myth has also been absorbed, over a long period of time, and to a varying degree, by a significant segment of non-elites.

The presence of a myth of the Threatening Other in national communities cannot be categorised as a subject for the satisfaction of intellectual curiosity only. Thus the point of this thesis is not to pretend to an ethical detachment about the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other in Poland, but to maintain at all times a critical stance towards the subject while being morally engaged with it. This thesis is written from the liberal position of recognition of the rights of an ethnic minority to the maintenance its ethno-cultural make-up and of recognition of such a minority as a integral part of the national community (in the civic sense).⁹

My intention in undertaking this study is to provide new and more adequate interpretations of the damaging impact of anti-Jewish themes on Polish ethno-national culture and on the Polish Jewish minority in the modern era and, by so doing, to contribute to a better understanding of the character and specificity of modern Polish antisemitism of an exclusivist ethno-nationalist origin. I hope that the thesis will also contribute to the understanding of the damaging impact of the myth of the Internal Threatening Other on national

⁹On the subject of communitarian rights in liberal thought , see Will Kymlicka, ed., The Rights of Minority Cultures (Oxford, 1995) and Will Kymlicka, Liberalism Community And Culture (Oxford, 1989).

communities and on inter-ethnic relations between a majority nation and its ethnic minority perceived as the Threatening Other.

This thesis is not claiming to be a general history of Polish-Jewish relations and hardly touches on internal affairs of the Jewish community and its responses to the myth. It is not a study of the Catholic Church and the State per se, nor of changing class, social, and gender relations, nor of other ethnic minorities in Poland.

Terminology and Approach

At the heart of this research is the myth of the Threatening Other. As far as I am aware there has been no major investigation of this myth in a national context. In fact two important works on national mythologies, by George Schopflin and Anthony D. Smith respectively, do not treat this myth as one of the essential national myths a nation lives by.¹⁰ This omission springs from the fact, that as I have already stated, the myth is important only for some nations (primarily those characterised by exclusivist ethno-nationalism), while irrelevant to others.

My understanding of the following terms - the Internal Threatening Other, myth, and ethnic nationalism, is as follows:

By the term Internal Threatening Other, I mean here a type of Other (ethnic/national minority with a distinctive ethno-cultural make-up) whose qualities and activities are evaluated by the in-group (majority nation) in a predominantly negative way. The in-group perceives such an ethnic minority as its enemy, and evaluates it as a source of its misfortunes - past, present and future - and therefore aims to exclude it from its realm. The Internal Threatening Other is perceived as the polluter of the nation; in contrast to the External Threatening Other (neighbouring nations) perceived as an enemy threatening to 'wipe out' the nation.¹¹ The perception of an ethnic minority as a polluter is based on a negative evaluation of a minority's qualities - its language, religion, culture, ethnicity - and of its social and economic activities within society. The Internal Threatening Other is

¹⁰See Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, 1986), 86-100. Hereafter Smith, *The Ethnic.*; and George Schopflin, 'The Functions of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths,' in: Geoffrey Hosking and George Schopflin, eds., *Myths and Nationhood* (London, 1997), 19-35. Hereafter Schopflin, 'The Functions.'

¹¹This distinction was made by Anna Triandafyllidou, 'Nationalism and the Threatening Other: the Case of Greece,' *ASEN Bulletin*, No. 13, 1997, 18-19.

perceived as a polluter of all aspects of national life - political, social, economic and cultural.

Of course, in the case of the Jewish minority, the terms Threatening Other and polluter have already been applied in scholarly studies on the perception of this minority by different social agents in both pre-modern and modern societies.¹² Given the scope and longevity of such perceptions one can argue that the Jews represent a special case of a minority evaluated in such a prejudiced way in various historical and socio-political contexts.¹³

Looking at cases of the presence of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other in modern societies, I recognise that such a perception is not only limited to nations shaped on the basis of ethnic nationalism with weak civic elements of self-image such as Poland, but also to nations based on civic nationalism with some ethnic elements in its self-image such as France. Nevertheless, the position taken in this thesis is that the longevity of such a myth, and its damaging impact on the ethnic minority and political culture of the dominant nation, is usually much stronger in nations of an ethnic type with strong exclusivist ethnic nationalist tendencies than on nations of civic type in which exclusivist ethnic nationalist tendencies are mitigated by civic nationalism.

The term myth has several meanings and can be seen as having a variety of roles, functions and purposes. By the term myth I understand here a set of beliefs, constructed and held by collectivities - in this context a nation - which convey emotional conviction and are experienced as social truth by those who believe in them. And myth constitutes an important cultural force within a nation.¹⁴ What

¹²On the perception of the Jews as the Threatening Other and polluter in twelfth century Europe, see Roger I. Moore, The Formation of a Persecuting Society (Oxford, 1994), 34-45. Hereafter Moore, The Formation.; On similar perceptions of the Jews in English popular culture of the early modern period, see Frank Felsenstein, Antisemitic Stereotypes: A Paradigm of Otherness in English popular culture. (London, 1995); On the perception of the Jews as the Threatening Other and polluter in twentieth century Europe see, the collection of articles, Robert. S. Wistrich, ed., Demonising the Other. Antisemitism, Racism, and Xenophobia (Jerusalem, 1999).

¹³The scope of this research does not allow for comparisons with other ethnic minorities perceived as the Threatening Other, such as the Armenians or Roma group. In my opinion, such comparative analysis could be useful in terms of assessing similarities and differences in the perception of various ethnic minorities as the Threatening Other.

¹⁴On myth and its social functions, see, for example, Schopflin, 'The Functions.' 18-19; and William G. Doty, Mythography. The Study of Myths and Rituals (Alabama, 1981), 11-25. Hereafter Doty, Mythography.

matters in the myth is not historically validated truth but its emotional content which may be biased and prejudiced. 'Yet, myth is also a way of delimiting the cognitive field.'¹⁵ If the message conveyed in a myth is primarily incongruent with reality, then such a myth can be damaging for the national community which subscribes to it.¹⁶ Such damaging impact can also affect intellectual discourse conducted within such a community, as it is recognised that scholars and other social groups can be influenced by myths purporting to represent social truths in their societies.¹⁷ I shall argue that this is exactly so in the case of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other in Polish national discourse.

In terms of its structure, the myth consists of a network of elements and themes usually expressed in narrative. The narrative can be expressed in more or less elaborated and intensified forms, and can undergo addition and expansion as well as deletion and substitution.¹⁸ Its individual mythical elements may contradict or overlap each other but this does not affect the myth in terms of its persistence and emotive power. Its mythical themes and elements can also be interrelated with other myths. For example, I shall argue that the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other towards the Polish state and its people is closely interrelated with other more general Polish national myths such as the myth of the decline and suffering of the Polish nation.

Next, the myth is characterised by adaptability to different historical and socio-political contexts and by functional vitality. Its role is usually polyfunctional - the myth can act as storage and source of information (in this case information about the Jewish minority and its history), and as a means of offering explanation and interpretation of events taking place in a nation. Besides these functions, I shall argue that the myth of the Threatening Other can play a specific role in political culture such as providing rationalisation and justification for the purification of a nation from a minority perceived as the Threatening Other, and for violence directed against such a minority by radical myth-makers. It can also play an important role in raising national cohesion, in political and social mobilisation, and in

¹⁵Schopflin, 'The Functions.' 23.

¹⁶ibid., 22.

¹⁷See Barrows Dunham, Man against Myth (London, 1948), 23.

¹⁸Doty, Mythography. 12-13.

discrediting political opponents by labelling them as representing the interest of the Threatening Other.

By the term and with reference to notions of nationalism I adhere to the Anglo-Saxon typology - rather than the continental typology that provides a much narrower definition of nationalism only as a right-wing ideology and movement. In particular I rely on definitions of nationalism put forward by Anthony D. Smith.¹⁹ Following his typology, I refer to ethno-nationalism as an ideology and movement according to which national membership lies in genealogy and in a common vernacular culture and history. This is in contrast to the principles of territorial civic nationalism where the main national criterion lies in a territory, in a common legal code, and in common public culture for all citizens. In the ethno-nationalist world-view, ethnicity equals nation and is seen as the main constituting element of the state.

'Vernacular cultures, notably language and customs, are more highly prized than legal equality, and popular mobilisation more than citizenship...in place of a civic, mass culture, ethnic nationalisms extol native history and a more circumscribed ethnic culture.'²⁰

Furthermore, the ethnic nationalism of a dominant nation frequently shows an exclusivist tendency towards other ethno-cultural groups, which dwell on the same territory. Such minorities are singled out and categorised as a threat to the very essence of the people and the polity. This is exactly how the Jewish minority has been perceived by Polish ethno-nationalists. In my opinion, the application of this typology can be helpful in clarifying the development and the broader impact of exclusivist ethnic nationalism on Polish political culture and the society as a whole. Historical and social studies that apply the narrower definition of nationalism ignore the extent to which exclusivist ethnic nationalism with its strong anti-Jewish theme has influenced modern national discourse and inter-ethnic relations between Poles and Polish Jews.²¹

¹⁹See Anthony D. Smith, 'Ethnic Nationalism and the Plight of Minorities,' Journal of Refugee Studies, Vol. 7, No. 2/3, 1994, 187-189. Hereafter Smith, 'Ethnic.'

²⁰ibid., 188.

²¹The prevailing tendency in historical studies of the Polish nation, its nationalism and ethnic minorities, is the application of the narrower definition of nationalism. For a recent debate on the use of the continental and Anglo-Saxon definitions of nationalism in Polish scholarly discourse, see the special issue of Znak, No. 3, 1997, 4-94.

Historical and Sociological Reasons For The Emergence of the Threatening Other

In clarifying my own perspective on the reasons for the emergence of the myth of the Threatening Other I have drawn on Leonard W. Doob's Patriotism And Nationalism. Their Psychological Foundations, and Aleksander Hertz's The Jews in Polish Culture, both published in 1964, and Hertz's earlier article 'Insiders Against Outsiders', published in 1934, and on other works with relevance to the internal consistency of my position.²²

Doob's and Hertz's conceptualisation of the Threatening Other are not only similar but in fact complementary. Both of them define the Other as a psychosocial category that is historically conditioned and manifested in different forms and intensity. They both also recognise that the notion of the Threatening Other can be a powerful driving force in modern society. The chief difference between the two scholars, besides their terminology is that Hertz's conceptualisation of the Threatening Other frequently refers to the history of nationalism and of ethnic minorities (particularly the Jewish minority in Eastern Europe), whereas Doob presents a more general picture.

How does the Other become the Threatening Other - the enemy of the nation? Both Doob and Hertz argue that the evaluation of the Other as the enemy may have absolutely no basis in reality but may be rooted in bias and prejudice. Furthermore, emotional conviction and (what is commonly understood) as non-rationality can play an important role in the evaluation of an out-group as enemy. Hertz also emphasises that the mythologisation of the Other as the enemy can continue regardless of the actual social position and the numerical size of the mythologised subject.²³ A similar perspective is presented by the sociologist James Aho. In his study The Thing of Darkness. A Sociology of the Enemy, Aho also argues that an enemy is often one's own construction and that such a construction once assembled and accepted as social truth can be difficult if not impossible to

²²Aleksander Hertz, The Jews in Polish Culture (Evanston, IL, 1988) (First published in Polish in 1964). Hereafter Hertz, The Jews.; and Aleksander Hertz, 'Swoi przeciwko obcym,' in: Jan Garewicz, ed., Aleksander Hertz Socjologia nieprzedawniona. Wybór publicystyki (Warszawa, 1992), 145-164. The article was first published in Wiedza i Zycie, No. 6, 1934, 458-469. Hereafter Hertz, 'Swoi.'

²³Hertz, 'Swoi.' 158-159.

deconstruct.²⁴ This perspective indicates that the perception of an out-group as the Threatening Other can be independent of its qualities and activities per se, but instead is dependent on the process of its evaluation by an in-group, which may be prejudiced and non-rational.

This perspective, which I take up in this thesis, is in sharp opposition to the claim that the perception of an out-group as an enemy is rooted in its inherent qualities and activities, a claim that is frequently applied to the studies of middleman minorities - of which the Jewish minority is a good example. According to Walter Zenner, such a claim is itself rooted in the anti-middleman sentiments and stereotypes of its advocates.²⁵

Such a claim is detectable in intellectual discourse in Poland on the social and economic role of the Jewish minority in Polish society throughout history, a discourse which basically claims that the presence of Jews has constituted a problem or impediment to the development of ethnic Poles.²⁶ In my opinion, this proposition cannot be seen as an objective means of evaluating the role of the Jewish minority within Polish society, particularly as this minority never had any irredentist tendencies towards the Polish polity. But rather it is an expression of prejudice and of the absorption of an ethno-nationalist perspective on economy and society which can be seen as an important factor shaping such a position.

Why do nations need the Threatening Other ?

This question has occupied many scholars since the early twentieth century. The sociologist William G. Sumner was probably the first to claim that hatred of the Other and cohesion of the in-group are correlative to each other. Sumner's proposition has been accepted and developed by many scholars up to the recent period. For example, Dusan Kecmanovic, in his recent study of ethno-nationalism, emphasises that the use of the Threatening Other as a means of raising national cohesion is particularly prominent in nations ridden by social antagonisms.

'The fact is that the identification of the group enemy smooths, buffers or completely neutralises intra-group antagonisms.

²⁴James Aho, The Thing of Darkness. A Sociology of the Enemy (London, 1994), 3-15.

²⁵See Walter P. Zenner, Minorities in the Middle. A Cross-Cultural Analysis (New York, 1991), 48-49.

²⁶See Irwin-Zarecka, Neutralising. 175-186.

Discriminative aggressiveness against strangers and the strengthening of bonds among group members go hand in hand and mutually reinforce each other.'²⁷

Both Doob and Hertz are in agreement with Sumner's proposition that the Other provides an effective spur for in-group cohesion. Doob stresses that raising cohesiveness is especially important when the nation is going through social, political and economic crises.²⁸ During such periods, the Threatening Other serves as a scapegoat for all the ills inflicted on the nation. Doob also notes that in such situations, scapegoating not only increases national cohesion but makes the nation feel superior to the group perceived as the Threatening Other.²⁹ In times such as a war, occupation of the polity by a foreign state, or continuous economic and social crises, scapegoating is always on the rise. It makes the nation feel good about itself as the blame for experienced misfortunes is transferred onto the out-group which may not be in fact responsible for such a crisis at all.

This pattern is clearly noticeable in the case of the scapegoating of Polish Jews for all varieties of crises experienced by the Polish state: i.e. the partitions of Poland in the eighteenth century; the weak development of an ethnic Polish bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century; all social and economic problems of the inter-war period including the problem of labour for the largest social group, the peasants; the Communist take-over of power in the early post-war period; and the social and economic weaknesses of the Communist system, particularly strongly expressed by the ethno-nationalist Communist groups in 1968.

Doob also links the perception of the Other as an enemy to the level of insecurities felt by the in-group. According to him, the more a nation feels insecure, inadequate and disappointed with its achievements, the more it tends to refer to the Threatening Other. He writes thus:

'The threat posed by the out-group, consequently, may be psychological in nature and hence as dependent upon people's

²⁷Dusan Kecmanovic, The Mass Psychology Of Ethno-nationalism (New York and London, 1996), 36.

²⁸On the subject of war and the raising of national cohesiveness in such situations, see, for example, Anthony D. Smith, 'Warfare in the formation, self-images and cohesion of ethnic communities,' Ethnic and Racial Studies, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1981. Hereafter Smith, 'Warfare.'

²⁹Doob, Patriotism. 249-253.

interpretation of a situation as upon reality itself. If they feel generally secure or if they are especially satisfied with their society, they are less likely to feel inclined to take vigorous action either to preserve or expand the power and culture of their nation; they may disregard even hostile out-groups. Under such conditions, their anxiety must first be aroused before they will acknowledge the threat and hence be stirred to nationalist activity.³⁰

From Doob's explanation it is evident that the major factors behind perceiving a Threatening Other can be found in historical and socio-political conditions. A nation that experiences a political, social or economic crisis shows a greater tendency to refer to the Threatening Other than a nation that undergoes a stable development. The sources of crisis are various. They may refer to major social and cultural changes within the nation. They may also refer to being in or remembering a state of war, partitions or occupation by a foreign state. Whatever the factors, the evaluation of a particular group as the Threatening Other can lack a realistic basis.

National insecurities, social conflicts, and various crises are also key-elements in Aleksander Hertz's conceptualisation of the need for the Threatening Other whom he refers to as the alien-enemy. To Hertz, like Doob, the presence of the phenomenon of the Threatening Other within a community is a sign of insecurities, and deep moral and social crisis. Thus he states:

'An alien is an intruder among us. He encroaches on our life...And if - as in the case to a remarkable degree in our civilisation - we ourselves are in a state of disharmony and disarray within the compass of the values we profess, the alien becomes all the more threatening and disturbing. If an environment that is coherent and stable rejects the alien, it never treats him as hysterically as an environment that is inwardly disturbed and uncertain of its values. It was not a matter of chance that our era has been marked by the most dramatic and fanatic manifestations of hatred towards aliens. This is an era of terrible social and cultural sickness. The growth of antisemitism and the forms that it took in many European countries were symptoms of the profound illness of entire communities.'³¹

³⁰ibid., 254.

³¹Hertz, The Jews. 53,

In this thesis, I shall also suggest that the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other 'speaks more' about the crisis in Polish ethno-national political culture and about the insecurities of Polish ethno-nationalism than about the Polish-Jewish ethnic minority.

In The Jews in Polish Culture, Hertz states another reason why some ethnic minorities can be evaluated as the alien-enemy. According to him, such an evaluation can be related to the fact that the out-group (ethnic/national minority) may be viewed as carrier and representative of new values that are feared by the in-group (majority nation) which is uncertain of their own system of values.

'Human communities in a state of deep inner conflict, uncertain of their own values and disturbed by their own weakness, regarded with all the greater alarm those who might introduce new values threatening the old. Whether those aliens really bore some new and different values was given no thought. Alien-enemies, bearers of corruption, were, seen everywhere.'³²

The explanation for such anxiety can be found in Mary Douglas's classic work Purity and Danger in which she shows that the concept of polluter is attributed to social groups whose functions within society give them much greater importance than is reflected in their status and influence.³³ This is a position which could also be applicable to the Jewish minority as the agent of modernisation in societies in which segments of the in-group show little aptitude for such a change - such as in the nineteenth century Polish society.

I shall argue here that the notion of pollution has been an important feature of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other towards the Polish state and its people throughout its development, since the Jew has been persistently perceived as the carrier of new ideas, values and doctrines - categorised by Polish ethno-nationalists of various kinds as alien and threatening to Polish national traditions.

Hertz also points out that in some circumstances, the more the Other absorbs the cultural values of the in-group the more it is perceived as the Threatening Other. He gives a couple of general illustrations of such a phenomenon, Blacks in the Southern states of the

³²ibid., 53.

³³Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger (London, 1966), especially, 140-158. This theory has been applied by the historian Roger I. Moore in his analysis of the perceptions of Jews in medieval Europe, Moore, The Formation. 100-102.

USA, and Jews in post-eighteenth century continental Europe. He states:

'In the American South hostility toward Blacks increased during the period when Blacks were becoming increasingly like whites and had fully accepted white values and aspirations. The more American a Black became, the more alien and hostile he was felt to be by white Southerners. The same, and to no less a degree, can be said of Jews. Anti-Semitism assumed its most acute forms when the assimilation of Jews to non-Jews, speaking objectively, had become an unquestionable fact.'³⁴

This proposition, of course cannot be viewed as applicable to all members of an ethnic minority, as in general the majority of them wish to maintain their moral-cultural codes. Nevertheless, I shall argue that this proposition is feasible in the case of the culturally assimilated Polish Jews with strong or even total self-identification as Poles, as they too were perceived by ethno-nationalists as polluters of Polish culture and of the Polish moral code .

Exclusivist Ethno-Nationalism and the Threatening Other

In the previously mentioned article 'Insiders Against Outsiders,' Hertz provides a good insight into the historical context within which the notion of the Threatening Other had begun to flourish in modern national discourse. He links this category to the new type of nationalism that had originated in Europe in the 1870s.³⁵ According to Hertz, the category of the Threatening Other had never before been used with the same degree of emotional intensity and conviction as by the ethno-nationalists in the 1870s. From this period, both the discourse and the vocabulary of nationalism were to be influenced by the Threatening Other, and the mythologisation of the Threatening Other was to become an element of nationalist doctrine and practice.³⁶ Slogans of 'national egoism' and 'national will', intertwined with catch-phrases about threatening aliens, were continuously disseminated by the ethno-national press all over the

³⁴Hertz, *The Jews*. 144.

³⁵On the development of late nineteenth century nationalism, also described as ethno-linguistic or integral nationalism, see, for example, Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (Oxford, 1982), chapter 5; and Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* (Cambridge, 1994), 101-162.

³⁶Hertz, 'Swoi.' 159.

continent and particularly in East-Central and Eastern Europe where this type of nationalism was to exert a strong and long-lasting grip over national politics and culture.³⁷

Hertz also points out that this trend was not limited only to politics but was also to be found in the intellectual discourse of the late nineteenth century, since social sciences, for example, encouraged this type of thinking about the Other. He gives two examples of such sociological theories - Ludwik Gumplowicz's and Ratzenhofer's theories of inter-group relations.³⁸ According to Hertz, Gumplowicz's theory asserted that antagonism between an in-group and an out-group was a result of real biological and cultural differences and that therefore a member of an out-group could not obtain membership of an in-group. Ratzenhofer's theory asserted that antagonism against an out-group provided an objective basis for shaping the cohesion of an in-group, and therefore that hatred towards out-groups should be perceived as a positive aspect in facilitating in-group solidarity. Both works had provided a rationale for the newly established nationalist movements in East-Central Europe, and their influence was to have a long lasting effect on the understanding of the character of nationalism and national identity in the region.

Hertz's argument about the importance of the polarisation between 'us' and 'them' in ethno-national discourse is persuasive. Looking at the political and social writings that have been emerging in Poland since the 1880s there is no doubt that polarisation between us (ethnic Poles) and them (Jews) has been the most central theme in the ethno-nationalist vision of the modern Polish nation-to-be. One can in fact argue that this dichotomy has constituted the back-bone of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other and has provided a powerful explanation as to why Polish Jews as a collectivity were never in practice accepted into the realm of the Polish nation.

Exclusion of the Jewish ethnic minority from the Polish state by ethno-nationalists - and particularly the role of the myth in this process of exclusion - constitutes the central issue of this thesis. In discussing the broader socio-historical problem of exclusion of ethnic minorities, I have been aided mainly by two works, Rogers Brubakers's article

³⁷See Elie Kedourie, Nationalism (Oxford UK, and Cambridge, USA, 1993), 100-102. Hereafter Kedourie, Nationalism.

³⁸Hertz, 'Swoi.' 156-159.

entitled 'Nationalising states in the old 'New Europe' - and the new' and Anthony D. Smith's previously mentioned article 'Ethnic Nationalism and the Plight of Minorities'.

In the article 'Ethnic Nationalism and the Plight of Minorities,' Smith states that the tendency towards exclusion and homogenisation is by no means a product of ethnic nationalism alone. However, as he argues, when exclusivist and homogenising attitudes mingle with ethno-nationalism, the repercussions for ethnic minorities singled out and categorised as the Threatening Other can be most severe. Such repercussions are brought about by two mechanisms of authentication and purification of a nation. As a result, the exclusivist ethno-nationalism of a majority nation tends to show a low tolerance of internal diversity. This feature is noticeable at different stages of the development of exclusivist ethno-nationalism, including both the pre-independence and post-independence phases.³⁹

At the pre-independence stage the immediate actual Threatening Others are usually neighbouring national communities, yet other ethno-cultural groups living within the nation can also be perceived as the Threatening Other in a variety of ways in conjunction with the external Threatening Other, e.g. the Jewish minority perceived as the agent of 'Germanisation' by Czech ethno-nationalists at the beginning of the twentieth century and the Jewish minority perceived as the agent of both 'Germanisation' and 'Russification' by Polish ethno-nationalists of the same period.⁴⁰

In the post-independence phase, exclusivist tendencies towards ethnic minorities expand, as ethno-nationalists embark on a new and grand-scale project of purification, described by Brubaker as the ethnic nationalisation of the state.⁴¹ Ethnic nationalisation includes areas of politics, the economy and culture, and can vary greatly from one state to another depending on the position of the ethno-nationalists within the state and the spread of the doctrine among the populace. However, from Brubaker's description, it is clear that there is one main conviction behind all forms of ethnic nationalisation - the view that the

³⁹Rogers Brubaker, 'Nationalising states in the old 'New Europe' - and the new,' *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1996, 415. Hereafter Brubaker, 'Nationalising.'

⁴⁰The issue of the perception of Jews as agents of Germanisation by Czech ethno-nationalists has been pointed out by Lonnie R. Johnson, *Central Europe. Enemies, Neighbours, Friends*. (New York, Oxford, 1996), 147.

⁴¹ Brubaker, 'Nationalising.' 414.

nation has experienced unfair treatment and been weakened by other ethno-national groups in the past.⁴² As a rule, the claim of mistreatment refers to the entire socio-economic and cultural development of the nation. Therefore, to compensate for these wrongs, ethno-nationalists have the right to exclude any minorities that have in their judgement contaminated the nation, and that as bearers of non-national values might presently divide the nation-state and weaken its national essence once again. In other words, ethno-nationalists as guardians of the nation have a duty to purify it from all alien elements perceived as threatening.

Brubaker also points out that ethnic nationalisation of the post-independent stage has a much more diffuse character than that of the pre-independent phase. Thus he states:

'Consequently, it is harder to pinpoint what is specifically 'nationalist' about politics in such states. In such settings, nationalism becomes an 'aspect' of politics, embracing both formal policies and informal practices and existing both within and outside the state.'⁴³

The processes of purification usually begin with culture.⁴⁴ Vernacular language, national history and literature are those areas that have to be thoroughly cleansed from alien elements by ethno-nationalists. Yet the purification process in ethnic nations does not limit itself only to culture - but also includes the population itself. In turn, this 'cleansing' of the people entails two different but inter-linked strategies: the first focusing on the in-group - majority nation itself since the ethno-nationalists are never satisfied with the state of national morale among the core ethnic nation, and the second concentrating on the out-groups - ethnic minorities perceived as the Threatening Other.

The purification of the nation from a minority can take the following forms: the first and mildest is assimilation which aims at the establishment of a homogenous society in which members of the minority abandon their traditions, culture and use of their language in favour of the traditions, culture and language of the dominant nation. The second is separation, aimed at keeping the minority separate and in a position of inferiority. The third and fourth forms are pressured

⁴²ibid., 414

⁴³ibid., 416.

⁴⁴See Smith, 'Ethnic.' 191-192.

emigration and the expulsion of minorities (recently named 'ethnic cleansing'), both of which aim at disposing of a minority by expelling them from the polity ; and the final form is genocide aimed at the physical elimination of the minority.⁴⁵ The latter is generally confined only to those cases where ethnic nationalism is strongly intertwined with biological racism and produces policies of dehumanisation of the ethnic minority, as in the case of German nationalism and the Jewish minority during the Second World War.⁴⁶

In general, most cases of national self-purification from minorities are confined to the first four projects. I shall also argue that the choice of the form of purification of a nation of its minority depends on the kind of the evaluation of the ethnic minority as the Threatening Other. A minority evaluated as mildly Threatening Other (benign) would be considered a fit subject for assimilation, while a minority evaluated as a foremost Threatening Other (malign) would be considered a fit subject for separation, emigration and ethnic cleansing or even genocide.

One should bear in mind that the exclusion of the Jews from the realm of the modern Polish nation is a complex and difficult issue, and particularly as it was achieved, not so much by Polish ethno-nationalists, but to an infinitely greater degree by the German occupiers within the borders of the Polish state during the Second World War. Up until the outbreak of the Second World War, Polish ethno-nationalists, despite enjoying a high level of support within the populace for their project of Jewish mass emigration from Poland, did not succeed in implementing the exclusion of the Jews from Poland by emigration. Furthermore, the form of purification used by the Germans towards Polish Jews, as well as towards other European Jewish communities, was that of genocide, a strategy never

⁴⁵Of course, within the tradition of thought which originated within late eighteenth century discourse, assimilation is viewed as a means of inclusion of a minority into the nation. This position is rejected in this thesis since assimilation generally leads to the disappearance of an ethnic minority . In contemporary literature on ethnic minorities it is agreed that the most acceptable forms of inclusion of an ethnic minority within a nation are by policies of pluralism and integration, both aiming at the unity of various groups within a society, while allowing the ethnic minorities to maintain their characteristics. See Ivan Gyurcsik, 'New Legal Ramifications of the Question of National Minorities,' in: Cuthberston and Leibowitz, eds, Minorities. 1-49.

⁴⁶Smith., 'Ethnic.' 195.

contemplated by the Polish ethno-nationalist camp - with the exception of an insignificant political groups in the inter-war period.

Overall, emigration had been the chief form for excluding the Jewish ethnic minority from the realm of the Polish polity, advocated in different historical periods by ethno-nationalists of various kinds and intensity, including Communist ethno-nationalists. This latter group, which was to hold political power in the 1960s, succeeded in the implementation of the policy of emigration of the remaining Polish Jews.

In this thesis, I shall argue that the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other provided the rationale for the project of the emigration of Jews from the Polish polity in all the periods under examination. Separation of the Jewish minority from the ethnic Polish community was also advocated within the ethno-nationalist camp from the late 1880s up until 1939, but it was not as popular as the emigration project. It was also treated as a measure for the separation of the ethnic Polish community from the Jewish minority and therefore, preserving the authenticity and purity of Polish morale and culture. The myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other provided a rationale for this project also.

Polish National Discourse and the Threatening Other

Poland is a good example of a society in which the division between 'ourselves' (*swoi*) and 'the Other' (*obcy*) has been an important feature of collective memory and identification up to the recent period. This fact has generally been acknowledged by scholars of various disciplines, including historians, sociologists and specialists in Polish literature. For example, Stefan Traugutt, a well-known literary critic of the 1980s notes that attitudes towards the Others constituted an important element of the development of Polish collective identity.⁴⁷

The first major sociological studies concerning the division between 'us' and 'them' in Polish society were conducted in the inter-war period. Studies by authors such as Jan Stanislaw Bystron, Aleksander Hertz and Stanislaw Ossowski revealed the importance of the division between 'us' and 'them' with reference to Polish national identity, and gave voice to their criticism of the creation of distinct

⁴⁷Stefan Traugutt, 'Posłowie do Swojskości i Cudzoziemszczyzny,' in: Maria Prussak ed., Geniusz Wydziedziczony. Studia Romantyczne i Napoleońskie (Warszawa, 1990), 428.

borders between 'us' and 'them' in multi-national societies, and of the use of the Other (evaluated as a Threatening Other) in political culture for the purpose of increasing national cohesion.⁴⁸

Studies conducted in post-1945 Poland have shown that the categories of 'us' and 'them' have continued to be relevant to national identification and collective memory, although Polish society post-1945 has become a nearly homogenous national community in which ethnic minorities constitute only an insignificant number.⁴⁹

Sociological works of the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s have revealed a particular and continuous pattern in national self-identification and attitudes towards Others, and one which is characteristic of a significant cross-section of Polish society. The main aspects of this pattern are as follows:

1. Modern Polish national identity is modelled on the matrix of ethno-nationalism in which the notions of legal equality and citizenship are by definition of little importance. Thus to be a Pole means to have genealogical ethnic Polish roots, to speak the Polish language, to follow Polish tradition and culture as defined in an ethnic sense, and to be of Catholic denomination.⁵⁰

2. Catholicism has long been an important feature of Polish national identity, and manifests itself in what can be described as a peculiar form. According to the sociologist Ewa Nowicka, Polish Catholicism takes on the form of a national religion in which the national set of values is of greater importance than the universal Catholic set of values, and where the 'Catholic God' is viewed as an 'ethnic Polish God.'⁵¹ This can be seen as rooted in two myths - the seventeenth century myth of *antemurale* - Poland as the rampart of

⁴⁸For a summary of works by Jan Stanisław Bystron and Stanisław Ossowski, see Ewa Nowicka, 'Wprowadzenie. Inny Jako Obcy,' in Ewa Nowicka, ed., *Religia a obcość* (Kraków, 1991), 19-20. Hereafter Nowicka, 'Wprowadzenie.'

⁴⁹See, for example, two works by the historian Tadeusz Łepkowski, *Uparte trwanie polskości* (Warszawa, 1989), 67-68. Hereafter Łepkowski, *Uparte*. and 'Historyczne Kryteria Polskości,' in Antonina Kłoskowska, ed., *Oblicza Polskości* (Warszawa, 1990), 88-99; Zdzisław Mach and Andrzej K. Paluch, eds., *Sytuacja mniejszościowa i tożsamość* (Kraków, 1992), 11-18; and the sociological study by Ewa Nowicka, 'Narodowe samookreślenie Polaków,' in Ewa Nowicka, ed., *Swoi i obcy* (Warszawa, 1990), 55-100.

⁵⁰Tadeusz Łepkowski, *Myśli o historii Polski i Polaków* (Warszawa, 1983), 35-39. Hereafter, Łepkowski, *Myśli*.

⁵¹Ewa Nowicka, 'Polak-Katolik. O Związkach Polskości z Katolicyzmem w Społecznej Świadomości Polaków,' in Nowicka, ed., *Religia*. 117-123. Hereafter Nowicka, 'Polak.' 122.

Christian Europe, and the romantic myth of the chosenness of Poland as 'Christ's nation' - long-lived myths in the Polish collective mind.⁵²

The strong connection between Catholic and ethno-national identity, rather than adherence to a universal Catholic set of values, has also been pointed out in the study entitled Religiousness of the Polish People 1991, edited by Lucjan Adamczuk and Reverend Witold Zdaniewicz.⁵³ The result of such a peculiar fusion of Catholicism and ethno-nationalism is that firstly, there is a noticeable difficulty within segments of Polish society in perceiving a person of any denomination other than Catholic as a Pole.⁵⁴ Secondly, that such a phenomenon has also a negative effect on the sense of belonging to the Polish nation by persons of denominations other than Catholic, who together constitute approximately four per cent of the entire population. For example, in a study of the Protestant religious minority whose largest concentration is in the capital, Warsaw, Ewa Nowicka and Magdalena Majewska conclude that the Warsaw Lutherans see themselves as a collectivity as citizens of a lesser category than Catholic Poles, and feel social disapproval as far as the national context is concerned.⁵⁵

3. Ethno-cultural homogeneity is generally evaluated as a positive feature within Polish contemporary society.⁵⁶ Furthermore, society as a collectivity is characterised by what sociologists describe as 'low internal tolerance' towards national minorities living within the Polish polity, and a higher 'external tolerance' towards foreign visitors.⁵⁷ As a result, according to the Report on the Situation of Persons Belonging to National and Ethnic Minorities in Poland conducted in 1994, among the main obstacles to the improvement of

⁵²On the importance of the myth of Poland as Rampart in Polish collective mind, see Janusz Tazbir, Poland as the Rampart of Christian Europe. Myths and Historical Reality (Warsaw, 1983). On the romantic myth of chosenness of Poland as Christ's nation, see, for example, Andrzej Walicki, 'The Three Traditions in Polish Patriotism,' in: Stanislaw Gomulka and Antony Polonsky, eds., Polish Paradoxes (London and New York, 1990) 28-29. Hereafter Walicki, 'Three,' and hereafter Gomulka and Polonsky, eds., Polish.

⁵³Lucjan Adamczuk and Witold Zdaniewicz eds., Religiousness of the Polish People 1991 (Warszawa, 1993), 49.

⁵⁴See, Nowicka, Religia.

⁵⁵Ewa Nowicka, Magdalena Majewska, Obcy u Siebie. Luteranie Warszawscy (Warszawa, 1983), 151.

⁵⁶See Ireneusz Krzeminski's introduction to Ireneusz Krzeminski, ed., Czy Polacy są antysemitami? Wyniki badania sondażowego (Warszawa, 1996), 23. Hereafter Krzeminski, ed., Czy Polacy.

⁵⁷Nowicka, 'Wprowadzenie.' 23-25.

the position of minorities in Poland were 'increasingly nationalist behaviour and attitudes, and excessively lenient treatment of the perpetrators [of various anti-minorities actions] on the part of Polish society and governmental bodies' and 'intolerance of 'others'.⁵⁹

4. Among the many Others evaluated as the Threatening Other, the Jew stands out as the foremost Threatening Other in the national context. As I have previously mentioned, the Jews feature strongly in the Polish collective memory and their evaluation within the national context past and present among various segments of the society has been primarily negative. This holds even for those segments that cannot be categorised as subscribing to the tradition of the core ethno-nationalist political parties - parties which existed in the pre-1939 period and which were officially revived in the post-1989 period. In the second chapter, I shall describe the strongest and most recent evaluation of the Jews as the Threatening Other and discuss the reasons for the evaluation of the Jewish minority as the foremost Threatening Other.

The subject of the Other and the division between 'us' and 'them' in the Polish national context is one of the most challenging and least popular issues within public discourse. This fact has been indicated by the discussion of such issues by some authors, reflected even in the titles of their works, for example, Stefan Amsterdamski and Tadeusz Kowalik, The Subjects We Do Not Like to Think About, Namely, About Some Dilemmas of National Principles (*O czym myśleć nie lubimy czyli o niektórych dylematach zasady narodowej*), and Jan Stanisław Bystron, 'National Megalomania' (*Megalomania Narodowa*) in a volume entitled, The Subjects I Was Discouraged to Write About (*Tematy które mi odradzano*).⁶⁰

The subject of the Jew as the foremost Threatening Other in the national context is perhaps the least popular and most challenging of all such issues. Although there has been a revival of interest in Polish Jews and their history in the 1980s and early 1990s in Poland, judging by the number of publications and public debates, some topics related

⁵⁹See Grzegorz Janusz, Report on the Situation of Persons Belonging to National and Ethnic Minorities in Poland (Warszawa, 1994), 17. (This report was sponsored by the Phare Programme of the European Communities and Open Society Institute)

⁶⁰See Stefan Amsterdamski and Tadeusz Kowalik, O czym myśleć nie lubimy czyli o niektórych dylematach zasady narodowej (Warszawa, 1980), 11-18; and Jan Stanisław Bystron, 'Megalomania Narodowa' in: Tematy które mi odradzano (Warszawa, 1980).

to Polish attitudes towards the Jewish minority have been omitted or presented in a distorted version that contains elements of the perception of the Jew as the Threatening Other. Such a situation is not limited only to general public discourse but is also present in intellectual discourse.

With the exception of works which explicitly recycle anti-Jewish themes, the manner in which the perception of the Jew as the Threatening Other is manifested in mainstream intellectual discussion is in a moderate form, and limited to the evoking of the subtle premise that it is the Jews - as an unassimilated ethno-cultural collectivity - that has constituted the 'problem' within Polish society, and that there has always been an incompatibility between Polish and Jewish interests.

The sociologist Iwona Irwin-Zarecka was perhaps the first to discuss this phenomenon in detail and to point out its intricacies and prejudiced character in her earlier cited work on perceptions and memory of Jews in contemporary Poland, entitled Neutralising Memory. The Jew in Contemporary Poland, where she notes that the concept of the Jews as a problem:

'has enjoyed wide currency over the last years, its grip on the structure of discourse about things Jewish in Poland extends beyond the realm of the generally expected...the notion that Jews constitute a problem by their very presence is one of the core premises of any analysis of the 'Jewish question,' past and present.'⁶⁰

The prominence and extent of this phenomenon lies in the fact that this notion is also expressed by individuals and groups who engage in condemning antisemitism and who support the so-called 'pro-Jewish' position. According to the sociologist Marcin Kula, the so-called 'philosemitic voices' represent positions, which cannot be accepted as neutral in any critical inquiry into attitudes towards the Jews within Polish society.⁶¹ Furthermore, he also notes that among these voices there is a wide-spread 'silent assumption' that Jews, even those Jews most assimilated into Polish culture, not only fail to be the same as ethnic Poles, but constitute a lesser category of citizenship.

This, as I shall argue, can be seen as a reflection of strong homogenising tendencies and low tolerance of internal diversity in society, tendencies which have an affect on all minorities. Moreover, it

⁶⁰Irwin-Zarecka, Neutralising. 165.

⁶¹Kula, 'Problem,' 27.

can also be viewed as a symptom of a lack of acceptance of the principles of pluralism and integration in relation to the position of minorities within society. In the next chapter, I shall demonstrate that these tendencies are not new, but were already present within the liberal elites at the end of the nineteenth century.

This phenomenon is most clearly noticeable in historical works, which as Irwin-Zarecka correctly notes, is particularly troubling, since historians play an important role in forging public opinion in Poland. In my own research, I have come across historical works conveying the notion of the Jew 'as a problem' in a variety of ways, including those studies condemning the violent and aggressive type of antisemitism represented by the core ethno-nationalist political movements of the inter-war period.⁶² Furthermore, some historical works also present the more elaborated themes of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other as perfectly objective facts, a point also noted by Irwin-Zarecka:

'What is troubling is not their presence [images of 'Jewish crimes'] in the writings of the nationalistic Right, but their prominent position within what appear as perfectly objective historical studies.'⁶³

Another important issue concerning the presentation in historical studies of negative evaluations of Jews in Polish society is the omission of those topics seen as throwing a bad light on Polish society, a fact noted by the Polish historian Jerzy Tomaszewski, one of the main contemporary experts on the history of Jewish and other minorities in Poland. In his article 'Polish Society Through Jewish Eyes', he discusses the way some historians deal with the negative side of relations with Polish Jews of the inter-war period. Tomaszewski notes:

'One does come across cases of Polish authors trying to deny facts, but one is more likely to come across Polish historians not mentioning certain facts, presenting them imprecisely or treating them as marginal, even if they have won notoriety throughout the world. This type of attitudes causes indignation among many Jewish journalists and only strengthens stereotypes unfavourable to our country.'⁶⁴

⁶²A good example of such is Roman Wapiński's, Polska i małe ojczyzny Polaków (Wrocław, Warszawa, 1994), 152-192. Hereafter Wapiński, Polska.; and Olaf Bergmann, Narodowa Demokracja Wobec problematyki Żydowskiej w latach 1918-1929 (Poznań, 1998).

⁶³Irwin-Zarecka, Neutralising. 172.

⁶⁴Jerzy Tomaszewski, 'Polish Society Through Jewish Eyes,' in: Andrzej K. Paluch, ed., The Jews in Poland Vol. 1, (Cracow, 1992), 417. Hereafter Paluch, The Jews.

In his review of a collection of documents concerning the history of the Jewish minority in the post-1945 period, Tomaszewski also conveys the same criticism:

'I am constantly surprised to read opinions of serious people who suggest that there had in fact been no antisemitism in Polish society after World War II, or that it turned out to be only a transient phenomenon, provoked, what is more, by external forces.'⁶⁵

The final point which must now be raised is that the lack of scholarly objectivity in reference to important anti-Jewish themes is linked with the normative and axiomatic stance of the defence of national honour, as pointed out by the well-known historian Jerzy Jedlicki:

'The Polish intelligentsia, historians included, for years seems to have been incapable of dealing with the problem of mass antisemitism in Poland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I hardly have in mind its inheritors - they are not interesting. I mean those who despise antisemitism, who witnessed its outbursts with anguish and tried to fight it whenever they could. Even so, many of them are inclined to believe and argue that antisemitism in Poland was merely a product of extreme chauvinist demagoguery or mob prejudice which never penetrated the healthy core of the nation. All evidence to the contrary is so easily passed over in silence, and, sometimes even worse, it is expurgated from published documents. Why is this done by those who bear no guilt? ...We do this because we are especially sensitive on this point which painfully offends our moral consciousness...Our permanent dodge, avoiding the subject or misrepresenting it with phrases, the inability to investigate the truth objectively and present it as it is, seems not so much a political operation as a defence reaction which over the years has become established as a response to the generalised accusing stereotype. For it seems to be a general law that an honest and unrelenting evaluation of one's past is most difficult to make when it is the object of accusations from outside.'⁶⁶

This explanation reveals that adherence to national values and traditions - even those far removed from subscribing to the tradition of

⁶⁵Jerzy Tomaszewski, 'The History of Jews in Poland 1944-1968,' *Midrasz* (The best of *Midrasz*), 1998, 47. Hereafter Tomaszewski, *The History*.'

⁶⁶Jerzy Jedlicki, 'Heritage and Collective Responsibility,' in: Ian Maclean, Alan Montefiore and Peter Winch eds., *The Political Responsibility of Intellectuals* (Cambridge, 1990), 57-58.

the core exclusivist ethno-nationalist political movements - is an important obstacle to any critical scholarly investigation of the negative perception and treatment of the Jewish minority in Poland. This suggests an inability on the part of the historical profession to be objective and dispassionate as far as the subject of negative attitudes and perceptions towards the Jewish minority is concerned in the Polish national context.

The most troubling part of this perspective is the notion that any position that challenges the accepted point of view is seen as an outsider's attack on national values and traditions, and is in fact made the justification for taking up such a defensive position in the first place.⁶⁷ This also implies that anyone who presents a critical evaluation of the negative side of Polish relations with the Jewish community is himself/herself to blame for such attitudes, a highly disturbing notion indeed, and one leading to the accusation of being anti-Polish. In chapter four, where I discuss in more detail the presentation in post-war Polish historiography of anti-Jewish attitudes during the Holocaust, I show that it is not only outsiders but also Poles such as Professor Jan Blonski accused of anti-polonism, when they present critical approach to this subject.

In short, one can see that a community whose national identity has been shaped on the matrix of ethno-nationalism may have great difficulty in exercising tolerance towards Others (the Internal Others) and in the acceptance of the Others' moral-cultural codes. Furthermore, such a community (both elites and non-elites) may be prone to a negative evaluation of the Others as the Threatening Other. This has been the case in Poland where the Jewish minority has been evaluated as the foremost Threatening Other in contrast to and above all other minorities. The way in which the perception of the Jew as the Other developed into the myth of the Threatening Other, (used in a more or less elaborated form), and the damaging results of this myth on the Jewish minority and the Polish ethnic nation, will be discussed in the following chapters.

⁶⁷On the issue of national honour and society's lack of capacity for critical self-examination in various national communities including Poland, see Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance* (New Brunswick and London, 1994), 8-82. Hereafter, Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames*.

Sources and Structure of the Thesis

In my choice of primary sources for the analysis I have included samples of the ethno-nationalist press (particularly its core segment), its political programmes and writings, as well as various state documents and political and social writings and interviews that illuminate the scope of exclusivist ethno-nationalist thinking about the Jewish minority, among various elites (and non-elites) from the 1880s up to the year of 1968.

Given the fact that I have aimed at providing a 'global picture' of the longevity and impact of the perception of the Jew as the Threatening Other on modern Polish political culture throughout different historical periods, I have relied on the findings of recent scholarly research with reference to particular issues discussed in the thesis.

In cited Polish titles I have preserved the original orthography. All Polish words in the main text are written in *Italic style*.

The thesis is divided into six chapters that analyse the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other and its functions over five distinct historical periods.

This first and introductory chapter explored the theoretical issues which underlie the socio-historical analysis of this study - such as the importance of the Threatening Other in the ideology of exclusivist ethno-nationalism, the historical and psychosocial reasons for the emergence of the Threatening Other, and the concept of purification of the nation from the Threatening Other. It also introduced the problem of the Threatening Other in Polish national culture.

The second chapter explores the roots of the myth going back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, its nascent forms prior to the 1880s, and its development into a fully-fledged form in the late pre-independence period of the 1880s to 1914 and the post-independence period 1918 to 1939. It discusses the polyfunctionality of the myth, particularly focusing on the inter-war period when a variety of uses of the myth are clearly detectable.

The third chapter examines the role of the myth in the rationalisation and justification of anti-Jewish violence of the inter-war period and looks at the serious damaging effect of such violence on inter-ethnic relations between the two communities.

The fourth chapter explores the presence of the myth in Nazi occupied Poland during the Second World War and this in fact is a central chapter of the thesis since it investigates the continuity of the myth in a radically different set of socio-political contexts where the minority perceived as the Threatening Other is actually being eliminated by an external social agent - the German occupier. Here attention is focused on two aspects - the presence of the myth among underground Polish elites and non-elites, and the impact of this myth on the witnessing by Poles of the extermination of Polish Jews by the Germans.

The fifth chapter analyses the presence of the myth among the anti-Communist political elites, the emergence of the myth within the Communist political movement, and the role of the myth in anti-Jewish violence during the early post-war Communist period.

The sixth and final chapter explores the presence of the myth and its particular version and uses by the so-called ethno-nationalist Communist elites between 1967 and 1968. In terms of the impact of the myth on the Polish-Jewish minority, this chapter looks at 1968 as the final realisation of the ethno-nationalists' main objective of excluding the Jewish minority from the realm of the Polish nation-state.

Chapter II.

The Myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other from its Origin up to 1939.

'There is a very little knowledge of Jews and Jewish matters in Poland today. In this respect the Polish soul and mentality is full of prejudice and bias and the entire attitude is based on 'magical thinking': the most hideous, stupid and outrageous ideas are accepted as truth without being questioned...Thus it is too easy to make generalisations about Jewish matters without seeing the diversity of Jewish life and to use the Jewish issue for the purpose of political demagoguery...Indeed, Dmowski's methods reveal just how easily this can be done.'

Ludwik Oberlaender, 'Ruchy nacjonalistyczne a antysemityzm,' Miesięcznik Żydowski, No. 7-8, 1932.

Introduction

One of the developments accompanying the political and economic transformation of Poland in 1989 and 1990 was a strong outburst of anti-Jewish beliefs and sentiments in public life. References to Jews as aliens and as a menace to the Polish nation, and slogans that Poland was 'falling into Jewish hands' and that 'Jews rule and want to rule Poland' were disseminated by the various newly established national parties and a segment of the Polish Catholic Church.¹ The Solidarity movement was itself also affected by this trend. After its split into two factions in May 1990, the right wing faction Center Alliance accused the members of the left wing Solidarity faction the Citizens Movement For Democratic Action of not being true Poles (*prawdziwi Polacy*). At the same time some communist groups continued to claim that the political camp under the banner of Solidarity represented anti-national interests, that is to say Jewish interests.

In various press statements and in public speeches the following themes came to the fore: of the Jew being responsible for previous declines of Poland, particularly during the Communist period, of the

¹On the subject, see, for example, Kula, 'Problem.' 23 ; and Kinga Dunin-Horkawicz, Malgorzata Melchior, 'Żyd i antysemita. in: Marek Czyżewski et al., Analiza dyskursu publicznego w Polsce (Warszawa, 1991) 37-78 and Kinga Dunin-Horkawicz, 'Jak nie być antysemitą w Polsce? Antysemityzm w dyskursie publicznym' Studia Socjologiczne, No. 3/4, 1991, 125-141.

Jew hindering the present political and economic transformation of Poland, and of potentially preventing the future development of a great Polish nation. In short, the Jew was referred to as the enemy of the Polish people and of its culture; as the exponent of international finance; as a carrier of cosmopolitan and spiritually-debased Western values; and as the creator of the imposed post-War Communist system.

Anti-Jewish beliefs were particularly intensified during the first free presidential election of late 1990. The presidential candidate Tadeusz Mazowiecki the chief opponent of Lech Wałęsa and himself a leading Solidarity man and a Catholic, was labelled a Jew and subjected to a Church investigation into his family genealogical tree in search of alleged Jewish ancestry.² Various surveys conducted at the time showed that anti-Jewish slogans and beliefs had a high public acceptance. For example, according to a survey concerning the presidential campaign, fifty per cent of Lech Wałęsa's electorate and twenty-five per cent of Tadeusz Mazowiecki's electorate were convinced that 'Jews had too much power in Poland.'³ The conviction that the Jews wanted to govern Poland was found even among schoolchildren who for obvious reasons had never had any interaction with Polish Jews and who could only have acquired such beliefs through parents, schools and the mass media.⁴

To some observers both in Poland and in the West such an anti-Jewish mood in a state where the Jewish minority numbers only approximately five thousand within a thirty eight and a half million population, came as a shock.⁵ Overall, it was claimed that these anti-Jewish beliefs and sentiments had resulted from the re-emergence of nationalist political movements and parties, and that they had a self-

²Kula, 'Problem.' 23.

³Konstanty Gebert, 'Antisemitism in the 1990 Polish Presidential Election.' Social Research, No. 58, 1991, 727.

⁴According to a poll conducted in three Warsaw schools, twenty-five per cent of school children expressed that opinion. Tuszyńska Agata, 'Nie jestem rasistką.' Kultura, No. 513, June 1990, 3-26. For an account of similar opinions among college students and secondary school pupils see, Krystyna Daniel, 'The Schools, the Church and Antisemitism Among Polish Youth.' in: Paluch, The Jews. 429-434.

⁵The figure of five thousand constitutes an actual number of Jews affiliated to existing Jewish organisations in contemporary Poland. The highest figure for the Jewish community including individuals of mixed marriages is estimated at fifteen thousand. See, Alina Cała and Helena Datner-Śpiewak, Dzieje Żydów w Polsce 1944-1968. Teksty źródłowe. (Warszawa, 1997), 176. Hereafter Cała and Datner-Śpiewak, Dzieje.

reproducing character. A historical connection with the inter-war period was also drawn.⁶

I shall argue that this entire phenomenon can be classified as the strongest and most recent manifestation of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other which had first emerged fully-fledged approximately a hundred years earlier and had since frequently reoccurred with greater or lesser intensity in the context of Polish national discourse. What transpired in this manifestation, as in the previous ones, was the presence of a variety of mythical themes and components as described above. Furthermore, the polyfunctionality of the myth was also evident. As in the past, the myth was used to raise political and social mobilisation and national cohesion, to discredit political opponents, and to provide a biased source of information about the Jewish minority and its history in Poland. Without overstatement it can be said that this manifestation revealed that the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other was still a living force in Polish society of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

In this chapter I set out to discuss the roots of this myth, its nascent form prior to the 1880s, and its development in a fully-fledged form in the late pre-independence period 1880s-1914 and post-independence period 1918 to 1939. I consider such discussion to be important historical background to further analysis. I focus on the following two questions: How did this long-lived myth come about? And what are its main components and social functions?

To begin with, it must be stressed that I categorise the myth as primarily a nineteenth century social construction which had been a part of modern Polish nation-building based on ethnic nationalism of the exclusivist type. And therefore I treat the myth as a good indicator of the persistence and emotive power of exclusivist ethno-national traditions in Poland.

Of course, being a nineteenth century phenomenon the myth had exerted little impact on the first six hundred years of Jewish dwelling in pre-modern Poland which began in the eleventh century and which was marked by the gradual development of a distinguished and culturally assertive Polish Jewish community.⁷ Nevertheless, I

⁶Marcin Kula, 'Problem.' 45-49.

⁷Historical sources inform us that contact between Jews and Poles goes back to the tenth century when the first Polish entity was established. Early evidence of permanent Jewish settlements in Poland, mainly in Silesia, is dated at the twelfth

argue that its roots can be traced back to the pre-modern period, particularly to notions concerning the Jews which had developed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The Roots of the Myth

Looking at pre-modern Poland we have to bear in mind the two general aspects important to this study: firstly, that during the first three centuries of Jewish settlements in Poland, the ethnic composition and boundaries of the polity differed significantly from the ethnic make-up and boundaries of Poland of the seventeenth century. The Polish Kingdom ruled by the first dynasty of the Piasts between 996 and 1370 was a rather ethnically and religiously uniform state and its boundaries were closely similar to those of post-1945 Poland.

The last Piast ruler Casimir III (1333-1370) known as Casimir the Great (*Kazimierz III, Wielki*) for his contribution to the economic and political development of the state, is recognised as the medieval ruler who was the most favourably disposed to Jewish settlement in Polish territories. He ratified and implemented, throughout the entire Polish Kingdom, the charter of rights that had been granted in 1264 to the Jews of Great Poland (*Wielkopolska*) by Boleslaw the Pious (*Bolesław Pobożny*), one of the major documents determining the legal and social status of the Jews in pre-1795 Poland.⁸

Secondly, that under the ruling of the second dynasty of the Jagiellonians, which began in 1386 and lasted until 1572, Poland became a multi-national and multi-religious polity. Ethnic Poles, whose language, customs and mores had developed by the end of sixteenth century constituted approximately forty per cent of the entire population which also included Ukrainians, Belorussians, Lithuanians, Jews, Germans, Armenians and Tatars.⁹ The state's boundaries

century. Despite the presence of theories claiming non-Western sources for Jewish immigration to Poland, it is generally accepted that immigration was primarily Western European in origin, from Bohemia and the German and Austrian territories. See for example, Bernard D. Weinryb, The Jews of Poland: a Social and Economic History of the Jewish Community in Poland from 1100 to 1800 (Philadelphia, 1973), 10-20. Hereafter Bernard D. Weinryb, The Jews.

⁸On the various charters of rights granted to the Jews in medieval Poland and the reaction of Polish statesmen, political thinkers, historians and Catholic clergy at various times, see the important article by Shmuel A. Cygielman, 'The Basic Privileges Of The Jews Of Great Poland As Reflected In Polish Historiography.' Polin, Vol. 1, 1986, 117- 133.

⁹Bernard D. Weinryb, The Jews, 107.

dramatically expanded and Poland became territorially the second largest state in Europe as a result of the final union of 1569 between Poland and Lithuania.

The state's noticeable presence on the political map of Europe accompanied by economic growth, and particularly by its agricultural potential and cultural dynamism, led to the later general perception of late Jagiellonian Poland as the Golden Age of Polish history. This Golden Age coincides with what came to be described as the Golden Age in the social and cultural history of the Polish Jews, who having been granted a unique communal autonomy in religious and legal matters (*the kahal system*) by the last Jagiellonian monarch Sigismund August (1548-1572), came to perceive Poland as their refuge, relatively free from persecution in comparison to other European states of the time.

It should be noted here that with the extinction of the Jagiellonian dynasty, Poland's prestige in the international arena gradually faded away. Unlike in other European countries where political power was concentrated in the monarch, Poland became 'the noble republic'. The entire legislative power was shifted onto the nobility (*szlachta*) which in effect became, to use the words of Elie Kedourie, the Polish state.¹⁰ Every new king elected by the nobility was bound by a set of agreements (*pacta conventa*) by which his powers were frequently ceded to the nobles.

The seventeenth century witnessed the first major reaction of ethnic Poles to the Jagiellonian concept of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious Poland. The reaction of Catholic clergy, nobility and burgher estates was predominantly negative and was followed by an expressed wish to curb internal differences. Religious diversity came to be the first target of such a reaction.

The century was marked by a growing fusion of Polishness and Catholicism manifested in the crowning of the Virgin Mary as the Queen of Poland in 1656 and in the general triumph of the Counter-Reformation which was to strongly undermine the concept of religious tolerance endorsed by the state in the previous century and which led in turn to a substantial re-Catholicisation of the nobility who had converted to Calvinism in large numbers under the short-lived

¹⁰Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (Oxford UK, Cambridge USA, 1994), 113. Hereafter Kedourie *Nationalism*.

influence of the Reformation.¹¹ The 'open' society of the sixteenth century was transforming itself into a 'closed' society, a process very much aggravated by a series of foreign invasions on Polish territories.¹² Thus it can be argued that Polish ethno-cultural identity had come, for the first time, into conflict with the concept of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious Polish state.

In this social climate, there was a rapid outpouring of 'a series of specifically Jew-baiting books and pamphlets'. Of course, this was not the first time in which anti-Jewish themes had appeared in the writings of Polish political writers, thinkers and clergymen. However, as pointed out by Salo W. Baron, in these particular anti-Jewish writings the emphasis was placed on 'the purported misdeeds and crimes of contemporary Jewry in their relations with Christians' and not on the theological differences between Judaism and Christianity which constituted the main feature of the early medieval anti-Jewish works.¹³ Another aspect of these anti-Jewish writings was that their authors were not confined only to Catholic clergymen and certain circles of nobility but came also from the burgher plebeian estate which enjoyed the support of the Catholic Church.

During the seventeenth century references to the Jews as an internal enemy (*wewnętrzny wróg*) or the foreigner among us (*obcy wśród swoich*) were frequently made in the writings of the Polish burgher plebeian estate.¹⁴ In these writings next to the earlier theologically based references to the Jews as God's killers, the Jews came to be described as social parasites, as 'insects eating Poland from within', as spies for foreign entities, and as 'God's plague' threatening the economy of the burghers.

¹¹On the importance of the Counter-Reformation in shaping seventeenth century Polish society, see Henryk Samsonowicz, et al., *Polska. Losy Państwa I Narodu* (Warszawa, 1992), 209-211. Hereafter Henryk Samsonowicz, et al., *Polska*.

¹²On the foreign invasions and wars the Polish state fought in the seventeenth century, see Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Price Of Freedom* (London and New York, 1993), 99-104. Hereafter Wandycz, *The Price*.

¹³See Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of Jews* Vol. 16, (New York, 1976), 138-139. Hereafter Salo W. Baron, *A Social*.

¹⁴See Urszula Augustyniak, *Koncepcje narodu i społeczeństwa w literaturze plebejskiej od końca XVI do końca XVII wieku* (Warszawa, 1989), 57. Hereafter Augustyniak, *Koncepcje*. and Jacob Goldberg, 'Poles and Jews in the 17th and 18th Centuries: Rejection or Acceptance,' in: *Jahrbucher fur Geschichte Ost Europas*, Band. 22, Heft. 2. 1974, 250-251.

Close economic ties between the Jews and the nobility, particularly the magnates, were heavily criticised.¹⁵ Moreover, these writings reveal that the Jews were attributed more blame for the lack of a strong urban economy than the nobility itself, which was after all the chief opponent of the urban economy and had the political power to hold back the development of the towns. To the Jews was also attributed responsibility for corruption on the part of the nobility and lack of concern for the state, and therefore for the increasing impoverishment of the Polish polity:

'You tricked the nobility and rich magnates. And now suddenly you have impoverished all our estates.'¹⁶

Interestingly, Jews who converted to Catholicism were also viewed as outsiders who could not be trusted and accepted as members of the Polish community. A popular plebeian proverb of the time was: 'a converted Jew like a domesticated wolf is a two-faced friend.'¹⁷

This points to the presence of a nascent racial element in the perception of the Jews which was later to feature strongly in modern evaluations of converted Polish Jews.

The idea of the exclusion of the Jews and other heretics from the realm of the state was also contemplated in the burgher literary genre. The expulsion of the Jews from Spain in the fifteenth century was praised as was the contemporary Russian policy of excluding Jews from the Russian state: 'Moscow is wiser...she neither stands a Jew nor a foreigner'.¹⁸

In short, one can see here that the Polish burghers' view of the Jews as economic competitors had clear ethnocentric, xenophobic overtones. Although these views did not exert much influence on contemporary political and cultural affairs of state, it is important to note that they were discovered and recycled by modern ethnic nationalists in the late nineteenth, and first three decades of the twentieth century. In fact, these modern ethnic nationalists referred to these burgher writers as one of the two estates in pre-modern Poland,

¹⁵On the economic ties between the nobility and the Jewish community see, for example, Hillel, Levine, Economic Origins of Antisemitism. Poland and Its Jews in the Early Modern Period (New Haven and London, 1991), 10-11. Hereafter Levine, Economic.

¹⁶Hajduk Miklosz Odmienia Art u Zyda Cited in Augustyniak, Koncepcje. 62.

¹⁷ibid., 62.

¹⁸Jan Jurkowski, Poselstwo z dzikich pol. Cited in Augustyniak, Koncepcje. 58.

which, in contrast to the nobility, showed concerns for the Polish national interest.¹⁹ The second highly appraised estate was the pre-modern Catholic clergy - seen as the true defender of the Polish nation against the Jewish invasion.

'In pre-modern Poland anti-Jewish activities were guided by the Catholic Church which knew well the Jewish soul and Jewish goals. The Church warned Polish society against the destructive activities of the Jews and was in charge of fighting against the Jewish invasion.'²⁰

The idea, popular among the seventeenth century burghers, of learning from and imitating medieval Spain's policy of the expulsion of the Jews, was repeated by Roman Dmowski in his so-called 'bible' of modern Polish nationalism Thoughts of A Modern Pole (*Myśli Nowoczesnego Polaka*).²¹ It was also frequently recycled by the ethno-nationalist press of the inter-war period:

'All Poland's troubles are the result of centuries of Jewish invasion. If we want to be a great independent nation, we must get rid of the Jews as the Spaniards did in the fifteenth century'.²²

The eighteenth century was marked by the rapid political, economic and territorial decline of the polity followed by its total disintegration. During this century, the general population doubled from six million to eleven and a half million, and the Jewish community came to constitute six per cent of the entire population. Under such conditions a negative evaluation of both the Jewish economic position and of its ethno-cultural composition took on a more solid and advanced form.²³ This was particularly visible in political writings and public debate in the second part of the century when a desperate attempt was made to reform the state's political, social and economic systems. The main critics of the Jews were the underdeveloped ethnic Polish burghers and Catholic clergy, but they

¹⁹See, for example, Teodor Jeske-Choiński, Poznaj Żyda (Warszawa, 1912), 190-192.

²⁰Stanisław Tworowski, Polska bez Żydów (Warszawa, 1939), 30. Hereafter Tworowski, Polska.

²¹Roman Dmowski, Myśli Nowoczesnego Polaka (Lwów, 1904), 216.

²²Gazeta Warszawska, 19 April, 1935. Cited in Harry M. Rabinowicz, The Legacy of Polish Jewry (New York, London, 1965), 184. Hereafter Rabinowicz, The Legacy.

²³According to Hillel Levine: 'from the second half of the eighteenth century there was an upsurge in the allegations that Jews are unproductive...impeding development for other members of the society; or conversely, that they are too enterprising, standing at the avant-garde, disrespectful of the traditional ways 'we' insiders do things.' Hillel Levine, Economic, 238.

were also joined by a significant number of the noblemen.²⁴ In the latter case most of the critical voices came from the growing pauperised segment (*gołota*), which unlike the large landowners, did not see in the Jew a useful and necessary administrator of an estate (*the arenda system*) and a middle man in economic terms.²⁵ Instead, like the burgher class, the landless nobles saw in the Jew a skilful economic competitor. Their views concerning the Jews were also influenced by Catholic teachings, particularly by the Jesuits who were in charge of the Catholic educational system.²⁶

It should be noted at this point that eighteenth century Catholic clergymen writers, like the Catholic priests of the previous century, concentrated on disseminating an image of the Jew who was harmful to the contemporary Christian community.²⁷ Not only was such harmfulness defined in economic, cultural and theological terms, but also in physical terms. Accusations of ritual murders of Christians, particularly of Christian children, were widely circulated in their writings. The expression that 'freedom cannot exist without liberum veto and Jewish matzo cannot exist without Christian blood', coined by the rural priest Jędrzej Kitowicz, is a good example of blood libel presented as social truth, contrary to the stance of the Apostolic See of that time.²⁸ The comparison of alleged ritual murder to liberum veto which was the principle of unanimous vote, a real parliamentary practice introduced in 1589, well reflects the biased way of thinking of the Polish Catholic clergy, thinking which was to persist even into the first half of the twentieth century.

Characteristically, in the eighteenth century's political and social writings and debates, the Jew was made into a scapegoat responsible for all contemporary political, social and economic ills experienced by

²⁴For a good summary of this problem see, Krystyna Zienkowska, 'Stereotyp Żyda W Publicystyce Polskiej W Drugiej Połowie XVIII wieku,' in: Jerzy Michalski ed., *Lud Żydowski W Narodzie Polskim* (Warszawa, 1994), 81-98. Hereafter Zienkowska, 'Stereotyp.'

²⁵See Gershon D. Hundert, 'Some Basic Characteristics of The Jewish Experience In Poland.' *Polin*, Vol. 1, 1986, 31.

²⁶On the impact of Jesuit education on the nobility in the first half of the eighteenth century, see, for example, Anatol Leszczyński, *Sejm Żydów Korony 1623-1764* (Warszawa, 1994), 31-33. On the Jesuit educational system, see Henryk Samsonowicz et al., *Polska*, 217-219.

²⁷See Salo W. Baron, *A Social*. 138.

²⁸On the history of the accusation of blood libel in pre-modern Poland, see Zenon Guldon and Jacek Wijaczka, 'The Accusation of Ritual Murder in Poland, 1500-1800.' *Polin*, Vol. 10, 1997, 99-140.

the state: political corruption and treason, financial fraud, impoverishment of towns, industry and villages, the spread of alcoholism among the peasantry, and the materialism and egoism of the nobility, particularly of the magnates. As in the previous century, the Jew was accused of hindering the Polish urban economy and was also blamed for the negative attitude of the nobility towards commerce. This pattern of accusing the Jews for all misfortunes incurred by the Poles and the Polish state was to feature as one of the main themes of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other throughout the modern period.

Reading these writings one can clearly see that such reasoning was based on ignorance and prejudice towards the Jews, and was aimed at transferring the blame for major political, social and economic problems onto a group which was perceived as a powerful and contemptible alien. To give one particular example, the logic behind the notion that the Jews were responsible for negative attitudes towards commerce was reasoned thus: the Jews whose main occupation was commerce were the most contemptible nation in the world, therefore the commerce that they conducted was also worthy only of contempt and explained the general repulsion towards commerce in Poland.²⁹ Such an explanation completely ignored the basic fact that the nobility's evaluation of commerce as dirty and low profession sprang from its ethos of knighthood.³⁰

Moreover, in this body of writing, terms used to describe the Jewish community have a strong connotation of dirt and pollution: 'the Jews poison the air with their stink', 'the Jews rot the air of towns'. Thus we can observe here the emergence of the nascent concept of the Jew as a spoiler and polluter of the country, a concept later to become an important element of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other.

Finally, at the end of the eighteenth century, and for the first time, a distinction between the Polish nation and the Jews had been made in political and social writings.³¹ And the nascent idea of antagonism between the Jewish and Polish ethno-cultural identities

²⁹Zienkowska, 'Stereotyp.' 92.

³⁰Janusz Tazbir, *Świat Panow Pasków* (Łódź, 1986), 225.

³¹The emergence of this distinction was first suggested by Zienkowska, 'Stereotyp.' 97.

had also been raised. And it had influenced the debate on the emancipation of the Jews.

The works of Stanisław Staszic (1755-1826), one of the leading figures of the Polish Enlightenment, and a precursor of the ethno-linguistic model of the Polish nation, serve as a good illustration of such a perspective.³² In his main work, Warnings for Poland (*Przestrogi dla Polski*) published in 1790, Staszic categorises the Jewish community as harmful locusts destroying Polish towns and villages. What is evident in his approach is a high level of contempt towards the Jews mixed with a recognition of their dynamism and assertiveness as a community. Therefore Staszic advocated forcible assimilation of Jews into the Polish mores, customs and language as the only means of harmonious existence between them and ethnic Poles, and as a prerequisite for granting the Jews some - but not full equality - of civic rights.³³ His perspective on the Jews was not an isolated one but was shared by many members of the Polish political elite of the time. An opposite perspective that argued both that the Jews could be a valuable part of society and should be granted emancipation unconditionally was championed by a small minority, mainly by one writer, the Jacobin Józef Pawlikowski.³⁴

Perhaps this situation explains why the project of the emancipation of the Jews in late pre-partitioned Poland, in fact not realised before the final partitioning in 1795, lacked that enthusiasm which accompanied the first phase of the emancipation of Jews in Western and Central European states.³⁵

What was the reaction of the Jewish community of the time to such a negative evaluation? Overall, historical records attest that the community or at least its public representatives expressed a strong sense of connection to Poland, viewed themselves as loyal to its

³²On the precursors of Polish ethno-nationalism, see Andrzej Walicki, The Enlightenment and the Birth of Modern Nationhood (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1989), 80-88. Hereafter Walicki, The Enlightenment.

³³On the stance of the leading figures of the Polish Enlightenment towards the Jews, see, for example, Zdzisław Libera, Rozważania O Wieku Tolerancji Rozumu I Gustu (Warszawa, 1994), 75-94, and the monumental study of Artur Eisenbach, The Emancipation of the Jews in Poland 1780-1870 (Oxford, 1991), 91-102. Hereafter Eisenbach, Emancipation.

³⁴See Jacob Goldberg, 'The Changes In The Attitude Of Polish Society Toward The Jews In The 18th Century' Polin, Vol. 1, 1986, 42.

³⁵On the phases of the Emancipation, see Jacob Katz, Emancipation and Assimilation: Studies in Modern Jewish History (Franborough, 1972), 22.

monarch, and wished to be involved in the political and social affairs of the state.³⁶ The loyalty was not undermined by the failure of the proposal for their emancipation in the Four Year Parliament of 1788-1792. A good illustration of such loyalty was the participation of a segment of Polish Jews in the Kościuszko insurrectionary movement of 1794, and their presence in the legions of Henryk Dąbrowski. Concerning the issue of cultural polonisation as a prerequisite to emancipation, the traditional religious Orthodox majority objected to it, claiming that their cultural distinctiveness was not incompatible with loyalty to the Polish monarch and state. Whereas a small Haskalah movement supported the programme of cultural assimilation.

In short, one can see that in the eighteenth century, the concept of the harmfulness of the Jews, based on prejudice and ignorance of the nature of Jewish beliefs, customs and habits, took a strong hold on Polish political and social thought. And in fact this concept gradually rose to a national level as the idea of an opposition between the Polish nation and the Jews emerged during the late Enlightenment, a time of the crystallisation of the nascent ethnic type of modern Polish nationalism.³⁷ At which stage, the earlier pre-modern prejudiced perceptions of the moral-cultural code of the Jews - as inferior and harmful to Christian ethos - came to be intertwined with the nascent concept of the incompatibility of the Polish and Jewish moral-cultural codes as defined in the national context. The singling out of the Jew as the harmful Other was based on the prejudiced perception of Jewish religion, Jewish language, culture and ethnic make-up, and on the social and economic function of the Jew as the middleman group in Polish society.

Significantly, no other ethno-cultural group dwelling on the territories of the Polish polity was evaluated in such a way in Polish political and social thought. For example, in the case of the largest Christian Slavic groups inhabiting the Eastern part of the Polish state, it was generally assumed that they were part of the Polish nation and would assimilate into Polish culture on a voluntary basis as they

³⁶On the issue of responses of the late pre-modern Polish-Jewish community to the Polish discourse on Jewish emancipation and cultural assimilation, see Eisenbach, Emancipation. 125-145.

³⁷The historian Andrzej Walicki attributes this development to the disintegration of the Polish state. See Walicki, The Enlightenment. 89.

would recognise the supremacy of Polish civilisation.³⁸ The smallest ethno-cultural groups, such as the Armenians and the Muslim community of Tatars, were also treated without much ambivalence as part of the Polish nation. The reason for such a situation was the fact that they had become rather 'invisible' as ethno-cultural groups due to the extensive cultural polonisation they had undergone by the end of the eighteenth century. For example, by this time, both these groups had lost the use of their respective languages in daily life.³⁹ In the case of the Armenians, their organised communal life had also disintegrated.⁴⁰ This indicates that the late pre-modern Polish culture was already characterised by strong homogenising tendencies and by a low tolerance of internal difference, contrary to the popular modern Polish self-perception of the nation as historically tolerant and open to foreigners.

From the Concept of the Harmfulness of Jews to the Myth of the Jew as the Chief Threatening Other 1795 -1880s

In the first half of the nineteenth century, which was marked by insurrectionary attempts at regaining sovereignty and by the development of Polish nationalism in its romantic form, the concept of the harmfulness of the Jews continued to constitute an undercurrent in political and social discourse among the political elites both in stateless Poland and in exile in France and England. A close look at this discourse shows that neither the romantic liberal ethos encompassed in the slogan 'for your freedom and ours,' nor the particularly powerful positive images of Jews created by the eminent Polish romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855), had exerted much attenuating influence over the perception of the Jew as a harmful alien.⁴¹

With the exception of small left-wing circles, biased views towards the Jews were not recognised as such but were held as social truth by both the Conservative and the mainstream democratic liberal movements. A good representative example of biased views in the latter group is that of Maurycy Mochnacki (1804-34), one of the leading

³⁸ibid., 75.

³⁹Wiesław Władyka, ed., *Inni wśród swoich* (Warszawa, 1994), 75, 107.

⁴⁰Mirosława Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *Ormianie w dawnej Polsce* (Lublin, 1982), 311.

⁴¹For a discussion of these images see Magdalena Opalski and Israel Bartal, *Poles and Jews. A Failed Brotherhood* (Hanover and London, 1992), 19-21. Hereafter Opalski and Bartal, *Poles*.

figures of the illegal political organisation The Patriotic Association (*Towarzystwo Patriotyczne*).⁴² In his work on the Polish insurrection of 1830-31, Mochnecki did not treat the Jews as equal members of Polish society, but instead as a 'powerful alien element' with intrinsic faults developed as a result of living in exile. For him the Jews were also a powerful economic group wielding 'the spectre of Mammon.' Therefore he advocated that it was better to neutralise them or win them over to the independence struggle but he did not recommend granting them equal rights in a future independent Poland.⁴³

Such a situation suggests that while the exclusionary project of removing the Jews from the realm of the Polish nation was not yet formulated, exclusionary ideas concerning the Jewish community were already present in Polish political and social thought and manifested themselves in attitudes towards the concept of equality of the Jews within Polish society. In a sense, one can argue, that with the disintegration of the pre-modern multi-ethnic Polish state in which the Jews had constituted a part of the social landscape, their position was becoming increasingly precarious vis -a-vis the Polish nation defined in an ethnic sense.

The romantic period also shows, that within some ethnically pure Polish circles, exclusionary ideas were already being extended onto those persons and their offspring who had given up their Jewish ethno-cultural identity and converted to Catholicism. This undercurrent was particularly visible in the evaluation of the first and second generation of Frankists who had originally constituted an offshoot of the eighteenth century Jewish mystical movement.⁴⁴ By the first two decades of the nineteenth century the first and the second generations of Frankists were Catholics and noblemen who had produced a number of prominent thinkers and military figures committed to the Polish cause. Yet such persons were not perceived the same way as ethnically pure Poles, but were viewed with suspicion and fear. They were seen as a dangerous social group who by penetration into the pure ethnic Polish core group, could successfully conspire against it. Such views were presented in the pamphlet *My*

⁴²See Samsonowicz et al., *Polska*. 318-319.

⁴³Maurycy Mochnecki, *Powstanie narodu polskiego w roku 1830 i 1831*. Cited in Wapinski, *Polska*. 156. It is interesting that this respected historian does not recognise that such views as Mochnecki's on Jews are prejudiced.

⁴⁴On the history of the Frankist movement, see Weinryb, *The Jews*. 237-240.

Discovery of the Israelite Way of Thinking (*O Żydach i judaizmie, czyli wykrycie zasad moralnych tudzież rozumowan Izraelitow przez I*) published in Siedlce in 1820, and in the well-known drama The Undivine Comedy (*Nieboska komedia*) (1835) written by Zygmunt Krasinski (1812-59), one of the most important romantic Polish writers next to Adam Mickiewicz.⁴⁵

Two important studies, The Emancipation of the Jews in Poland, 1780-1870 by Artur Eisenbach, and Poles and Jews. A Failed Brotherhood by Magdalena Opalski and Israel Bartal, point out that the pre-modern perception of the Jew as a harmful alien was absorbed in different degrees by a wide segment of the political and intellectual elites throughout the first seven decades of the nineteenth century. Not only was this perception reflected in public debate, political writing and social journalism, but also in Polish literature, even in the writings of those such as Józef Ignacy Kraszewski (1812-1887) who had at an earlier stage exhibited an open attitude towards the Jews and who himself had been harassed by his own family for making close professional links with Jews.⁴⁶

This belief in the Jew as a harmful alien clearly impacted on Polish political and military discussions on the inclusion of Jews in the insurrectionary movements, on the projects of integration of the Jews into the Polish nation, and on their emancipation.⁴⁷ In fact it contributed to a vast number of contradictions concerning all three issues.

Furthermore, within that segment of already culturally assimilated Polish Jews, this perception caused disappointment, bitterness and frustration as illustrated by the following:

'For centuries, with glowing hearts
Our fathers shed blood for [Poland's] freedom
why are we today rejected with contempt ?...

⁴⁵Short fragments of the pamphlet About Jews and Judaism - a Discovery of the Israelite Way of Thinking by I. are cited in Mateusz Mises, Z rodu żydowskiego (Warszawa, 1991) (reprinted from 1938), 18. On Krasinski's perspective on Jewish converts, see Opalski and Bartal, Poles. 19.

⁴⁶Kraszewski was accused by his own family of serving Jewish capital when he decided to leave the Warsaw Gazette and started to work for the Daily Gazette (*Gazeta Codzienna*) owned by the Jewish entrepreneur Ludwik Kronenberg. See, Alina Kowalczykova, 'Kraszewski w Warszawie' Rocznik Warszawski, 1992, 206. On the evolution of Kraszewski's perception towards the Jews, see Opalski and Bartal, Poles. 64-65.

⁴⁷See Eisenbach, Emancipation and Opalski and Bartal, Poles. 15-18.

Why do our compatriots renounce the Jew ?
Why do they not see in him a friend and a brother ?
And deny him all human rights ?⁴⁸

While, within the large segment of the traditional Orthodox Jewish community, this perception led to suspicion and a lack of confidence in the Polish elites.⁴⁹

In the case of the participation of the Jewish community in nineteenth century insurrectionary movements, Jewish commitment to the Polish cause was invariably questioned, dismissed and looked upon with mistrust or disdain. The two-fold tendency was first to focus on flaws within the Jewish community, particularly cases of betrayal and lack of support for the national cause, and secondly to undermine or reject any Jewish military, auxiliary and financial participation in the struggle for the liberation of the Polish state.⁵⁰ Importantly, this perspective was to become the dominant pattern of perceiving the Jews with regard to those wars Poland fought after regaining her statehood in 1918.

Perhaps the one exception to this pattern was the more generally positive evaluation of the Jewish community's efforts in the Polish Uprising of 1863-64 against Tsarist Russia. The scale of involvement of both culturally assimilated and traditional Orthodox Jews was so publicly visible, particularly in Warsaw, that it could not be easily dismissed or undermined at the time.⁵¹ However, in the aftermath of the crushed insurrection followed by an intensified russification, this historical moment of so-called Polish-Jewish brotherhood was obliterated from public memory.

Contradictory attitudes of a prejudiced nature were exhibited in the Polish approach to cultural assimilation. Of course, cultural assimilation was not a uniquely Polish practice, most of the dominant nations of Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century expected to integrate their subordinate groups through cultural

⁴⁸Aleksander Kraushar 'Przez wieki.' Cited in Opalski and Bartal, *Poles*. 17.

⁴⁹This problem has been well discussed by Opalski and Bartal, *Poles*. 78-84.

⁵⁰See Eisenbach, *Emancipation*. 248-255. On Jewish participation in insurrectionary Polish movements, see also Hanna Wegrzynek, 'Ludność żydowska wobec powstania listopadowego.' and Krzysztof Makowski, 'Ludność żydowska wobec wydarzeń Wiosny Ludów na ziemiach polskich.' in: *Żydzi w Obronie Rzeczypospolitej* (Warszawa, 1996), 31-42, 43-64.

⁵¹On the perception of Jews during the 1863-64 Insurrection, see Opalski and Bartal, *Poles*. 58-77.

assimilation. In fact, this can be viewed as a common expression of ethnocentric and homogenising tendencies characteristic of those nascent national states and led to a high degree of confusion around issues of Jewish emancipation, assimilation and integration.⁵²

Nevertheless, there was a significant difference between the Polish and Western European approaches to cultural assimilation and emancipation. In the case of Western European nation-states, the project of cultural assimilation was generally accompanied by the granting of equality of rights to Jews as individuals. Whereas in the Polish case such equality of rights for Jews was rejected on principle by a vast majority of the elites.⁵³

The exception was a rather small group consisting of democratic left-wing activists and writers such as Wawrzyniec Surowiecki and Jan L. Żukowski.⁵⁴ This group which also included acculturated Polish Jews, advocated that the Jews were to be recognised as Poles in a civic sense and therefore propagated the concept of the Pole of the Mosaic Persuasion (*Polak Mojżeszowego Wyznania*) - the Polish equivalent of the concept of the Frenchman of Mosaic Persuasion.

Moreover, with the beginning of the next century, the Polish project of cultural assimilation of Jews became highly problematic. It was marred on the one hand by a lack of recognition of the minority's rights to preserve its cultural characteristics, and on the other hand by an exclusivist tendency towards already assimilated Jews. Thus more demands were made for total assimilation into Polish moral-cultural codes, a demand not acceptable to the vast majority of Polish Jews who wanted to preserve their morale-cultural make-up, while at the same time the small but steadily growing group of culturally assimilated third generation Jews were being evaluated as 'incorrect' Poles.⁵⁵ Here, the national homogenising tendencies and the very low acceptance of internal diversity, two prominent features of Polish ethno-national culture, become transparent. Only a small minority of the political and cultural elites recognised the prejudiced nature of

⁵²On the political theory of Jewish emancipation, see Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley, Oxford, 1993), 221-222.

⁵³See conclusions in Eisenbach, *Emancipation*. 519-527.

⁵⁴See Janusz Detka, 'Żydowska Kwestia' in Józef Bachórz, Alina Kowalczykova, eds., *Słownik Literatury Polskiej XIX Wieku* (Warszawa, Wrocław, 1991), 1051.

⁵⁵On the development of this problem in the last three decades of the nineteenth century, see Alina Cała, *Asimilacja Żydów w Królestwie Polskim (1864-1897)* (Warszawa, 1989), 216-267, 279-303. Hereafter Cała, *Asimilacja*.

such perspectives. For example, in a work entitled Antisemitism and the Jewish Question (*Antysemityzm i kwestia żydowska*), published in 1907, the little known author Adam Boryna questioned the concept of the polonisation of Jews :

'Treating 'the Jewish Question' without prejudice and without illusion, first of all we have to abandon our hopes for the expansion of the assimilation of the Jews in the name of moral principles...This principle cannot be regarded as non controversial and infallible because it would be very hard to deny the Jews the right to cultivate their national distinctiveness. In fact if we consequently follow such a principle to its logical conclusion it would mean that we ourselves would have to demand from our own emigrants [ethnic Poles] total assimilation into the nations among whom they dwell. Thus their moral duty would be to abandon their Polishness and to assimilate into the American or Brazilian nations.'⁵⁶

A good example of the extent of the proliferation of these national homogenising tendencies and very low acceptance of internal diversity is the fact that these perspectives took hold even over members of the main liberal group - the short-lived movement of Warsaw Positivists led by Aleksander Świętochowski (1849-1938).⁵⁷ Although in the 1860s and 1870s the positivists had supported the inclusion of the Jews into Polish society and granting them (as individuals) equal rights, yet by the 1890s they started to evaluate the Jewish minority primarily in negative terms. The biased nature of the positivists' attitude towards the Jewish minority lay in the fact that they regarded only one type of Jew - namely the entirely polonised Jew - as 'humanised' and therefore as worthy of inclusion into the Polish nation, while the rest of the Jews they viewed with varied degrees of contempt and disrespect, and categorised as a type of 'social disease' which needed to be cured. In time, the realisation that the majority of Jews did not intend to give up their ethno-cultural identity led the positivists towards adopting a position claiming that the Jews were

⁵⁶Adam Boryna, Antysemityzm a kwestia żydowska. Cited in Adolf Nowaczyński, Mocarstwo Anonimowe (ankieta w sprawie żydowskiej) (Warszawa, 1921), 237. Hereafter Nowaczyński, Mocarstwo.

⁵⁷The positivists advocated a program of 'organic work' and emphasised the importance of cultural and economic progress. The movement first developed in the Prussian partitioned zone in the fifties. An important thorough investigation of the evolution of the positivists' attitudes towards the Jews was conducted by Alina Cała. See Cała, Asimilacja. 216-267.

basically a foreign and harmful group towards Polish society. This alleged harmfulness of the Jews was attributed to the qualities of their character. Here is one typical illustration of such a position expressed by the leading member of this group, the writer Boleslaw Prus (1847-1912):

'The Jews in Galicia [the Austrian partitioned zone] constitute one tenth of the entire population. They are characterised by poverty, ignorance, separatism and by their harmfulness towards the rest of the inhabitants. Therefore the people feel resentment towards them.'⁵⁸

Equality of rights for the Jewish population, introduced at different times and in different forms in the three partitioned zones by the Prussian, Austrian and Russian states, was particularly resented by ethnic Poles who had not played any part in the introduction of such legislation, except in the Russian partitioned zone where the legislation had been drafted by a Pole Margrave Aleksander Wielopolski, chairman of the Russian-controlled civil government.⁵⁹ The chain of critical responses to Wielopolski's Emancipatory Act of 1862, expressed in various Polish press statements, testifies that equality of Jews before the law was perceived not only as an economic threat but also as an insult directed at Catholic culture and as a disaster in terms of the national interest of ethnic Poles.⁶⁰

Once again, the premise for such an evaluation of Jewish emancipation lay in the perception of the Jews as contemptible and harmful aliens and in the almost total lack of questioning or challenging of this pattern. Instead, this prejudiced perception continued to be treated as social truth. Therefore it was recycled and transformed into a contemporary form of social and economic criticism of present-day Jews.

Importantly, from the middle of the century, the size of the Jewish community itself came to be perceived as a threat to the ethnic Poles whose number had increased from ten million in 1870 to fourteen million five hundred thousand by 1900.⁶¹ Various tendentious demographic forecasts exaggerated the numbers and birth-rate of the Jewish community, which like the rest of the

⁵⁸Bolesław Prus, *Kroniki* Vol. 16, (Warszawa, 1965), 419.

⁵⁹See Eisenbach, *Emancipation*. 517-521.

⁶⁰Clear illustrations of such reaction are provided in Eisenbach, *Emancipation*. 520-521 and in the previously mentioned article by Golczewski, 'Anti-Semitic.' 93-95.

⁶¹See Samsonowicz et al. *Polska*. 379.

population was undoubtedly increasing in numbers throughout the second half of the century.⁶² In these forecasts, the exaggerated size of the Jewish community was given as evidence that the Jews constituted a dangerous group able in the future to 'physically' swallow the ethnic Polish community.⁶³ Such a doomsday vision was accompanied by the appearance of new expressions such as Judeo-Polonia. Next to their numbers, the economic role of the Jews within society was also perceived as highly dangerous.

In the middle of the century the expression 'Jewish bondage' (*niewola żydowska*) entered the vocabulary of social and economic discourse.⁶⁴ It was used by members of the Agrarian Association (*Towarzystwo Rolnicze*), an institution representing the most influential segment of the Polish nobility, and was propagated by The Warsaw Gazette (*Gazeta Warszawska*), an important conservative daily later to be named as the precursor of Polish nationalism by the core exclusivist ethno-nationalist movement, the Endecja. In the words of the Endek Jędrzej Giertych:

'[The Warsaw Gazette] was the leading national paper which advocated the preservation of Polish national culture, fought against the Jewish influence, and warned against the German threat long before the birth of Roman Dmowski.'⁶⁵

It was in this paper that vicious attacks full of invective and known as the so-called Jewish war was launched in 1859.⁶⁶ The main object of the attack was the expanding and successful Jewish bourgeoisie whose role in the industrialisation of the country and in

⁶²According to available data, the highest concentration both of the ethnic Polish and Jewish populations lived in the Russian partitioned zone and the lowest concentration of both populations was in the Prussian partitioned zone. By the end of the nineteenth century the number of Jews living in the Russian partitioned zone was one million two hundred and seventy-one thousand which constituted fourteen per cent of the entire population, in the Austrian partitioned zone it was eight hundred thousand which constituted ten per cent of the entire population, and in the Prussian partitioned zone it was fifty thousand which constituted two per cent. See Piotr Wróbel, Zarys Dziejów Żydów na Ziemiach Polskich W Latach 1880-1918 (Warszawa, 1991), 10-11. Hereafter Wróbel, Zarys.

⁶³On the discussion of some of these forecasts, see Eisenbauch, Emancipation. 259-262.

⁶⁴Opalski and Bartal, Poles. 16.

⁶⁵Jędrzej Giertych, Polski Obóz Narodowy (Warszawa, 1990), 30. Hereafter Giertych, Polski.

⁶⁶For a short summary of the event see Eisenbach, Emancipation. 398-400.

the development of a contemporary form of capitalism was unquestionable.

Why was the Jewish bourgeoisie attacked rather than being praised for playing a large part in the modernisation of a society which was still basically half-feudal and pre-industrial ?

The explanation of this phenomenon lies in a combination of inter-linked factors. Firstly, as stated earlier, the Jewish bourgeoisie was viewed as a harmful alien in the eyes of a large segment of Polish elites which were still in their greater majority of gentry origin.⁶⁷ Secondly, the Jewish bourgeoisie was also viewed as a powerful economic competitor representing capitalism, an economic model that the Polish gentry was traditionally highly critical of. Thirdly, the Jewish bourgeoisie gradually came to be perceived as the carrier of a system of values which were identified as anti-Polish: the reason being that the Polish national ethos of that time, shaped by the nobility, was characterised by conservatism, traditionalism, nativism and the glorification of the rural idyll and by a corresponding disapproval of the system of values associated with the culture of capitalism, industrialisation and urbanisation.⁶⁸ In fact this ethos did not undergo major changes even after the process of 'embourgeoisement' of ethnic Poles that began in the 1870s. Catholicism, conservatism and traditionalism still continued to be identified as the pillars of Polishness. Moreover, the representatives of the new ethnic Polish bourgeoisie were to some extent influenced by the nobility's perception of capitalism and its ethos. And they claimed that while Jewish capitalist activities were directed against society, their own capitalist activities would result in an improvement in the well-being of the entire Polish society.⁶⁹ Thus it is not difficult to see how under such circumstances the Jewish bourgeoisie came to be objectified as representative of anti-Polish values and its achievements in the modernising of the country to be discounted and dismissed.

⁶⁷On the importance of the gentry and its ethos in shaping modern Polish elites, see Walicki, 'The Three.' 27-28.

⁶⁸On the importance of Catholicism, conservatism and traditionalism in Polish national traditions of the nineteenth century, see Walicki, 'The three.', 29-31; and Łepkowski, *Uparte*. 30-31. On the negative perceptions of the capitalist West by Polish elites of the first half of the nineteenth century, see Jerzy Jedlicki, 'A Stereotype of the West in Post-partition Poland' *Social Research*, Vol. 59, No. 2 1992, 345-364.

⁶⁹A good example of this way of thinking is presented in Jan Jeleński, *Zydzi, Niemcy i My* (Warszawa, 1880), 34-35.

Moreover, by the first decade of the twentieth century, the perception of the Jew as a carrier of anti-Polish values was to be further elaborated as new ideas such as free thinking, Western liberalism, Socialism and Communism were added to the group of doctrines, ideas and values categorised as anti-Polish by a large segment of the conservative and catholic elites.⁷⁰ Here the Jew was frequently made the embodiment of all these values. This was a part of the mythologisation of the Jew as the enemy of Poland and of its people, a process about to have long-lasting consequences on the relations between the ethnic Polish majority and the Polish Jewish minority in the modern era.

The Emergence of the Fully-Fledged Myth between 1880s and 1918

The final formulation of the myth of the Jew as the chief Threatening Other took place in the late pre-independence period between the 1880s and the year 1918. In general this period was marked by the rise of modern Polish political movements and parties in all three partitioned zones, and social and economic changes in Polish society resulting in increasing urbanisation and the emergence of the proletariat class. The process of modernisation also affected the culture and internal structure of Polish Jewry. As a result a Jewish intelligentsia and proletariat developed, and ideas of secularisation, Jewish socialism and above all the concept of Jewish nationalism began to penetrate the traditional orthodox community.⁷¹

The late pre-independence period was important in terms of the defining and moulding of the Polish nation-to-be. It was during this time that the most potent form of modern Polish nationalism, the ethnic type of integral form, was fully fledged and thus the process of nation building on a matrix of exclusivist ethnic nationalism entered a new intensified phase.

The myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other was both an element and a product of this process, with the premise of the myth based on the earlier well-established concept of the Jew as the harmful

⁷⁰On the categorisation of free thinking, Western liberalism, Socialism and Communism as anti-Polish doctrines, see Łepkowski, *Mysli*, 36-37; and Michał Sliwa, *Polska myśl polityczna w I połowie XX wieku* (Wrocław, 1993), 239-254. Hereafter Sliwa, *Polska*.

⁷¹See, for example, David Vital, *A People Apart. The Jews In Europe 1789-1939* (Oxford, 1999), 353. Hereafter Vital, *A People*.

and contemptible alien recycled and reformulated into the concept of the Jew as the chief enemy of Poland and of its people. I shall argue here, that from the moment the concept of harmfulness of Jews was reformulated along exclusivist ethnic nationalist lines, the precarious position of Jews vis-a-vis the majority of ethnic Poles was aggravated to a level incomparable with past experience.

In singling out the Jew as the chief enemy of Poland and its people, the Polish exclusivist ethno-nationalists were acting no differently to contemporary French, German, Hungarian and Romanian exclusivist ethno-nationalists who also categorised the Jew as the Threatening Other.⁷² As the scope of this thesis does not allow for making comparisons I can only state that close similarities can be found between all these cases in terms of the content of the myth (its major themes and elements). At the same time, it is important to bear in mind that there has been a considerable variation in terms of the development and impact of the myth on each of the nations, and on the interactions with their respective Jewish communities.

Singling out the Jew as foremost alien to the Polish historical culture-community meant that the civic status and belonging of Jews in Polish society was not only questioned but in fact totally dismissed and denied. In the ethno-nationalist world-view, mid-nineteenth century terms such as Pole of the Mosaic Persuasion, the Polish Citizen of the Mosaic Persuasion (*Obywatel polski wyznania mojżeszowego*) and Pole - Israelite (*Polak Izraelita*) were simply seen as mutually exclusive.

The implications of this perspective were to become fully apparent in the post-independence phase starting in 1918 when various manifestations of belonging to Poland on the part of the members of the Polish Jewish community were constantly challenged in public by ethno-nationalists. Generally, Jews who called themselves Poles in a civic sense were verbally abused and reminded that they were Jews and Jews only - not Poles.

Historical records attest that this pattern of treatment was not only limited to ordinary members of the Jewish community, but also to politicians, and members of the Polish parliament and municipal

⁷²On the various developments of exclusivist ethnic nationalism and political antisemitism in Europe, see Shmuel Almog, Nationalism And Antisemitism In Modern Europe 1815-1945 (Oxford, 1990), 66-72 and Jacob Katz, From Prejudice To Destruction. Anti-Semitism, 1700-1933 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1994), 260-300. Hereafter Almog, Nationalism.

councils. For example, at meetings of the Lodz Municipal Council the slogan 'Jews Out!' (*precz z Żydami*) was frequently shouted by core ethno-nationalists, the Endeks during speeches of Jewish councillors.⁷³ Polish Jewish artists, including even those who were highly culturally assimilated, were also denied the right by core ethno-nationalists to call themselves Polish artists. Such was the case of Julian Tuwim (1894-1954), one of the best-known Polish poets of the inter-war period, who was under constant attack by the Endecja press which claimed that he had no right to consider himself a Polish poet.⁷⁴

The emergence of the myth can be chronologically located with a fair degree of precision because it is reflected both in the vocabulary and argumentation used in public discourse. From the 1880s it is possible to observe a substantial increase in the use of terms such as 'enemy' (*wróg*) and 'foreigner' (*obcokrajowiec*) to describe the Jews as a collectivity. The earlier eighteenth century reference to the Jew as a polluter and spoiler of the country had become elaborated in a national context. Thus the Jews were portrayed as a kind of sickness, a social, economic and cultural disease that the Polish nation had been enduring for a long time. A typical middle-of-the-road opinion was as follows:

"The Jewish Question' in Poland is like gout, we cannot get rid of it, but we have to make sure that it causes us a minimum of discomfort.'⁷⁵

Terms such as swamp (*bagno*), mean locusts (*szarańcza podła*), filthy insects (*plugawe robactwo*), weeds (*chwasty*), Jewish plague (*plaga żydowska*) and enslavement by Jews (*niewola żydowska*) came to comprise the basic ethno-nationalist vocabulary in describing the Jewish presence.⁷⁶

Common arguments presented in this anti-Jewish discourse were the following: firstly, that the Jews were not suited for integration into the Polish nation because they were culturally and

⁷³See, for example, Minutes of the Łódź Municipal Council Meetings of 8 and 16 February 1939, 74-75 and 83-85. The Łódź Archives, No. 12759. I am grateful to Dr Jacek Walicki of the Łódź Archives for providing me with this material.

⁷⁴See Magnus J. Kryński, 'Politics And Poetry: The Case Of Julian Tuwim.' *The Polish Review*, No. 4, 1974, 11-14.

⁷⁵This opinion was expressed by Stanisław Kozmian, a representative of a conservative political group based in Cracow, in his review of Theodor Herzl's *Der Judenstaat* (1896). Cited in Nowaczynski, *Mocarstwo*. 232.

⁷⁶See Krzysztof Stepnik, 'Powieść antysemitcka w ostatnich latach Kongresowski' *Krytyka*, No. 39, 1992, 88-90.

ethnically alien and that furthermore they were an older and more powerful people than the Poles. Secondly, that alone among the ethno-cultural groups inhabiting the Polish territories, the Jews constituted a unique case, one that had in the past and could yet have in the future a disastrous impact on the Polish state and Polish national 'well-being'. That in fact, they were permanently engaged in the process of the Judaisation (*zażydzenie*) of the Polish universe including its territory, economy, language, customs and traditions. That the Jews were also traitors to Polish national causes as they frequently represented foreign interests, especially those of the chief external Polish enemies, the Germans and the Russians. That they were carriers of anti-Polish doctrines, values and norms such as free thinking, Socialism and Communism. That Poland was an innocent and suffering victim of the Jewish invasion. Finally, that Poles should defend themselves in a more organised and effective way so as to show the Jews that they were the true and sole owners of Poland. And in fact that the Jews were not suited to reside among the Poles but should look for a homeland elsewhere.

In this argumentation the Jew was always characterised as the perpetrator vis-a-vis the Pole as the victim, and as a threat to all aspects of national life. Here the concept of Jewish economic threat can be seen to be based on the interpretation of economic competition in a collectivist way. The wide acceptance of this interpretation of economic realities had its roots in the lack of a strong Western liberal perspective in Polish political and social thought, and in the dominance of the ethno-nationalist perspective on economic competition.⁷⁷ The concept of Jewish political and cultural threat can be viewed as based on a biased interpretation of political and cultural realities, in which the realities are falsely exploited to fit the ethno-national world view.⁷⁸ Such perspectives were to have very important long-lasting effects on evaluations of, and interactions with, Polish Jewry in modern Poland.

The predisposition to slip into such a distorted perception can be seen to be reinforced by two other factors: firstly, by the myth of

⁷⁷On the low acceptance of Western liberal thought in Poland, see Jerzy Szacki, *Liberalizm Po Komunizmie* (Kraków, 1994), 62-78.

⁷⁸On the ethno-nationalist ideological misinterpretations of realities, see George Schopflin, 'The politics of national identities.' in: Michael Branch ed., *National History and Identity* (Helsinki, 1999), 59-60.

victimhood, which exerted a powerful psychological effect on Polish national consciousness during the nineteenth century; secondly, in the earlier pre-modern pattern of the moulding of Polish ethno-cultural identity.⁷⁹ In medieval period, the alien was an important element of the crystallisation of Polish identity during a time when the Poles were engaged in a struggle for ethnic survival against the then real alien threat of the German rulers in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and the Teutonic Knights in the fifteenth century.⁸⁰ However these two factors alone cannot provide a satisfactory explanation of why the Jew was singled out as the foremost Threatening Other.

Complex and highly emotionally charged narratives based on the argumentation presented above came to be woven into the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other. These narratives were propagated by persons who I define as myth-makers. They came from different social groups including the pauperised nobility and intelligentsia of gentry origin, and the new bourgeoisie. By profession they were journalists, writers, lawyers, pedagogues, politicians, and Catholic priests. All can be viewed as ethno-nationalists of different varieties and intensities. What historical analysis tells us is that their anti-Jewish views were popular within a broad segment of Polish society.⁸¹ What all these myth-makers had in common was the claim of representing and defending both the national and the Catholic interests which by that time had become irreversibly intertwined. This was due to the fact that during the nineteenth century the Catholic clergy was involved in national uprisings and activities aiming at the preserving Polish language and culture, thereby reinforcing the seventeenth century concept of the Catholic Church as guardian of the Polish nation and depository of national traditions.⁸²

⁷⁹On the importance of the sense of victimhood in Polish nineteenth century culture, see Jerzy Jedlicki, 'Holy ideals and prosaic life, or the Devil's alternatives.' in: Gomulka, Polonsky, eds., Polish. 45-47.

⁸⁰See Paul W. Knoll, 'National Consciousness in Medieval Poland', Ethnic Studies, Vol. 10, 1993, 67.

⁸¹The popularity of such opinions within the Polish middle classes was pointed out by Andrzej Jaszczuk, Spór Pozytywistów Z Konserwatystami O Przyszłość Polski 1870-1903 (Warszawa, 1986), 207-208. Hereafter Jaszczuk, Spór.

⁸²On the importance of Catholicism in shaping Polish nationalism and national identity, see Z. Anthony Kruszewski, 'Nationalism And Politics: Poland.' in George Klein, Milan J. Reban, eds., The Politics Of Ethnicity In Eastern Europe (New York, 1981), 151. Hereafter Kruszewski, 'Nationalism.' Hereafter Klein, Reban, eds., The Politics.

Among the most prolific and significant myth-makers of the late pre-independence period, with works frequently re-printed both before and after 1918, I include the following three authors:

First, Jan Jeleński (1845-1909) - a conservative catholic and self-made businessman from the pauperised nobility who propagated the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other on a large scale through his own populist press: the two weeklies Soil (*Rola*), published first in 1883 and in circulation for next thirty years, and the News for Everybody (*Dziennik Dla Wszystkich*) set up in 1905, as well as through his pamphlets and the setting-up of libraries directed at the Polish non-elites.⁸³ Jeleński can be considered as the first writer to suggest, that in the best interest of Poles, the Jews should first be isolated and then should disappear through emigration from all the Polish territories. He can also be regarded as the propagator of such popular catchy phrases as 'do not buy at Jewish shops' (*nie kupuj u Żyda*), 'be aware of the Jew' (*strzeż się Żyda*) and 'bread for our own people' (*chleb dla swoich*). After the social revolution of 1905, which swept through cities of the Russian partitioned zone, Jeleński accused the Jews of causing social unrest. In his pamphlet entitled To the Enemies of Their Own Homeland (*Wrogom własnej ojczyzny*), he categorised the Jews and socialists as the 'killers' of Poland, and voiced his support for the political movement of the Endecja. According to him this was the party that 'all honest and just' Poles should support'.⁸⁴

Secondly, Teodor Jeske-Choiński (1854-1920) - an ex-positivist turned conservative, and of German ethnic origin, who was a more sophisticated writer of anti-Jewish themes than Jeleński and whose works were aimed at a more educated stratum of Polish society. In the eighties and nineties he wrote for various conservative papers including the afore mentioned Jeleński's Soil.⁸⁵ His most important work Let's Get To Know the Jew (*Poznaj Żyda*) published in 1912, can be viewed as the most elaborated single representative of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other. It includes the theme of the Jew as responsible for all past and present Polish misfortunes and

⁸³For a good summary of Jeleński's anti-Jewish activities, see Jaszczuk, Spor. 212-220, and Cała, Asymilacja. 278-284.

⁸⁴Jan Jeleński, Wrogom własnej ojczyzny (Warszawa, 1906), 6-10.

⁸⁵On Jeske-Choiński see, Władysław, Niemirycz and Waław Olszak, eds., Polski Słownik Biograficzny Vol. 10, (Wrocław, 1978), 194-195. Hereafter, Niemirycz, Olszak, eds., Polski.

weaknesses, the theme of the Jew as a threat to all aspects of Polish life, and the theme of the Jew as the 'internal plague,' the polluter of Poland, who alone has the power to prevent a future rebirth of the Polish state.

Finally, Andrzej J. Niemojewski (1864-1921), an ex-socialist known as the enfant terrible of the Polish intelligentsia, who in contrast to the previous two myth-makers fashioned himself on various anti-Jewish Russian and Lithuanian writers, the Judeophobes, who categorised the Jewish religion as a source of all social evil.⁸⁶ Niemojewski is known for categorising the Jew as the fifth partitioning power of Poland in his major work The Structure and the March of the Army of the Fifth Partition [of Poland] (*Skład i Pochód Armji Piątego Zaboru*) published in 1911. He also propagated the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other in his own press Independent Thought (*Mysł Niepodległa*) which emerged in 1906 and in a series of lectures published as booklets including The Jewish Soul in the Mirror of the Talmud (*Dusza Żydowska w świetle Talmudu*) and The Ethics of Talmud (*Etyka Talmudu*). In the latter he stated:

'Polish Democracy and Patriotism in relation to Judaism and Semitism is like culture and civilisation in relation to slavery and despotism. It is also like rationalism and free thought in relation to revelation and dogmatism. Thus to be a Polish Democrat means to be the enemy of Jewishness, in other words, to be an antisemite.'⁸⁷

In general, we can state that from the 1880s onwards the myth was propagated in political writings, literary works, and in a significant number of publications of conservative, conservative radical and catholic provenance.⁸⁸ Within the catholic press, the Jesuit monthly Common Review (*Przegląd Powszechny*), edited by Marian Morawski (1845-1901) professor of philosophy at the Jagiellonian University, was one of the major propagators of the myth of the Jew as the enemy both of Catholicism and of the Polish nation. The only major exception was the liberal press which was free of images of the Jew as the enemy of Poland and of its people.

⁸⁶See Niemojewski's defence of the Lithuanian priest Justyn Pranajtis included in the booklet Skład i Pochód Armji Piątego Zaboru (Warszawa, 1911), 3-8. On Niemojewski, see Niemirycz, Olszak, Polski. 3-10.

⁸⁷Andrzej Niemojewski, Etyka Talmudu (Warszawa, 1917), 127.

⁸⁸See Wróbel, Zarys. 22-23.

This shows that an important part of late nineteenth century Polish political and cultural thought was characterised by a clear anti-Jewish theme, a fact generally played down in Polish historiography.⁸⁹ If the subject is discussed at all, it is not submitted to a proper critical analysis but rather to a limited explanation placing its roots at 'the sense of threat and political, cultural and economic inadequacies strongly felt by the underdeveloped Polish middle classes, the inefficient bourgeoisie and pauperised intelligentsia', doubtless an important part of the nineteenth century Polish experience.⁹⁰ Such an intellectual position, which is dictated by a considerable degree to the saving of national honour, obscures our understanding both of the prejudiced nature of the anti-Jewish position and of the importance of the exclusivist ethno-nationalist perspective in modern Polish political culture.

The Myth and the Endecja

In 1897 the myth entered the realm of modern Polish politics. This was the year in which the chief and purest exponent of modern Polish ethnic nationalism in its integral form, the National Democrats movement (*Narodowa Demokracja*) was set up in Warsaw by Roman Dmowski (1864-1939) who became the movement's unquestioned leader. From the outset, the National Democrats movement, commonly called Endecja, rejected the actuality of the pre-modern multi-ethnic and multi-religious Jagiellonian Poland and advocated the concept of a 'powerful' Poland (*Polska mocarstwowa*) which was to resemble the model of Piast Poland.⁹¹

The National Democrats movement was characterised by its rapid development in all three partitioned zones. This was particularly visible in the variety of press circulated by the Endecja and by its forerunner the National League (*Liga Narodowa*), including papers for the youth, intelligentsia, and peasantry, as well as papers for the émigré

⁸⁹The consequences of such a position were well stated by Frank Golczewski. Golczewski, 'Antisemitic.' 88.

⁹⁰For example, the distinguished Polish historian Krystyna Kersten presents such point of view in her otherwise revealing article 'The 'Jewish Communism' Stereotype. (The Polish case)' in: Andre Gerrits, Nanci Adler, eds., The Vampires Unstaked. National Images. Stereotypes and Myths in East Central Europe (Amsterdam, Oxford, 1995), 146.

⁹¹See Andrzej Walicki, 'The three.' in: Gomulka, Polonsky, eds., Polish. 34-35.

ethnic Polish community in France and the United States.⁹² Although the membership was initially small, the party's simple political message that it was the national party representing the interest of all ethnic Poles, was soon to bring a substantial level of popularity within different social groups and in all three partitioned zones.⁹³ In the words of a contemporary observer, a Polish Jew Wilhelm Feldman:

'The National Democrats [was] not a party but a clearly defined moral-political movement powerful throughout the whole of Poland.'⁹⁴

The myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other was fast absorbed and elaborated in the political writings of the Endecja. And in fact it was employed as one of the core elements of its ideology.⁹⁵ This differentiated Endecja from other emerging political movements such as the peasant movement which like Endecja became a party of mass support.⁹⁶ To the ideologues and politicians of the Polish Peasant Party (*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe, PSL*), the myth constituted more an underlying than a central concept in their ideology, and was therefore used less frequently and in a more moderate way; whereas the Endecja and its associated organisations became the chief and the most outspoken disseminator of the myth in its most vulgar and aggressive form.⁹⁷ In the next chapter, I shall discuss in more detail the vocabulary employed by Endecja in reference to the Jew as the Threatening Other.

It is important to emphasise here that the Polish Socialist Party (*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna, PPS*), founded among others by Jozef Pilsudski (1867-1935) in 1892, was the only major emerging political movement which did not use anti-Jewish themes in its political writings and programmes.⁹⁸ Despite contradictory attitudes towards Jewish cultural assimilation and minority rights, the PPS ideologues

⁹²See Bogumił Grott, *Nacjonalizm Chrześcijański* (Kraków, 1991), 11-20. Hereafter Grott, *Nacjonalizm*.

⁹³On the early development of the Endecja, see Grott, *Nacjonalizm*. 11-16.

⁹⁴Wilhelm Feldman, *Rzecz o Narodowej Demokracji* (Kraków, 1902), 4.

⁹⁵On anti-Jewish thought in the National Democrats party, see Andrzej Friszke, 'Pytania o polski nacjonalizm' *Wież*, No. 11, 1993, 74-85.

⁹⁶See Grott, *Nacjonalizm*, 67-69 and Norman Davies, 'Polish National Mythologies.' in: Geoffrey Hosking, George Schopflin eds., *Myths*, 151.

⁹⁷See Edward D. Wynot, 'The Polish Peasant Party and the Jews, 1918-1939.' in: Yisrael Gutman et al. ,, *The Jews of Poland between Two World Wars* (Hanover, London, 1989), 39-41. Hereafter Gutman et al., eds. *The Jews*.

⁹⁸On the founders and development of PPS, see Śliwa *Polśka*. 22-37.

and politicians, having had a strong attachment to the traditions of Jagiellonian Poland, saw the Jews as an integral part of Polish society.⁹⁹ This manifested itself in PPS support for the concept of equality of rights for all citizens of a future Poland regardless of their religion and ethnic background.

Importantly, I argue that there was a qualitative difference between the Endecja's anti-Jewish stance and its anti-German position which also played an important role in its ideology. In the latter case the perception of the Germans as the Threatening Other can be seen as based on real historical experiences going back to the medieval period when the Polish Kingdom had to defend itself against the German policy of *Drang nach Osten*, and also on the more recent experience of the forced Germanisation of ethnic Poles in the Prussian (German) partitioned zone, a policy introduced by Chancellor Bismarck of the newly united German state (1871).¹⁰⁰ The difference is that in the former case the perception of the Jews as the Threatening Other can be identified as primarily based on prejudice.

Furthermore, comparing the image of the Germans against that of the Polish Jews as the enemies of Poland, we can see that the former image was definitely more static and much more limited in its content as the reality obviated any need for elaborated mythologised stories. Importantly, in contrast to the Jews, the Germans were not perceived as the polluters of national life in all its aspects - political, economic and cultural.

This perspective was reflected in the Polish treatment of the German minority in inter-war Poland, where the principle of marginalisation and tit for tat was generally advocated by the Polish ethno-nationalists who viewed the German minority through the perspective of relations between the Second Republic and the Weimar Republic and subsequently the Third Reich.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹See Michał Śliwa, 'The Jewish Problem in Polish Socialist Thought.' *Polin*, Vol. 9, 1996, 26. Hereafter Śliwa, 'The Jewish.'

¹⁰⁰On the importance of the long historical conflict with Germany in shaping modern Polish nationalism, see Kruszewski, 'Nationalism.' 147-149. On the policy of *Kulturkampf*, see Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Lands of Partitioned Poland 1795-1918* (Seattle and London, 1984), 233-235.

¹⁰¹For a good summary of the Polish ethno-nationalists' attitudes and policies towards the German ethnic minority, see Włodzimierz Mich, *Obcy w polskim domu* (Lublin, 1994), 114-120. Hereafter Mich, *Obcy*.

In the ethno-nationalist view, the Jew, by the sheer fact of who he was, was evaluated as the competitor who could only hinder the development of the Polish nation. The perception of the Jew as a competitor always aiming to undermine Polish national causes was reinforced by the demands for equality of rights and communal minority rights voiced by the newly established secular Jewish movements of both Zionist and socialist orientations.¹⁰²

From 1905 onwards the notion of conflict between Jewish and Polish economic interests and between the moral-cultural codes of the two communities was continuously stressed in Endecja appeals to the ethnic Poles for a national awakening (*przebudzenie Polakow*).¹⁰³

Appeals for a national awakening were particularly intensified in the aftermath of the fourth Russian State Duma election of 1912 in which the Polish Socialist Party, greatly aided by the Jewish vote, defeated Endecja.¹⁰⁴ Although relatively obscure, the PPS candidate Eugeniusz Jagiello was widely recognised as 'the only Christian [on the electoral list] that was not an antisemite.'¹⁰⁵ In the aftermath of this election, Endecja's defeated candidate Roman Dmowski proclaimed a social and economic boycott of the Jewish population in the Russian partitioned zone, and urged the Poles to unite and rise against their internal enemy. The key slogan 'Do not buy at Jewish shops' (*Nie kupuj u Żyda*) was presented by Dmowski as a national commandment (*nakaz narodowy*). In the press supported by the Endecja, that section of the Polish population that did not approve of the economic boycott was accused of violating 'the most holy national principle', whereas Poles who supported it were praised for being truly patriotic and Catholic. This development can be viewed as one of the first steps towards the exclusion of the Jews from the realm of the Polish nation.

¹⁰²On Zionist and Bundist aspirations for equality of rights and minority rights for the Jews, see Vital, *A People*, 610-616.

¹⁰³Michael C. Steinlauf argues that the concept of national conflict between Jews and Poles gave Polish antisemitism a unique logic that made it different from other European antisemitic movements. Michael Steinlauf, *Bondage To The Dead. Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust*. (New York, 1997), 14. Hereafter Steinlauf, *Bondage*.

¹⁰⁴On the Endecja's anti-Jewish stance during and after the fourth Duma election in Warsaw in 1912, see Stephen D. Corrisin, 'The Jews, the Left, and the State Duma Election in Warsaw in 1912: Selected Sources.' *Polin*, Vol. 9, 1996, 45-54. Hereafter Corrisin, 'The Jews.'

¹⁰⁵Report from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Warsaw Oberpolitseimeister no. 11379, 29 Oct./11 Nov. 1912. Cited in Corrisin, 'The Jews.' 54.

The impact of such a practice of social mobilisation through the argument of conflict and threat was correctly analysed two decades later by one of the most discerning critics of exclusivist ethno-nationalism in inter-war Poland, the Polish Jew Ludwik Oberlaender. In the Polish-language Zionist journal The Jewish Monthly (*Miesięcznik Żydowski*) Oberlaender states:

'The ideology of antisemitism, constructed and used by Dmowski as a means of awakening 'creative powers' within the ethnic Polish community, has arrested the development of these powers over a long period of time, and is subsequently developing into a separate phenomenon.'¹⁰⁶

More recent sociological study shows that this practice has had a much longer-lasting effect on Polish national identity. According to a survey conducted in Poland in May 1992, the Jews were still viewed as competitors in a moral-cultural sense.¹⁰⁷

The use of the notion of the Jewish threat can also be viewed as an important element of the Endeks's process of raising national cohesiveness among ethnic Poles of different social classes with conflicting social and economic interests. One has to remember here that not every social class within Polish society had a fully developed Polish national awareness in the 1900s. The gentry, intelligentsia of gentry origin, and the bourgeoisie had a strong national awareness, whereas the peasantry, the largest social group, was characterised by the weakest sense of national awareness and a strong local identity.¹⁰⁸ In fact a significant segment of the peasantry of this period still associated the concept of Polishness with the Polish gentry and the serfdom system, and therefore feared it.¹⁰⁹ In such a social context, the notion of the Jewish threat can be seen as a useful tool for the unifying of otherwise conflicting groups - a useful tool of molding the modern Polish nation-to-be.

¹⁰⁶Ludwik Oberlaender, 'Ewolucja poglądów Narodowej Demokracji w sprawie żydowskiej.' *Miesięcznik Żydowski*, No. 1, 1931, 5-6.

¹⁰⁷Krzemiński, ed., *Czy Polacy*. 19-20.

¹⁰⁸On various levels of national awareness within Polish society, see Łepkowski, *Uparte*. 24-28.

¹⁰⁹On the lack of development of national consciousness among peasantry in the early twentieth century, see Jan Jerschina, 'The Catholic Church, The Communist State, and the Polish people.' in Gomułka, Polonsky, eds., *Polish*. 93-95. On the peasants' association of Polishness with the gentry and serfdom, see Wapiński, *Polska*. 145-147.

A discussion on the role of Endecja in disseminating the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other in the late pre-independence period would be incomplete without a brief look at the legacy of Dmowski whose role after 1914 as a Polish statesman and politician exceeded in importance his earlier role as leader of his party. After all he has generally been viewed as the founder of modern Polish nationalism. In his views concerning Jews, Dmowski may be regarded as a Polish Edouard Drumont (1844-1917) whose own writings were meticulously elaborated the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other.¹¹⁰

In his first major and later to be most popular work, the previously mentioned Thoughts of A Modern Pole, which purported to represent the voice of the modern Polish nation-to-be, Dmowski elaborates the theme of the Jew as the cause of all past and present misfortunes and weaknesses of the Polish nation - including the lack of a strong ethnic Polish bourgeoisie, a position strongly modelled on the eighteenth century bourgeois thinker Stanislaw Staszic.

He also elaborates the theme of the Jew as threat to the present and future Polish nation and provides a carefully constructed explanation as to why the Jews could not be considered as part of the Polish nation-to-be. Here a sense of fear of the Other, intertwined with a sense of inferiority and superiority toward the Other, becomes apparent:

'We have to come alive and expand our existence [as a nation] in all aspects. Our aim should be to become a strong nation, one which cannot be defeated. Where we can, we should civilise foreign elements and expand our potential by absorbing these elements into our nation. Not only do we have a right to do so but this is also our duty....Our national organism should absorb only those [foreign elements] which it is capable of assimilating, elements which should serve to expand our growth and collective potential - a category Jews do not fall into. Their distinctive individuality developed over hundreds of years does not allow us to assimilate the majority of them into our nation. The reason being that our nation is too young and our national character not yet fully formed. In fact it is the Jews who are in a better position to assimilate our majority into their culture and even to assimilate a part of us in a physical sense. [The other reason we cannot assimilate

¹¹⁰On Edouard Drumont, see, for example, Pierre Birnbaum, 'Gregoire, Dreyfus, Drancy and the Rue Copernic: Jews at the Heart of French History,' in: Pierra Nora, ed., Realms of Memory. Vol. 1, (New York, 1996), 381-387.

them] lies in the character of their race which has never lived in the way in which a society of our type has lived. [The Jews] have far too many characteristics that are alien to our moral code and that would play a destructive role in our lives. Mingling with the majority of them would lead to our destruction: the young and creative elements on which the foundation of our future existence depends would be dissolved by the Jewish elements.’¹¹¹

In The Jewish Question Part I: Separatism in the Case of the Jews and Its Source (*Kwestia żydowska, czesc I: Separatyzm Żydów i jego źródła*), published in 1909, Dmowski divides the Jewish community into two sections - the first and larger section comprised of Jews who were either religious or secular, both Socialist and Zionist, and the second smaller group comprised of culturally assimilated Jews. Dmowski evaluates the whole of the first group as a hostile camp that has consciously ‘embarked on a battle’ with the Polish nation, while the second group of assimilated Jews he criticises for failing to transform themselves into ‘proper, rightful Poles’, whose Polishness is shabby and whose Jewishness is obvious in their entire world outlook and who additionally dare to force upon Polish society their ideas and values.

‘With the fast growing numbers of Jewish intelligentsia, the number of assimilated Jews has been expanding but has been losing its quality. This great production of assimilated Jews has shown signs characteristic of mass production, namely in forms superficial and shallow. The numbers of Poles of Jewish origin have increased enormously but they have been shabby second-rate Poles...This intelligentsia has created its own Jewish sphere with a separate soul and separate attitude. Moreover, it has felt its power growing and therefore it has come to desire to force its own values and aspirations upon Polish society.’¹¹²

In The Fall of Conservative Thought in Poland (*Upadek myśli konserwatywnej w Polsce*), published in 1914, he re-states his previous position and emphasises that all categories of Jews constitute a force directed against the Polish nation .

¹¹¹Roman Dmowski, Myśli Nowoczesnego Polaka (Lwów, 1904) 2nd ed., 214-215.

¹¹²Roman Dmowski, Kwestia żydowska. Separatyzm Żydów i jego źródła. (Warszawa, 1909), 29.

Characteristically, Dmowski insists that his views towards Jews have not been shaped by prejudice but by concerns over Poland:

'In spite of everything, I can honestly say that I do not feel hatred towards the Jews. And in general I am not guided in politics by hatred. I only care about Poland and its well-being, and regard it as my duty not to allow anyone to cause my country any harm.'¹¹³

By this strategy he suggests that firstly there were 'objective grounds' for considering Jews as the Threatening Other, and secondly, that it was the Jews themselves who were responsible for their being categorised as the enemy.

It is important to stress here that such reasoning was used in the rationalisation and justification of the notion of antisemitism as national self-defence. Here it was the Jew who was himself to blame for the emergence of antisemitism and for those antisemitic activities directed against him. A good illustration of this position can be found in the previously mentioned work of Teodor Jeske-Choinski Let's Get To Know the Jew (*Poznaj Żyda*):

'Antisemitism is simply a form of self-defence by Christians against the active hatred directed against them by Jews. Antisemitism will cease to exist when the Jew finally understands that living in someone else's home means learning how to be an acceptable guest and how neither to aspire to the role of the host nor to harm the hostAfter all our Christian culture is humanitarian.'¹¹⁴

Although such a defining of antisemitism was not limited only to the Polish case but also had European dimensions, it still had its own particular internal history in Poland. In general, Polish ethno-nationalists were convinced that their own nation among all European Christian nations was the one most threatened by the Jews and therefore that their own self-defence against this 'enormous threat' was primarily a necessity and could not be evaluated as morally and socially wrong. Such a position was widely elaborated:

'The self-defence of Christian nations against Jews is not only desirable but is also a duty dictated by the instinct for self-preservation. At present, as in no other periods of time, fulfilling this duty is so urgent because Jews, having been granting equality, are

¹¹³Roman Dmowski, 'Speech of 1 October 1912.' Cited in Adolf Nowaczyński, Mocarstwo. 238.

¹¹⁴Teodor Jeske-Choinski, Poznaj Żyda (Warszawa, 1912), 238.

powerful and dangerous on an incredible scale just as they were before the destruction of the Temple...Self-defence has to be both material and spiritual. Not only it is important to defend the material culture and the right to exist, but also to defend the Christian soul which has been poisoned by the Jewish press and to defend the Christian conscience which has been mocked by Jewish cynicism and commercial shrewdness ... All this is of primary relevance to us Poles, whom the Jews have come to be particularly fond of, so particularly in fact that we are on the verge of suffocation...[The Jews speak thus:] 'If you do not allow us to establish a 'Judeo-Polonia state' and a nation of 'Judeo-Polish people,' we will strangle you.'¹¹⁵

Generally, it can be seen that on the eve of the First World War, when the 'dream' of Poland regaining its independence was coming closer to realisation, that the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other was already an important element of ethno-national political culture. Here the myth emerged as provider of answers to all the significant questions and problems of Polish national existence. This was to continue during the inter-war period, a turning-point in terms of the impact this social construction was to exert both on society and political culture in the modern era.

The Myth and Political Culture 1918-1939

The newly resurrected Second Polish Republic of 1918 was still a multi-national state whose ethnic make-up closely resembled that of the pre-partitioned First Republic. According to the census of 1931, the ethnic Polish population numbered approximately sixty-five per cent; the Ukrainians as the largest minority sixteen per cent; the Jews ten per cent; the Belorussians six per cent; and the Germans three per cent. Approximately sixty-five per cent of the entire population declared affiliation to the Catholic denomination.¹¹⁶

Although Poland, as the first among the eight newly created states of Eastern Europe, signed the Minorities Treaty, this act was not conducted in good faith but under the tremendous pressure of the Great Powers. In practice, ethno-nationalists of all varieties could not stomach this document. To them, the Minority Treaty meant on

¹¹⁵ibid., 238-239.

¹¹⁶Data cited in Juliusz Bardach Bogusław Lesnodorski and Michał Pietrzak ed., *Historia ustroju i prawa polskiego* (Warszawa, 1994), 468 -467. Hereafter Bardach et al. *Historia*.

principle an act of invasion into the domestic policies of the Polish state, while Jewish minority rights in particular were viewed as a kind of insult and attempted crime against the Polish state and its people.¹¹⁷ Such an evaluation of Jewish minority rights was widespread despite the fact that the various and ideologically diverse Jewish political parties, demanding such rights, had pledged loyalty to the Polish state after it regained its independence.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, in Endecja circles, International and Polish Jewry was frequently held responsible for Poland being forced to sign this 'humiliating treaty' which was finally renounced in September 1934 by Foreign Minister Jozef Beck.¹¹⁹

In general, the popularity of ethno-national attitudes towards minorities resulted in an increasing ineptitude on the part of the Polish state in handling its minorities.¹²⁰ In the case of the Ukrainian and Belorussian minorities, which after all had been treated as part of the same Slavic family, this was manifested in an increasing support for their polonisation, openly advocated in the thirties. In the case of the Jewish minority, which significantly was the only large minority not to have irredentist territorial aspirations towards the newly 'resurrected' Polish state, this was manifested in a number of ways of which the endorsement of the project of exclusion of Polish Jewry through emigration can be viewed as the most significant.

Likewise during the late pre-independence period, Polish Jewry, unlike any other minority, found itself at the centre of ethno-nationalist attention. Polish Jewry was placed in the limelight of any debate concerning the state and its people. As early as at the beginning of the Second Republic, when the Endecja held one third of all seats in the first Polish parliament, the Endeks declared that the Jews were in a state of war with the true owners of the Polish state - the Polish majority. The aim of such rhetoric was to create an atmosphere of social panic and anti-Jewish hostility, particularly among the poor,

¹¹⁷On the history of the Minorities Treaty in Poland, see Salo Baron, Ethnic Minority Rights (Oxford, 1985), 1-45.

¹¹⁸For various statements of loyalty to the Polish state expressed by various Jewish political parties in the inter-war Polish Jewish press, see, for example, the collection Ten Years of Poland's Independence In the Polish-Jewish Press (Warsaw, 1931).

¹¹⁹See, for example, Tworkowski, Polska. 36 and Józef Kruszyński, Zydzi i kwestia żydowska (Włocławek, 1920), 100-101.

¹²⁰Anthony Kruszewski states that 'Poles could not understand, except for a few politicians on the Socialist Left, the re-awakening of national aspirations of the Lithuanians, Ukrainians and Belorussians.' Kruszewski, 'Nationalism.' 158.

uneducated and credulous masses and youths. Judging by their involvement in outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence, these were the social groups most susceptible to the Endecja's crude and emotionally charged propaganda.

One of the most conspicuous indicators of the persistence of such early perceptions of Jews on the part of the inter-war political elites, was the fact that equality of rights, in fact guaranteed by the Polish constitution of March 1921, continued to be perceived in terms of Jewish privilege, a perception deeply rooted in the pre-modern way of thinking. A year after the March constitution became the binding law of the state this phenomenon was observed by the Zionist journalist Apolinary Hartglas. In his pamphlet The Yellow Patch (*Żółta Łata*), Hartglas compares contemporary Polish perceptions of equality of rights for Jews to the common perceptions during the late eighteenth century Four Year Parliament (1788-1792), and notes a clear discrepancy between the official endorsement of the concept of equality of rights, and its practice in relation to the treatment of Polish Jewish citizens. In particular he refers to various discriminatory pieces of legislation that the new Polish state had inherited from its partitioned political powers. Legislations which, still applied commonly by Polish state officials, violated the principle of equality of rights for Jews.

'A few advocates of Jewish equality of rights state that all legal restrictions should be abolished in order to speed up the integration of Jews by assimilation into Polish society. A much larger group claims that even equality granted on paper should be made conditional on the level of integration and assimilation of Jews into the Polish [ethnic] nation. At the same time it is clear to them that three million Polish Jews cannot and do not wish to be assimilated in such a way. Overall there is a lack of support for true equality of rights for Jews.'¹²¹

Looking closely at ethno-nationalist approaches to the issue of equality of rights for the Jews one can see that Hartglas' observations were both discerning and accurate. Ethno-nationalists of all varieties and intensities frequently referred to such equality of rights as an attempt at gaining privileges by Jews for Jews. In fact many prominent

¹²¹ Apolinary Hartglas, 'Żółta Łata (Sprawa ograniczeń prawnych) .Part I' in: Yitzhak Gruenbaum ed., Materiały w sprawie żydowskiej w Polsce, Vol. 5 (Warszawa, 1922), 8.

politicians used such references in their parliamentary speeches, such as Wincenty Witos (1874-1945), the unquestioned leader of the so-called moderate wing of the Peasant movement and three-time Prime Minister in the inter-war period, and General Władysław Sikorski (1881-1943), short-term Prime Minister from 1922 to the first half of 1923 and Prime Minister-to-be during the Second World War.¹²² Here are two illustrations. On January 19 1923 Premier Sikorski stated in parliament:

'The Jewish minority undoubtedly believes that the rights which Poland has voluntarily granted it will be safe-guarded by the government. But a note of warning is necessary here, because too often the defence of its justified interests has been turned by the Jewish side into a struggle for privilege.'¹²³

On 17 October 1923, the newly appointed Premier Witos stated the following:

'Here with full responsibility, I must say that Polish society in general is, in many areas, still a long way from possessing what the Jews in Poland possess. Constitutional rights apply to everyone equally, and if the honourable deputy [the Zionist MP, Dr Reich] were to review all the areas of life and objectively draw the necessary conclusions, he would arrive at the conviction that Poland ranks first in Europe in tolerance; it is a country where Jews, above all others, fare best.'¹²⁴

References to equality of rights as an attempt by Jews at gaining privileges frequently featured in the political programmes of various political parties.¹²⁵ Here are two examples. The first extract comes from the political programme of the National Workers' Party (*Narodowa Partia Robotnicza, NPR*) led by Karol Popiel, which merged with the Christian Democratic Party (*Stronnictwo Chrześcijańskiej Demokracji*) into the Labour Party (*Stronnictwo Pracy*) in 1937. The second extract comes from the political programme of one of the

¹²²For a discussion of Polish politicians' parliamentary speeches concerning Jews, see Isaac Lewin, The Jewish Community in Poland (New York, 1985), 216-240.

¹²³*ibid.*, 221.

¹²⁴*ibid.*, 225.

¹²⁵For a detailed description of various Polish political parties approaches to the position of Jews in inter-war Poland, see Anna Laudau-Czajka, W jednym stali domu...Koncepcje rozwiązania kwestii żydowskiej w publicystyce polskiej (Warszawa, 1998), 240-259. Hereafter Laudau-Czajka W jednym.; and Jerzy Holzer, 'Polish Political Parties and Antisemitism.' Polin, Vol. 8, 1994, 194-205. Hereafter Holzer 'Polish.'

smaller Christian Democratic parties, the Polish Catholic and People's Union (*Polskie Stronnictwo Katolicko-Ludowe, PSKL*).

1. 'The National Workers' Party does not recognise the Jews as a separate national minority and denies their jargon [Yiddish] the right to be considered as an official language....Recognising the equality of rights and duties of all citizens of the Polish State, the NPR opposes all sorts of attempts of gaining privileges on the part of the Jewish community at the expense of the Christian population, namely, attempts at receiving rights, and attempts at abstaining from fulfilling their duties towards the State.'¹²⁶

2. 'Concerning the Jewish mass of several millions, the Polish Catholic and People's Union upholds the ground of traditional Polish religious toleration, which is guaranteed by the Constitution, and on the grounds of social and civic justice. However, the Party is not going to tolerate the privileged position of Jews in any aspect of life...Our point of view is that there are definitely too many Jews in Poland and that their influence on our life is generally negative and harmful, and that the saturation of Polish cities with Jews also causes poverty among the Jews themselves. PSKL wholeheartedly supports the emigration of Jews from Poland to other countries and will defend the Polish state from the new Jewish invasion from the East. Although we grant the Jews equal rights with other citizens and condemn anti-Jewish excesses on the part of irresponsible elements - we will not allow the Jews to create a state within a state and will concentrate all our efforts against Jewish parties acting against the Polish state and its sovereignty.'¹²⁷

These examples exemplify the fact that there was a positive correlation between the perception of the Jew as the Threatening Other and the negative approach towards the concept of equality of rights for Jews. Such a situation was in fact registered by Polish Jews at the time. In February 1939 the Zionist leader Moshe Kleinbaum stated:

'From a formal point of view the Jews were citizens enjoying equal rights; in reality they are treated as a 'foreign and harmful element'. It is in the nature of life to destroy all things that are untrue,

¹²⁶Programme of the National Workers' Party in: Ewa Orlof, Andrzej Pasternak eds., *Programy partii i stronnictw politycznych w Polsce w latach 1918-1939* (Rzeszów, 1993), 143. Hereafter Orlof, Pasternak, *Programy*.

¹²⁷Programme of the Polish Catholic and People's Union. Orlof, Pasternak, *Programy*. 180.

founded on fiction and on an internal lie. There will therefore have to come a radical change in the attitude of the Polish government to the Jews: for good or for ill, as true citizens or as 'pernicious aliens.' One way or the other.¹²⁸

The negative impact of the myth on approaches towards equality of rights for Jews became increasingly apparent in the second half of the thirties when the Polish state actively embarked on a curtailment of such equality. Here a particular trend is discernible. Unlike, in states such as Germany, Hungary and Romania, where anti-Jewish legislation was openly and decisively introduced, the Polish state was characterised by a degree of reluctance towards the open implementation of such legislation.¹²⁹ Thus, with the exception of some laws directed explicitly against the Jewish community, such as the restriction on ritual slaughter (*shechitah*), the general practice was to introduce bills which formally looked as though they would affect all citizens and thus could not be categorised as discriminatory against the Jewish minority.¹³⁰ However, these laws were in practice directed against the religious, social and economic rights of Jews.

Recent historical research conducted on different political parties, organisations and social institutions reveals that as exclusivist ethnic nationalism increased and became the driving force in the political culture, the Endecja's anti-Jewish perspective found increasingly common support among a large segment of otherwise ideologically diverse political elites, the Church, and society at large.¹³¹

¹²⁸Moshe Sneh (Kleinbaum), 'Hoser omez ba-zad ha-yehudi.' Cited in Vital, People. 799.

¹²⁹For a concise summary of the treatment of the Jewish minority in Eastern European states, see Ezra Mendelsohn, 'German and Jewish Minorities in the European Successor States Between the World Wars - Some Comparative Remarks.' in: Ezra Mendelsohn, Chone Shmeruk, eds., Studies in Polish Jewry (Jerusalem, 1987), 51-64. Hereafter Mendelsohn, 'German.'

¹³⁰On the problem of the violation and curtailment of the principle of equality of rights for Jews in inter-war Poland, see Bernard D. Weinryb, Jewish Emancipation Under Attack (New York, 1942), 32-34, 63-64; and Jerzy Tomaszewski, 'The Civil Rights of Jews in Poland.' Polin, Vol. 8, 1994, 115-128.

¹³¹On similarities of political perspective on Jews among otherwise ideologically diverse political parties, see, for example, Włodzimierz Mich, Obcy. 25-27. For a detailed analysis of anti-Jewish positions within the conservative movement, see the monograph by Włodzimierz Mich, Problem Mniejszości Narodowych w Myśli Politycznej Polskiego Ruchu Konserwatywnego (1918-1939) (Lublin, 1992), 59-154. Hereafter Mich, Problem.

The myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other was increasingly adopted in various forms and to a varying degree by the Peasant movement, the Christian Democrats, the conservatives, the monarchists, and by many other smaller political parties. Prominent figures such as the afore mentioned Wincenty Witos of the Peasant movement, Wojciech Korfanty of the Christian-Democratic movement, and Wladyslaw Studnicki of the conservative movement, frequently expressed the myth in a more or less restrained form. For example, in his work The Polish-Jewish Issue (*Sprawa Polsko-Zydowska*), Studnicki categorised the Jews as 'parasites on the healthy branch of the Polish tree' and blamed them for the disintegration of pre-modern Poland.¹³²

As a rule, the only main political camps to reject the myth were the Polish Socialist Party, and Joseph Pilsudski's Independence Camp, established after Pilsudski left the ideal of Socialism for the ideal of Independence.¹³³ However, even within some sections of these two political camps, the presence of the myth came to be noticeable, particularly in the thirties.

In the case of the PPS, clear evidence that a small group of its active members were susceptible to the exclusivist ethno-national perspective was the publication of Jan M. Borski's pamphlet The Jewish Issue and Socialism: Polemics with the Bund (*Sprawa Zydowska a socjalizm: Polemika z Bundem*) by the official PPS publishing house The Worker (*Robotnik*) in 1937. In this pamphlet, Borski, the editor of the main PPS paper The Worker (*Robotnik*), categorised the Jews as spiritually and emotionally alien to Poles and called for the emigration of Jews from Poland. However, it is important to stress here that Borski's pamphlet was primarily a reaction to his party's recognition of the principle of minority rights for Jews, and was met with strong criticism on the part of influential PPS politicians.¹³⁴

¹³²Wladyslaw Studnicki, Sprawa Polsko-Zydowska (Warszawa, 1936), 5. For a contemporary critical review of Studnicki's work, see Sprawy Narodowosciowe, No. 3, 1936, 319-320.

¹³³Pilsudski's gradual ideological evolution towards the ideal of Independence began during the first decade of the twentieth century, see Alina Kowalczykowa, Pilsudski i Tradycja (Chotomow, 1991), 119. On Pilsudski's attitude towards the PPS in 1918, see Daria Nalecz, Sen o władzy. Inteligencja wobec niepodległości (Warszawa, 1994), 76.

¹³⁴On the PPS position on issues concerning the Jewish minority in the inter-war period, see Sliwa 'The Jewish.' 14-31 and Antony Polonsky, 'The Bund in Polish Political Life, 1935-1939.' in: Ezra Mendelsohn ed., Essential Papers on Jews and the Left (New York, London, 1997), 166-197.

In the case of the Independence Camp, the absorption of the myth by a distinguished number of its members was particularly significant because out of this movement emerged the so-called Sanacja, which constituted the governing body from the time of Pilsudski's coup d'état in May 1926 until the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939.¹³⁵ In general, the Sanacja, opposed by both the Endecja and the Left-wing political parties, was itself divided into two sections, the left-wing and the right-wing.¹³⁶ In time the latter constituted its politically most prominent part.

A good illustration of the relatively early spread of the exclusivist ethno-nationalist perspective on Jews within the Sanacja government was a speech by the MP Bogusław Miedziński during the parliamentary Budget Commission session of February 1934. In his speech, Miedziński made remarks about the Jewish community similar to those commonly found among Endecja MPs: that he was personally disappointed that three million Jews lived in Poland and that Polish cities were occupied by huge Jewish masses and that everyone would prefer that all of them be gone.¹³⁷ Unsurprisingly, his remarks, which caused a degree of embarrassment to the government of the time which was still supportive of the inclusion of Jews in the polity, received unprecedented applause from the Endecja MPs.

Importantly, after the death of the Marshal in 1935, exclusivist ethno-nationalism found a growing number of supporters among the right-wing Sanacja. In fact, in the post-1935 reality, the right-wing Sanacja came very close in its perception and evaluation of the Polish Jews to that of the Endecja. This was particularly visible in the newly set up political organisation, the so-called Camp of National Unity (*Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego, OZON*) which emerged in February 1937. In the OZON, headed by Colonel Adam Koc and under the patronage of the President of State Ignacy Mościcki (1867-1946) and

¹³⁵In fact, as a result of the parliamentary election of 1930, Sanacja gained a majority of seats (forty-six point eight per cent), and on forming the government became independent of their political opponents. The Endecja became the main party of opposition with twelve point seven per cent. See Szymon Rudnicki, *Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny. Geneza i działalność* (Warszawa, 1985), 58-59. Hereafter Rudnicki, *Obóz*.

¹³⁶The term Sanacja means healing or restoration and comes from the Latin *sanatio*. It referred to Pilsudski's aim of restoring health to the political, social, and moral life of Poland after his coup of May 1926.

¹³⁷On Bogusław Miedziński's speech at the Budget Commission session on 10 February 1934, see 'Żydzi W Sejmie.' *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, No. 1, 1934, 89-90.

Marshal Edward Rydz-Smigły, the exclusivist ethno-nationalist position came to be the most explicit, as the organisation represented an attempt at an official merging of Piłsudski's Independence ethos with that of the Endecja.¹³⁸ As a result, in May 1938, the Supreme Council of OZON adopted a thirteen paragraph resolution on 'the Jewish Question' in which the myth of the Jew as the chief Threatening Other served as a rationale for the proposal of the mass emigration of Jews from Poland.¹³⁹

It is worth noting here that both OZON and the Endecja constituted mass movements. OZON reached the figure of one hundred thousand members in 1938, while the Endecja numbered approximately two hundred thousand members in 1939, a figure higher than both the membership of the Polish Peasant Party and the PPS combined.¹⁴⁰

The Catholic Church and the Myth

Characteristically, the myth was also absorbed by the Polish Catholic Church which over and above all other social institutions in inter-war Poland had a real impact on the minds of the population, particularly on the largest segment, the Polish peasantry, who constituted approximately three quarters of the entire population.¹⁴¹ Important recent historical research on the Catholic Church clearly shows that the anti-Jewish position was clearly manifested in the inter-war Catholic press by a large segment of the Catholic clergy, both among both its lower and upper ranks.¹⁴² Apart from a small

¹³⁸On the merging of Piłsudski's ethos with that of Endecja within the OZON camp whose membership was only open to ethnic Poles, see Grott, *Nacjonalizm*, 61-63.

¹³⁹See Emanuel Melzer, 'Antisemitism in the Last Years of the Second Polish Republic.' in: Gutman et al., eds., *The Jews*, 126-140. Hereafter Melzer, 'Antisemitism.'

¹⁴⁰On the endorsement of Endecja's programme by the late Sanacja government, see, for example, Bogumil Grott, *Nacjonalizm*, 62-63 and Yisrael Gutman, 'Polish Antisemitism between the Wars: An Overview.' in: Gutman et al. eds., *The Jews*, 103-106. Hereafter Gutman, 'Polish.'

¹⁴¹See Gutman 'Polish.' 152.

¹⁴²On the Catholic Church's position on Jews as reflected in the Catholic press, see Ronald Modras, *The Catholic Church and Antisemitism. Poland, 1933-1939* (Chur, 1994), 79-87, Hereafter, Modras, *The Catholic*; Ronald Modras, 'The Catholic Press in Inter-War Poland and the 'Jewish Question': Metaphor and the Developing Rhetoric of Exclusion.' *East European Jewish Affairs*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 1994, 49-69; Anna Laudau-Czajka, 'The Image of the Jew in the Catholic Press during the Second Republic.' *Polin*, Vol. 8, 1994, 146-175. Hereafter Laudau-Czajka, 'The Image.';

number of exceptions, such as the paper Trend (*Prąd*) of the Catholic youth movement Rebirth (*Odrodzenie*), the Catholic press propagated in various ways the myth of the Jew as the enemy of the Polish nation and of Catholicism. Taking into account the fact that the Catholic press of that time constituted twenty-three per cent of the entire Polish press, and that press was the main medium of mass communication, this indicates the extent to which the Catholic population was exposed through the Catholic medium to the exclusivist ethno-nationalist perspective on Jews.¹⁴³

Articles, rhymes and poems in forms resembling prayers expressed the myth. For example, the previously mentioned monthly Jesuit Common Review which was directed at sophisticated readers, published, in December of 1922, the following poem entitled 'Yet we are blind!' (*A myśmy...slepi!*). Here is a short extract:

'Jewry is contaminating Poland thoroughly:
It scandalises the young, destroys the unity of the common
people.
By means of the atheistic press it poisons the spirit,
Incites to evil, provokes, divides...
A terrible gangrene has infiltrated our body
Yet we...are blind
The Jews have gained control of Polish business,
As though we are imbeciles,
And they cheat, extort, and steal...' ¹⁴⁴

Like the *Endecja's* press, the Catholic press was dynamic and enjoyed a good sized readership. A good illustration of the popularity of some of the Catholic papers was the Franciscan Little Daily (*Mały Dziennik*), which first appeared in the summer of 1935 in eight thousand copies, and which reached an unprecedented one hundred and forty thousand and six hundred and fifty copies by the end of the

and Franciszek Adamski, 'The Jewish Question in Polish Religious Periodicals in the Second Republic: The Case of the Przegląd katolicki.' *Polin*, Vol. 8, 1994, 129-146. Hereafter Adamski, 'The Jewish.'

¹⁴³Data concerning the percentage of the Catholic press in inter-war Poland is cited in Andrzej Paczkowski, Prasa polska 1918-1939 (Warszawa, 1980), 222-223. Hereafter Paczkowski, Prasa. 292-293.

¹⁴⁴"A myśmy ...slepi.!", Przegląd Powszechny, 7 Dec. 1922. Cited in Laudau-Czajka, 'The Image.' 169. Similar rhyming poems were published in the radical ethno-nationalist monthly for university students Alma Mater, See, for example, Alma Mater, No. 10, 1938, 7.

same year.¹⁴⁵ In this paper, directed at the unsophisticated reader, simple stories of the individual lives of Catholic Poles were published on a regular basis. As a rule, in such stories, the Jew was always made responsible for the hardship and misery of their lives.¹⁴⁶ The Jew was the perpetrator, and the Catholic Pole - the long suffering victim.

Looking at the relationship between the Catholic Church and the core ethno-nationalist party the Endecja, two issues have to be borne in mind. Firstly, that despite some ideological problems and disagreements, there was a close link between the two as far as the issue of the Polish state and nation were concerned. The Endecja adhered to the Catholic ethos and emphasised the importance of the place of the Catholic Church in the state, as expressed in the concept of the Catholic state of the Polish nation (*Katolickie państwo narodu polskiego*). In exchange, the Endecja enjoyed a substantial level of popularity among the Catholic clergy who identified themselves with the ideology of ethno-nationalism.¹⁴⁷ The Catholic press often stated that 'healthy nationalism ...is a natural supporter of Catholicism and that Catholics have a duty to nurture nationalism.'¹⁴⁸

In my opinion, in the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Endecja one can see a particular fusion of exclusivist ethno-nationalism and religion, a fusion resulting in a highly Catholic ethno-nationalism and highly ethno-nationalist Catholicism. The second issue is that with regard to the perception of Jews as the chief Threatening Other, the Endecja used Catholicism to justify its ideas and programmes. Here, Catholicism was also used as an argument against associating the Polish ethno-nationalist position on Polish Jews with that of the Nazi position on German Jews. The Endeks continuously insisted that their own perspective was not based on racist grounds like the Nazi one, but was rooted in concerns over the fate of the Polish nation, a notion that, as I have already shown,

¹⁴⁵On the popularity and circulation of *Mały Dziennik*, see Paczkowski, *Prasa*, 222-223.

¹⁴⁶See, for example, stories such as 'Incredible Relationships in the Jewish Factory.' *Mały Dziennik*, No. 72, 28. June, 1935, and 'Jewish Educators Poison Our Children with the Venom of Hatred and Atheism.' *Mały Dziennik*, No. 69, 25 June 1935, 3.

¹⁴⁷On the links between the Endecja and the Catholic Church, see Grott, *Nacjonalizm*, 89-93. On the importance of the Catholic Church in Polish society of inter-war Poland, see Kruszewski, 'Nationalism.', 150 -152.

¹⁴⁸See, for example, Rev. Fanciszek Błotnicki, 'Kosciol- Narod i Panstwo.' *Pro Christo*, No. 3, March, 1937, 42. This article was reprinted from another catholic paper *Gazeta Kościelna*, No. 3, 17 January 1937.

emerged in the pre-independence period. A good illustration of such a position is the article 'Catholicism, Racism and the Jewish Question' (*Katolicizm, rasizm i sprawa żydowska*), published in the chief theoretical paper of the Endecja National Thought (*Mysl Narodowa*) on 15 December 1935. Here are some extracts:

'Our ideology is older than Hitler's ideology....In our treatment of Jews we never found ourselves in conflict with the Church...We are not racists...our main goal is to serve the nation. There is no conflict between our nationalism and Catholicism. We define the Jews as the enemy of our nation and as a foreign element which has caused the degeneration of European culture and civilisation...the battle of the Polish nation with the Jews does not stand in conflict with the Catholic Church, but in fact, serves her interest.'¹⁴⁹

This type of reasoning, which clearly involved a high level of rationalisation of the Jew as the enemy of the Polish nation, allowed the core Polish ethno-nationalists to completely dismiss some striking similarities to that of the Nazi perspective of German Jews as the chief Threatening Other of the German nation.¹⁵⁰

Characteristically, this high level of rationalisation of the Jew as the Threatening Other, and of the Poles as long suffering victims, a principle applicable not only to the Endeks but to all kinds of Polish ethno-nationalists, prevented them from critically examining their position concerning the Polish Jewish minority. Such lack of questioning of their position, already present in previous periods, was also evident in those ethno-nationalists who were opposed to the use of anti-Jewish violence as a means of 'solving the Jewish Question' in inter-war Poland. While they could recognise anti-Jewish violence as socially and morally wrong, they entirely rejected the possibility of their views being prejudiced, both socially and morally. A good illustration of such a phenomenon was OZON's ideological declaration published in the majority of papers in 1937:

¹⁴⁹'Katolicizm, rasizm i sprawa żydowska'. *Mysl Narodowa*, No. 51, 15 December 1935, 1-2.

¹⁵⁰On the perception of Jews as the chief Threatening Other of the German nation and state during the inter-war period, see an important article by Omer Bartov, 'Defining Enemies, Making Victims: Germans, Jews, and the Holocaust.' *American Historical Review*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1998, 771-816. Hereafter Bartov, 'Defining.' For a comparison of Polish and German political antisemitism prior to 1939, see William H. Hagen, 'Before the "Final Solution": Toward a Comparative Analysis of Political Antisemitism in Inter-War Germany and Poland.' *The Journal of Modern History*, No. 68, 1996, 351-381.

'With regard to the Jewish population our position is this: we value too highly the standard and content of our cultural life and the public peace, law, and order that no state can dispense with to approve acts of licence or brutal anti-Jewish reactions which hurt the prestige and dignity of a great nation. On the other hand, the instinct for cultural self-defence is understandable and the tendency of Polish society to economic independence is natural.'¹⁵¹

The fact that a substantial segment of the political elites and the Catholic Church propagated the myth allows us to infer that the myth was to some degree absorbed by a significant segment of Polish society. The large circulation of local and national press disseminating the myth serves as evidence of this. Even in a region such as Pomerania where Jews constituted less than seven-tenths of one per cent of the population, the local population was 'bombarded' with publications expressing the myth.¹⁵²

Among the more significant groups publicly condemning the evaluation of the Jews as the enemy of Poland and of its people were the small break-away left-wing of Sanacja, the Democratic Party (*Stronnictwo Demokratyczne*), the PPS, and those political and social organisations whose majority of members adhered to the PPS and Democratic Party ethos such as the Association of Polish Teachers (*Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego*).¹⁵³ Among the better known individuals were intellectuals of progressive, liberal views such as the philosopher Tadeusz Kotarbiński, Michał Michałowicz, Director of the Children Clinic at the Joseph Pilsudski University of Warsaw, and Piotr Gąszyniec, Professor of the University of Jan Kazimierz in L'viv (*Lwow*).¹⁵⁴ As a rule these organisations and individuals were labelled as traitors to the Polish nation and as servants of the Jews, and were commonly referred to as 'shabbes goys' (*szabejsgoje*) and 'Jewish uncles' (*zydowscy wujkowie*) in the Endecja press.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹Ideowo-politczna deklaracja plk. A. Koca, *Przegląd katolicki*, 1937. Cited in Adamski, 'Jewish.'

¹⁵²Ryszard Michalski, *Obraz Żyda i Narodu Żydowskiego Na Łamach Polskiej Prasy Pomorskiej W Latach 1920-1939* (Torun, 1997), 26-30.

¹⁵³On the PPS and Democratic Party's different forms of opposition to antisemitism, see Melzer, 'Antisemitism.' 133.

¹⁵⁴On the opposition of Polish intellectuals to antisemitic actions, see, for example, Rabinowicz, *The Legacy*. 104-106.

¹⁵⁵In Yiddish, a shabbes goy is a Gentile who is asked by Orthodox Jews to light a fire, put out candles, or perform a chore on the Sabbath. See Leo Rosten, *The Joys of Yiddish* (London, 1988), 331.

Development of the Myth between 1918 and 1939

As in the late pre-independence era, during the inter-war years the myth proved to be a versatile and many faceted phenomenon. Its main narrative on the destructive nature of the Jewish presence within the Polish polity, which as I have already shown, was already fully developed by 1918, intensified in free independent Poland.

Furthermore, the myth was skilfully adapted to contemporary political, social and economic circumstances. As a result, every event and development of Polish national life was incorporated into the narrative of the destructiveness of the Jewish impact on the Polish state and nation.

For example, the Jews were even made responsible for the surplus emigration of the largest social group, the Polish peasants, who were leaving Poland in search of better economic and social conditions. Ethno-nationalist papers of various kinds frequently stressed that 'eight million Poles are forced to live outside their homeland, while four million Jews occupy Poland' and that 'Polish peasants, instead of emigrating to foreign countries in search of bread and work, should find such bread and work in the towns and cities of their homeland. We demand this in the name of simple justice.'¹⁵⁶

In the late thirties this vision was endorsed by the state. The state had failed to conduct any agrarian reforms because of opposition from powerful landowners, and saw, in the project of replacing the Jewish population of towns and cities with the peasant population, the best solution of dealing with the difficult social and economic situation in the countryside and of achieving the desired polonisation of the urban areas. Here the logic of exclusivist ethno-nationalist thinking in solving labour market and housing problems is clearly visible. The peasants were viewed as the 'soil of the country', an integral part of the Polish people with a right to employment, while the Polish Jews were simply viewed as an alien element whose presence constituted an obstacle to the development of ethnic Poles, and who therefore had no right to keep their occupations and homes.

Throughout the entire period, the myth's main repeated elements continued to be similar to those of the previous pre-independence phase: that the Jews were the greatest enemy of the

¹⁵⁶Alma Mater No. 6-7, May, 1938, 14 and Mały Dziennik, No. 18. 2 June, 1935, 3.

Polish religion, Catholicism, and of its moral code; that the Jews were behind freemasonry and wanting to rule over the Polish state; that the Jews were the exponents of international finance harmful to the Polish economy; that the Jews were moral degenerates who exercised a demoralising effect on Polish culture and on its people; that the Jews were inventors and propagators of free thinking, liberalism, Socialism, Communism and Bolshevism - ideologies alien and harmful to the Polish national cause; and that they conspired with other enemies of Poland against her.

The fact that some of these elements not only overlapped but also contradicted each other was of no significance to the myth-makers and disseminators, because different elements of the myth were used at different times to cope with different challenges: such as opposing communism, socialism and free thinking. And yet in some cases many elements of the myth were simultaneously emphasised. For example, the image of the Jew as a Communist was frequently accompanied by the image of the Jew as a cultural and moral degenerate whose mind was occupied with pornography, moral dirt and filth. A good illustration of the simultaneous use of different elements of the myth is a letter of May 1936 by Cardinal August Hlond, the long serving Primate of Poland between 1926 and 1948:

'It is a fact Jews oppose the Catholic Church, are steeped in free-thinking, and represent the avant-garde of the atheist movement, the Bolshevik movement, and subversive action. The Jews have a disastrous effect on morality and their publishing-houses dispense pornography. It is true that the Jews commit frauds, practise usury and deal in white slavery. It is true that in schools, the influence of the Jewish youth upon the Catholic youth is generally evil' 157

Between 1918 and 1939 many Polish Jewish artists, and Polish artists of Jewish origin, including those who had in fact lost touch with the Jewish community, were labelled in such a way. Furthermore, those ethnic Polish artists who associated themselves professionally with their Jewish peers were portrayed in a similar way. For example, members of the literary group *Skamander*, which included among others, writers and poets such as Julian Tuwim, Antoni Slonimski, Jan Wierzyński and Jerzy Iwaszkiewicz, were accused of being

157 'Głos Prymasa Polski.' *Rycerz Niepokalanej*, May 1936. Cited in Landau-Czajka, 'The Image,' 170.

'Bolsheviks', 'moral perverts' and 'pathological erotomaniacs'. On 13 March 1921 The Warsaw Courier (*Kurier Warszawski*) wrote the following about Skamander's literary programme:

'The Jews want to destroy the national ideal, logic, faith and all aesthetic values....The new poetry is nothing more than Jewish conspiracy....rooted in bolshevism.'¹⁵⁸

Characteristically, the themes of Judeo-Communism (*zydokomuna*) and Judeo-Bolshevism (*żydo-bolszewizm*) were intensified during the inter-war period. One of the main reasons behind this intensification was the victory of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the subsequent establishment of the first Communist state - Soviet Russia. These two events raised the fear of Communism, a fear noticeable not only in Poland but also in many other European states.

In Polish ethno-nationalist press of various kinds, the Soviet Communist political system was categorised as Judeo-Bolshevik and was persistently held up as a major political threat endangering the existence of the Polish nation and that of other nations. For example, even before the start of the Bolshevik War of 1920 between Poland and Soviet Russia, a substantial bulk of literature had already emerged that categorised Bolshevism as a Jewish conspiracy aimed at oppressing the Russian people and conquering the entire world.¹⁵⁹ The Bolshevik War of 1920 was itself used to enhance the credibility of the myth of Judeo-Bolshevism, as various ethno-nationalists insisted that this event exposed the Jews as a harmful element to the Polish state. A good illustration of this position is the following statement of Rev. Stanisław Trzeciak, one of the most prolific propagators of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other in inter-war Poland.

'The Jews betrayed the Polish Army. Not only did they not participate in the defence of L'viv, but they constituted ninety-nine per cent of those who acted against the Polish state during the Bolshevik War. Between ninety-eight and a hundred per cent of Jews are communist revolutionaries.'¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸*Kurier Warszawski*, No. 72, 13 March 1921, 9.

¹⁵⁹For an analysis of this phenomenon, see Irena Kaminska-Szmaj, *Judzi, zohydza, ze czci odziera. Język propagandy politycznej w prasie 1919-1923* (Wrocław, 1994), 143-149.

¹⁶⁰Rev. Stanisław Trzeciak, 'W obliczu grozy.' *Pro Christo*, No. 3, March, 1937, 1. Hereafter Trzeciak, 'W obliczu'

In 1936, the Youth Press Committee (*Komitet Prasy Młodych*), made up of fifteen different radical ethno-nationalist, conservative and Catholic papers, was set up to fight Communism and to promote the ideology of exclusivist ethno-nationalism.¹⁶¹ Once again, one of the main messages disseminated by this organisation was that fighting against Communism equalled fighting against Jewry.

Significantly, the Communist Party of Poland (*Komunistyczna Partia Polski, KPP*), set up in December 1918, was consistently labelled as a Judeo-Communist movement supported by the Jewish minority. Was the notion of Judeo-Communism correct in reference to the KPP and its supporters? Looking at the membership profile of the KPP, which was the only pro-Soviet party and one with a non-national agenda in inter-war Poland, one can indeed see a high number of non-ethnic Poles, namely Jews, Belorussians and Ukrainians, many of whom were attracted to the KPP because of its consistent position opposing discrimination against ethnic minorities.

However, this does not mean that the KPP was essentially a Jewish party supported by the Jewish minority. On average, the Jews constituted between one-third and one-fourth of the whole Communist movement and without doubt played an important role in the KPP, which I will discuss later.¹⁶² The highest figure for Jewish membership of the entire Communist movement in the 1930s is estimated at approximately ten thousand individuals. Taking into account the fact that the Jewish community numbered approximately three million, we can clearly see that only a very small segment of the Jewish minority was attracted to Communism. Even if one takes into account the Communist claim of significant victory in the parliamentary elections of 1928 and that two-fifths of all votes cast for the Communist movement at that time were Jewish, this would still show that only five per cent of the entire Jewish community were supporters of Communism.¹⁶³

The conclusion one may reach here is that there was an extensive linking of the Jews to the anti-national forces of Communism

¹⁶¹Rudnicki, *Oboz.* 300-303.

¹⁶²On the number of Jews in the KPP and their role in the party, see Jaff Schatz, *The Generation. The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communists of Poland* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford, 1991), 75-102. Hereafter Schatz, *The Generation*.

¹⁶³The data for the Jewish voters' support for the communist movement in 1928 is cited in Schatz, *The Generation*. 98.

and Bolshevism. Typically, all Jews as a collectivity, and thus regardless of their ideological affiliation or sympathies, were accused of being Communists and spreading Bolshevism. Such a conviction was voiced in the following slogan 'not every Communist is a Jew, but every Jew is a Communist.'¹⁶⁴ Of course, such prejudiced grounds were common in all other elements and themes of the myth.

The theme of Jewish conspiracy against Poland was not limited only to the new external enemy the Soviet Union but also included the older external enemy Germany. These two themes were particularly apparent in the writings of the *Endecja* and its extreme offshoot organisations. In the case of the Soviet Union, the Jew was generally portrayed as both the creator and chief executor of the external threat. In the case of Germany, the Jew was generally portrayed as the over zealous executor of anti-Polish policies. This latter theme continued to appear in the *Endeks'* writings after 1933 when Nazism had become the legitimate political power in Germany. One of its most absurd versions was the claim that Hitler, like previous heads of the German [Prussian] state, might use the Jews in order to destroy Poland and therefore it would not be expedient for him to destroy the German Jews. This type of thinking, which clearly reveals a high level of incongruity with reality, is visible in Roman Dmowski's late work published in 1936, entitled *Change* (*Przewrót*):

'Concerning the German ambition to the East [of ruling over Poland] it is important to remember that Prussian politicians, beginning with the Frederick the Great, have always employed the Jews. The Jews have been their most precious tool . In the eighteenth century the Jews served as the main agents of the demoralisation and corruption of the First Republic's parliament, and acted as brokers and spies for the Prussians. Later on they constituted the pillar of Prussian power on invaded Polish territories. All of them publicly announced their identification with Germany and were keen to participate in the Germanisation [of the Poles], in which they were even more insolent than the Germans themselves...

The Jews constituted the fore-runners of German culture on Polish territories invaded by Austria and Russia. The entire Jewish population without exception served in the German Army when it

¹⁶⁴This slogan comes from a lecture by Rev. Stanisław Trzeciak cited in *Mały Dziennik*, No. 263, 22 March 1936, 5.

entered the Congress Kingdom [a part of Central Poland in the Russian partitioned zone] many years ago [during the First World War].

If Poland did not have so many Jews the partitions of Poland would never have happened and Prussian eastern policy would not have been so triumphant.

[The Germans] who are now advocating the same Prussian policy concerning the East, have to go hand in hand with the Jews - there is no other option. If the Germans go with the Jews against Poland they can not therefore destroy the Jews in Germany.'¹⁶⁵

Social Functions of the Myth between 1918 and 1939

A close examination of the inter-war period provides a rich source of data of the ways such a myth was used by ethno-nationalists. Firstly, on the level of national discourse the myth was intended to raise the collective cohesiveness of ethnic Poles and to provide simplistic explanations of the nation's past and present failures - in essence suggesting that Poland would be a great and prosperous nation if not for the presence of the Jews who had mistreated Poland - its host nation throughout the long course of its history. As a rule, this type of reasoning intensified at times of social, political and economic crisis: for example, during the first formative years of the Second Republic of 1918-1920 - a period of finalising of the borders of the polity; from 1929 to 1931 - a period of major financial and political difficulties; and between 1936 and 1939 - a period of intense social and economic tension. It is not difficult to see how the use of the Jewish scapegoat in dealing with all past and present problems effectively blocked any rational enquiry into the real reasons behind national upheavals and social and economic crises, and how it came to offer an explanation of Polish national experience utterly incongruent with reality.

Secondly, the myth was used to fulfil another function, namely that of asserting legitimacy and authority and of simultaneously discrediting political rivals. This type of discreditation, first used by the late nineteenth century myth-maker Jeleński who castigated as Jewish that entire section of the public which did not subscribe to his paper *The Soil*, proliferated on a large scale on the political scene of

¹⁶⁵Roman Dmowski *Przewrót* Cited in Roman Wapiński, ed., *Roman Dmowski. Wybór pism* (Warszawa, 1990), 323.

inter-war Poland.¹⁶⁶ For example, in the *Endecja* press, Joseph Pilsudski was frequently portrayed as a politician favoured by the enemies of Poland - the Jews along with the Germans and the Ukrainians. In the early thirties, the ruling *Sanacja* was often accused of representing the Jewish interest above that of Poles, while the PPS was continuously labelled as Jewish.¹⁶⁷ The discreditation of rivals by labelling them as Jews even went as far as mutual accusations between rival extreme ethno-nationalist organisations and various ethno-nationalist papers.¹⁶⁸

The important point that must be made about this process is that a particular definition of Jew was applied here. The term Jew did not refer to actual Jews or persons of Jewish origin, but was treated instrumentally as a useful label to discredit any political figure, organisation or media in the eyes of the public. The term Jew became a term of political abuse. Jewish identity or the presence of Jews themselves were irrelevant to the labelling of people as Jewish. Such a strategy was to have a long-term impact on Polish political culture. In fact judging by its degree of application in contemporary Poland, this is the most persistent surviving function of the myth.¹⁶⁹

Purification of the Polish Nation from the Jewish Polluter

In terms of its impact on Polish Jewry in inter-war Poland, the myth can be seen as the prime rationale and justification for the project of the purification of the Polish nation from both the presence and influence of the Jewish community. The quest for achieving sameness within the Polish nation was one of the main goals of all kinds of ethno-nationalists, in particular the *Endeks* and those of their supporters within the Catholic clergy who represented the most extreme views on how Polish society should think and act. Because of the categorisation of the Polish Jewish community as the chief Threatening Other, the Jews were seen as the chief polluter of the Polish nation and of Polish territories. Both groups of the traditional

¹⁶⁶Jaszczyk, *Spor.* 232.

¹⁶⁷On the subject, see Jerzy Tomaszewski, 'Dokumenty o zaburzeniach antysemitycznych na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim na jesieni 1931 roku.' *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, No. 2, 1997, 77 and Rudnicki, *Obóz.* 112-113.

¹⁶⁸Such tactic were noted by Szymon Rudnicki, *Obóz.* 113.

¹⁶⁹On the contemporary labelling of rival football teams in Poland as Jews, see Lidia Ostałowska, Joanna Podolska, 'Mój Murzyn Zawsze Biały.' *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 9 February, 2000, 20-21.

Orthodox Jews and more culturally assimilated Polish Jews were perceived as the chief polluters of the ethnic Polish community. The major difference was that the former group was perceived as the polluter of Polish economic and social realities but not of Polish culture, as it was seen, and in fact was, primarily maintaining its own separate culture; while the latter group was primarily perceived as the polluter of Polish culture because of its active engagement therein and contribution thereinto.

Furthermore, as was the case in the nineteenth century, in certain circles within political and cultural elites, Jews who converted to Christianity were also viewed as polluters - of a very dangerous type - because of the level of their potential and actual 'infiltration' into the core ethnic Polish community through marriage. Here attitudes towards these converts was based on the concept of purity of blood (*limpieza de sangre*), similar to Spanish Catholic attitudes towards 'Conversos' in the medieval period.¹⁷⁰

In general, there was not a single uniformly agreed position among the exclusivist ethno-nationalist elites on the status of these converts as members of the Polish nation. Among groups which accepted the converted Jews as Catholics, but opposed the categorisation of them as members of the Polish nation, were various radical exclusivist ethno-nationalist groups, as well as some Conservative and Catholic groups.¹⁷¹ The Marian Order monthly Pro Christo, the weekly Culture (*Kultura*) published by the Central Institute of Catholic Action, and publicly known individuals such as the conservative writer Stanislaw Cat-Mackiewicz and the Catholic writer Zofia Kossak- Szczucka from Catholic Action (*Akcja Katolicka*), were outspoken representatives of such a position.¹⁷² The basis for denying a converted Jew a place within the Polish national community was clearly racial. Here is one such illustration. On 27 September 1936 in Kultura, Kossak- Szczucka (to whom I will return in my chapter on the Second World War) stated the following:

¹⁷⁰On Spanish Catholic attitudes towards the 'new Christians', see, for example, Almog, Nationalism. 3-4.

¹⁷¹Records in the Catholic press of denying converted Jews a place in the Polish nation are described by Landau- Czajka, 'Image.' 152-154.

¹⁷²On some prominent conservative figures' negative approach to Jews converted to Catholicism, see Melzer, 'Antisemitism.' 135-136, Landau-Czajka, W jednym. 251-252.

'Jews are so terribly alien to us, alien and unpleasant, that they are a race apart. They irritate us and all their traits grate against our sensibilities. Their oriental impetuosity, argumentativeness, specific mode of thought, the set of their eyes, the shape of their ears, the winking of their eyelids, the line of their lips, everything. In families of mixed blood we detect the traces of these features to the third or the fourth generation and beyond.'¹⁷³

Such a position shows that although Catholicism was one of the chief markers of Polish national identity, the conversion of Jews to Catholicism did not automatically mean inclusion into the Polish nation, for in the eyes of some exclusivist ethno-nationalists they were still perceived as alien and as a very dangerous type of polluter in their alleged threat to the biological make-up of ethnic Poles.

In short, one can argue that the inter-war period shows that there was not even one single sub-group existed within Polish Jewry which could be categorised as acceptable and inclusive to the Polish nation. Unlike in the case of other ethnic minorities, neither acculturation nor complete polonisation constituted guarantors that members of the Jewish minority would be included without objection within the Polish nation.¹⁷⁴ Such a situation would become even more obvious in the post-war reality, when extensive cultural assimilation, including celebrations of Christian religious festivals, was to become a more common social experience among a section of Polish Jews remaining in Poland.¹⁷⁵ In the 1960s, that group of entirely polonised Jews and their off-spring would become one of the main targets of the exclusivist ethno-nationalist agenda. The basis for their exclusion would lie in the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other. I shall discuss this process later in chapter six.

¹⁷³Zofia Kossak-Szczucka, 'Nie istnieją sytuacje bez wyjścia,' *Kultura*, 27 September, 1936. Cited in Landau- Czajka, 'Image.', 165-166.

¹⁷⁴Historical research informs us that linguistic and cultural assimilation among Polish Jews, particularly among the young generation, was on the increase during the post-independence phase 1918 -1939. In the 1921 census, a quarter of those who declared their religion as Jewish declared their nationality as Polish. See Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe Between the Two World Wars* (Bloomington, 1983), 23, 29. According to the same author, 'polonisation of the Jewish community certainly increased in the 1930s, and Polish became the main language of even Zionist publications, all this despite the dramatic rise of antisemitism. Mendelsohn, 'German.' 60. See also Brubaker, 'Nationalising.' 421-425.

¹⁷⁵See Schatz, *The Generation*. 240-241.

Purification of Polish Culture

The concept of Jews as polluters of culture referred to various cultural institutions such as theatres, cinemas, film and radio industries, as well as to the vernacular Polish language, and Polish literature. Typically, Jewish presence in the arts was categorised as a spiritual disease (*schorzenie duchowe*) and abomination (*żydowskie paskudztwo*). The inter-war Endeks' zealous need to purify the national language and literature from alien elements resembled closely the trend advocated in late nineteenth century France by Charles Maurras (1868 - 1952).¹⁷⁶ As a rule, the Endeks insisted that Polish Jewish artists who wrote in the Polish language were not creating Polish literature but simply using the language as a 'technical medium' for their works, which were categorised in any case as intrinsically alien to Polish spirituality. Here is a typical example of such a perception:

'Tuwim does not write Polish poetry, he only uses the Polish language. His poetry does not represent the spirit of Juliusz Slowacki but that of Heinrich Heine...the soul of a merchant and Jewish poet.'¹⁷⁷

Articles expressing such a position were published in various ethno-nationalist papers including the previously mentioned Endecja's ideological press organ National Thought, where a special column 'On Display' (*Na Widowni*) was dedicated to fighting the influences of 'Judeo-Polish culture'. The chief writers of this column were Stanislaw Pienkowski, Jan Rembielinski and Zygmunt Wasilewski.¹⁷⁸ The most frequently attacked Polish Jews were the poets and writers Julian Tuwim, Jozef Wittlin, Marian Hemar, Roman Brandstaetter, Janusz Korczak and the historian Marcei Handelsman who was the founder of the Historical Institute at the University of Warsaw.¹⁷⁹

The core ethno-nationalists also insisted that the presence of the Jewish community was an obstacle to the self-purification of ethnic

¹⁷⁶On the importance of language in ethno-nationalist projects of self-purification of a nation see, Kedourie Nationalism. 108-109 and Smith 'Ethnic.' 190-191.

¹⁷⁷Kurier Warszawski, No. 52, 21 February, 1921, 2.

¹⁷⁸See, for example, Stanislaw Pienkowski, 'Poezja kryptozydowska.' No. 41, 1926, 234-236; Jan Rembielinski, 'Na Widowni', No. 45, 1931, 178-179 and No. 47. 1931, 209-210; and Zygmunt Wasilewski, 'Na Widowni' No. 10, 1935, 170-171.

¹⁷⁹The issue of ethno-nationalist attacks on Marcei Hendelsman is discussed by Monika Natkowska, Numerus clausus, getto ławkowe, numerus nullus, paragraf aryjski. Antysemityzm na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim, 1931-1939 (Warszawa, 1999), 59-74.

Poles.¹⁸⁰ From the moment Poland regained its independence the issue of self-cleansing was emphasised by the Endeks and the Catholic clergy who were not satisfied with the state of national morale and culture. In this respect the Jewish community was frequently made a scapegoat for the imperfections, weaknesses and shortcomings of ethnic Poles. The mere presence of Jews was allegedly responsible for polluting the mentality and soul of the Polish nation and preventing Poles from 'breathing in Polish spirit,' in short from becoming 'better Poles'.¹⁸¹

This type of allegation revealed insecurities about Polish national identity on the part of the core ethno-nationalists. A typical elaborated example of the desire to improve the qualities of Polishness within the nation by getting rid of Jewish influence was the following:

'Dejudaisation of the press and radio and therefore dejudaisation of the Polish mentality is as vital as dejudaisation of commerce, crafts and industry. In fact the work on the rebirth of the soul of the Nation should start with the dejudaisation of the Polish mentality because there is no possibility of the dejudaisation of Poland without the dejudaisation of the Polish mentality. The true Polish national and catholic press can play an enormous role in this process. However we need to free it from Jewish influence and from the Jews themselves and the 'white' Jews [Poles who co-operated with Jews].¹⁸²

Projects of Separation and Emigration

The concept of social and cultural separateness, first advocated in the late nineteenth century by the Jesuit Marian Morawski, was regarded by ethno-nationalists of various intensities as a necessary step towards the purification of the Polish nation from the Jewish polluter. Separation of the two communities was particularly advocated in the areas of culture, education of the youth, and professional occupations such as medicine and law. This desire for separation was often expressed in sayings :

¹⁸⁰On the importance of the self-purification of the core nation by its ethno-nationalists, see Smith, 'Ethnic.', 193.

¹⁸¹This kind of expression was, for example, used by Rev. Stefan Kaczorowski in *Pro Christo*, No. 7, 1933,

¹⁸²Rev. Stanislaw Trzeciak, *Pornografia narzedziem obcych agentur* (Warszawa, 1929), 45.

Jewish arts for Jews and Polish arts for the Poles.'¹⁸³

'Jewish doctors for Jewish patients, Jewish lawyers for Jewish clients.'¹⁸⁴

'National tragedy - Jewish teachers in Polish schools'¹⁸⁵

Although inter-war ethno-nationalists failed to achieve a substantial separation between ethnic Poles and Polish Jews within the realm of Polish culture, they succeeded in achieving separation in some professional organisations. For example, in the late thirties, the so-called Aryan paragraph was introduced by the Union of Architects of the Polish Republic, the Union of Medical Doctors of Poland, and by the Polish Lawyers Association.¹⁸⁶ In both cases economic grounds, particularly the issue of the labour market, were provided as an explanation for introducing such a measure. A typically exclusivist ethno-nationalist position was applied here: the Jews had to be excluded from professional organisations in order to allow the Poles to reach full economic potential.

In some cases the exclusivist ethno-national position concerning separation of the two peoples was not based on economic, social and cultural grounds alone but contained also a racial element which was perhaps most apparent in demands for the separation of Jewish youths from ethnic Polish youths in schools, children's organisations and other institutions of education. The need for the separation of Polish and Jewish children and youths was continuously voiced in ethno-nationalist papers and other publications. For example, in the pseudo-scholarly work 'Intellectual Abilities of Polish and Jewish Youths in Polish High Schools' (*Poziom Intelktualny Młodzieży Polskiej i Żydowskiej W Naszych Gimnazjach*), Professor Ludwik Jaxa-Bykowski, who was to become an important figure in the higher education system set up by the Polish Underground during the Second World War, demanded the separation of Jewish and Polish children on ethno-cultural and racial grounds. Jaxa-Bykowski claimed that contact between Jewish and Polish youths led to the degeneration of

¹⁸³A slogan promulgated by the writer and critic Karol Hubert Rostworowski. Cited in Tadeusz Bielecki, *Zarys idei społeczno-politycznych* (Warszawa, 1938), 15.

¹⁸⁴Slogan cited in Anna Landau-Czajka, *W jednym*. 219-220.

¹⁸⁵*Mały Dziennik*, No. 120, 26, October, 1935, 4.

¹⁸⁶On the prominence of the extreme ethno-nationalist position in professional organisations, see Jan Józef Lipski, *Katolickie Państwo Narodu Polskiego* (Londyn, 1994), 139-140. Hereafter Lipski, *Katolickie*.

intellectual abilities among the latter, and that the Jewish biological and ethno-cultural make-up constituted a threat to Polish intellect and mental health.¹⁸⁷ At the same time he also stressed that youths from Slavic minorities did not exert any damaging impact on ethnic Polish youths.

As already mentioned, the purification of the Jewish minority from the territory of Poland to be achieved by emigration, was the ultimate goal of all kinds of ethno-nationalists. According to the ethno-nationalist world-view, the emigration of the Jews was essential if ethnic Poles were to attain full development. This belief was clearly based on the perception of the Jew as the chief Threatening Other who could cause only harm to ethnic Poles and their polity. Here are two illustrations of such a belief. The first is an extract from the Labour Party programme of 1938, a party which was to become an important member of the Polish governmental coalition during the Second World War. The second is an extract from an article by the extreme exclusivist ethno-nationalist Rev. Stanisław Trzeciak 'Facing the Impending Storm - Two Contradictory Worlds,' (*W obliczu grozy. Dwa przeciwne światy*).

1. '[In Poland] the Jewish issue has a separate and more extreme ramification. The well-being of our nation and of our Polish state has been harmed to a great extent by the over-sized Jewish population and its social and territorial spread. More importantly, the moral distinctiveness, and political and social trends within the Jewish community are seriously damaging to our economic, cultural and moral interest. The solution to this extremely topical Jewish issue lies primarily in support for Polish [ethnic Polish] economic and cultural development, modification of the capitalist system...the development of Polish industries, businesses and free professions...The Polish government and society at large should co-operate in the implementation of the mass emigration of the Jews. Such a legislation will provide the fastest nationalisation of Polish economic, political, cultural and social life.'¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷Ludwik Jaxa-Bykowski, 'Poziom Intelktualny Młodzieży Polskiej i Żydowskiej W Naszych Gimnazjach.' *Psychometria* No. 1 1933, 1-27. On Professor Ludwik Jaxa-Bykowski, see Tadeusz Bartoszewski, *Warto być przyzwoitym człowiekiem*. (Warszawa, 1990), 184. Hereafter Bartoszewski, *Warto*.

¹⁸⁸Programme of the Labour Party of 1938. Cited in Olaf, Pasternak eds., *Programy*. 190.

2. 'The harm that has been caused to the Polish nation by the granting of equal rights to the Jews must be put right. In the first instance, civic rights have to be removed from the Jews, and next, they themselves have to be removed from Poland. These are the indispensable requirements if Poland is to remain Poland and to free itself from economic captivity and the destructive intellectual influence of the Jewish world. It is high time that these incredible historical mistakes were reversed and that resolutions were made regarding all the harm the Jews have caused Poland. The most important enemy is the enemy within.'¹⁸⁹

The former statement clearly represents a more moderate version of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other, while the latter represents a more explicit and aggressive version of the myth and also expresses extreme ideas in favour of the removal of the Jews. It is worth noting here that political programmes generally expressed a more moderate version of the myth than that found in the press and other publications.

By the middle of the thirties, with the exception of the Democratic Party, the PPS, and the KPP, a majority of political elites advocated the concept of the emigration of the Jews from Poland. Of course, among the more prominent parties and political groups, there was no uniform policy or programme on actual implementation of the project of emigration of Polish Jews.¹⁹⁰ Some political parties and politicians had a more detailed programme for the potential realisation of the emigration of Jews than others. There were some political parties including the post-1935 Sanacja government that opted for a kind of co-operation with Zionist organisations in order to speed up the emigration process, and who insisted that emigration would be a positive way of solving poverty among the Jewish community. Moreover, some political parties and politicians proposed plans for the gradual emigration of Jews, while others, particularly the extreme exclusivist ethno-nationalist organisations, demanded their total and instant removal.

As a rule, the party which propagated the more aggressive and elaborated myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other proposed more

¹⁸⁹Trzeciak, 'W obliczu.' 7.

¹⁹⁰For a detailed description of emigration programmes advocated by various political parties, see Laudau- Czajka, *W jednym.* 240-268 and Mich, *Obcy.* 55-67.

radical measures on how to implement the emigration and speed up the process. For example, the off-shoot radical organisation of the Endecja, the National Radical Camp (*Obóz Narodowo Radykalny, ONR*), advocated instantly stripping the Polish Jews of all rights and not permitting them to take any of their financial assets abroad. According to the ONR, Jewish financial assets and properties belonged to the Poles from whom they were originally stolen.¹⁹¹ The ONR programme of April 1935 stated:

'A Jew can not be a citizen of the Polish state. Until the time of the completion of the mass emigration of Jews from Poland, the Jew should be given the status of 'attached person' to the state....The Jews are the ones that must emigrate from Poland - not the Polish workers and peasants. The 'dejudaisation' of Polish towns and cities is a necessary requirement for the healthy development of the national economy.'¹⁹²

Characteristically, the main objective of exclusivist ethno-nationalists on Jewish emigration was firstly to achieve the polonisation of cities and towns where the Jewish minority, a traditionally strongly urbanised group, constituted an average of between thirty and forty per cent; secondly, to achieve the polonisation of commerce and industry, areas in which Polish Jews were traditionally active, and for which the Polish nobility and the peasants had shown little inclination or aptitude in previous periods.¹⁹³ One can here suggest that the inevitable process of the modernisation of Polish society which took place in the inter-war period, led to an intensified quest for the removal of the Polish Jew - the original agent of modernisation within nineteenth century Polish society.

Unsurprisingly, the process of targeting the Jewish minority as a group obliged to leave Poland for the good of the host nation was rationalised to a high level. Most Polish politicians of the thirties insisted that the grounds for Jewish emigration were 'objective' - meaning economic and demographic, and therefore could not be categorised as prejudiced. However, they were basically a form of camouflage for prejudice towards Jews and the prevalent perception of

¹⁹¹See Lipski, *Katolickie*. 138-142.

¹⁹²Programme of the ONR. Cited in Olaf, Pasternak eds., *Programy*. 49.

¹⁹³For a short summary of Jewish demography and occupations in inter-war Poland, see Steinlauf, *Bondage*. 16-17.

them as the Threatening Other, the polluters of the state and the nation. A close look at some ethno-nationalist writings shows just how frequently was such camouflage unsuccessful.

A clear example is the previously mentioned work The Polish-Jewish Issue (*Sprawa Polsko-Żydowska*) by the prominent inter-war conservative politician Władysław Studnicki.¹⁹⁴ Studnicki proposed a detailed plan for the gradual emigration of one hundred thousand Jews a year, which according to him, would lead to the dejudaisation of Poland within thirty years. Unlike the more radical exclusivist ethno-nationalist politicians, Studnicki insisted that the Jews were entitled to take their financial assets with them. He also suggested that Poland should hold a protectorate over Palestine to which the Polish Jews were supposed to emigrate en masse. Although Studnicki insisted that his advocacy of the emigration of the Jews from Poland was based not on hatred but on statistics, his work contains references which directly point to the perception of the Jew as the Threatening Other in terms such as the 'dejudaisation of Poland', 'the Polish misfortune' and 'parasites on the healthy branch of the Polish tree.'¹⁹⁵ In my opinion, the case of Studnicki points out the extent to which the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other was rationalised by the political elites, and shows an equal lack of understanding of the nature of prejudice.

It is worth adding here, that assertions by ethno-nationalist politicians of the inter-war period, of 'objective' economic and social grounds for the emigration of the Jews from Poland, have been absorbed into contemporary Polish historiography. This phenomenon, noted and critically analysed by Ezra Mendelsohn in his article 'Inter-war Poland: good or bad for the Jews?', points to the presence of the exclusivist ethno-nationalist way of thinking in contemporary intellectual discourse.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴See page 75 this chapter.

¹⁹⁵See Sprawy Narodowosciowe, No. 3, 1936, 319-320.

¹⁹⁶'No one can deny that the large number of Polish Jews and their peculiar economic structure and role in the Polish economy had influenced attitudes toward them, just as no one can deny that Polish backwardness must be taken into account in any effort to understand the Polish state's Jewish policy. But it is surely misleading to assume that the condition of Polish Jewry and the backwardness of the Polish state rendered inevitable the state's policies and society's attitudes towards the Jewish minority.' Ezra Mendelsohn, 'Inter-war Poland: good or bad for the Jews?' in Abramsky, Jachimczyk, Polonsky, eds. The Jews. 135-136. A similar critical point

Importantly, the project of emigration was perceived as a just means of disposing of the Jewish minority, and as compatible with the Catholic ethos. With the exception of a small group of extreme exclusivist ethno-nationalists who proposed a more radical form of disposing of the Jews by force, the majority of Polish ethno-nationalist political elites and of the Catholic Church insisted that they 'did not wish to harm the Jews but simply wanted them to leave Poland'. Their exclusivist ethno-nationalist ideological world-view prevented them from recognising that the removal from the Jewish minority of the right to Polish citizenship, and the consequent rendering of them as homeless, could be classified, in principle, as an unjust process.¹⁹⁷

Conclusions

In summary, my main goal in this chapter was to discuss the roots of the myth, its nascent forms prior to the 1880s, and its development into a fully-fledged form in the late pre-independence period 1880s to 1914 and post-independence period 1918 to 1939. I have also analysed the polyfunctionality of the myth, particularly focusing on the inter-war period when exclusivist ethno-nationalism became the driving force of Polish political culture.

Overall, I have demonstrated that the myth of the Jew as the foremost Threatening Other of Poland and its people is an important phenomenon, without an understanding of which it is difficult to grasp how the Polish Jewish minority was perceived and treated by the exclusivist ethno-nationalist political elites, their supporters and the Catholic Church in both periods 1880-1914 and 1918 -1939.

This elaborated social construction had its roots in pre-modern ways of perceiving the Polish Jews as the harmful Other, a perception which became clearly noticeable in the political and social discourse of the seventeenth century, and which continued to develop during the following century when it became intertwined with emerging nascent notions of the incompatibility of co-existence between Poles and Jews and of the Jews a polluters of Polish life. Already at that time, the Jews were the only ethno-cultural group, among all other ethno-cultural

was made by the Polish historian Jan Kofman, *Nacjonalizm Gospodarczy - szansa czy bariera rozwoju* (Warszawa, 1992), 80-81.

¹⁹⁷On the way in which ethnic nationalists exclude minority groups from membership within a nation, see Brubaker, 'Nationalising.' 430; and Smith, 'Ethnic.' 193.

groups living in the pre-modern Polish state, to have their qualities and socio-economic activities evaluated in such strongly negative terms in the national context.

Furthermore, during the first eighty years of the nineteenth century, the notion of the Jew as the harmful Other to Polish Christian society did not decrease in prominence in political and social discourse, but had a substantial impact on the approaches by political elites to the emancipation of Jews and on their evaluation of Jews as members of Polish society.

This is not to say that biased views of the Jews as the harmful Other to Polish Christian society were accepted by the entire political and cultural elites. On the contrary, some members of these elites, including prominent public figures such as the poet Adam Mickiewicz treated the Jews as an inclusive part of the Polish stateless nation and advocated a positive evaluation of their socio-economic role within society. However, they represented only a minority position and therefore did not succeed in challenging the dominant negative evaluation of Jews within national discourse.

Yet it was not until the last two decades of the nineteenth century, when modern Polish ethno-nationalism in its integral form emerged, that a major shift occurred in the evaluation of the Jewish minority in a national context. Beginning in the 1880s, the notion of the Jew as the harmful Other to Polish Christian society was transformed into the notion of the Jew as the chief Threatening Other towards the Polish polity, its people, and the people's essence. Complex narratives elaborating this notion were generated and woven into the myth of the Jew as the foremost Threatening Other. In its fully-fledged form, the myth was first to be found in political and literary writings of Conservative and Catholic ethno-nationalist elites, pre-dating the emergence in 1897 of the core ethno-nationalist movement the *Endecja*. For the *Endecja*, one of the fastest growing political movement of the time, the myth had become an important element of its ideology, and its politicians and supporters subsequently developed the most explicit, elaborated and aggressive version of the myth.

The emergence and wide-spread acceptance of the fully-fledged myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other by significant segments of modern political elites was a crucial moment in the history of Polish

Jews, because it meant that the already precarious position of Jews vis-a-vis the majority of ethnic Poles was aggravated to an unprecedented level. Not only did this situation apply to the majority of traditional Orthodox Jews but also to the growing minority of highly culturally assimilated Jews with a strong self-identification as Poles. The negative consequences of this development on the position of Jews within society were noted even by those Polish authors who themselves held an ambivalent attitude towards the Jewish minority.

'Wrong to be a Jew, wrong to be a convert...Night is falling, a night in which everything looks gray and ambiguous'¹⁹⁸

'Regarding the 'Jewish Question', public opinion goes round and round in a magic circle and cannot find a way out. The unenlightened Jew in his dirty gaberdine cloth who exploits and poisons the peasants with vodka we call a scoundrel - and for him we have contempt. The Jew who has left his backward community, taken off his dirty gaberdine and has accepted European education and desires to work in a productive way we call an arrogant trickster - and for him we also have contempt. Finally, the Jew who has ceased to be a Jew, has cut off his links with his tribe, has converted to Christianity and has entered our society, him we call the 'meches'[a convert] - and for him we also have contempt.'¹⁹⁹

By the end of the pre-independence period, the myth had become a provider of answers to all problems and questions concerning national existence among ethno-nationalists of all kinds and intensities. In the post-independence period 1918-1939, the myth intensified and became widespread and accepted as social truth by a majority of political elites and the Catholic Church. As in the previous period, the myth was expressed in a variety of ways by different political parties and organisations. The most extreme form was expressed by the Endecja, its offshoot radical organisations, and their various supporters, while other political parties and organisations, and their supporters, expressed the myth in a more moderate and less intense version. On the other hand, in both the late pre-independence and post-independence periods, there was a segment of political and cultural elites questioning the myth.

¹⁹⁸Boleslaw Prus, *Lalka* Vol. 1, (Warszawa, Czytelnik, 1972), 202. The novel *Lalka* was first published as a serial in the paper *Kurier codzienny* between 1887-1889.

¹⁹⁹Klemens Junosza-Szaniawski, *Nasi Żydzi w miasteczkach i na wsiach* (Warszawa, 1889), 124. Cited in Cała, *Asymilacja*, 213.

In general, the case of late pre-independence and post-independence Poland shows that an unchallenged long-term prejudiced perspective on a minority group perceived as a harmful Other can easily be reformulated into a myth of the foremost internal Threatening Other under the circumstances of thriving exclusivist ethnic nationalism. When such a myth becomes a widespread and accepted social truth - a means of delineating national reality and of perceiving the minority itself - it can prove extremely durable and unshakeable. Questioning and deconstructing such a myth can be extremely challenging and difficult.

This is the basis and background of the refusal to accept the Jewish minority as part of the modern Polish nation, and for the anti-Jewish violence found in modern Poland, and for the persistent influence of the myth on Polish political and popular culture up to the recent period.

Chapter III.

The Myth and Anti-Jewish Violence in the Inter-War Period, 1918-1939.

Introduction

In scholarly literature exclusivist ethno-nationalism is viewed as one of the forces which can strain the bonds that sustain civility within ethnically mixed societies and as one that may frequently lead to inter-ethnic tensions, hatreds and eruptions of violence. It may also lead to flows of refugees and asylum-seekers from minority groups threatened by such violence.¹

Anti-Jewish violence perpetrated by the extreme section of the exclusivist ethno-nationalists and their supporters in inter-war Poland can serve as a good illustration of some of these phenomena. This violence undoubtedly contributed to the deterioration of inter-ethnic relations between the majority group, the Poles, and the minority group, the Polish Jews, on both local and national levels. Moreover, for some members of the Jewish community, it was also an important factor, next to Zionist convictions, in reaching the decision to emigrate from Poland for good.²

Most of the historical research concerning anti-Jewish violence between 1918 and 1939 can be viewed as descriptive, concentrating on a discussion of the entire period, or on single riots such as the Przytyk Pogrom of 9 March 1936, or on anti-Jewish excesses at universities.³ One of the least discussed issues is how the dissemination, by ethno-nationalists, of hostile images of Jews impacted on the instigation of violence.

In this chapter I examine links between the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other and eruptions of anti-Jewish excesses, concentrating on the extent to which this myth influenced the initiation, evaluation and justification of anti-Jewish violence. My

¹See Smith, 'Ethnic,' 196-198 and also Kecmanovic, *The Mass.* 132-150.

²On the issue of the importance of various forms of hostility on inter-ethnic relations between Poles and Jews, and on the decision-making process of emigration from Poland within the Jewish community, see Emanuel Melzer, *No Way Out. The Politics of Polish Jewry 1935-1939* (Cincinnati, 1997) 53-80. Hereafter Melzer, *No Way.* 53-80 and 131-153. See also Alina Cała, 'The Social Consciousness of Young Jews,' *Polin*, Vol. 8, 1994, 42-65.

³See, for example, Jolanta Zyndul, *Zajścia Antyżydowskie W Polsce W latach 1935-1937* (Warszawa, 1994). Hereafter Zyndul, *Zajścia.* ; Modras, *The Catholic.* 301-323 and Melzer, *No Way.* 53-80.

main argument here is that a case such as the anti-Jewish violence in inter-war Poland shows that negative images of a minority perceived as the enemy of the state and of its people can play an important role in the legitimising of violence as national self-defence under conditions of thriving exclusivist ethno-nationalism. This process is characterised by four main stages: first mandating and justifying anti-minority riots; secondly, paying tribute to the perpetrators of the violence as national heroes; thirdly shifting the responsibility for such violence onto its victims; and finally, minimising its unethical and criminal nature. By the term violence, I understand here the following types of actions: inflicting damage on Jewish properties, including private homes, shops, institutions and synagogues, slander, physical harassment, assaults, and murder.

Before moving into the main analysis I shall provide a brief outline of the socio-historical context in which anti-Jewish disturbances and riots occurred in inter-war Poland.

Social and Historical Background to the Violence

It is possible to differentiate four major waves of anti-Jewish violence that swept through inter-war Poland. Each of these waves was characterised by specific conditions and development; the first wave of 1918-1920 was rooted in the process of the formation of the new Polish nation-state; the second in 1930-1933 was primarily based at the universities; the third, which is the least researched, was linked to the emergence of the National Radical Camp in 1934; and the last, in 1935-1937 was the most wide-spread and severe, engaging both university youths and members of the public in a number of villages and towns.

The first wave of violence began in 1918 and lasted until 1920, the end of the Bolshevik War. Territories most affected were the Eastern Provinces where heavy fighting was taking place between the Polish and the Ukrainian armies during the first two years of independence, and in parts of so-called Little Poland (*Małopolska*) where a peasant revolt erupted in the spring of 1919.⁴ This first wave was characterised by the high number of mortalities reaching

⁴See Witold Stankiewicz, *Konflikty społeczne na wsi polskiej 1918-1920* (Warszawa, 1963), 159-169. Hereafter Stankiewicz, *Konflikty*. ; Jerzy Tomaszewski, 'Trzeci maja 1919 roku w Rzeszowie,' *Almanach Żydowski*, 1996-1997, 7-16. Hereafter Tomaszewski, 'Trzeci.'

approximately two hundred and thirty. The reasons for such a high death toll was the fact that soldiers and officers of the two Polish armies of Jozef Haller, the so-called Blue Army (*Błękitna Armia*) and the Army of Great-Poland (*Armia Wielkopolska*) were the main perpetrators of this violence.⁵ One can also argue that the war-time situation was itself a factor conducive to an increase in aggression and hostility toward a Jewish minority perceived as the Threatening Other and conspiring with Poland's enemies against her.⁶

The second major wave broke out at the universities during the first term of the academic year 1930/31 and twice re-occurred during the first term of the following two academic years.⁷ During this phase, anti-Jewish excesses were frequently intertwined with demonstrations against the Sanacja government, which, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, was labelled at the time by the Endecja as representing Jewish interests.⁸

Violence against Jewish students was advocated by the following organisations: the All Polish Youth (*Młodzież Wszechpolska, MWP*), the Youth Movement of the Camp for a Greater Poland (*Ruch Młodych Obozu Wielkiej Polski, OWP*) and the student self-help associations (*Bratnia Pomoc*).

Historical research tells us that these organisations, whose political and social ethos was basically Christian and exclusivist ethno-nationalist, were not marginal, but in fact enjoyed a significant level of popularity among university youths.⁹ According to available data, approximately sixty per cent of all registered students at universities were members of student self-help associations in 1930. These associations were mostly controlled by the All Polish Youth, the Endek's longest established youth organisation. The only exception was the Jagiellonian University where membership of the student self-

⁵ See, for example, Jerzy Tomaszewski, 'Polskie Formacje Zbrojne wobec Żydów 1918-1920,' in: *Żydzi w obronie Rzeczypospolitej* 97-111 and Zyndul, *Zajścia*. 9.

⁶ On the importance of war as a factor in an increase of aggression and hostility towards ethnic minorities, see Panikos Panayi, 'Dominant Societies and Minorities in the Two World Wars.' in Panikos Panayi ed., *Minorities in Wartime* (Oxford/Providence, 1993), 3-23. Hereafter Panayi, 'Dominant.'

⁷ See the reports on student anti-Jewish demonstrations in the volumes of *Sprawy Narodowosciowe*, No. 6, 1931, 644-654; and No. 6, 1932, 698-703.

⁸ On the issue of the linking of anti-Jewish and anti-government actions by the Endecja in the early 1930s, see Rudnicki, *Obóz*. 58-59.

⁹ See *ibid.*. 70-75.

help association was open also to Polish Jewish students.¹⁰ The Youth Movement of the OWP, set up in 1927, was a dynamic section of the main OWP organisation which by 1933 had reached two hundred and fifty thousand members.¹¹

Not only did these organisations advocate anti-Jewish violence, they were also the main suppliers of the perpetrators of such violence. And, in some cities, students of these organisations were supported in these violent actions by high school pupils, who were also significantly influenced by the OWP and the Endecja. Clear evidence of Endecja's influence over high school pupils in inter-war Poland was the party's almost entire control over the Scout movement throughout the whole period.¹²

Importantly, these student organisations regarded such anti-Jewish actions as a viable way of putting pressure on the government to implement various anti-Jewish laws at universities. The first among such legislation was the policy of 'numerus clausus' consistently demanded by the All Polish Youth since its setting-up in 1922. 'Numerus clausus' was a policy aimed at limiting the number of Polish-Jewish students at Polish universities and institutions of higher education. Both Jewish students and a substantial section of Polish intellectual elites recognised it as a discriminatory policy and as a violation of the Polish constitution.¹³

The third wave of anti-Jewish violence was orchestrated by the National Radical Camp (ONR), set up in 1934 as an organisation to replace the disbanded OWP. The newly established National Radical Camp was responsible for anti-Jewish excesses that took place in April, May and during the first half of June of the same year.¹⁴ The extremely violent nature of these excesses prompted the leaders of the

¹⁰On the participation of various student organisations in anti-Jewish violence, see *ibid.*, 72 - 75 and Szymon Rudnicki, *From 'Numerus Clausus' To 'Numerus Nullus,' Polin*, Vol. 2, 1987, 246-268. Hereafter Rudnicki 'From 'Numerus.'

¹¹The OWP was set up in 1926. It was joined by members of various political parties including the Christian-National Association, the Peasant Party -Piast, and the National Worker's Party, and the Endecja. Its leadership was in the hands of the extreme so-called Young group within the Endecja, which enjoyed the support of Roman Dmowski. The OWP was dissolved by the state administration in 1933 due to its extreme militant and anti-government programme. On the development of the OWP and on structural changes within the Endecja, see Grott, *Nacjonalizm*. 80-85.

¹²See Rudnicki, *Oboz*. 73.

¹³On reactions condemning the 'numerus clausus' policy, see, for example, Rabinowicz, *The Legacy*. 104-106.

¹⁴See the report 'Żydzi,' *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, No. 4, 1934, 474.

Jewish community to begin talks on setting up an organisation for the monitoring of anti-Jewish events in Poland.¹⁵ The Sanacja government of the time was alarmed by the ONR's strongly anti-Sanacja stance and by that party's extreme position on the issue of solving the 'Jewish Question.' Given the explicitly fascist and militant nature of the ONR, on 12 May 1934, the Ministry of Interior Affairs decided to issue a set of special instructions against the excesses. Moreover in July of the same year, the government proclaimed the ONR to be an illegal organisation. However, this action did not put an end to the activities of the ONR since many of its members were also members of the legal Endecja.

The fourth wave of anti-Jewish excesses occurred between 1935 and 1937, amid sharply increasing popular support for the ethnic homogenisation of the Polish state. Once again violence broke out at the universities where the All Polish Youth and the ONR intensified their campaign in support of 'ghetto benches' for Jewish students. The activists and supporters of this campaign were easily identifiable by the wearing of the green ribbon. The campaign of 'ghetto benches', aimed at the segregation of ethnic Polish and Polish Jewish students at universities and other institutions of higher education, was finally won by the extreme ethno-nationalists in 1937. That year the government officially granted universities the power to regulate the seating of Polish and Jewish students, arguing that such a measure would bring an end to violent disturbances and would guarantee the maintenance of peace on campuses.

However, campus violence continued to take place after 'ghetto benches' were introduced by universities, and in some cases there was even an escalation of violence resulting in individual murders of Jewish students.¹⁶ In many universities, extreme ethno-nationalist students used physical force to move Jewish students to the 'segregated sections' of lecture halls. Historical records show that many Jewish students refused to accept the segregational system on the grounds that it violated their civic rights. The policy of 'ghetto benches' was also condemned by a significant number of Polish university professors and democratic Polish student organisations such as the Imperial Thought (*Mysł Mocarstwowa*), a conservative student

¹⁵ See *ibid.*, 286.

¹⁶ See Melzer, *No Way*. 71-80.

organisation close to the left-wing Sanacja, and the Academic Civic Youth (*Akademicka Młodzież Państwowa*), a Sanacja student organisation, as well as by the international academic community.¹⁷

According to the extreme ethno-nationalist programme, the 'ghetto bench' system was but the first step on the road to forcing Polish Jewish students to leave Polish universities. In the late 1930s, the academic youth of the Endecja and of the ONR started their demand for a policy of 'numerus nullus', aimed at the complete 'dejudaisation' of all Polish institutions of higher education.

Outside of the universities, anti-Jewish violence orchestrated by local sections of the Endecja took place in approximately one hundred and fifty towns and villages, the most frequent and intense rioting taking place in the central part of Poland where the Jewish minority was highly concentrated. However, it must be stressed, that violence erupted in all parts of the state regardless of the size of the local Jewish population living in a particular area. For example, in Silesia, where the Jews constituted just one point seven per cent of the entire population, attacks still took place.¹⁸ It is estimated that between 1935 and 1937, approximately two thousand Polish Jews were injured and between twenty and thirty killed.¹⁹

The wide-spread eruption of violence between 1935 and 1937 can be seen as a direct result of the newly intensified anti-Jewish campaign launched in 1935 by the Endecja and the ONR. Both parties, moved by the visible recent popularity of fascism and exclusivist ethno-nationalism in other European countries, saw in anti-Jewish violence a viable and indispensable means of speeding the process of emigration of the Jews from Poland, and therefore of achieving the 'dejudaisation of the Polish nation-state' (*odżydzanie Polski*). On 15 November 1935 Endecja's leading paper the Warsaw National Daily

¹⁷For a list of foreign and domestic organisations and individuals protesting against the policy of 'ghetto benches' and anti-Jewish campus violence, see Memorandum on Anti-Jewish Excesses (London, 1938), 1-3. Major works protesting against these practices and written by the Polish authors were Ryszard Gąszyniec, Ghetto Ławkowe (Lwów, 1937) and Antoni Gronowicz, Antisemityzm Rujnuje Moją Ojczyznę (Lwów, 1938).

¹⁸See Jolanta Żyndul, 'Zajścia antyżydowskie 1935-1937. Geografia i formy,' Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego W Polsce, No. 3, 1991, 69. Hereafter Żyndul, 'Zajścia.'

¹⁹Jewish sources in Palestine presented higher figures of injured and killed to those presented in Polish sources. A discussion on these statistics and the numbers cited appears in Żyndul, 'Zajścia.' 70-71.

(*Warszawski Dziennik Narodowy*), called for the expulsion of the Jews from the capital Warsaw as a first major step towards the complete 'dejudaisation' of Poland.²⁰

A close examination of arguments of the time in support of anti-Jewish violence, shows that violence was not generally viewed as a means to the physical destruction of the Jewish community, but that its main objective was to make the daily life of the Polish Jews so odious and unbearable (*obrzydzenie*) that they would be 'persuaded' to 'voluntarily' emigrate from the country. In fact, anti-Jewish rioting was viewed by the Endek instigators as a warning message to the Jews that the Poles were no longer willing to tolerate their presence within the Polish nation-state.

On average, the outcome of a single outbreak of anti-Jewish violence involving the civilian population in inter-war Poland was one or two deaths. For example, one person died in Strzyżów on 21 April 1919 and one in Baranów on 5 May 1919; and two were killed in Niebylec on 28 April 1919, in Grodno on 5 June 1936, and in Przytyk on 9 March 1936. Among the highest figures killed by civilians was five dead in the Odrzywół riot of 20 and 27 November 1935, and eight dead and one hundred injured in the riot in Kolbuszowa, Rzeszów district, on 6 May 1919.²¹

Overall, in the inter-war period, the two most common forms of violence directed against Jews were the smashing of windows and plundering of shops and private homes, and the beating-up of inhabitants of villages and towns, students at universities and commuters on trains. At certain times on some of the suburban-lines such as Warsaw - Otwock, the police had to set up extra patrols in order to protect Jewish travellers.²² Less common were the burning of Jewish shops and the bombing of Jewish institutions and synagogues, and throwing harmful chemicals at Jewish passers-by.

The Myth as a Destructive Means of Communication

As a rule, the message communicated in the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other were formulated in highly emotive language. Primitivism, and aggressiveness were the two main characteristics of

²⁰See the report 'Żydzi,' *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, No. 5, 1935, 481. On the problem of anti-Jewish terror between 1935 and 1937, see also Mich, *Obcy*. 84-89.

²¹According to data cited in Stankiewicz, *Konflikty*. 162.

²²See, Żyndul, 'Zajścia.' 58.

its vocabulary since the myth had become deployed in both political propaganda and popular culture. The most frequent terms used by the Endecja to describe the Jewish Threatening Other were nouns expressing a high level of animosity, such as Jewish 'menace', 'horde', 'curse', 'flood' and 'tribe of parasites.' The term Jew itself connoted a negative meaning in the narrative of the Jew as the Threatening Other.

Moreover, this aggressiveness was reinforced by phrases stressing ideas of struggle, battle and even those of a war being fought against the Jews. The following examples from two inter-war monthly publications, the student Alma Mater and the catholic Pro Christo, illustrate the typical way these expressions were used: 'the struggle against the Jews is a national duty'²³; 'the struggle against the Jews is also a struggle against the communist gangrene that is spreading around the country, it is a struggle for our true independence'²⁴; and 'our existence is dependent, step by step, on how we fight the Jews.'²⁵

In the thirties, these phrases were overwhelmingly present in the political propaganda of the Endecja, the OWP, the ONR and the All Polish Youth. In fact 'the struggle against the Jews' (*walka z Żydami*) became the key-slogan of the core ethno-nationalist press including a whole range of student, social, catholic and tabloid papers. The purpose of using such expressions was to convey the message that Polish-Jewish relations constituted a zero-sum conflict in which the Polish ethnic community had to take action to defend itself against the subjugation and destruction intended for it by the Jewish ethnic minority.

The exact extent to which this anti-Jewish vocabulary was absorbed by the population at large is difficult to establish owing to the lack of a viable methodology. Nevertheless, it is possible to infer that the anti-Jewish vocabulary was absorbed to higher or lesser degree by members and supporters of the above parties and organisations, and also by the readers of their press and literature. Bearing in mind that this body of writing constituted a large and important part of all publications in inter-war Poland, the level of absorption or at least the

²³St.P. 'W szrankach polemiki', Alma Mater, No. 3, 1939, 6-7.

²⁴Zbigniew Dymecki, 'W obliczu czerwonego niebezpieczeństwa. Agentury komunizmu w Polsce,' Alma Mater, No. 6-7, 1938, 4.

²⁵Adolf Reutt's speech 'Rola Polski Wsrod Innych Narodow Wielkich' published in Pro Christo, No. 11, 1936, 10-12.

popularity of such anti-Jewish propaganda cannot be seen as a marginal phenomenon.

A perusal of the circulations of the anti-semitic tabloid newspapers that constituted the most extreme part of the core ethno-nationalist press shows that even these papers had a good-sized readership. In 1938 alone the total circulation of such papers exceeded one hundred thousand and equalled that of all weeklies dedicated to social and literary issues published in Poland at the time; two of these anti-Jewish weeklies, Under the Ban (*Pod pręgierz*) and The Self-Defence of the Nation (*Samoobrona Narodu*) each reached a circulation of more than twenty five thousand the same year.²⁶

Alongside the press, the same anti-Jewish language was employed in popular books on Jewish subjects. Prominent authors of this genre such as Stanislaw Trzeciak, Marian Morawski, and Henryk Rolicki (real name Tadeusz Gluzinski) were published in the so-called series 'The Expert Jewish Library' (*Biblioteka Żydoznawcza*). This literature was generally advertised in the core ethno-nationalist press directed at both the more sophisticated as well as the popular market. For example, the Alma Mater directed at the catholic academic youth ran a special column on 'What Books To Read' (*Co czytać?*) in which anti-Jewish and anti-communist works were highly recommended. Similar columns were published by the popular newspaper Little Daily (*Mały Dziennik*) and the Pro Christo, which also published a list of recommended books on Jews entitled 'Literature On The Subject Of Jews' (*Literatura Żydoznawcza*).

This kind of language was also deployed in lectures, seminars and discussions organised by the Endecja, and the All Polish Youth. Importantly, these events exemplify that the dissemination of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other in its vulgar and emotionally intense form was conducive to an increase in the level of hostility towards Jews. In fact, it can be argued that the dissemination of the myth's powerful message of Jewish destructiveness, was an important factor in the incitement to ethnic hatred and violence against members of the Jewish ethnic minority. Cases of spontaneous attacks on individual Jews after such events were reported in the Jewish and Polish press. Among more extreme examples was the knife attack by Jan Antczak on three Jewish men in Lodz in January 1937 committed

²⁶See Paczkowski, Prasa. 291-292.

on the way back from a lecture given by the Rev. Stanislaw Trzeciak. Two of three men were badly injured and the third died.²⁷

Moreover, records of public participation in anti-Jewish violence demonstrate that such explicit anti-Jewish expressions were conducive to the incitement of aggression on the part of that section of the population drawn to it by speeches and slogans expressing the myth. The destructive nature of this type of communication is unquestionable since these events were characterised by a significant level of social mobilisation. Some of the riots, organised by the Endecja, attracted substantial crowds of people; the largest numbering the fifteen thousand who participated in anti-Jewish excesses in Czestochowa on 19 June 1937.²⁸

Finally, we can also credit the dissemination of the narrative of Jewish destructiveness by core ethno-nationalists with creating what in sociological literature is described as 'a moral panic' towards a designated group perceived as a threat to the rest of society, in this case the Jewish ethnic minority.²⁹ This can be clearly be detected in the pattern of behaviour of the perpetrators and supporters of anti-Jewish violence. And the crucial elements of 'moral panic' can be found here: first, expressions of concern over the behaviour of the Jewish minority allegedly causing harm to the political, economic, social and cultural development of ethnic Poles; secondly, wildly exaggerated claims of this threat - such as the destruction of the Polish nation; thirdly consensus on the threat posed by the Jewish minority; fourthly, an increased level of hostility toward the Jewish minority; and finally outbursts of volatility directed at the Jewish minority. Another crucial element in this process is a sense of self-righteousness in justifying anti-Jewish violence as national self-defence.

Violence as National Self-Defence

A close examination of anti-Jewish violence in inter-war Poland shows that the legitimising of anti-Jewish riots and excesses as national

²⁷This case was reported in Warszawski Dziennik Narodowy, No. 31, 1937. Cited in Zyndul, Zajścia, 92.

²⁸*ibid.*, 67-68.

²⁹Stanley Cohen was the first sociologist to use the term 'moral panic' and to notice its collective behaviour-like quality. On the subject of 'moral panic' and its elements, see, Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance (Oxford UK, Cambridge USA, 1994), 31-53. Hereafter Goode and Ben-Yehuda, Moral.

self-defence was a strongly emphasised tendency on the part of the perpetrators of this violence and their supporters. This legitimisation was manifested in four main ways; firstly in mandating and justifying anti-Jewish riots and disturbances; secondly in paying tribute to the perpetrators of this violence and in making them to appear as national heroes; thirdly in shifting the guilt and responsibility for the violence onto the victim - the Jewish ethnic minority; and finally in minimising the unethical and criminal nature of the inter-ethnic violence itself. At the root of such legitimisation lay the myth of the Jew as the chief Threatening Other . Later on in this thesis I shall demonstrate that a similar legitimisation of anti-Jewish violence also occurred in the early post-war period between 1945 and 1947.

To understand how anti-Jewish violence could have been justified as national self-defence, one has to take into account the use, by Endecja, of a prominent theme in Polish national mythology - the myth of victimhood and unjust treatment by Others. As previously mentioned for obvious historical reasons, the theme of Polish victimhood had become prominent in Polish national mythology particularly since the partition of the First Polish Republic in the second half of the eighteenth century. In the Endek version of national history, that is to say the myth of Polish victimhood strongly intertwined with the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other, the Jew constitutes the most dangerous and sinister oppressor of the Polish nation, whereas the Pole is the long-suffering victim . The Endek version of the myth of national martyrdom stresses that Poles have been consistently marginalised and thwarted by Jews, that they have been relegated to the position of a minority in their own country, and that they have to fight back in order to regain their rightful position.

The tendency of legitimising anti-Jewish violence as national self-defence was first to be found in the actions and pronouncements of the officers and soldiers of both the Haller and the Great Poland armies in the Eastern territories between 1918 and 1919. In general these officers and soldiers shared the conviction: that the Jews as a collectivity were the enemy of the Polish nation-state and that they collaborated with Poland's other enemies - the Ukrainians and the Bolsheviks. The chief accusation made against the Jews was of Bolshevism understood as Russian Communism. When it came to this

issue these armies treated all Jews as Communists despite the evident political diversity within the Polish Jewish community.³⁰

The strong belief in the myth of the Jew as the chief Threatening Other resulted in two major mass killings of seventy Jews in L'viv between 22 and 24 November 1918, and of thirty Jews in Pinsk on 5 April 1919. These murders caused an uproar in parliament where Ignacy Daszynski, one of the main leaders of the PPS, demanded an end to the excesses of the army, whom he referred to as hooligans in uniform. These condemnations, however, did not stop the men involved from believing that they had acted in national self-defence. For example, such a position is stated in the memoirs of the lieutenant Antoni Jakubowski who said of the L'viv killings: '...the Jewish perfidy was even bigger than the Ukrainian one ...the Jews were rightly punished. The whole suburb had to be pacified by military action...'³¹

The same arguments were used in relation to the peasant anti-Jewish riots in Little Poland (*Małopolska*) in April and May of 1919. Records of the investigation reveal that members of the Endecja justified the violence on the grounds that the Jews constituted a political threat to the nation. For example, Desydery Ostrowski, the headmaster of a local gymnasium and leader of the local section of the Endecja stated in the autumn of 1919:

'...In my opinion the Jewish menace is one that is hostile to us, and Socialism - also hostile to us - is supported mainly by the Jews. During the war, we saw the Jews as they betrayed us and supported the Germans...'³²

The notion of national-self-defence was also used as grounds for the anti-Jewish student riots of the 1930s. In the aftermath of the first major rioting, the Chief Council of the Endecja passed on 22 November 1931 the following resolution:

'The numbers of Jews in this country and their strong position in its economic life, that has only but strengthened under the present government, is threatening our economic future. Their destructive influence on the population's morals and on spiritual national life, and their hostile attitude towards the Polish *raison d'être* proves that the

³⁰See, for example, Vital, *A People*. 798-820.

³¹Tomaszewski, 'Polskie.' 100. On attitudes within the Polish military elite towards the Jewish community, see also Józef Lewandowski, 'History And Myth: Pinsk, April 1919,' *Polin*, Vol. 2, 1987, 50-72.

³²Statement of Dezydery Ostrowski. Cited in Tomaszewski, 'Trzeci.' 14.

rightful aim of Polish national politics has to be opposition to the Jewish Threat.

Therefore, the Chief Council sees in the latest student 'events' signs of a battle for Polishness and a proof that the majority of Polish youth is highly patriotic. This, for us, serves as a reassurance that the political and cultural future of our Homeland will be secured and that the State will become an national [ethno-national] one...'³³

Acting in national self-defence was also the justification used by Adam Doboszynski, the chief instigator of the 'march on Myslevice' (*marsz na Myslenice*) on 22 and 23 June 1936. Under Doboszynski's command, one hundred and fifty people terrorised the local Jewish community and destroyed all its material goods. The Myslenice police could not stop the attack as they were disarmed by Doboszynski's men. Afterwards Doboszynski was proclaimed a national hero in circles of the Endecja and was later appointed to the position of vice-chairman of the party.

It is worth adding here, that when the Second World War ended, it was Doboszynski who was placed in charge of restructuring the executive of the party after his return to Poland in December 1946.³⁴

The same conviction was publicly expressed by the perpetrators of the Przytyk pogrom, and by their lawyers during the trial in June 1936. The historian Joshua Rothenberg who investigated the Przytyk pogrom in detail, noted:

'The Endek lawyers acting for the Polish defendants repeatedly attacked not only the Jewish defendants but the Jewish people as a whole. One of their most frequent accusations was that most Jews were communists and that the Jewish defendants were either communists or were manipulated by communists. The Jewish religion was also attacked. The question of the right of Jews to remain in Poland was raised on numerous occasions.

According to several Jewish newspaper correspondents, the Polish defendants, and even more so the witnesses, conducted

³³From the political debate on student anti-Jewish riots in the autumn of 1931, reported in *Sprawy Narodowosciowe*, No. 6, 1931, 651.

³⁴Andrzej Paczkowski, *Zdobycie władzy 1945-1947* (Warszawa, 1993), 64. Hereafter Paczkowski, *Zdobycie*.

themselves defiantly, like heroes to whom the future of Poland was entrusted.³⁵

Importantly, the sentences of the Przytyk defendants exemplify the common tendency to be more lenient to ethnic Poles participating in anti-Jewish riots than to Jewish co-defendants. Although they brought a wave of protest not only from the Jewish ethnic minority but also from Polish left-wing political and social organisations chiefly the PPS, the sentences were not revised. One can see in such cases that the judicial institution gave a clear impression of minimising the criminality of inter-ethnic violence, thereby making such violence socially acceptable. Jolanta Zyndul suggests that ideological reasons, such as acting in national self-defence, were classified by some judges as extenuating circumstance.³⁶ This in fact suggests that these judges subscribed to, or felt obliged to, support the Endecja's position on anti-Jewish violence.

The case of the Przytyk pogrom clearly exemplifies the phenomenon of shifting responsibility for anti-Jewish violence onto the Jewish ethnic minority itself and the minimising of the unethical and criminal nature of such violence. In fact, this was common practice among the Polish perpetrators and their lawyers, as well as among journalists representing the ethno-nationalist press of various kinds. For example, reports published by the Little Daily on the trial that took place after anti-Jewish excesses in Grodno in June 1935, can serve as a good illustration of these practices. Reporting on the trial of the perpetrators of the Grodno riots, which erupted after the funeral of a Pole killed by two Jews over a personal matter, the Little Daily commented:

'If the Jews of Grodno had condemned the murder of Kuszczka [the surname of the dead Pole] and joined in with his funeral procession, the excesses would not have taken place. Immediately after the murder a version of the story was circulated that it was committed over a woman at a dancing-hall. The Jews themselves are the ones responsible for these excesses. The streets on which the funeral procession took place and where an angry wave of people was walking was crowded during the evening hours. Therefore, it was

³⁵Zyndul, Zajscia. 92. See also Joshua Rothenberg, 'The Przytyk Pogrom,' Soviet Jewish Affairs, Vol. 16, No. 2, 1986, 40. Hereafter Rothenberg, 'The Przytyk.'

³⁶Rothenberg, 'The Przytyk.' 39-43.

difficult to see and judge what people were doing... Testimonies of Jewish witnesses should therefore be dismissed.³⁷

Importantly, the shifting of responsibility for anti-Jewish violence onto the Jewish ethnic minority, was a tendency limited not only to the perpetrators and supporters of physical violence, but also to be found among some political groups and social institutions that in principle condemned the use of physical violence against the Jewish minority. The most salient example of this phenomenon is the Polish Catholic Church. Here are three examples of the Church's reaction to anti-Jewish violence ; the response of Primate August Hlond to the Przytyk pogrom of March 1936, the response of the Catholic Press Agency to the same pogrom, and the response of Cardinal Aleksander Kakowski to a delegation of rabbis in June 1934.

In the aftermath of the Przytyk pogrom of March 1936, Cardinal August Hlond and Bishop Sapieha of Cracow issued pastoral letters. These letters expressed, alongside a general statement of condemnation of physical violence, approval of an economic boycott of the Jewish ethnic minority. They also listed a number of accusations against Jews, such as spreading atheism, Bolshevism, corruption and the dissemination of pornography. Characteristically, those parts of the pastoral letters dedicated to the condemnation of violence were brief and vague, whereas the greater parts - concentrating on criticism of the Jews - were direct and explicit. These letters were commented on by the Polish - Jewish press of that time as statements that could only contribute to an increase of inter-ethnic hostility.

The response of the Catholic Press Agency (*Katolicka Agencja Prasowa*) to the Przytyk pogrom raised even more controversy. As in the case of the pastoral letters, this document condemned the physical attacks against Jews, but at the same time demanded the cultural separation of the Polish majority from the Jewish minority, and the social and economic emancipation of the ethnic Polish population.³⁸

In the third example, a delegation of rabbis from the Union of Rabbis of the Polish Republic (*Związek Rabinów Rzeczypospolitej*) visited Cardinal Kakowski on 7 June 1934 and asked him to influence the youth of Endecja and the ONR to stop orchestrating anti-Jewish disturbances. His response was full of contradictions. On the one

³⁷'Dalszy ciąg procesu grodzkiego. Przemowienia stron.' *Mały Dziennik*, No. 181, 14 November, 1935, 4.

³⁸Report on anti-Jewish excesses *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, No. 1-2, 1936, 107-108.

hand he entirely condemned anti-Jewish riots, while on the other hand he spoke about Jewish provocation and charged the Jewish community with the crime of insulting Christian feelings, spreading atheism and supporting communism.³⁹

What these examples reveal is that the Church, in its responses to anti-Jewish violence, condemned the use of such violence on the grounds of Christian teaching, while at the same time blaming Jews themselves for anti-Jewish incidents with reference to various themes of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other.⁴⁰

Responses to anti-Jewish violence on the part of the OZON government were similar to those of the Church. On the one hand, the representatives of the OZON government condemned anti-Jewish violence as socially destabilising incidents which could only slander the good name of Poland and of the nation. On the other hand, they insisted on the Polish nation's right to self-defence against the Jewish minority.

All these cases provide good evidence that the rationalisation of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other exerted a strong influence over perceptions of anti-Jewish violence on the part of institutions and organisations which, in principle, objected to the use of violence against Jews as a means of accelerating the disappearance of Jews from Poland. Furthermore, they clearly show that the perception of the Jews as the Threatening Other by organisations which condemned anti-Jewish violence was similar to those organisations which advocated such violence. This explains why condemnations of anti-Jewish violence were not absolute and why the shifting of the responsibility for anti-Jewish violence onto the Jewish minority took place.

³⁹Reports from a visit of a delegation of the Union of Rabbis of the Polish Republic were published by the Union of The Rabbis of the Polish Republic and the Catholic Press Agency. See *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, No. 2-3, 1934, 285-286 and No. 4, 1934, 474-475. In the aftermath of the meeting the Jewish community expressed shock and disillusion with the Cardinal's statement, while at the same time the Zionists condemned the delegation of rabbis for taking inappropriate action.

⁴⁰The pattern of the Church's attitudes towards the Jews from the earliest Councils and Popes was condemnation of violence against Jews (who had, after all, to be preserved as 'witnesses to the truth faith') mixed with condemnation of the perfidy of Jews. In the case of the Polish Catholic Church of the inter-war period, this position was heavily intermingled with the exclusivist ethno-nationalist position on the Jews. On the pattern of the Church's attitudes towards the Jews, see, for example, Moore, *The Formation*, 35-39; and Leon Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth* (London, 1974), 326-328.

It is worth noting here that Wiktor Adler, one of the main leaders of the Bund, the Jewish Socialist Party, noted similarities between perceptions of the Jews on the part the Endecja and its offshoot radical organisations and on the part of those organisations and parties that advocated non-violence. In his work Economic Antisemitism in the Light of Statistics (*Antysemityzm gospodarczy w świetle cyfr*), he refers to the former group as 'zoological antisemites' (*zoologiczni antysemita*), while the latter he calls 'cultural antisemites'

'The Endeks and its off-shoot radical organisations go straight to the point: we hate the Jews and do not wish to know them... They hate Jews in an obsessive and paranoid way... Thus it is not surprising that this blind hatred... is expressed by attacks on women, children and the elderly... 'Cultural antisemites' (primarily supporters of the Sanacja and the Peasant Party) condemn such excesses. They disagree with the means - the use of violence. However they agree with the content of the Endek message - the dejudaisation of Poland, and justify it with economic arguments.'⁴¹

Even more controversial responses towards anti-Jewish violence can be found among well-known individuals including members of the cultural elites in inter-war Poland. For example, Aleksander Świętochowski, the writer and the founder of the previously mentioned Warsaw Positivist School, insisted in April 1937, that anti-Jewish violence within Polish society was 'natural and understandable' because of the size and the social and cultural make-up of the Jewish minority dwelling on Polish territories.⁴² He also criticised liberals for condemning anti-Jewish violence without providing a viable solution to the 'Jewish Question'. And by doing so he implicitly shifted the responsibility for anti-Jewish violence onto the Jewish minority and minimised the criminal nature of this violence.

'The Jews and their defenders... unfold in vivid images the monstrosity of these [acts of anti-Jewish violence] acts; they remind the Polish people of a whole catechism of religious commandments and of a whole code of civil duties... most people do not care ... they harbour

⁴¹Wiktor Adler, Antysemityzm gospodarczy w świetle cyfr (Warszawa, 1937), 4.

⁴²For a summary of Świętochowski's position towards the Jewish minority taken up in the discussion published in April in Wiadomości Literackie, see Modras, The Catholic. 372.

open or quiet sympathy and recognition for the antisemitic perpetrators.'⁴³

On the other hand, it must be stressed that progressive members of the Polish academic and literary communities unequivocally condemned anti-Jewish violence. Furthermore, the PPS and the Democratic Party, and organisations which adhered to their ethos, engaged in active condemnation of the use of violence against the Polish Jews by organising lectures, days of solidarity with the Jewish community, and special fund-raising for victims of violence.⁴⁴

Jewish Provocation

The most salient element of justification for anti-Jewish violence as national self-defence was alleged Jewish provocation. The concept of Jewish provocation, used as a direct explanation of Polish counter-attacks, was generally defined in the broadest sense to suit each particular situation. Looking at the historical data it appears that any social and political actions on the part of the Jewish ethnic minority could be classified as a provocation against the Polish nation.

I have differentiated the following types of behaviour of the Jewish community, which were continuously defined as provocation against the Polish nation in the inter-war period: first, alleged support for foreign powers, particularly the Soviets, the Ukrainians and the Germans; secondly, participation in Communist and Socialist parties; thirdly, parliamentary speeches by Jewish MPs' criticising actions of the Endecja and its offshoot radical organisations; fourthly, critical reactions of the Polish-Jewish press to anti-Jewish propaganda; and finally reactions of the Polish-Jewish press to individual criminal acts committed by individual Jews.

A particularly interesting case of alleged Jewish provocation was the election and the assassination of the first democratically elected President of Poland, Gabriel Narutowicz (1865-1922).⁴⁵ Narutowicz, against whose candidature the Endecja had vehemently protested from the start, was elected with the support of Jewish and other ethnic minorities representatives. Immediately afterwards, the

⁴³Aleksander Świętochowski, 'Antysemityzm,' *Wiadomości Literackie*, 16 April, 1937, 3.

⁴⁴On active condemnation of anti-Jewish violence by Polish political organisations and members of cultural elites, see, for example, Melzer, *No Way Out*. 64, 71-80.

⁴⁵On the historical background to the election and assassination of Gabriel Narutowicz, see, for example, Wandycz, *The Price*. 223-224.

Endecja organised a wave of anti-presidential demonstrations in the capital. The Endecja press insisted that Narutowicz was a President representing Jewish and not Polish interests. On 11 December 1922 the Warsaw Gazette stated:

'Who would expect that the first elected President of the Polish Republic would be greeted with silence by the Polish parliament....and with waves of protesting demonstrators on the streets...Who would dare to think that the majority the Poles would not be responsible for casting the decisive vote on their Presidential candidate....Among newspapers published in Polish only two expressed unreserved joy at the outcome of the presidential election: the Zionist Our Courier and Rosner's Polish Courier....The Polish nation has to defend itself against this Jewish invasion. The Jews have made a terrible political mistake and therefore have provoked this outburst of anger against them . Poles who were unaware of this situation and thus allowed it to happen [the election of Narutowicz] have sinned against Poland.'⁴⁶

A few days after the presidential election Narutowicz was assassinated by an Endek supporter. Press affiliated to Endecja insisted that the Jewish minority has provoked this outcome. The logic behind such reasoning was that it was primarily Jews that had voted for Narutowicz and that therefore he was the president of the Jews and other non-ethnic Poles, and not President of the Poles, the true owners of the newly independent Polish state ; secondly, that as assassination of heads of state was rare in Polish history - a historical fact - it had to be the Jews who were responsible for this assassination; and that the Jews were responsible for provoking a reaction among Poles out of character with the Polish cultural matrix. Thus, the Jews bore responsibility for this crime.

'The murder of the President of the Polish Republic is an event which stands outside political ramifications. This matter has to be seen through the aspect of national sentiments....Outside of the political scene, this is a nation with an emotional body and one which has expressed its reactions, even reactions which are politically irresponsible...Our nation has been put under a terrible test, perhaps the most terrible in its entire history. At the moment when finally after years of captivity historical events have given our nation a chance of being an independent sovereign state, this chance has immediately

⁴⁶'Po wyborze.' Gazeta Warszawska, No. 338, 11 December, 1922, 1.

been jeopardised [the election of Narutowicz] with the support of Jewish votes. The Polish nation has been subjugated to a terrible dilemma: to be or not to be, to be sovereign, or to give over our sovereignty to the Jews.'⁴⁷

Violence and National Martyrdom

Importantly, in the inter-war period, Polish individuals who were killed as a result of active participation in anti-Jewish riots were identified by supporters of *Endecja* and its offshoot organisations as national heroes and martyrs. The most obvious example is the case of Stanisław Waclawski.

Stanisław Waclawski, a student of the law faculty at the University of Stefan Batory in Vilnius, was fatally injured on the second day of anti-Jewish excesses that began on the university campus on 9 November 1931.⁴⁸ His funeral, attended by approximately two thousand students, turned into a national demonstration which had to be dispersed by the police.⁴⁹ In the propaganda of the All Polish Youth, Waclawski was instantly turned into a national martyr who had given up his life for the cause of the dejudaisation of Polish universities. News of his death travelled fast to other academic centres in L'viv, Poznan and Lublin - where combined anti-Jewish and anti-government demonstrations took place. Violence also spread to the provincial cities and towns of the Białostok, Kielce, and Lodz districts, where agitated youths smashed windows of Jewish properties and propagated slogans such as 'Beat up the Jews and Save Poland.'⁵⁰ In many places, police arrested the most violent students as well as high school pupils of gymnasiums who had been drawn into the events by groups of older students. On 14 November, the biggest mass in commemoration of Waclawski's death, attended by seven thousand students, was held in the church of St. Anne, in Warsaw.⁵¹ One year later on the first anniversary of his death, anti-Jewish violence of varying degrees broke out in the major universities. The

⁴⁷'Tragiczny konflikt.' *Gazeta Warszawska*, No. 344, 17 December, 1922, 1.

⁴⁸For a description of this event, see Rudnicki, 'From 'Numerus'', 246- 268.

⁴⁹To prevent further fighting the Rector closed down the university and issued a statement condemning anti-Jewish violence, according to the report 'Zajscia antyzydowskie,' *Sprawy Narodowosciowe*, No. 6, 1931, 647.

⁵⁰*ibid.*, 647.

⁵¹*ibid.*, 646.

table below illustrates examples from the universities of Warsaw and L'viv.⁵²

Date and Place	Events
9. 11. 1932 University of Warsaw	Members of the O W P from the Faculty of Law expel their Jewish colleagues out of the lecture halls; twenty Jewish students injured
10.11. 1932 University of Warsaw	After the mass dedicated to S. Waclawski at St. Anne's Church, two thousand students gather in an academic hostel. Attempts at organising street demonstrations are prevented by the police
14.-17.11 1932 University of Warsaw	Atmosphere of hostility at the Medical and Law Faculties; fights between Polish and Jewish students. Polish students from democratic student organisations sign a petition condemning the anti-Jewish actions of students associated with the Endecja ⁵³

⁵²Data based on the report 'Akademickie wystapienia Antyzydowskie,' Sprawy Narodowosciowe, No. 6, 1932, 698-700.

⁵³The two democratic student organisations were the Imperial Thought and the Academic Civic Youth.

12. 11. 1932. University of L'viv
(Lwow)

After the mass approximately one thousand students form a march to the Technical House where a plaque commemorating Waclawski's death is to be unveiled. The police break up the crowd and confiscate the plaque. Students continue on to other parts of the city where they smash one hundred twenty windows of Jewish properties and beat up Jewish passers-by . Thirty-three students are arrested. Anti-Jewish demonstrations last the whole day

13.11. 1932. The University in L'viv

Anti-Jewish demonstration take place throughout the day. Police arrest twenty-three Polish students. President of L'viv, Drojankowski, issues a statement condemning the anti-Jewish excesses

Over the ensuing academic years, those students who were radical ethno-nationalists continued to refer to Waclawski as a symbol of the national struggle against the Jews, and as a martyr whose death should be avenged. One of the ONR's leaflets refers to him as a hero and explicitly incites the public to anti-Jewish violence: 'On the anniversary of Waclawski's death, Jewish blood must flow. On that day, Jewish homes and businesses acquired by wrongs done to Poles, and even by their deaths, must burn'.⁵⁴

Jews as a Physical Threat to the Polish Nation

In the context of the intensified anti-Jewish propaganda by the Endecja and its offshoot radical organisations of the thirties, the Jewish ethnic minority was now to be categorised not only as an economic, political and cultural threat to the Polish nation but also as a physical

⁵⁴Such references to Waclawski appeared in leaflets and brochures. The above mentioned ONR leaflet was published in *Czas*, 2 November, 1936 and is cited in Rudnicki 'From 'Numerus.' 266.

one. Characteristically, the core ethno-nationalists interpreted individual murders of Poles by Jews as a sign of the strength and aggressiveness of the Jewish minority. And, as Emanuel Melzer correctly observed, the real motives behind these killings, such as self-defence or individual criminality, were completely discounted by the core ethno-nationalists and that section of the public under their influence.⁵⁵

Classifying cases of individual murders of ethnic Poles as part of the conflict between the Polish and Jewish communities was to touch a 'raw ethnic sentiment'. It is not difficult to perceive how the notion of 'the Jew as the murderer of one of us' was to engender heated, spontaneous and violent reactions against the Jewish minority. And in fact one can argue that it was the dissemination of this notion that triggered the most brutal beatings and killings in the inter-war period. Here are three examples of such cases from the 1930s.

On 26 November 1932 three Polish students were injured in a fight with Jewish artisans on the streets of L'viv.⁵⁶ One of them, Jan Grotkowski, a veterinary student was mortally wounded. The next day members of the student self-help association and of the *OWP* urged their colleagues to avenge the death of Grotkowski with the slogan 'blood for blood' (*'krew za krew'*). The reaction to this was instant. Several hundred students from the University of Jan Kazimierz took to the streets, mercilessly beating up Jewish passers-by and smashing windows in Jewish shops. Further anti-Jewish excesses continued for another four days, despite police attempts to put an end to them and despite condemnations by the rector of the L'viv University and the Catholic Archbishops of the L'viv diocese. News of Grotkowski's death spread to other universities in the state, and in Warsaw and Krakow Jewish students were beaten up and thrown out of the universities. Other anti-Jewish demonstrations took place at academic centres in Krakow, Lublin, Poznan, Warsaw and Vilnius.

In Przytyk on 9 March 1936, an initial clash between Jewish youths and gangs of young Poles attacking them, turned into a full-scale bloody riot after a Polish peasant Stanisław Wiesniak was killed by a Jew Szolem Lesko.⁵⁷ The sight of Wiesniak's corpse being

⁵⁵Melzer, 'Antisemitism.' 129.

⁵⁶See the report on Grotkowski's death and on student anti-Jewish demonstrations in *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, No. 6, 1932, 700-703.

⁵⁷Rothenberg, 'The Przytyk.' 37.

publicly carried by his weeping family to the doctor's house , along with cries of 'they've killed one of us!' enraged the crowd. In its anger the mob launched a large -scale attack on the two Jewish neighbourhoods of Podgajek and Zacheta. According to a conclusive statement issued by the deputy public prosecutor S. Dotkiewicz, the riot proceeded in the following way:

'...Here groups, twenty to thirty strong, armed mainly with stanchions, ran along the street, forcing their way into houses. Dozens of Jewish apartments had windows and doors wrenched from their frames by metal bars, pegs, stones weighing twelve kilograms or more, and even shafts....Inside the apartments and shops, furniture and goods were destroyed; some were looted, although these cases were rare. Some of those wronged maintained that their money from the fair was lost during the sacking. Where the inhabitants were caught, they were beaten up with shouts of: 'kill them; don't forgive them for what they have done to our brother!'⁵⁸

As a result, one Jewish couple, the Minkowskis were killed, and their house completely wrecked. However their children, despite being seriously beaten were saved by their ethnic Polish neighbour.⁵⁹ The violence ceased after police reinforcements were brought to Przytyk from Radom.

In Minsk Mazowiecki, a riot lasting almost four days occurred on 1 June 1936 after Judka Lejb Chaskielewicz shot Jan Bujak out of personal animosity. Only a few hours later a furious crowd smashed windows in all the Jewish shops and private houses. Fearing for their lives three thousand local Jews fled the town. Among the ones who stayed, forty-one were injured over the next two days and some Jewish houses were burned on the last day of the riot.⁶⁰

The Endecja propaganda that followed these two deaths was incorporated into a key-slogan: 'the blood of Bujak and Wiesniak has divided Jews and Poles' ('*krew Bujaka i Wiesniaka dzieli Żyda od Polaka*').⁶¹ Such slogans aimed to show that there was no possibility

⁵⁸Document : Conclusions of the Investigation signed by the Public Prosecutor S. Dotkiewicz, edited by Adam Penkalla, 'The Przytyk Incidents' Of 9 March 1936 From Archival Documents,' *Polin*, Vol. 5, 1990, 349.

⁵⁹Andrzej Penkalla, 'Zajścia przytyckie 9 marca 1936 roku,' *Kultura*, No. 9, 1989, 10.

⁶⁰Zyndul, 'Zajścia.' 66.

⁶¹Rudnicki, *Oboz*. 295.

of peaceful co-existence between the two ethnic groups, and that ethnic hatred and violence was a 'natural' element of Polish-Jewish relations.

Conclusions

My aim in this chapter was to demonstrate that from 1918 and 1939 the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other played an important role in the legitimisation of anti-Jewish violence as national self-defence. I have shown that the myth constituted an important factor in mandating and justifying all forms of anti-Jewish violence and in minimising the unethical and criminal nature of this violence. Moreover, the myth provided grounds for the participants of such riots to be seen as national heroes and for shifting the guilt and responsibility for the violence onto the victims. I shall return to the issue of the impact of the myth on anti-Jewish violence, when discussing the early post-war period 1945-1947 in chapter five.

Although anti-Jewish violence was advocated and orchestrated only by the radical section of political ethno-nationalist elites, its negative impact on inter-ethnic relations between Poles and Polish Jews is beyond question. The post-independence period (1918-1939) was the first historical period in which the Polish Jews experienced the full force of the most radical form of Polish exclusivist ethno-nationalism in action. In the post-1935 period, this phenomenon was difficult to contain by the state, which having endorsed the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other, was, on principle, against using violence as means of solving the so-called 'Jewish Question.' It must also be stressed that anti-Jewish violence was unequivocally condemned by the PPS, the Democratic Party and a segment of the cultural elites.

On a more general level, the case of anti-Jewish violence in inter-war Poland can serve as a good illustration that various forms of hostility against a minority group can be attributed to the long-established and rationalised perception of this minority as the Threatening Other. Radical exclusivist ethno-nationalists who advocate extreme means of treating such a minority, may use the myth to instigate, rationalise and justify anti-minority violence as national self-defence. Under conditions of thriving exclusivist ethno-nationalism, this process may result in outbursts of severe anti-minority riots, difficult to contain by the state.

Chapter IV.

Perceptions of the Jewish Minority during the Period of the German Occupation, 1939-1945.

'For all honest Poles, the fate of the Jews going to their death was bound to be exceedingly painful, since the dying...were people whom our people could not look straight in the face with a clear conscience.'

Jerzy Andrzejewski, 'Zagadnienia polskiego antysemityzmu,' Odrodzenie, No. 27, 1946.

Introduction

As revealed in the two previous chapters, the inter-war period was a crucial era for the popularity and dissemination of the ideology of Polish exclusivist ethnic nationalism. By the end of the Second Republic, a significant section of the Polish political elites, the Catholic Church, and non-elites, perceived the Polish-Jewish minority as the chief 'objective' enemy of the Polish nation and as harmful to all aspects of its development: political, economic, social and cultural. The myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other, highly rationalised, became the prevalent way of thinking about Polish Jewry and became central both to Polish-Jewish relations and to the general debate on national life and nationhood. The myth provided a rationale for one of the most powerful beliefs of that time - that there was no possibility for peaceful co-existence between the ethnic Polish majority and the Jewish minority within the same polity, and that Polish Jewry's homeland lay abroad. Therefore, on the eve of the Second World War (WWII), a broad consensus had been reached on the project of the exclusion of the Jewish ethnic minority from Poland by means of mass emigration.

In this chapter I look closely at the continuity of this way of thinking during the years of WWII. Firstly, I examine the presence and the development of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other within the underground political elites. And secondly, I look at the impact of this myth on society at large in the German established so-called Generalgouvernement (*Generalna Gubernia*, GG).¹ I focus on

¹The Generalgouvernement was that part of Nazi occupied Poland not incorporated into the Reich, unlike the western regions of Danzig (*Prusy Zachodnie i Gdańsk*) and

the following questions: To what extent did this myth continue to impact on Polish political discourse during WWII? Was it still relevant to plans for the shape of a future independent Polish nation-state even during the on-going Nazi genocide of Polish Jewry? And to what extent did this myth influence Polish attitudes toward Jews as victims of Nazi genocide?

I base my analysis on official documents and reports of the so-called underground Polish state and press of the various Polish political parties and social organisations that proliferated clandestinely, and on private diaries and memoirs.²

In my opinion, an analysis of the persistence of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other in war-time Poland can provide a better understanding of the main patterns of Polish relations and interactions with the Jewish minority during that period. In particular it can contribute to a more adequate explanation of two inter-related processes: first, the marginalisation of Polish Jews within the so-called underground Polish state; and secondly, the indifference towards the Nazi extermination of the Jewish minority.

On a more general level, I hope that this chapter will contribute to an understanding of the destructive influence of such myths on inter-ethnic relations in war-type circumstances: when a minority perceived as the Threatening Other is being exterminated by an external social actor, and a majority group is attributed the role of the by-stander.³

I absolutely reject the notion of ethnic Poles as the accomplices of the Nazi genocide of the Jews. And I treat the phenomena analysed here as occurring simultaneously, but primarily separately, to the Nazi genocide of European Jews. At the same time, I do not accept the thesis that Polish anti-Jewish perceptions and actions were basically

Reichsgau Watherland (*Kraj Warty*). The territory of the GG was divided into four districts, each named after its major city, Warszawa, Krakow, Radom and Lublin. In August 1941, after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, the Nazi authorities set up a fifth district, Galicia, with its centre in L'viv, where Jewish ghettos were established by the end of the same year. Hereafter GG.

²Many primary sources vital for an analysis of Polish attitudes towards the Polish Jews during WWII have been published in the last decade. See, for example, Paweł Szapiro, ed., *Wojna żydowsko-niemiecka. Polska prasa konspiracyjna 1943-1944 o powstaniu w getcie Warszawy* (Londyn, 1992). Hereafter Szapiro, *Wojna*. and Kazimierz Przybysz, ed., *Wizje Polski. Programy polityczne lat wojny i okupacji 1939-1944* (Warszawa, 1992), Hereafter Przybysz, *Wizje*.

³On the subject of hostile perceptions by dominant nations of ethnic minorities in war-time, see Panayi, 'Dominant.' 3-23.

the product of Nazi antisemitic propaganda. This argumentation, first presented in Polish underground circles, and later taken up by some historians, holds good only in respect of that very small segment of Polish society that collaborated with the Nazis for profit or that was directly influenced by German fascism. In such cases the impact of the Nazi concept that everything was allowed with regards to the Jews can be detected.⁴ However, this argumentation does not hold as far the discourse on Polish Jews within the underground is concerned. Beyond some similarities of concepts, for example the linking of Jews and Communism in both the Nazi press and Polish clandestine publications, the main pattern of perceptions of Polish Jews among Polish political and military elites was basically 'home-made' and rooted in the ideology of Polish exclusivist ethno-nationalism.

In this chapter my main argument is firstly that the dominant way of thinking about Polish Jews as the Threatening Other did not undergo re-evaluation during and after the Nazi destruction of ninety per cent of the Polish-Jewish community, and that throughout WWII the myth was used by the significant segment of Polish underground as the main reference point in the discourse on the Jewish ethnic minority and its relation to the future Polish nation-state. Secondly, I argue that the myth of the Jew as the enemy of Poland influenced to some degree the way in which a significant segment of political elites and society at large related to the Nazi extermination of Jewry. In the context of the Holocaust, Polish Jews were primarily perceived as a group of suffering human-beings, but as outside of the 'universe of Polish national obligations'. The suffering of the Jewish ethnic minority was not recognised as a part of the unfolding tragedy of the Polish nation-state and of its people, nor their deaths as a part of the same tragedy. This is not to say that there were no members of the government-in exile and underground, and members of non-elites, who thought of the Polish Jews as an intrinsic part of the Polish nation-state and their tragedy as a part of the Polish national tragedy. Rather both Polish and Jewish data attest that such views were representative only of a minority position.

⁴For example, on the subject of the participation of Polish youth in violent attacks initiated by the Germans against Jews, see Helen Fein, Accounting For Genocide. National Responses and Jewish Victimization during the Holocaust. (Chicago and London, 1984), 240-241.

Wars often strengthen ethnic self-consciousness and ethnic imagery but weaken or destroy the cohesion of multinational societies.⁵ Such processes can be particularly intensified in societies in which 'the core nation' shows a high level of support for the ethnic homogenisation of the nation-state and for the exclusion of a particular ethnic minority prior to the out-break of war. Poland between 1939 and 1945 can be viewed as just such an illustration.

Before moving into the analysis, I will briefly discuss the main perspectives on the subject of ethnic Poles' relations with Polish Jews during WWII. I treat this discussion as a necessary introduction to my further analysis which will reveal the complexities and partisan representations in the post-war period.

Academic research on Polish perceptions of its Jewish ethnic minority and on anti-Jewish attitudes, actions and indifference during the Holocaust comprises a relatively new field of study. Scholars who have contributed most to this field have acknowledged both the need for further analysis and the methodological challenges this subject poses.

'Despite the fifty years which have elapsed since the end of the Second World War, historians still have a long way to go before they can be seen to have provided a full and objective representation of the intricate problems connected with the relations between the Polish underground and the Jewish populations during the most tragic period in its history.'⁶

'We historians bear a heavy responsibility as witnesses to an epoch of bestiality. The challenge we face is difficult and sometimes even painful, but silence is tantamount to denying or avoiding the truth.'⁷

The most important scholarly investigation of the subject has been conducted by the historians Yisrael Gutman, Shmuel Krakowski and David Engel, and the sociologist Nechama Tec.⁸ The works of

⁵Anthony D. Smith, 'Warfare in the formation, self-images and cohesion of ethnic communities,' Ethnic and Racial Studies, Vol. 4, No. 4, October 1981, 390.

⁶Shmuel Krakowski, 'The Polish Underground and the Extermination of the Jews' in: Polin, Vol. 9, 1996, 138.

⁷Gutman, 'Historiography.' 189.

⁸ See, Yisrael Gutman, Shmuel Krakowski, Unequal Victims. Poles and Jews During World War Two (New York, 1986). Hereafter Gutman, Krakowski, Unequal.; David Engel, In the Shadow of Auschwitz: The Polish Government-in-Exile and the Jews, 1939-1942 (Chapel Hill N. C., 1987) and the same author, Facing The Holocaust. The Polish Government-in-Exile And The Jews. 1943-1945. (Chapel Hill N. C., 1993)

Gutman and Krakowski describe in detail anti-Jewish actions within the Polish underground institutions and organisations in Nazi occupied Poland. The work of Engel deals with a similar problem within the Polish government-in-exile. Whereas Tec's work analyses the social aspect, in particular the presence of anti-Jewish attitudes among rescuers of Jews.

The problem of Polish anti-Jewish attitudes and actions during the Holocaust constitutes the most complex and sensitive aspect of Polish-Jewish studies. And one which still generates highly emotionally charged debates involving both scholars and the general public in Poland and international circles. These debates are usually marked by what Antony Polonsky has called 'a tragic dialogue of the deaf.'⁹ The reason for such an outcome is that the subject has frequently been treated in an unacademic and partisan way to suit particular normative and axiomatic positions. On the one hand, the majority of Polish scholars have been inclined to deny any wrong done to the Jews that might reflect negatively on the ethnic Polish community - the key witness to the Holocaust. On the other hand, some western media and writers have used these issues in attempt to prove that the Poles were the collaborators of the Nazis in the annihilation of European Jewry. Both these positions have created an obstacle to a proper investigation of the problem.

The Polish perspectives

As already indicated there is a visible reluctance and opposition to discussing the subject both among Polish historians and the general Polish public. Looking closely at the bulk of Polish historical work both popular and scholarly on Polish-Jewish relations during WWII, it is obvious that in most cases they would rather not confront the subject. Furthermore, it is possible to distinguish between two types of approaches; the minority approach able to discuss the issue boldly, and the majority approach aimed at rejecting the issue as irrelevant.

Hereafter Engel, *In the Shadow*. and hereafter Engel, *Facing*. ; Nechama Tec, *When Light Pierced the Darkness: Christian Rescue of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland* (New York, 1986). Hereafter Tec, *When Light*.

⁹Antony Polonsky, 'Polish-Jewish Relations And The Holocaust.' *Polin*, Vol. 4, 1989, 227. Hereafter Polonsky, 'Polish-Jewish.'

The latter can be defined as the narrative of denial.¹⁰ It is characterised by the following three aspects: a strong defensive stance on a national level ranging from a minimalisation of the issue to its complete dismissal; the thesis that the Polish nation and the Polish underground state acted in a principled way towards Polish Jews during the Holocaust; and charges of anti-polonism against both Polish and foreign authors who argue differently.

Characteristically, inconsistent and clearly ambivalent statements about Jews can be detected in this narrative of denial. Acknowledgements of the destruction of Polish Jewry are intertwined with three types of accusations: lack of gratefulness on the part of Polish Jews towards those Poles who helped them; anti-Polish behaviour and actions on the part of Jews during WWII; and Jewish passivity in the face of the Nazi destruction of their own people. The character of these pronouncements is primarily ethno-nationalist. Jews are referred to not as part of the Polish nation-state, but as an alien group that has historically benefited from dwelling on the territory of Poland.

Examples of this category of approach can be found in popular works of history written by former members of the underground Polish state, for example, books by Stefan Korboński, General Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski, and Kazimierz Iranek-Osmecki.¹¹ They can also be found in standard history textbooks for high-school and university students.

The persistence of this approach over the last two decades has been discussed by the historian Andrzej Bryk and a team of scholars from the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. Bryk, who conducted a survey of history textbooks in use in Poland in the eighties reached the following conclusion: 'the description of the annihilation of the Jews on Polish territory is rather confusing and the subject of the relations between the Polish and the Jewish population is ridden with omissions, half truths and overt inaccuracies to say the least.'¹²

¹⁰On the narrative of denial, see Joanna Michlic, 'The Troubling Past: Polish Collective Memory of the Holocaust. An Overview,' *East European Jewish Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 1999, 75-84.

¹¹See, for example, Stefan Korboński, *The Jews And The Poles In World War II* (New York, 1989), Tadeusz Bor-Komorowski, *The Secret Army* (New York, 1951) and Kazimierz Iranek-Osmecki, *He Who Saves One Life* (New York, 1971).

¹²Andrzej Bryk, 'Polish Society Today And The Memory Of The Holocaust,' in Yehuda Bauer et al., *Remembering For The Future. Theme III* Vol. 3, (Oxford, 1988), 2373.

Scholars of the Jewish Historical Institute have reached similar conclusions about history textbooks for primary and high school education in use in Poland in the nineties.¹³

The persistent popularity of this approach can be observed also in two major public debates that took place in Poland in 1987 and in 1994. The first debate was provoked by a short article by the prominent Polish literary critic Jan Blonski entitled 'The Poor Poles Look At The Ghetto' ('*Biedni Polacy patrzą na ghetto*').¹⁴ According to Antony Polonsky, the publication of the article in Tygodnik Powszechny on 11 January 1987,

'sparked off what has certainly been the most profound debate on the implications of the Holocaust in Poland since the Second World War.'¹⁵

In the article Blonski raised the issue of the moral responsibility of Poles for the Holocaust and also plainly stated that pre-war anti-semitism had an impact on Polish attitudes towards the Jewish minority during WWII. His views and ones similar were rejected by most Poles who participated in the debate. Similar criticism came from both the communist and right-wing Solidarity factions. Blonski was accused of the endorsement of anti-Polish propaganda and of betraying the Polish state and nation. Some voices even called for his prosecution under articles 178 and 270 of the Polish criminal code, for 'slandering the Polish nation'.¹⁶

A similar outcome was visible in the second debate initiated by Michał Cichy's article 'Poles and Jews: Black Pages in the Annals of the Warsaw Uprising' ('*Polacy-Żydzi: Czarne Karty Powstania Warszawskiego*') published in Gazeta Wyborcza 24, on 29/30 January

¹³The team's nine reports on how the Holocaust is presented in history textbooks was published in the Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego (BZIH), No. 3-4, 1997.

¹⁴A representative sample of the debate was published in English in Aharon Weiss ed., Yad Vashem Studies, Vol. 19, 1997, and in a compilation by Antony Polonsky ed., My Brother's Keeper? Recent Polish Debates on the Holocaust (London, 1990). Hereafter Polonsky, My Brother's. On the debate, see Steinlauf, Bondage, 89-121; Antony Polonsky, 'Beyond Condemnation, Apologetics and Apologies: On the Complexity of Polish Behaviour Toward the Jews During Second World War.' in Jonathan Frankel, ed., Studies in Contemporary Jewry, Vol. 13, (Jerusalem, 1998), 190-224. Hereafter Polonsky, 'Beyond.'; and Shmuel Krakowski, 'Jews and Poles in Polish Historiography.' Yad Vashem Studies, Vol. 19, 1997, 317-340. Hereafter Krakowski, 'Jews.'

¹⁵Polonsky, 'Polish-Jewish.' 231.

¹⁶See Antony Polonsky's introduction to My Brother's Keeper? Recent Polish Debates on the Holocaust 14.

1994.¹⁷ In his article, Cichy discussed anti-Jewish attitudes and actions on the part of Polish military organisations and civilian population during the sixty-three day Warsaw Uprising launched against the Germans on 1 September 1944. In particular, he described well-known cases of individual and group murders of Jews, by the National Armed Forces (*Narodowe Siły Zbrojne*), and by some units of the Home Army. Although Cichy's revealing of the 'dark side' of the Polish treatment of Jews during the Warsaw Uprising was carefully supported by three historians - Andrzej Paczkowski, Andrzej Friszke and Teresa Prekerowa, a majority of discussants dismissed the article as untrue. Furthermore, groups of ex-soldiers of the Home Army (AK) and representatives of the Polish intelligentsia signed protests against its publication. Gazeta Wyborcza was accused of anti-Polish and 'anti-goyish' tendencies and of re-introducing Stalinist propaganda against the Home Army. By way of defence of the good name of Poland and as a counter-measure to these claims, the issue of Jewish Communists and their crimes against the Polish nation in the post-war Communist period was repeatedly raised.

A reluctance against an examination of the subject and a corresponding visible level of confusion can be observed also in that group of Poles who had a distinguished war-time record of aiding Jews and who additionally have played an important role in Polish-Jewish dialogue in the contemporary period. A case in point is Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, the historian and diplomat and former member of the Council for Aid to the Jews (*Rada Pomocy Żydom*, code name *Zegota*).¹⁸ His writings on the subject present somewhat contradictory statements as far as the issues of pre-war and war-time attitudes are concerned. For example, in the article 'Polish-Jewish relations in occupied Poland, 1939-1945,' Bartoszewski first suggests that there was in fact no atmosphere of hostility towards Jews on the part of Poles during the Nazi genocide of Polish Jewry, and that the

¹⁷The debate, including publication of letters and phone calls received by Gazeta Wyborcza, was published on 2, 3, 7, 11 and 12/13 February. The responses by the historians Andrzej Friszke, Andrzej Paczkowski and Teresa Prekerowa and Włodzimierz Borodziej and Tomasz Strzembosz were published in the issue dated 5/6 February. See Intelligence Report - Article on Warsaw Uprising Touches Raw Nerve in Polish-Jewish Relations No. 8, April 1994, 1-2, published by the Institute of Jewish Affairs, (London, 1994).

¹⁸For a critical discussion of Bartoszewski's major work Righteous Among the Nations, see Steinlauf, Bondage. 84 and Yisrael Gutman's 'Historiography on Polish-Jewish relations,' in: Abramsky, Jachimczyk, Polonsky, eds., The Jews. 179.

thesis that maintains otherwise has been put forward by Western scholars who 'are not directly involved in the study of the problem'.¹⁹ Secondly, he states that 'the stand taken by the majority of the population was more humane than one might have expected, taking into consideration the pre-war antisemitic atmosphere'. Thirdly, he states that during WWII, the attitudes of the Polish intelligentsia and the Catholic Church were 'quite principled and indeed sometimes highly principled' towards Polish Jews. Finally he moves the discussion into the area of the level of moral responsibility for the Holocaust and suggests that "enough aid' was done for the Jews only by those in Poland and other European countries who died whilst giving aid.' By so doing, as pointed out by Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, he foreclosed any further discussion on the problem of Polish attitudes towards Polish Jews during the genocide.²⁰

Why do a majority of Poles so vehemently oppose such a discussion?

One explanation perhaps is that a common perception of the national past has been an important factor in the process of denial - as indicated by Jan Blonski in the previously noted article 'The Poor Poles Look At The Ghetto':

'We {Poles} tend to dismiss {the issue} as impossible and unacceptable. After all, we did not stand by the side of the murderers. After all, we were next in line for the gas chambers. After all, even if not in the best way possible, we did live together with the Jews; if our relations were less than perfect, they themselves were also not entirely without blame. So do we have to remind ourselves of this all the time ? What will others think of us ? What about our self-respect ? What about the 'good name' of our society?...To put it differently, when we consider the past, we want to derive moral advantages from it. Even when we condemn, we ourselves would like to be above - or beyond - condemnation. We want to be absolutely beyond any accusation, we want to be completely clean. We want to be also - and only - victims'²¹

¹⁹Władysław Bartoszewski, 'Polish-Jewish relations in occupied Poland, 1939--1945,' in: Abramsky, Jachimczyk, Polonsky, eds., The Jews. 147-160.

²⁰Irwin-Zarecka, Neutralising. 69.

²¹Jan Blonsky, 'The Poor Poles Look At The Ghetto,' (English Translation), Polin, Vol. 1, 1986, 328.

It is widely recognised and accepted in Poland that the Second World War has become an important element of Polish national history and a provider of memories and myths of heroism and greatness for post-War generations. According to the social historian Tomasz Szarota, even in the nineties, WWII is still looked upon as a time of national greatness in heroism and martyrdom.²² In fact, the war, as no other period of the modern era, gives Poles reason to be proud of who they are as a nation, defined here in ethno-national terms. The memory of the exemplary Polish record of resistance in terms of both the armed struggle and the preservation of social institutions in Nazi occupied Europe provides material for sustaining the Polish heroic self-image; while the memory of the Nazi terror and discrimination, and the loss of ten per cent of the ethnic Polish population in German occupied Poland, as well as the sufferings incurred under the Soviet rule, sustains the self-image of Poles as martyrs.²³

In this context, the problem of Polish anti-Jewish attitudes and actions during WWII appears to be the only major aspect that could seriously undermine the image of a great heroic and suffering Poland. So far, only a small minority of Poles, particularly from the circles of the left-wing and the progressive catholic intelligentsia, have been able to come to terms with the background to this problem and with the problem itself.²⁴ And it is only just recently that unbiased scholarly research on the issue has begun to take place.²⁵ On the other hand, in

²²On contemporary views on the status of WWII in the national consciousness and history, see Tomasz Szarota, 'Wojna na pocieszenie,' *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 6 September 1996, 14-15.

²³In general, challenging the image of great and heroic Poles and providing a more realistic variety of images has proved to be a difficult task, one taken up mostly by writers such as Kazimierz Brandys, Miron Białoszewski and Andrzej Szczypiorski. For example, in an essay 'Notatki' published in *Więź*, No. 11/12, 1986, Szczypiorski writes: 'The version of the war most accepted by us portrays the Pole as a knight beyond reproach, ardent patriot and underground fighter. This is a true portrait, but only one among many... Where is the faint-hearted Pole who thought only about survival and a hundred times a day cursed the underground for allegedly exposing everyone to risk?... What about the Pole in a god-forsaken village, who sowed and ploughed, bred hogs, complied without murmur with compulsory deliveries to the Third Reich and the GG, drank illicitly distilled liquor with German gendarmes, and shopped in the city for Jewish-owned pianos, for he had somehow to invest the huge sums gained at the expense of someone else's plight?'

²⁴See, for example, parts of Jacek Kuron's autobiography recollecting the situation of Polish Jews in Warsaw during WWII. *Wiara i Wina. Do i od Komunizmu* (Warszawa, 1990), 18-27.

²⁵See Andrzej Bryk, 'The Hidden Complex Of The Polish Mind: Polish-Jewish Relations during the Holocaust,' in: Polonsky, ed., *My Brother's*. 161-182. Hereafter Bryk, 'The Hidden.'

the post-1989 period, groups of extreme Polish ethno-nationalists have used the issue as a way of reinforcing the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other, the enemy of Poland who continuously assaults the most precious elements of the national heritage.²⁶

The Jewish perspective

From the Jewish perspective, the issue of Polish anti-Jewish attitudes and actions during WWII has been shocking and emotionally painful. After all, as stated by Yisrael Gutman, 'the majority of the Jews who have expressed an opinion on Polish-Jewish relations during the Nazi occupation reached their conclusions on the basis of their own experiences during the war.'²⁷ Looking at the extensive body of their writing, it is clear that the most painful and difficult aspect for them has been the realisation that during the war their own community was perceived by the majority of ethnic Poles to be outside the fabric of Polish society. And that their own tragedy was not embraced into the Polish national tragedy but was met chiefly with indifference and acquiescence. This realisation has often manifested itself in strongly embittered statements about Polish lack of solidarity, at Polish betrayal of the Jewish minority, and the ill-concealed joy at seeing fellow Jewish citizens being murdered en masse by the Germans; a good illustration being the following by Alexander Donat:

'For years the Poles have been dreaming of getting rid of the Jews and now at last Hitler does it for them...at bottom they are delighted, however horrified by the inhuman cruelty. The Krauts devouring the Kikes: what could be sweeter.'²⁸

In cases in which survivors experienced blackmail and hostility on the part of ethnic Poles, or witnessed or were aware of killings of Jews by Poles, the comments are much harsher and basically equate the Poles with the Germans. This position gives an impression of Poles being directly associated with the Nazi extermination of Jews. And it

²⁶See publications of the Warsaw based publishing house Ojczyzna, available in book shops. For example, S. Bordacki Nie znamy prawdy o oświęcimskim Karmelu.

²⁷Yisrael Gutman, 'The Attitude Of The Poles to The Mass Deportations Of Jews From The Warsaw Ghetto In The Summer Of 1942' in: Rescue Attempts During the Holocaust. Proceedings of the Second Ad Vacuum International Historical Conference, Jerusalem, April 8-11, 1977 (Jerusalem, 1977), 399. Hereafter, Gutman, 'The Attitude.'

²⁸Alexander Donat, The Holocaust Kingdom (New York, 1965), 542. Cited in George M. Kren and Leon Rappoport, The Holocaust And The Crisis Of Human Behaviour (New York, London, 1980), 91.

is exactly this position that has been used by some western media as the major point of reference in Poland's relations with its Jewish ethnic minority during the war.

'Had it not been for the Poles, for their aid - active and passive - in the 'solution of the Jewish problem,' the Germans would never have been as successful as they were. It was the Poles who called 'Yid' at every Jew who escaped from the train transporting him to the gas chambers, it was they who caught these unfortunate wretches and who rejoiced at every Jewish misfortune. They were vile and contemptible.'²⁹

However, differentiation between 'bad Poles' *zli Polacy* and 'good Poles' *dobrzy Polacy* or 'good Christians' *dobrzy chrześcijanie*, can generally be found in the vast body of diaries, memoirs, testimonies and literary works. To the first category are ascribed Poles who were hostile to Jews in a variety of ways and under different circumstances. In the second category of 'good Poles' are ascribed people who were willing to help in any capacity or were simply sympathetic to the plight of Polish Jews. Characteristically, it appears that every act of help or solidarity, every individual 'good Pole' has been remembered and registered. For example, in her testimony Sonia Orbach recollected:

'...As we were sitting in the woods contemplating what to do next, a peasant appeared...he approached us and said "I know your family and would like to help you. If you find a place for yourself in the deep woods I will be happy to bring you food' ...he came back without police and a great friendship started between us. What can I tell you... As they used to say {in Poland} if that man was still alive I would wash his feet and drink the dirty water...'³⁰

Undoubtedly, for many Polish Jews, their exclusion from the realm of Polish society during the German occupation of Poland and their experience of Polish indifference towards the Nazi extermination of their own kind has constituted a morally devastating experience. The need for an explanation and rationalisation of this phenomenon has been frequently expressed in works written both during and after the Holocaust. In September 1943, in one of his early essays on Polish-Jewish relations, the historian Emanuel Ringelblum revealed the extent

²⁹Mordekhai Tenenbaum-Tamaroff, *Dapim min hadelakah* (Tel Aviv, 1947), 49-50. Cited in Polonsky, 'Beyond.' 194.

³⁰Yad Vashem Archives, 03/5268. Sonia Orbach's testimony (in Polish).

to which this issue was crucial to the then already much diminished remnants of Polish Jewry:

'The Polish people and the Government of the Republic of Poland were not in a position to deflect the Nazi steam-roller from its anti-Jewish course. But it is reasonable to ask whether the attitude of the Polish people measured up to the scale of the catastrophe that befell their country's citizens. Was it inevitable that the last impression of the Jews, as they rode in the death trains speeding from different parts of the country to Treblinka or other places of slaughter, should have been the indifference or even joy on the faces of their neighbours? Last summer, when carts packed with captive Jewish men, women and children moved through the streets of the capital, was it really necessary for laughter from wild mobs to resound from the other side of the ghetto walls, was it really necessary for such blank indifference to prevail in the face of the greatest tragedy of all time? A further question is whether some sympathy should not have been expressed during the slaughter of a whole people...We ask further, why was it possible to considerably reduce the evil of denunciations, spying and collaboration with the Germans within one's own community, while nothing was done to check the giant wave of blackmail and denunciation of the handful of Polish Jews that had survived the slaughter of a whole people? These and similar questions are being asked every day by the remaining quarter-of-a-million Jews...'³¹

The relevance of Ringelblum's questions for an inquiry into the Poles' relations with the Jewish minority during WWII has been recently voiced by David Blatman. In his essay 'The Past Refuses to Vanish', Blatman discusses the methodological difficulties of such an inquiry but insists that scholars are 'duty-bound to investigate Ringelblum's final question: 'why, even as they are being hauled away for extermination, are the Jews still 'others'?'³²

An analysis of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other in war-time Poland can, in my opinion, take us to the core of this problem.

³¹Emanuel Ringelblum, Polish-Jewish Relations During the Second World War (Evanston, Illinois, 1992), 7-8. Hereafter Ringelblum, Polish-Jewish.

³²David Blatman, 'The Past Refuses to Vanish,' East European Jewish Affairs, Vol. 27, No. 1, 1997, 57-60. Hereafter, Blatman, 'The Past.'

The Jew as the Threatening Other in Political Discourse

As previously indicated, the Polish underground state had a highly developed network of political, military and social institutions.³³ By the end of the war the number of all clandestine organisations reached three hundred.³⁴ Basically, they were divided into two major political camps; the non-Communist camp comprised of the majority of the pre-war political parties, and the Communist camp represented by one main party, the Polish Workers' Party (*Polska Partia Robotnicza*, PPR) supported by the Soviet Union. In the course of the war the Communist camp was to become the major political rival to the first camp.

The analysis in this chapter concentrates on the non-Communist camp as this was the political camp identified by Poles as sovereign and as representing 'the true Polish national interest.' I shall focus on the Communist camp's perception of the Jews in the next chapter where I analyse the myth in the early post-war period. However, I will indicate here, that in the context of national politics, ambivalence and contradictions could already be found in the Communist approach towards the Jewish minority during WWII. On the one hand, the Communists, in the name of internationalism, workers' fraternity and brotherhood, pledged that they would guarantee the Polish Jews equal civic and political rights to those of ethnic Poles in a future Poland. On the other hand, some of their political declarations pledged support for an ethnically homogenous model of the Polish nation-state.³⁵ However, this development was not yet significant for relations between the Communists and the Jews in the GG. On the whole, the PPR condemned the Nazi genocide of Jews, and the Communist military force, People's Army (*Armia Ludowa*, AL), was positively disposed towards the Jewish fugitives.

Ultimate authority over the non-Communist camp was wielded by the Polish government-in-exile, based first in France and subsequently in London, after the French defeat in the summer of 1940. The government-in-exile, in its make-up, represented a break with the pre-war past. Its coalition consisted of the following four political

³³For a detailed study of the underground Polish state, see Jan Tomasz Gross, *Polish Society under German Occupation: The Generalgouvernement, 1939-1944* (Princeton, N. J., 1979), 259-291. Hereafter Gross, *Polish*.

³⁴Bardach, Lesnodorski and Pietrzak, *Historia*, 615.

³⁵See Krystyna Kersten, *Między Wyzwoleniem a Zniewoleniem Polska 1944-1956* (Londyn, 1993), 11-12. Hereafter Kersten, *Między Wyzwoleniem*.

parties: the Peasant Party (*Stronnictwo Ludowe, SL*), the Labour Party (*Stronnictwo Pracy, SP*), the National Democrats (*Stronnictwo Narodowe*) the so-called Endecja, and the Polish Socialist Party (*PPS*). Inside Nazi ruled Poland, the Delegate's Bureau (*Delegatura*), appointed by the government-in-exile, held the supreme political authority. It oversaw the majority of political parties active in Nazi ruled Poland. The Home Army (*Armia Krajowa, AK*), commanded by the government-in-exile, was the main military resistance force, consisting of different military groups originally organised under the authority of individual political parties. By 1943 the membership of the AK had reached the number of three hundred and fifty thousand members making it the largest resistance organisation in Nazi occupied Europe.³⁶

How was the Jewish ethnic minority perceived within the chief institutions of the underground state? And to what extent did the ethno-nationalist construction of the Jew as the Threatening Other continue to impact on political discourse within the underground?

The Government-in-Exile and the Myth

I begin an examination of these issues with a brief look at the government-in-exile. In my opinion, the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other resulted in a clear contradiction in that government's policies and practices towards the Jewish ethnic minority. The key issue lay in the proposed status of Polish Jews in a future sovereign Polish nation-state. On the one hand, the government issued a number of declarations and resolutions in which it committed itself to a civic model of the nation-state in which Polish Jews would be granted political and civic rights equal to ethnic Poles. The first such proclamation was made by Prime Minister Władysław Sikorski as early as 6 October 1939. Sikorski's declaration was followed by two resolutions on 3 November 1940 and 23 February 1942.³⁷

Here I quote an excerpt from the first resolution of 3 November 1940, also known as 'Stąnczyk resolution' because it was announced by Jan Stąnczyk the Minister for Labour and Social Welfare and member of the PPS:

³⁶See, Steinlauf, *Bondage*. 26-27.

³⁷On the subject of the policies of the government-in-exile, see David Engel, *In the Shadow*. and *Facing*. For polemical views on the same subject see Dariusz Stola, *Nadzieja i Zagłada* (Warszawa, 1995). Hereafter Stola, *Nadzieja*.

'The Jews, as Polish citizens, shall in liberated Poland be equal with the Polish community, in duties and in rights. They will be able to develop their culture, religion and folkways without hindrance. Not only the laws of the state, but even more the common sufferings in this most tragic time of affliction will serve to guarantee this {pledge}'³⁸

In December 1941, in his address to the Jewish Labour Committee in New York, Jan Stancyk confirmed this declaration and reassured his audience that Polish Jews living abroad would be able to return to a future independent Poland.

'The question is often raised whether the Polish Jews who are not at present in Poland will be permitted to return to a liberated Poland. There must be no doubt whatsoever that every Polish citizen, irrespective of creed, race or nationality, will be free to return to his country. The Polish Government has clearly stated its position with regard to the political rights of the citizens of the future Poland. The constitutional guarantee of legal equality and equal responsibility excludes any possibility of exceptions. The Polish Jew, like any other Polish citizen, will be able to return to Poland.'³⁹

On the other hand, politicians officially representing the government frequently made contradictory statements to the effect that the majority of Polish Jews would have to leave Polish territory after the state regained its independence. For example, Ambassador Edward Raczynski and Minister Stanisław Kot, in separate conversations with representatives of British Jewry in France in early 1940, presented such a proposal. According to S. Brodetzky, one of the members of the British delegation:⁴⁰

'Professor Kot gave a long history of the Jews in Poland, which, he said, had treated the Jews well for centuries. But the Jews were a foreign body in Poland, they did not even speak Polish....He said that there were too many Jews in Poland, Hungary and Romania. About a third of them could remain, the rest would have to go elsewhere.'⁴¹

³⁸David Engel, *In the Shadow*. 80.

³⁹Declaration presented on behalf of the government-in-exile by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Jan Stancyk, to the Council of the Jewish Labour Committee in New York, December 1941. Cited in Manfred Kridl, Jozef Wittlin and Wladyslaw Malinowski, eds., *The Democratic Heritage Of Poland* (London, 1944), 197-198. Hereafter Kridl, Wittlin, Malinowski, eds., *The Democratic*.

⁴⁰Confirmation of such statements can be found in Polish official letters of that time, see Stola, *Nadzieja*. 73-74.

⁴¹S. Brodetzky, *From Ghetto to Israel. Memoirs* (London, 1960), 198.

Furthermore, in the spring of 1942, the government's parliament-in-exile, the National Council (*Rada Narodowa*), passed a National Democrats' resolution endorsing the project of emigration of Polish Jews en masse.⁴²

Contradictions were also visible in the government's comments on the plight of Polish Jews in the territory of the GG to various audiences during both the pre and on-going genocidal phases. On the one hand, in statements directed at the International Free World audience or to the National Council in London, leading members of the government were able to issue words of solidarity with the Jewish ethnic minority and to refer to its plight as a part of Poland's tragedy. However, such references, or any positive comments on the Jewish minority, tended to be limited or omitted when directly addressing Poles in Nazi occupied Poland.

Cases of omission were closely monitored by representatives of Polish Jewry outside Nazi Europe and were noted in the foreign press. For example, The East London Observer of 9 March 1942 reported:

'Considerable comment was caused by the omission from the Polish official press of General Sikorski's references to the courage of Polish Jews. As reported in our last issue, General Sikorski, at the opening of the Polish National Council on the 24 of February, declared, 'The spirit with which the Jews in Poland bear their sufferings must fill us all with admiration.' This remark of the Polish Prime Minister was not included in the report which appeared in the Polish press on that occasion, nor was it quoted in Polish broadcasts.'⁴³

The government's official press and broadcasts to occupied Poland also avoided directly calling on the ethnic Polish population to show solidarity and unity with the Jewish ethnic minority. Instead, official resolutions made vague general pronouncements that such solidarity and unity were commonly present within the population, and that therefore, further such calls were unnecessary. This type of response can be found in the records of the communications between the Ministry of Information in the government-in-exile and the Representation of Polish Jewry (*Reprezentacja Żydostwa Polskiego*), based

⁴²Stola, *Nadzieja*. 77.

⁴³'General Sikorski And The Jews', East London Observer, 9, March 1942, 1.

in Tel Aviv - the latter expressing its disappointment and frustration with the situation:⁴⁴

'We must record with pain, that in the regular weekly broadcasts by the Ministry of Information, we find not even one word on the need for a common communal life and mutual help between the Poles and the Jews...We hope that the Government will do everything in order to bring to the consciousness of the population how they must react to the bestial aims of the enemy'⁴⁵

The Ministry of Information would typically reply: 'An appeal to the public in Poland is unnecessary, as it is precisely from those circles that the information and vigorous protests are sent.'⁴⁶

How can these contradictions be explained ?

Looking at the four main political parties that constituted the government's coalition one can observe a clear division on the issue of the model of the future Polish nation-state and the position within it of the Jewish minority. Here, the National Democrats Party was the chief unquestionable advocate of an ethnically homogenous model of state. Throughout the war, the National Democrats openly and uniformly regarded Polish Jews as the enemy of the Polish nation and continuously demanded their removal from Poland. In contrast, the position of the Labour Party and Peasant Party on this issue was much harder to pinpoint than that of the National Democrats on this issue because of their general policy of keeping silent in the light of the German treatment of the Jewish population.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, a close examination of both parties' political programmes and press reveal a disturbing ambivalence; support for the official governmental position on the Jewish minority is intertwined with the exclusivist ethno-national view of the Polish Jews as an impediment to the development of the ethnic Polish population.

It is important to remember here that both parties had already endorsed the exclusivist ethno-national position in the pre-1939 period. During the war, neither their leaders in exile nor in the country were

⁴⁴The Representation of Polish Jewry was comprised of Zionist and Orthodox members with its headquarters in Tel Aviv and a branch in the United States.

⁴⁵See the Representation Report between 1940 and 1945, 45-46. Cited in Gutman, 'The Attitude.' 410.

⁴⁶ibid., 410.

⁴⁷See Andrzej Friszke, 'Publicystyka Polski podziemnej wobec zagłady Żydów' in: Wojciech Wrzesiński, ed., Polska-Polacy-mniejszości narodowe (Wrocław, 1992), 193-213. Hereafter Friszke, 'Publicystyka.'

willing to condemn or dispose of these concepts as they had become an intrinsic part of their ideological heritage and political platform supported by their respective electorates. I shall illustrate here such an ambivalent situation with the example of the Peasant Party which was far more influential than the Labour Party in both the pre-war and war-time periods.

On 26 March 1941, at a National Council meeting, the Peasant Party issued the following declaration in support of the previously quoted resolution of 3 November 1940. The declaration read:

'The Peasant Party announces its solidarity with this resolution. A resolution politically mature, dictated by sound political reason and principles of democracy as indicated by the Government of National Unity. The fact that we declare our solidarity with this resolution should not come to anybody as a surprise, as it has been always our attitude, and it is now, that the State's treatment of its citizens cannot be differentiated by reasons of religion, race or origin....This is a just and democratic principle with regard to rights of equality, and obligations of all citizens of the State. The Peasant Party is committed to the realisation of these principles in a future Poland'⁴⁸

However, just a month earlier on 20 February 1941, a contradictory statement had been made in an official meeting between the leadership of the emigre Peasant Party and Ignacy Schwarzbart, the representative of Polish Jewry on the National Council. At that meeting Ignacy Schwarzbart strongly criticised the policy of emigration for Polish Jews and asked the party's leaders to renounce it:

'This project harms our identity as fully-fledged citizens. No citizen can commit himself to being a patriot when he knows that his own state might make him an involuntary emigrant. Polish politicians should be aware that the emigration slogans will not bring sympathy for Poland among Jewry. In the past, there was peasant emigration from Poland without specific legislation for such an emigration. There was also voluntary Jewish emigration free of the notion that there were too many Jews in Poland. Emigration results from the economic situation. And no state has the right to create economic or political

⁴⁸Yad Vashem Archives M2/149, Collection of Dr Ignacy Schwarzbart. Declaration of Jan Banaczyk, member of the Polish National Council, presented on behalf of the Peasant Party at a meeting of the Council on 26 March 1941. Hereafter YVA M2/149.

conditions for a particular group of citizens in order to force them to emigrate.⁴⁹

In response, Stanislaw Mikolajczyk the leader of the Party stated that despite the recent historical changes, the Peasant Party would continue to support the emigration project because it had been endorsed in the party's programme in 1935. And he added that the party's leadership in exile could not revoke that decision.⁵⁰

Continuity of the pre-war Peasant Party's position on the Jewish ethnic minority was more explicitly formulated in the party's press organs circulated in the GG. For example, on 30 April 1942, the paper *To Victory* (*Ku zwycięstwu*) published an article entitled 'The Jewish Matter' (*Sprawa Zydowska*) in which both the arguments and the language were simply a repetition of the pre-1939 position. Characteristically, the Nazi treatment of the Polish Jews had no effect on that position:

'Concerning the Jewish matter, one thing is sure, that the position of Jews in Poland is deteriorating and that a significant number of them will have to emigrate from Poland...The Polish side should do everything in its power to help effect this emigration...The Jewish matter is an international matter. The presence of large Jewish masses in Poland is the result of the expulsion of Jews from other countries. Thus Poland has the right to demand that the world participate in a solution to the 'Jewish Question'.'⁵¹

Among the four main parties of the governmental coalition, the PPS was the only party to oppose outright the integral organic vision of a Polish state and to recognise the Polish Jewish community as part of a future Poland. Not only were PPS leaders engaged in condemnation of anti-Jewish attitudes and actions within the underground state and emigre Polish organisations, but they also took action against the exclusivist ethno-national policies and practices of the government.⁵² One of the achievements of the emigre PPS was the abolition of the pre-war legislation of 31 March 1938, concerned with dispossessing persons of Polish citizenship, and directed in

⁴⁹YVA, M2/149, Ignacy Schwarzbart's report from the Conference held with the leaders of the emigre Peasant Party. Londyn 20, February, 1941.

⁵⁰ibid., 6.

⁵¹Yad Vashem Archives 02-25, File No. 202/II-11, the Delegate's Bureau: Department of Interior Affairs. Local Reports. 1940-1942. Hereafter YVA 02-25.

⁵²A representative record of the PPS position on the Jewish ethnic minority is in the Yad Vashem Archives, M2/152, Collection of Ignacy Szwarzbart.

practice against the Jewish minority.⁵³ It was the PPS politician Herman Lieberman who abolished it on 28 November 1941 during his appointment as Minister of Justice to the government-in-exile. Of course, the abolition of this legislation took place at a time when the National Democrats were temporarily absent from government.⁵⁴

'The Polish Government...even now is doing everything in its power to redress all previous wrongs against any group of citizens. The decree of the pre-war Polish Government depriving of their Polish nationality persons who had resided abroad for many years without maintaining contact with the home country was one such wrong. This vicious decree has been revoked by the present Government.'⁵⁵

In short, one can see that with the exception of PPS, exclusivist ethno-national tendencies were present within the governmental coalition, and that they resulted in policies and practices contradictory to its officially declared commitment to a civic model of the nation - in which Polish Jewry would constitute an integral part. Yet overall, because of the proximity of and dependency on Western Allies, and the internal fluctuation of power, these tendencies were restrained in comparison to the situation within the underground in Nazi occupied Poland.

The Delegate's Bureau and the AK and the Myth

Perhaps the most apparent evidence of the impact of exclusivist ethno-nationalism on the underground state in Nazi ruled Poland was the ethnic homogenisation of its institutions. In contrast to the Polish government-in-exile which had two representatives of Polish Jewry

⁵³From March 1938 up to June 1939, eighty-eight per cent of all persons dispossessed of Polish citizenship were Polish Jews. See Jerzy Tomaszewski, 'Wokół obywatelstwa Żydów polskich' in Marcin Kula, ed., *Narody. Jak powstawały i jak wybijały się na niepodległość* (Warszawa, 1989), 512.

⁵⁴The National Democrats withdrew from the government after the government signed the Polish-Soviet agreement of July 1941. One of its factions headed by Marian Seyda re-entered the government in early 1942, while the other more radical faction headed by Tadeusz Bielecki remained in opposition. According to the historian Jerzy Janusz Terej, Bielecki's faction was more popular among supporters of the National Democrats in Nazi occupied Poland. Regarding the Jewish Question both M. Seyda and T. Bielecki took a similar stance. On the position of the National Democrats regarding Polish Jews, see Jerzy Janusz Terej, *Rzeczywistość i polityka. Ze studiów nad dziejami najnowszyimi Narodowej Demokracji* (Warszawa, 1979), 270- 300. Hereafter Terej, *Rzeczywistość*.

⁵⁵Declaration presented on behalf of the government-in-exile by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Jan Stanczyk, to the Council of the Jewish Labour Committee in New York, December 1941. Cited in Kridl, Wittlin, Malinowski, eds., *The Democratic*. 198.

included in its structure, there were no such representatives in the network of the Delegate's Bureau and the Home Army.⁵⁶

Membership of these organisations was reserved almost exclusively for ethnic Poles. Only those individual Polish Jews who were generally perceived rather as Poles could have been included in their framework of the underground organisations.⁵⁷ Of course, exceptions to this rule were the particular underground units under the control of those who advocated the inclusive model of civic nationalism.

Other important evidence of the spread of ethno-nationalist ways of thinking in the underground lay in the fact that prominent members were themselves critical of the official commitment to the civic model of a future Polish state upheld by the government-in-exile. Moreover, they were also inclined to disapprove of any positive attitudes and actions towards the Jewish minority on the part of the government-in-exile. Expressions of criticism and disapproval can be found in official reports, dispatches and memorandums sent to the government-in-exile from the GG. Here are two illustrations:

In his well-known report of 25 September 1941, Stefan Grot Rowecki the first commander-in-chief of the Home Army stated:

'All the Government's actions concerning Jews in Poland make a dreadful impression and incite anti-governmental propaganda. This is the case with the celebration of 'Jewish Day', Szwarcbard's speech, the appointment of Liberman and the offering of good wishes for the Jewish New Year. Please take it as an established fact that the overwhelming majority of the population is antisemitic. Even the socialists are no exception. There are only tactical differences about what to do. Hardly anybody advocates imitating the Germans. However, even those underground organisations under the influence of the pre-war executive groups of the Democratic Club or the PPS,

⁵⁶The Polish government-in-exile had two representatives of Polish Jewry, Ignacy Schwarzbart the representative of the Zionist organisations and Szmuel Zygielbom the representative of the Bund. See Gutman, Krakowski, *Unequal*. 58-65, and Irwin-Zarecka, *Neutralising*. 46.

⁵⁷There is nevertheless a substantial body of records including testimonies of Polish Jews and ethnic Poles that reveals that even members of this highly culturally assimilated group experienced prejudice and hostility on the part of Polish ethno-nationalists. See the discussion 'Polish-Jewish Relations During the Second World War' *Polin*, Vol. 2, 1987, 351-353.

accept the emigration project for Polish Jews as a solution to the Jewish problem.⁵⁸

In the summer of 1944, in one of his reports, Jan Stanisław Jankowski, the government's last Delegate and a member of the Labour Party, conveyed a much harsher and more explicit criticism of the government:

'The Delegate has asked me to state the following. According to him the government has exaggerated his 'love towards Jews.' Although he understands that this is to some extent necessary as far as Polish foreign relations are concerned, nevertheless he advises the restraining of such a position. Under the premiership of General Sikorski and the present premiership [of Stanisław Mikołajczyk] the government has been overtly philosemitic. It should bear in mind that inside the country itself Jews are disliked.'⁵⁹

Interestingly, Jankowski's criticism of the government for allegedly being philosemitic echoed similar criticism of the government by the National Democrats, and even by those extreme ethno-nationalist groups not subordinated to the Delegate's Bureau, such as Rampart group. In the aftermath of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of April 1943, the press of the National Democrats and aforementioned organisations was often critical of the government as well as of left-wing political circles, for being too 'sentimental or melancholic' over the German destruction of Polish Jews, and thereby failing to represent the Polish national interest.⁶⁰

A close examination of the communications of the Delegate's Bureau and AK with the government-in-exile suggests that an ethnically homogenous Poland without Polish Jews was a much more popular model than the inclusive civic one.

Characteristically, the arguments and language used by the authors of these communications frequently echoed the pre-1939 exclusivist ethno-national discourse on Polish Jews with the Jew continuing to be perceived as the Threatening Other, the enemy and impediment to the development of the Polish people. This trend in political thinking can be viewed as steady and continuous throughout

⁵⁸Stefan Grot Rowecki's dispatch of 25 September, 1941. Cited in Jan Tomasz Gross, *Upiorna dekada* (Kraków, 1988), 46. Hereafter Gross, *Upiorna*.

⁵⁹*ibid.*, 47.

⁶⁰On criticism of the government-in-exile and left-wing political organisations, see, for example, excerpts of exclusivist ethno-national papers, published by Szapiro in *Wojna*. 317-327.

the war. The Nazi destruction of Jewry does not appear to have had any diminishing effect on it. Here are three examples:

'In the last few weeks Jewish book-sellers have been given permits to open a few book-shops in the Warsaw ghetto. These book-shops have attracted huge interest. Thus the hope of Polish book-sellers of saving Polish books from Jewish hands has failed due to the Nazi regulations.'⁶¹

'Poles have only partially benefited from the disappearance of the Jews from industry and businesses as they are now being infiltrated by the German element.'⁶²

'The migrations of Jews to Poland and their high birth-rate has resulted in abnormal numbers of Jewish population in the country. The huge number of Jews in the cities has prevented the Poles from participating in crafts and businesses and is one of the main reasons for our peasant population being overcrowded in villages'⁶³

What is striking about these references is the distance they show towards the Polish Jewish minority as the victims of Nazi treatment. Perhaps the most explicit example of this was General Stefan Grot-Rowecki's report of 10 November 1942, contemplating the safety of the ethnic Polish population in the aftermath of the Great Deportation, a major genocidal action orchestrated by the Nazis in July of the same year.

'Polish society is apprehensive that in the aftermath of the current extermination of the Jews, the Germans may proceed to apply similar methods of extermination against Poles. I call for restraint and for counteracting these apprehensions with reassurances. The principal German objective in relation to us could be described as the absorption of our nation. Attempts to exterminate the resistant segments of our nation by methods applied against the Jews cannot, however, be ruled out.'⁶⁴

Undoubtedly, in this report, the Great Deportation, which took a heavy toll on the population of Warsaw Jewry, is not viewed as part

⁶¹YVA, 02-25, File No. 202/I-29, the Delegate's Bureau: the Presidential Bureau, Local Reports.

⁶²YVA, 0-25, File No. 202/II-6, the Delegate's Bureau: the Department of Internal Affairs. Reports on the situation, 1941-1942.

⁶³YVA, 02-25, File No. 202/I/31, Memorandums on the Situation in Poland 11 October -15 November 1942. 'The Jewish Population in Poland Overview'.

⁶⁴General Stefan Grot-Rowecki's report of 10 November 1942. Cited in Gutman, Krakowski, *Unequal*. 74-75.

of the unfolding tragedy of Poland and its people under German occupation . The Polish Jews are simply viewed as a kind of separate entity for whose well-being and safety the Chief Staff of the AK did not feel responsible.⁶⁵ The distance towards the Jewish ethnic minority is reflected in the language of the report. There is a glaring lack of reference to the Jews as members of the same society, as Polish citizens. They are presented as 'they,' not 'us.'

The need for references which would stress the belonging of Polish Jewry within Polish society during the war was recognised by representatives of the Jewish ethnic minority. Their position was that these references might be beneficial in creating a commonly called 'positive atmosphere' towards Jewish fugitives from the Holocaust, and for reducing anti-Jewish actions, mainly blackmail and denunciation. For example, in one of its appeals to the underground, the intelligentsia of the Warsaw ghetto demanded:

'To publish statements to make the Polish population aware that the Jews are valuable citizens of the Polish Republic and that crimes against them will be accountable before the courts of the Republic, and that, in particular, any form of collaboration with the Nazis will be viewed as high treason against the state.'⁶⁶

Similar appeals to the Delegate's Bureau were made by the members of the Council for Aid to the Jews (*Żegota*), an organisation set up in December 1942 under the auspices of the Delegate's Bureau. For example, the chairman of the Council and a member of the PPS -WRN, Józef Grobelny - nicknamed Trojan - insisted that rescuing the Jews was in the interest of a future independent Poland:

'The most important thing is to provide help to individuals... who have no means to save themselves and whose lives would be indispensable to a future state. The German extermination of Polish citizens will have a grave result on a future independent state. The state will suffer from the lack of every human being who could be saved today.'⁶⁷

The Treasurer of the Council, a member of the Democratic Union, Ferdynand Arczynski, nicknamed 'Marek' also insisted that 'Polish Jews were the most threatened element of Polish society and

⁶⁵Bryk, 'The Hidden.' 71.

⁶⁶YVA, 02-25, File No. 202/II-11, the Delegate's Bureau, the Department of Internal Affairs. Local Reports. 1940-1942.

⁶⁷YVA 06/82, Council for Aid to the Jews: Minutes I/2, 3.

that their chance of survival depended on the special care they should be given.⁶⁸

Of course, this position of treating the Jewish minority as integral part of the society during the German occupation was represented only by a minority of the underground's elite, mainly the Socialists and Democrats. A study of relations between the Council for Aid to the Jews and the Delegate's Bureau and the AK can serve as a good illustration of how isolated and marginalised was this Jewish minority within the underground elite.⁶⁹

Records of the minutes of the Council attest that silence, disapproval and procrastination were the main ways of responding on the part of the authorities of the Delegate's Bureau and AK, to the demands made by Socialist and Democratic activists of Żegota. Many of Żegota's projects that aimed at creating a more positive atmosphere towards the dying Jewish community failed as a result. The lack of broad support within the underground for Żegota's actions was implicitly indicated by the Polish historian of the Żegota, Teresa Prekerowa. Although she does not address the issue of the attitudes of the Delegate's Bureau and AK authorities toward the Polish Jews, she admits that Żegota's projects were marginalised in the underground:

The RPZ [Council of Żegota] people were aware that neither the council's activists alone, nor a much bigger group including its collaborators, would be able to achieve any meaningful results without broad social support. Therefore efforts were made to create a climate which was favourable to the actions of the relief groups. Members of the presidium, in the first instance, pressed the underground authorities and the government-in-exile to appeal to Polish society to help the hounded Jews in every possible way...There were attempts to offset the opinions of the clandestine nationalistic periodicals which persuaded their public that the lot of the Jewish minority 'is not our affair'. In order to supply editorial boards of the clandestine periodicals with edited materials, in the autumn of 1943, the council published three issues of the Press Service News (*Komunikaty Prasowe*), which reported the liquidation of the Jewish camps in the Lublin region and the uprising in the ghetto of Białystok, along with other

⁶⁸YVA 06/82, Council for Aid to the Jews, Minutes I/1-34, 6.

⁶⁹See Joseph Kermish, 'The Activities Of The Council For Aid To the Jews (Żegota) in Occupied Poland' in: Rescue Attempts During The Holocaust. Proceedings Of the Second Yad Vashem International Historical Conference (Jerusalem, 1977), 367-396.

important events. The underground press failed to react in any significant way to the information published, which perhaps, contributed to the closing down of the title.⁷⁰

On the whole, we can conclude that the ethno-nationalist perception of the Jews that prevailed within the political and military underground authorities was an important variable causing a lack of concern over the plight of the Jewish community. And one which contributed to the obstruction and procrastination of actions within the underground itself that was aimed at providing help to the Jews.

The Prevalence of the Myth in the Clandestine Press in the GG

I will now move to an analysis of the presence of the myth in the press of various clandestine organisations. Looking closely at these press, I have differentiated three main groups within the spectrum of prominent clandestine parties and social organisations. The premise for this differentiation being based on their two-fold attitude towards the Jews - as a minority and as victims of Nazi extermination. In my opinion this approach will give a good insight into the intricacies of the underground's attitudes towards the Polish Jews.

In the first of the three groups I include the left-wing parties: the Democratic Party (*Partia Demokratyczna*); the PPS - Freedom - Equality - Independence Party (*PPS - WRN*); and the Polish Socialists Party (*Polscy Socjalisci*) and other small independent organisations.⁷¹

In this group the position on Polish Jews was characterised by the following six elements: lack of reference to the Jews as the Threatening Other; a programme of inclusion of the Jewish minority within a future Polish nation-state; condemnation of the Nazi genocide of Jews; the perception of the Nazi destruction of Polish Jews as a part of Poland's tragedy; condemnation of anti-Jewish statements in Polish underground circles; and condemnation of anti-Jewish actions within Polish society. Importantly, this was the only political group within the underground state considering rescue operation of Jews as a basic civic duty to fellow citizens and as therefore being critical of the Polish underground institutions, as well as society at large, for not

⁷⁰Teresa Prekerowa, 'Relief Council for Jews, 1942-1945' in: Abramsky, Jachimczyk, Polonsky, eds., *The Jews*. 173. Hereafter Prekerowa, 'Relief.'

⁷¹On the subject of small clandestine organisations and their underground press, see Lucjan Dobroszycki, 'The Jews in the Polish Clandestine Press,' in: Paluch ed., *The Jews*. 289-296.

recognising the genocide of Polish Jews as a part of the tragedy of Poland.

For example, on 7 February 1944, New Ways (*Nowe Drogi*), the chief press organ of the Democratic Party stated:

'Within the Polish population there is a lack of understanding and recognition that the German extermination of Jews constitutes not only a crime against the Jewish community but in fact is a crime against the Polish state which is losing millions of its citizens.'

Next, commenting on blackmailing activities against the remnants of the Jewish minority, the paper called upon the underground institutions to take up efficient measures to curtail such activities:

'The conclusion of our reasoning is simple: the Poles have to disassociate themselves utterly and unequivocally from the German crimes. It is not enough to adopt a passive position and noble gestures of shock and disgust. There is an urgent need for a more active stance in counteracting the social demoralisation sown by the enemy [the Germans]. At present the Jewish issue concerns the moral well-being of the nation.'⁷²

On 8 January 1943, WRN the press organ of the PPS - WRN stated:

'Browsing through our political world we see many things which show that our nation is not ready {to embrace democracy}. After all we are supposed to be a democracy but the ghost of our own fascism is still present ...We are supposed to constitute a federation of nations but chauvinism and zoological nationalism... still threaten the ideal of partnership among nations. Despite the terrible tragedy occurring in front of our eyes, antisemitism is still alive in some circles of our society.'⁷³

Such reflections can also be found in the war-time diaries, memoirs and literary writings of individual Poles, particularly members of the progressive cultural elite. The poem 'The Poor Christian Looks at the Ghetto' by Czeslaw Milosz is perhaps the best known literary expression of this position.

⁷²Excerpt from the Nowe Drogi, 7 February 1944. Cited in Szapiro, ed., Wojna. 342-343.

⁷³YVA 0-25, File No. 202/III/80, the Delegate's Bureau: the Department of Information and Press. Weekly Reports of the Chairman.

In the second group, the ideologically most diverse, I include the following: the Labour Party; the Peasant Movement and affiliated smaller peasant groups such as *Orka* and *Ractawice*; the main catholic organisations, the Front for the Rebirth of Poland (*Front Odrodzenia Polski*, *FOP*) and the Union (*Unia*) headed by Jerzy Braun; and the Sanacja's Camp Of Fighting Poland (*Obóz Polski Walczącej*). Their position was characterised by following: the use of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other with differing frequency, and support for the exclusion of Polish Jews from a future Polish state.⁷⁴ However, their stance regarding the German destruction of Polish Jewry was that of strong condemnation, accompanied by expressions of sympathy towards the plight of Jews on a human level, and condemnation of Polish denunciators and blackmailers. The press organs of the Delegate's Bureau and the Home Army reflected a similar range of perspectives.⁷⁵

Within the third group, I include the following: the National Democrats - *Endecja* - the 'core' ethno-nationalist party; and extreme offshoot organisations such as the Rampart Group (*ONR-Szaniec*); the National Party- Great Poland (*SN-Wielka Polska*); the Confederation of the Nation (*Konfederacja Narodu*); *Sword and Plough* (*Miecz and Pług*); and the Awakening (*Pobudka*). Their position on the Jewish ethnic minority was characterised by continuous use of the myth of the Jew as the enemy of the Polish polity and of its people, and by advocating the project of the exclusion of Polish Jews from a future Polish state. With regards to the genocide of Polish Jews, their stance varied between a rather detached disapproval of genocidal methods of the Nazis, and approval of the outcome of the genocide. And it was accompanied by the insistent argument that the extermination of Polish Jews was outside of Polish considerations and criticism of Poles expressing human attitudes of sympathy towards the plight of the Jews.

⁷⁴See Friszke, 'Publicystyka.' 193-214.

⁷⁵*Children of Warsaw* (*Dzieci Warszawy*), one of the chief press organs of the Delegate's Bureau and the *Bulletin of Information* (*Biuletyn Informacyjny*), the chief organ of the AK, can be viewed as an exception to that pattern and be classified in the first group. On the subject of the representation of Polish Jews in the press of these two institutions see Friszke, 'Publicystyka.' 193-214 and Pawel Szapiro, 'Problem Pomocy dla walczacego Getta' in: Daniel Grinberg, Pawel Szapiro, eds., *Holocaust Z Perspektywy Połwiecza. Materiały z Konferencji zorganizowanej przez ZIH w dniach 29-31 Marca 1993*. (Warszawa, 1993), 291-322. Hereafter Grinberg, Szapiro, eds., *Holocaust*.

Apart from differing attitudes towards the Holocaust, the main difference between the second and the third groups, I argue, lay in the degree of intensity and frequency of the ethno-nationalist representation of Polish Jews. In the third group, the core of the ethno-nationalist camp, the myth of the Jew as an enemy of Poland appeared in its most uniform and crude version. Here, Polish Jews were typically described as a Jewish plague, a Jewish flood, and as the Judeo-Bolshevik enemy and malevolent entity, and such concepts were widely elaborated.

Within the second group, the Jews were addressed less frequently and there was a greater variation in the expression of the myth. In general, more moderate, diffuse and implicit references can be found in the central press of the Peasant Party and the Delegate's Bureau. Here the tendency was not to refer to the Jews directly but to describe relations between the ethnic Poles and the ethnic Jewish minority as one of irrevocable political and social conflict and antagonism. In this second group, the most explicit and crude anti-Jewish expressions can be found in the press of the Camp Of Fighting Poland, the peasant groups *Orka* and *Racławice*, the Catholic Unia and the Labour Party. In my opinion, their references to the Polish Jews were very similar to those of the third group. Here are two examples. On 15 August 1942 Nation (*Naród*) the organ of the Labour Party stated:

'For hundred of years, an alien malevolent entity has inhabited the northern sections of our city. Malevolent and alien from the point of view of our interests, as well as our psyche and our hearts.'⁷⁶

In January 1943, Poland (*Polska*), the organ of the Camp of Fighting Poland stated:

'In Poland the Jews had optimal conditions for development. Yet they have always worked to the detriment of our country. They have always loathed Poland and the Poles. After the present war, we will have to treat them differently, no matter how reduced their numbers.'⁷⁷

Support for an integral organic vision of Poland without the Jewish ethnic minority can be viewed as the only project that the parties and organisations of the second and third groups shared with

⁷⁶Excerpt from Narod, 15 August, 1942. Cited in Polonsky, 'Beyond.' 214.

⁷⁷Excerpt from Polska, January 1943. Cited in Gutman, Krakowski, Unequal. 115.

each other. The National Democrats interpreted the wide consensus on the exclusion of the Jewish ethnic minority from a future Poland as the 'long-awaited victory' of the party . For example, On 13 October 1943, one of the press organs of the National Democrats, Young Poland (*Młoda Polska*) stated:

'...Before the First World War the National Camp regarded the Jewish Question as the most urgent internal political issue to be resolved. However, on this issue, the National camp was opposed by a wide front ranging from the judaised left-wing to the freemasonry centres of Sanacja and the liberal 'patriots'...And yet before the war [WWII], the same political groups...supported an 'economic boycott of Jews.' Today, despite the tears shed over the burned ghetto [Warsaw], programmes of all Polish political organisations have agreed on the elimination of the Jewish influence. Victory has been achieved.'⁷⁸

At the same time, the National Democrats and its extreme offshoot parties were engaged in a propaganda war against those political parties which advocated the inclusive civic model of the nation-state. In this propaganda war the delegitimisation of political opponents on the basis of their positive association with Polish Jews was employed. Political opponents were presented as traitors acting in the interest of the Jews rather than the Poles. As we already know , this was a long established exclusivist ethno-national strategy going back to the pre-1918 period, and particularly prominent in the ethno-national political culture of the inter-war period. During WWII, the PPS, as in previous periods, was the party most frequently portrayed as representing Jewish interests because of its commitment to the civic model of a future nation-state and its continuous recognition of the plight of Polish Jews as part of the national tragedy.

On occasions, the government-in-exile was also described as disloyal to the Polish national cause, and as representing the interest of the left-wing parties and the Jews. Such labelling of the government-in-exile as anti-Polish resembled the labelling of the pre-1935 Sanacja government as representing Jewish interests. In the war-time period, the three reasons for this criticism were as follows: the government's official commitment to the civic model of a future Polish nation-state; the presence of Jews and persons of Jewish origin representing the PPS in the government itself; and the recognition of the Polish Jewish plight

⁷⁸Excerpt from Młoda Polska , 13 October, 1943. Cited in Szapiro ed., Wojna. 315.

as part of the national tragedy initiated by the PPS in April 1944 on the first anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Here is one illustration. On 28 June 1944, the National Press Agency (*Narodowa Agencja Prasowa*), the press organ of the National Democrats - Great Poland, stated:

'Currently in the Polish government in London, the Jew Grossfeld a member of the PPS, was appointed to one of the most important positions, Chancellor of the Exchequer.... Various Tennenbaumi and Tuwims are influential in emigre circles. Some of them support the government and others are servants of Moscow. Nothing has changed there. A similar situation has developed in Poland.... Today the international elements and the left-wing parties which define themselves as democratic want to throw Poland into the hands of international Jewry.'⁷⁹

The Myth and Perceptions of the Holocaust: the case of the ZSP and the FOP.

At this point I am going to look in more detail at the presence of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other within two underground organisations which have a record of being actually and actively involved in the Council for Aid to the Jews (*Zegota*). These were the Union of Polish Syndicalists (*Związek Polskich Syndykalistów, ZSP*) and the Front for the Rebirth of Poland. The ZSP participated in preliminary work on setting up the Council for Aid to the Jews in the autumn of 1942.⁸⁰ The FOP was also involved in establishing *Zegota*, and it took part in its workings until the summer of 1943 when the group withdrew from the Council. Needless to say, participation in *Zegota*'s actions meant risking one's life.

In my opinion, the presence of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other in the press even of these organisations proves beyond doubt how far the exclusivist ethno-national model of thinking about Polish Jews had spread within the political elites, a phenomenon perhaps unique to the Polish underground.

The ZSP was an organisation comprised of various small left-wing and trade-union groups which had stayed in opposition to the government-in-exile. At the end of 1943, this organisation was classified by the AK as one of four among thirteen political parties and

⁷⁹YVA, 0-25, File No. 202/III/81.

⁸⁰Prekerowa, 'Relief.' 161.

organisations which supported the inclusion of Polish Jews in a future Polish state.⁸¹ However, its earlier political programmes speak to the contrary. For example, in a programme published in July 1940, the Union of Polish Syndicalists proclaimed:

'The Jews in Poland constitute a foreign element that wants to strengthen its position on the body of the Polish state...the Jews are a nation without sovereignty and by maintaining their collectivity they have often had a destructive impact on other societies...

The position of Jews within the socio-economic structure of society makes them a destructive element within the Polish organism....Poland should be politically and economically independent and should do everything to make the Jews economically benign...'

This programme also explicitly advocated the exclusion of Jews from the future state :

Jews should leave Poland of their own accord...Polish nationalising policies should not regard Jews as a group to be assimilated. Assimilation is neither viable nor desirable.'⁸²

The notion of the Jews as aliens historically harmful to the Poles can also be found in the press organ of the ZSP the Spark (*Iskra*), as shown by this example published on 28 April 1943 during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising:

'We have never been philosemites. The 'Jewish Question' has been the most sensitive aspect of our internal politics. There have been many reasons that could explain why the Polish masses have disliked the Jewish element culturally and psychologically alien to us. The 'Jewish Question' has to be solved and without doubt it would have been solved in a future independent Poland according to the principles of Polish national interest. However, today, at this moment, when the remnants of Jews are fighting for their lives, we want to state that the whole of Polish public opinion feels deeply for the Jewish tragedy regardless of our personal sympathies and antipathies.'⁸³

Here, the pre-war perception of the Jew as the Threatening Other is repeated despite the realisation that the size of the Jewish community had been reduced as a result of German mass murder.

A similar attitude towards the Jewish ethnic minority is presented in the press of the Catholic Front for the Rebirth of Poland

⁸¹See Gutman, Krakowski, Unequal. 107.

⁸²The programme of the ZSP, July 1940. Cited in Przybysz, ed., Wizje. 43.

⁸³Excerpt from Iskra, 28 April, 1943. Cited in Szapiro ed., Wojna. 58.

(FOP) founded by Zofia Kossak- Szczucka and Witold Bienkowski at the end of 1940. This social organisation, based in Warsaw, defined itself as the representation of the Polish Catholic elite and aimed at the dissemination of Catholic, national and anti-communist values.

From 1942 to 1944 the FOP published three papers; two monthlies, Truth (*Prawda*) and Truth of the Youth (*Prawda Młodych*), and a bi-monthly Truth of the Day (*Prawda Dnia*). Main contributors were the writers Kossak- Szczucka and Jan Dobraczynski. Despite the fact that both of them were affiliated to the pre-war Catholic Action and supported the vision of Poland advocated by the Endecja, this did not stop them from extending their support to the Council for the Aid to the Jews.⁸⁴ In fact, Kossak-Szczucka was one of the leading founders of the Żegota, and was subsequently involved in various of Żegota's activities without becoming an official member of the organisation.⁸⁵ While Dobraczyński, employed by the Warsaw Municipal Social Department, assisted through his job in finding shelters for Jewish children.⁸⁶ Another prominent member of the FOP, Witold Bienkowski, editor of Truth of the Day, was officially engaged in Żegota on behalf of the Delegate's Bureau.

A good illustration of Bienkowski's perception of the Polish Jews can be found in the FOP's programme which was later rejected by the FOP's Council.⁸⁷ In this programme, written in the autumn of 1942, Bienkowski proposed total social segregation of the Jewish ethnic minority from the Polish majority for the sake of the Polish national interest. According to him, the Jews were a guest nation on the Polish territories, were characterised by an 'aggressive psyche' and therefore could only harm the host nation. Their presence on Polish territories was regarded by him as a misfortune, and emigration to Palestine seen as a viable solution to the 'Jewish Question' in the post-war future.⁸⁸

Characteristically, in the FOP's press, the notion that the Jews were the enemy of Poles and would have to be excluded from a future

⁸⁴According to Dobraczyński's own recollections he was a member of the National Military Organisation and Propaganda Section of the National Democrats during the War. See his preface to Roman Dmowski's *Mysli nowoczesnego Polaka* (Warszawa, 1989), 5.

⁸⁵On the subject of Kossak-Szczucka's participation in Żegota, see Tec, *When Light*. 107.

⁸⁶Michał Głowinski, 'Tajemnica Dobraczyńskiego' *Gazeta Wyborcza* No. 153, 3-4 July, 1999, 22-23.

⁸⁷See Przybysz ed., *Wizje*. 149.

⁸⁸Programme of the FOP, September 1942. Cited in Przybysz ed., *Wizje*. 143-144.

Polish nation-state appears comfortably next to statements of sympathy for their plight and calls for helping them. Kossak-Szczucka's article 'Whom do we help' (*Komu pomagamy*), published in Truth in August 1943, is a good illustration of just such a phenomenon:

'Today the Jews face extermination. They are the victims of unjust murderous persecutions. I must save them. 'Do unto others what you want others to do unto you.' This commandment demands that I use all the means I have to save others, the very same means that I would use for my own salvation. To be sure, after the war the situation will be different. The same laws will apply to the Jew and to me. At that point I will tell the Jew: 'I saved you, sheltered you when you were persecuted. To keep you alive I risked my own life and the lives of those who were dear to me. Now nothing threatens you. You have your own friends and in some ways you are better off than I. Now I am depriving you of my home. Go and settle somewhere else. I wish you luck and will be glad to help you. I am not going to hurt you, but in my own home I want to live alone. I have the right.'⁸⁹

What this article suggests is that motivation for rescuing Jews is chiefly based on the Christian duty of providing help to the needy. What is lacking is precisely the civic principle of helping Jews as fellow-citizens, members of the same society, a principle advocated only by the Democratic Party, the PPS, and other minor socialist groups. Here, the rescued Jew is treated as an outsider who had no right to remain in the country of the rescuer when the war is over. A future Poland was expected to be the polity of, and for, ethnic Poles only. Without doubt, this view is nothing less than an exposition of the main principles of Polish exclusivist ethno-nationalism. What is also characteristic of Kossak-Szczucka's argumentation is a complete lack of doubt that her ideological convictions might not be appropriate at a time when Jews were being killed by a common enemy - the Germans.

The same lack of questioning of ethno-nationalist convictions is manifested in a separate pamphlet of Kossak-Szczucka's authorship, Protest, circulated in August 1942. The publication of Protest was aimed at presenting the official position of the FOP on the plight of Polish Jews during the Great Deportation, and at providing written

⁸⁹'Komu pomagamy.' Prawda, August, 1943. Cited in Tec, When Light. 107.

proof of Poles' intolerance of and disassociation from the Nazi killings. Here is an excerpt:⁹⁰

'This silence can be tolerated no longer...He who is silent in the face of a murder - becomes an accomplice of that murder. He who does not condemn - assists. We therefore raise our voices, we Polish Catholics. Our feelings towards the Jews have not undergone a change. We have not stopped regarding them as the political, economic and ideological enemies of Poland. What is more, we are well aware that they hate us even more than the Germans, that they hold us responsible for their misfortune. Why, on what basis - this remains a secret of the Jewish soul, but it is a fact constantly confirmed. Our awareness of these feelings does not free us from the obligation to condemn the crime...We also protest as Poles. We do not believe that Poland can derive any advantage from the German cruelties. On the contrary, in the stubborn silence of international Jewry, in the efforts of German propaganda attempting to shift the odium of the massacre onto the Lithuanians and...the Poles, we sense the planning of an action hostile to us. We know also how poisonous are the seeds of this crime...He who does not understand this, who dares to link the proud, free future of Poland to base joy at the misfortune of his neighbour - he is indeed neither a Catholic nor a Pole.'⁹¹

Although Protest contains a moving description of the sufferings of Warsaw Jewry and strong opposition to the Nazi genocidal programme, Jews here are explicitly referred to as 'the political, economic and ideological enemies of Poland,' and categorised as obsessive Poles-haters who would unjustly plot against and blame the Poles for their plight. Protest is a good illustration that the ethno-nationalist perception of Polish Jews was left intact - the Jews were still the perpetrators and the Poles the victims. The Jews were still the ones who could harm the Poles and the Poles were the vulnerable group trying to defend their rights. Here is a similar example:

'We are not afraid of being accused of acting against the national interest. We are fulfilling the basic duty of Catholics, our responsibility is to take care of the most persecuted and suffering, the

⁹⁰The Great Deportation is a term referring to the first phase of the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto and other ghettos by the Nazis, which began in July 1942, and lasted until autumn the same year.

⁹¹Zofia Kossak-Szczucka, Protest, August 1942. Cited in Polonsky, 'Beyond.' 212.

Jews in our country. Our duty has no connection to our political convictions. We demand from the Jews that they respect the Polish national interest and not play any political games in which they might exploit their suffering.'⁹²

Moreover, in some of the publications on the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto, the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other takes on a more universal form. In Truth, April/May 1943, the Jews are categorised as the enemy of all European nations on whose territories they have dwelled. Here the modern myth of the Jew as the enemy of every nation is intertwined with the Christian medieval anti-Jewish concept. Of course, such a fusion of modern ethno-nationalist myths with Christian medieval anti-Jewish beliefs was already present in catholic writings in inter-war Poland.

'The last time Jews fought with arms in their hands was one thousand eight hundred years ago...Since which time the Jews have been parasites living off the bodies of European nations. This is why they have been universally loathed and detested. And they have fought with everybody cunningly, never openly with weapons in hand. They have caused three quarters of all the wars fought in Europe...They have lost all human dignity...Since last year the Germans have begun the extermination of Jews en masse on the territory of Poland. Polish society has been watching this terrible crime with shock and pity for the Jews who have not attempted to defend themselves...And suddenly the Jewish nation has decided to fight...This is a very important moment. Who knows, perhaps from the ashes of the Warsaw ghetto a new spiritually reborn Israel will emerge? Perhaps the Jews will cleanse themselves in this present burning and from being a wandering persistent parasite will transform themselves into a normal nation again...

We Catholics understand the importance of present events. We cannot remain passive hearing the voices of the murdered ones...Our duty is to provide help. And we do not care if they will reciprocate our help now or in the future. Our help cannot be limited to material support only. We also have to provide spiritual help. A prayer for the dying,.. making them aware that before death they can be redeemed by accepting baptism and the true faith'⁹³

⁹²Excerpt from Prawda dnia, May, 1944. Cited in Szapiro, ed., Wojna, 380.

⁹³Excerpt from Prawda, April/May, 1943. Cited in Szapiro, ed., Wojna, 218.

The case of the FOP and of Kossak-Szczucka in particular has been interpreted by some historians as a proof that pre-war Polish ideological antisemitism had 'softened', decreased or simply disappeared in the face of the Holocaust.⁹⁴ What this position fails to take into account is that the case of Kossak-Szczucka as the rescuer of Jews is representative only of a small group within society - the devout Catholic elite politically active in the underground.⁹⁵ Moreover, this position altogether avoids addressing the issue of Kossak-Szczucka's political views and the impact of such views on the reader. The important questions here are: how could the FOP's press make its readers want to help a people presented as the enemy of the Polish nation? and if so, what kind of a treatment might a rescued Jew expect from any person holding such convictions?⁹⁶

Jan Blóński, who was the first to analyse Kossak-Szczucka's Protest in detail, argues that this text 'takes us into the thinking and feeling of a significant portion of contemporary Polish society'.⁹⁷ Although it is methodologically difficult to provide any exact figures, Blóński's estimate appears reliable in the light of other important war-time records discussed here and the pre-war legacy of exclusivist ethno-nationalism.

What is possible to establish with certainty, is that during WWII, the Catholic elite's way of thinking was heavily influenced by the exclusivist ethno-nationalist perspective, while the vast majority of ethno-nationalist elites simultaneously identified with the Catholic ethos. As in the inter-war period, the close link between Polish Catholicism and exclusivist ethno-nationalism is unquestionable.

The Catholic principle of providing help to the most needy had no mitigating influence over the perception of the Jew as the enemy of the nation. In fact, the two perspectives of sympathy and aid for Jews

⁹⁴See Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, The Warsaw Ghetto (Boston, Massachusetts, 1987), 30-31. For a contesting position see Tec, When Light. 52-69.

⁹⁵The fact that this group represented only a very small section of Polish society is documented by Tec, When Light. 184.

⁹⁶Michael C. Steinlauf posed another important question: 'The point, rather, is that if even a founder of Zegota was an antisemite, what could one have expected of the average Pole, lacking, let us assume, Kossak's extraordinary ethical sensibility?' Steinlauf, Bondage. 40.

⁹⁷Jan Blóński, 'Polish-Catholics and Catholic Poles: the Gospel, National Interest, Civic Solidarity and the Destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto,' imprint from Yad Vashem Studies, Vol. 25, Jerusalem, 1996, 184.

and of perceiving them as the chief enemy of Poland were compatible with the Christian ethos within a section of the Catholic elites.

Condemnation of the Nazi genocide of Jews, and of collaborators was also compatible with the perception of the Jew as the Threatening Other who would have to leave Poland when the war ended. How can we explain such phenomenon ?

I argue that the majority of Polish ethno-nationalist elites during WWII disapproved of and rejected the Nazi method of exclusion of Jews by genocide. As in the inter-war period, they chose to advocate the project of emigration as the main means of excluding Polish Jews from the future Polish state.

Why was the Nazi policy of genocide of the Jews rejected by the Polish exclusivist ethno-nationalist elites ? Here two facts should be taken into account: firstly, that biological racism was not strongly intermingled with Polish exclusivist ethno-nationalism as in the German case; secondly, that with the invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939, Nazi Germany had become the actual enemy of Poland and of its people, and that therefore collaboration with the Nazi occupant was to be regarded as an act of national betrayal. This applied to any collaboration with Nazis, including anti-Jewish actions by Polish political and military groups. Such collaboration was generally met with disapproval on the part of the underground. Thus, at the beginning of the war, the National Democrats, the core exclusivist ethno-nationalist party, condemned those members of its fascist offshoot organisations who indicated a willingness to participate with the Germans in the orchestration of a wave of anti-Jewish violence.

'We shall not do what they [the Germans] expect us to do. After the war, we shall be able to solve the Jewish question according to Polish mentality and morality. That is why we did not approve of the deeds of those members of the [Falanga and O.N.R.] who tried, at the beginning, to co-operate with the Germans in antisemitic activities. We have no intention of baking our bread in this fire'.⁹⁸

Of course, it should be noted at this point that the issue of collaboration by any section of the Polish political elites ceased to be

⁹⁸Archives of Emanuel Ringelblum, No. I/91, Endecja's attitude towards Jews. Cited in Joseph Kermish ed., To Live with Honour And Die with Honor ! Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives "O.S" (Jerusalem, 1986), 614. Hereafter Kermish, To Live.

relevant one, as the Nazi regime had no interest in such collaboration, unlike in other Nazi satellite states.⁹⁹

The main reason genocide (as a form of solving the 'Jewish Question') was not acceptable to the majority of Polish ethno-nationalist elites resided in the strong Catholic tradition. Nazi exclusion of the Jews by mass murder was regarded as 'a barbaric anti-Christian action' and alien to the Polish-Catholic ethos. Even the most extreme right-wing section of the Polish political elites referred to Nazi genocide of Jewry in that way.

However, as in the inter-war period, the ethno-nationalist elites were convinced that their position regarding Polish Jews was just: exclusion of the Jews from a future Poland by 'voluntary' or forced emigration was not only acceptable but actually considered to be a proper way of disposing of an unwanted ethnic minority. Therefore, within these elites, there was no critical reflection on the social and moral implications of advocating such projects, either before or during the Nazi extermination of Jews.

In their rejection of and non-participation in the Nazi programme of the physical annihilation, Polish exclusivist ethno-nationalist elites were able to view the Nazi extermination of European Jews as unconnected to their own project of solving the 'Jewish Question' in a future Poland - a historically correct distinction in terms of approach. However, in their categorisation of the Jewish minority one can see similarities to that of the Germans - the Jew as the polluter of national life in all its aspects - political, economic, social and cultural. And here, one can argue, that just as in the inter-war period, these elites failed to recognise their own conceptualisation of Polish Jews as the national enemy, as similar, in many aspects to the Nazi perception of German Jews.¹⁰⁰

One can see here the dangerous and destructive side of exclusivist ethno-nationalism, even when it is free of biological racial elements and does not advocate genocide as a form of exclusion of an ethnic minority categorised as the chief Threatening Other.

⁹⁹On the failure of collaboration between Nazis and Polish fascist groups, see Tomasz Szarota, 'Zajścia anty-żydowskie i pogromy w okupowanej Europie,' in: Grinberg and Szapiro, eds., *Holocaust*. 153-175.

¹⁰⁰On elements of the Nazi conceptualisation of German Jewry as the enemy of the German polity and its people, see Bartov, 'Defining.' 779-785.

This takes us on to an important issue, that of the non-rationality of the myth and its adaptability to different sets of social conditions. As discussed in the second chapter, throughout the inter-war period, the ethno-nationalist camp claimed 'objective grounds' for the project of mass emigration of Jews from Poland, these being the size of the Jewish community and its economic position within Polish society. A typically explicit example of such anti-civic reasoning was the following statement:

'We have the right to be antisemites ...in this state in which every tenth citizen is a Jew, there are principal grounds for being an antisemite.'¹⁰¹

This reasoning ought to have lost its validity during the war for two obvious and logical reasons: the size of the Jewish community was undergoing a process of continuous and rapid reduction and its economic status had changed drastically under Nazi legislation. Yet despite full awareness of these facts, Polish ethno-nationalists continued to perceive the Jews as the chief impediment to the development of the Polish nation.

This reveals the non-rational origins and prejudiced nature of these types of social constructions, and their easy adaptability to different social contexts. And it confirms the pre-war thesis of Aleksander Hertz that the mythologisation of the Other as the enemy can continue regardless of the actual position within society of the mythologised group.¹⁰²

This phenomenon also exposes the prejudiced nature of pre-1939 ethno-nationalist argumentation claiming 'objectivity towards the 'Jewish Question' in Poland and exposes flaws in post-1945 intellectual approaches to the history of Polish Jews that apply such an argumentation.¹⁰³

The Concepts of Judeo-Bolshevism and Judeo-Communism

I shall now move on to discuss a particular aspect of the myth - that of the Jew as the pre-eminent political enemy supporting the anti-national forces of Bolshevism and Communism.

¹⁰¹L. Rościszewski, 'No Second Troy.' *The Times*, (*Czas*), No. 79, 21 March 1938. Cited in Mich, *Problem*. 261.

¹⁰²Aleksander Hertz, 'Swoi przeciw obcym.' 159.

¹⁰³On the prevalence of the thesis of objectivity in intellectual discourse, on the Jewish Question, see Irwin-Zarecka, *Neutralising*. 165.

As we know, these ideas functioned as popular 'social truths' in inter-war Poland. By the end of that period, the labelling of the Jewish minority as the agent of Communism and ideological traitor of Poland, was common in the press of various parties, ranging from extreme ethno-nationalist and fascist to Catholic and conservative.

During WWII this notion continued to be employed in political debates and was commonly used as a justification for attitudes and actions within the underground which both the Jewish minority and the left-wing underground defined as anti-Jewish.¹⁰⁴

Characteristically, political assessments of war-time events involving the Jewish ethnic minority were heavily influenced by notions of Judeo-Bolshevism and the Jewish betrayal of Poland. One such event was the Soviet invasion and occupation of Eastern Poland that began on 17 September 1939, where Ukrainians, Belorussians and Jews constituted the majority. According to Jaff Schatz, the record of the pre-war Polish government's policies towards these minorities helped the Soviet Army's claim that it had come to liberate these minorities from Polish national and class oppression. 'Thus, the majority of the population - Ukrainian nationalists, Belorussian Socialists, the Jewish poor, refugees from the German - occupied territories, some ethnic Poles who initially regarded the Soviet Army as an ally, and of course, the Communists - enthusiastically welcomed the Red Army.'¹⁰⁵

In underground circles, the positive reception of the Soviet Army, by a segment of the Jewish community during the Soviet take-over of the Polish Eastern territories, was interpreted simplistically - as a Jewish betrayal of Poland.¹⁰⁶ The diversity of Jewish responses to the Soviet invasion, and the subsequently varied treatment of Polish Jews by the Soviet authorities, was not taken into account when making these assessments. In fact, the pre-conditioned notion of the Jews as Bolshevik traitors of Poland provided a paradigm for the entire relations between the Soviet Union and that section of the Polish

¹⁰⁴See Pawel Korzec, Jean-Charles Szurek, 'Jews and Poles Under Soviet Occupation (1939-1941): Conflicting Interests,' *Polin*, Vol. 4, 1989, 204-225 and Krystyna Kersten, *Polacy Żydzi Komunizm. Anatomia półprawd 1939-68* (Warszawa, 1992), 30-31. Hereafter Kersten, *Polacy*.

¹⁰⁵Schatz, *The Generation*. 152.

¹⁰⁶On the subject of the Jewish ethnic minority under Soviet occupation and its relations with the Soviet regime, see Pinchuk Ben-Cion, *Shtetl Jews Under Soviet Rule. Eastern Poland on the Eve of the Holocaust*. (London, 1990), 21-38 and Gross, *Polish*. 20, 185.

Jewish ethnic minority which found itself under Soviet rule during WWII. Polish politicians often quoted this interpretation of betrayal as a historical truth, without any attempt at verifying the facts. For example, in his conversation with representatives of Polish Jewry on 5 December 1942 Minister Stanisław Kot stated:

'Minister Kot:.... The atmosphere in Russia was caused by the behaviour of the Jews under Soviet occupation. Many Poles suffered because of denunciations by Jews. In some places Jews joyfully welcomed the entering Soviet troops, helped disarm Polish officers and police..., and then collaborated with the Russian regime and brought about many arrests and deportations.

Dr. Stupp: If I may interrupt you, Mr. Minister, you probably know that in many areas of the Homeland Polish people, convinced the Soviet army had come to help, also welcomed the troops with flowers.

Minister Kot: Well, let us leave aside the welcome, but {what about} all the other things that happened later on?'¹⁰⁷

The steady development of the new Polish Communist party the PPR, and of its military units People's Guard (*Gwardia Ludowa*, GL), from the beginning of 1943, was another war-time event that contributed in underground circles to the intensification of the categorisation of Jews as Communists and Bolsheviks.¹⁰⁸ The pre-war belief that Jews were equated with Communism and Bolshevism was commonly applied with reference to the PPR that had been set up on 5 January 1942 with two bases, one in the GG, and the other in the Soviet Union. A majority of Polish Communists who found themselves in the Soviet Union had been members of the pre-war KPP, and many of them were Polish Jews, while in the PPR's branches in the GG, the growing number of members were new-comers to the Party, and their background was generally ethnically Polish.¹⁰⁹ From the start the PPR, unlike its pre-war predecessor the KPP, stated its commitment to Poland's independence.

The link between the PPR and the Soviet Union played an important role in the categorisation of the PPR as anti-national. The memory of the Soviet invasion and occupation of the Eastern Polish

¹⁰⁷Cited in David Engel, 'The Polish Government-in-Exile and the Holocaust,' *Polin*, Vol. 2 1989, 280.

¹⁰⁸Terej, *Rzeczywistość*. 310-318.

¹⁰⁹On the war-time development of the PPR, see Schatz, *The Generation*, 179-189.

Territories in September 1939 was very fresh within the non-Communist underground and could not easily be reconciled with the fact that the Soviet Union had joined the Allied Powers in the war against Nazism in the summer of 1941, after having been invaded by the Germans. Thus, in the non-Communist underground, the PPR was viewed both as political opponent and national enemy, posing a similar threat to that of the Nazi rulers. Moreover, the perception was that the PPR was exclusively created by Jews and for Jews and other non-Poles, and that no 'true' Pole would join such an anti-national party. Such beliefs had little grounding in reality but persisted nevertheless. I shall argue, that in the context of political developments during the war, the notion of a Judeo-Communist conspiracy aimed at the destruction of Poland, provided a convenient explanation for the increasing power of the Communist camp, without damaging the good image of ethnic Poles. In a sense, this notion sustained the belief that 'true Poles' could not be members or potential sympathisers of the Communist party.¹¹⁰ Such explanations would come to play an important role in later assessments of Communist rule in post-war Poland.

References to Jews as Communists and Bolsheviks can be commonly found in reports of the Delegate's Bureau and AK. Here are four such illustrations:

'The Polish population of Brzesc has welcomed the German invasion {of the Soviet Union} as 'redemption' from the Judeo-Bolshevik yoke'¹¹¹

'The partisan units are commanded by Bolshevik officers. The vice-commander is often a Jew.... Jewish bandits frequently terrorise the local population.'¹¹²

'The 'komuna' is preparing for military actions in October. News is spreading that they are planning to begin the disarming of the Germans...The decision-makers are Jews and bandits.'¹¹³

¹¹⁰See Łepkowski, *Mysli*. 37.

¹¹¹YVA, 02-25, File No. 203/III-55, the Home Army: the Headquarters - section II, Report from the Trip to Eastern Poland, 20 November 1941.

¹¹²YVA, 0-25, File No. .202/I-35, the Delegate's Bureau: the Presidential Office. Correspondence to the Government.

¹¹³YVA, 0-25, File No. 202/II-25, the Delegate's Bureau: the Department of Internal Affairs.

'Jews are completely alien to us and are hostile to Poles in various areas. They are threatening the local population with Bolshevism.'¹¹⁴

Fugitives from the Holocaust, including women, were referred to as communists, Bolshevik agents and helpers posing a serious threat to the ethnic Polish population. Other labels simultaneously associated with them were bandits and common criminals. Not only were these types of references to be found in the press of the extreme ethno-nationalists, but they were also present in the orders of the local and chief commanders of the AK.¹¹⁵ For example, in his order of 31 August 1943, Rowecki's successor, General Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski stated:

'Well-armed gangs roam endlessly in cities and villages, attacking estates, banks, commercial and industrial companies, houses and apartments and larger peasant farms. The plunder is often accompanied by acts of murder, which are carried out by Soviet partisan units hiding in the forests or ordinary gangs of robbers. The latter recruit from all kinds of criminal subversive elements.

Men and women, especially Jewish women, participate in the assaults. This infamous action of demoralised individuals contributes in considerable degree to the complete destruction of many citizens who have already been tormented by the four-year struggle against the enemy...

In order to give some help and shelter to the defenceless population, I have issued an order - with the understanding of the head of the *Delegatura* - to the commanders of regions and districts regarding local security...instructing them where necessary, to move with arms against these plundering or subversive bandit elements...'¹¹⁶

This record clearly shows that in the context of the political struggle against the Communist camp, the Jews were simply viewed as an ideological and physical threat to the security of the ethnic Polish population. They were the enemy. This of course explains the lack of concern for their predicament on the part of the Chief of Staff of the AK, an issue often brought up by survivors of the Holocaust.

¹¹⁴YVA, 0-25, File No. 202/III/28, Report by Kreton, 28 January 1942.

¹¹⁵Polonsky, 'Beyond.' 219.

¹¹⁶Order of General Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski, 31 August 1941. Cited in Polonsky, 'Beyond.' 219.

Lack of concern for the fugitives has been pointed out by the historian Antony Polonsky. According to him 'nothing in the order (which was later withdrawn in the wake of protests from within the Home Army) indicates any sympathy for fugitives from the Nazi Genocide; no appeal is made to villagers to provide them with the food and shelter that otherwise they could only seize by force; and no understanding is shown of their predicament.'¹¹⁷

It is important to note here that Bor-Komorowski's prejudiced assessment of co-operation between fugitives from the Holocaust and Communist military forces did not take into account two important facts: first, that with the exception of those AK units which were under control of the left-wing Sanacja and the PPS, the general policy within the AK was to deny membership to Polish Jews; and secondly, that the gradual acceptance of inclusion of various military forces of extreme political parties under the umbrella of the AK made it unsafe for Jews to approach the AK. In fact for fugitives from the Holocaust, the consequences of co-operation between the AK and the extreme military organisations of the National Democrats, such as the Rampart Group or Sword and Plough, were extremely serious, as contact with such units could result not only in rejection but also in brutal hostility and death.¹¹⁸

The obsession with Judeo-Bolshevism was manifested in the crudest form in the third group of political parties listed in this chapter. Characteristically, in this group's press, the issue of Judeo-Bolshevism was raised in order to justify the destruction of Warsaw Jewry, during both the Great Deportation and the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of April 1943. Jewish plight 'at the hands of the Germans' was compared to the alleged plight of ethnic Poles 'at the hands of the Jews' under the Soviet occupation. In fact, the Jews were presented in these press as responsible for the extermination of Poles in the Soviet-occupied part of Poland. Therefore, their readers were advised to disassociate themselves emotionally from the witnessed plight of the Warsaw Jewry. This echoed Nazi propaganda disseminated in official press directed at the Polish population. For example, on the eve of the

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, 219.

¹¹⁸ Gutman, Krakowski, *Unequal*. 80-97.

Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, the Nazi papers propagated false news of the 'Jewish murder' of Polish officers in Katyn.¹¹⁹

Here is one illustration. On 30 April 1943, the Stream of Youth (*Nurt Młodych*), one of the press organs of the Sword and Plough, wrote:

'We are aware that the 'chosen people' have chosen the red banner.. over the Polish White Eagle. We know how the Jews have behaved towards Poles on the territories occupied by Russia. We know what immense casualties the Polish Nation has suffered as a result of the actions of these Jews. Thus, the fate incurred by these Jews now, although appearing terrible from a human point of view, seems justified.'¹²⁰

Furthermore, the Jews were not only viewed as the servants of the Russians but were also accused of co-operating with the Germans. The concept of the Jew as long-term supporter of the Germans, the long-standing historical enemy of Poland, was extensively elaborated by Roman Dmowski in the inter-war period. In the war-time press, Dmowski's theory was simply recycled and adapted to the contemporary political and social context. This particular process confirms the easy adaptability of the myth of the Threatening Other to expand and to adjust to different historical contexts.

For example, on 21 September 1942, Rampart (*Szaniec*), the press organ of the Rampart group wrote:

'The present pogrom of the Jews in Poland orchestrated by the Germans is a well organised job... The Jewish writer Szalom Ash could not invent a better version of a pogrom of the Poles {than the German pogrom of the Jews}...We can imagine what the Jews would do to the Poles. In fact we know what they did to us during the Jewish occupation of {the Eastern Territories}... The Jews have been the servants of the Germans for the last few hundred years. And they will always support the Germans and anybody else who is against us. Therefore, let us not be sentimental over their tragedy...Of course we advise taking up a philosophical posture of indifference towards the fate of the Jews. We should avoid expressions of satisfaction that the unpleasant job of destroying one enemy is conducted by our other enemy. Such a position, we must stress, would not be Christian and

¹¹⁹Tomasz Szarota, Życie codzienne w stolicach okupowanej Europy (Warszawa, 1995), 179-180. Hereafter Szarota, Życie.

¹²⁰Excerpt from *Nurt Młodych*, 30 April, 1943. Cited in Szapiro, ed. Wojna. 76.

Polish....This position could in fact be identified as Jewish and German.'¹²¹

The particular concept of a connection between the Nazi and Jewish spirit could also be seen as a repetition of the ideas of the Catholic historian Feliks Koneczny. Koneczny, who was dismissed from his post at Stephen Batory University in Vilnius in the 1920s, was one of the chief proponents of the theory that Jewish civilisation allegedly threatened the entire Christian-Latin world.¹²² In his war-time writings, he went one step further, claiming that Nazism, too, was penetrated by the Jewish spirit. In the article entitled 'The Judaised Hitlerism' (*Hitleryzm zażydzony*), Koneczny argued that Nazism was in fact a product of Jewish civilisation.¹²³

Of course, these crude and extreme versions of the myth as discussed in the last two paragraphs, could generally be found only within the press of the National Democrats, particularly within its extreme off-shoot organisations. However, it should be borne in mind, that this political camp published a substantial number of clandestine papers. In 1944, of the six hundred continuous titles of the entire underground press, one hundred and twenty titles were published by this group.¹²⁴ According to historical research, the National Democrats and its off-shoot radical organisations possessed good technical press equipment in comparison to other clandestine parties, and their press enjoyed a wide circulation within all parts of Nazi-occupied Poland.¹²⁵ Many of the titles were directed at particular segments of society, including the peasant and working classes, and the youth.

The Myth of the Covert Jew

Within the press of the same political camp, a new and important development can also be detected, namely that of the

¹²¹ YVA, 0-25, File No. 202/III/80, the Department of Information and Press, weekly reports.

¹²² On Feliks Koneczny, see S. L. Shneiderman, "'High" Antisemitism Revived,' *Midstream*, August-September, 1973, 76-81.

¹²³ Feliks Koneczny, *Cywilizacja Żydowska* (London, 1974), 389-394.

¹²⁴ All Polish political parties that went underground produced clandestine press. The numbers of this press increased vastly from forty titles at the end of 1939 to six hundred titles by 1944. See Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed., *Centralny katalog polskiej prasy konspiracyjnej 1939-1945*. (Warszawa, 1962), 11-12.

¹²⁵ Jerzy Jarowiecki, Jerzy Myśliński and Andrzej Notkowski, *Prasa Polska w latach 1939-1945* (Warszawa, 1980), 96-101.

expansion of the use of the notion of the covert/masked Jew hardly distinguishable from his ethnic Polish counterpart. By way of note, the notion of the covert/masked Jew had been used with reference to the most culturally assimilated Polish Jewish intelligentsia of the pre-war period. During that time, it was this group of Polish Jewry that was frequently perceived as the most dangerous because of its alleged ability to destroy 'the spiritual, cultural and even biological essence' of the Polish nation. The core exclusivist ethno-nationalist press, such as the *Endecja's National Thought*, regularly published a list of Polish Jews who adopted Polish sounding names. According to the paper, Jews who had adopted Polish names were 'covert Jews' pretending to be Poles. Furthermore, by so doing, they were committing a type of 'crime' against the Polish nation.¹²⁶

During the war this notion of covert Jews came to be employed in describing the Jews, not only as the cultural, but also as the political enemies of Poland. Furthermore, its potential was to be used against any individual whose ethnic identity was suspect. The expansion of the use of this notion synchronised with the time of the destruction of the majority of Polish Jewry, and with the fact that Polish Jews living on the Aryan side in the GG needed to appear Polish in their physical and cultural make-up in order to survive. So who were the masked Jews?

On 16 May 1943 the *Manager (Kierownik)*, the press organ of the National Democrat's National Military Organisation, presented the following profile of the covert Jew:

'The Jewish hand is turning against us and blames the Polish nation for all the miseries that have befallen and for the lack of help from our side. Yes, a majority of the Jewish nation is destroyed, but the remnants have not changed their attitude towards us. They are closer to a Russian or German Communist than they are to us Poles. They are waiting to take control over our economic life. They are plotting against us along with other ethnic minorities. In our conflict with Soviet Russia they support the Bolshevik side. They would do anything in order to weaken us and to prevent the emergence of a Great Poland. We are fully aware that a few hundred thousand Jews are enough to take control of our economy and to infiltrate the centres

¹²⁶See, for example, 'Ochrona Nazwisk Polskich' (In Defence of Polish Names), No. 32, 1922, 6-7.

of our political and cultural life. These particular Jews are even more dangerous than the Jews en masse. There are many signs that covert Jews in Poland and Jewish emigre circles are now preparing to take control over Poland.¹²⁷

As we can see, within the extreme ethno-nationalist camp the covert Jew was defined as the most threatening element in a future Poland, and categorised as an ideological enemy nursing a particular hatred for everything Polish and conspiring with all other enemies of the state. Different elements were interlocked in this particular version of the myth: the Jew as ideological enemy, the Jew as traitor of Poland, and the cunning and powerful Jew always aiming at harming the Polish nation.

¹²⁷Excerpt from Kierownik, 16 May 1943. Cited in Pawel Szapiro ed., Wojna. 179-180.

Having established the impact that the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other had on the way the significant segment of underground elites related to Polish Jews, I shall now look briefly at the impact of this myth on the Polish ethnic community at large during WWII. I shall focus on two issues: public support for a Poland without Jews, and reactions towards the German destruction of Polish Jewry.

Public support for exclusivist ethno-nationalism during the war was an embarrassing issue for the Polish officials of the time. The already established and strong emphasis on national honour and reputation in Polish culture and fear of being accused of collaboration with Nazis in the extermination of the Jews, contributed to considerable distortions and contradictions in the presentation of this issue.¹²⁸

In order to save national honour and secure Poland's place among the Allied Nations, Polish officials frequently engaged in the suppression of information that might reveal the extent of negative attitudes on the part of ethnic Poles towards Jews, from the international public eye and representatives of Polish Jews abroad. Moreover, positive aspects of the ethnic Polish population's interaction with Polish Jewry were emphasised, and their extent exaggerated by ascribing them to the entire Polish population. Looking at the historical material one can detect a huge discrepancy between the official government position that stressed the solidarity and unity of the entire ethnic Polish population with the Polish Jewish minority, and the information actually received by the government from Nazi occupied Poland.

Public Support for a Future Poland without Jews

Underground reports and dispatches sent to the government-in-exile show that its commitment to the inclusion of the Jewish minority in a future Poland, one that brought it credibility in the eyes of the Western powers, gained a low public acceptance in Nazi occupied Poland. This trend can be viewed as steady and continuous throughout the war. The Nazi destruction of Polish Jews does not

¹²⁸On the importance of the notion of national honour and reputation in Polish national discourse, see Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames*. 81- 82.

appear to have had any mitigating influence over it. Here are four illustrations:

According to a dispatch sent by Janusz Radziwill to Minister Jan Kot, there was opposition against the inclusion of the Jewish ethnic minority in a future Polish nation-state even within the electorate of the PPS Party. The resolution of 3 November 1940 'made a disastrous impression in Poland, even among workers belonging to the Polish Socialist Party.'¹²⁹

An official report of the Department of Internal Affairs of the Delegate's Bureau, covering a period between 15 November 1941 and 1 June 1942, also spoke of popular support for the emigration of the Polish Jews from a future Poland, despite the shock and horror caused by the Nazi treatment of Jews:

'German bestiality towards Jews has brought about sympathy for them and condemnation of Nazi methods within the Polish population. And it has also caused a decrease of aggressive [Polish] antisemitism. Nevertheless, there is a general expectation that the Jewish matter will be sorted out by voluntary or forced emigration after the war. Present economic changes (laws regarding Jewish business and properties) indicate a future rise of political antisemitism.'¹³⁰

In the summer of 1943 the government received a memorandum from Roman Knoll, a senior official in the Delegate's Bureau. According to Knoll, the return of Polish Jews to their homes after the war would not be acceptable to the ethnic Polish population and could in fact erupt into violence which would be justified by ethnic Poles as a means of self-defence. He also emphasised that the future disappearance of antisemitism in Poland was purely conditional upon the disappearance of the Jews themselves.

'In the Homeland as a whole...the position is such that the return of the Jews to their jobs and workshops is completely out of the question, even if the number of Jews were greatly reduced. The non-Jewish population has filled the places of the Jews in the towns and cities; in a large part of Poland this is a fundamental change, final in character. The return of masses of Jews would be seen by the population not as restitution but as an invasion against which they

¹²⁹Cited in Engel, *In the Shadow*. 80.

¹³⁰YVA, 02-25/6, the Delegate's Bureau: the Department of Internal Affairs. Reports on the situation 1941-1942.

would defend themselves, even with physical means...The Government is correct in its assurances to world opinion that anti-semitism will not exist in Poland; but it will not exist only if the Jews who survive do not endeavour to return en masse to Poland's cities and towns.'¹³¹

A report of 27 March 1944 of the Department of Information and Press of the Delegate's Bureau states that the government's commitment to the inclusion of Jews into a future state was simply received with shock and mistrust by the Polish peasantry. In fact, the peasants doubted that such a pledge could have been made by Polish state authorities. Moreover, the report indicates that the peasants classified the Jews, together with the German and Ukrainian ethnic minorities as unwanted peoples within a future state. The fact that Jews and Poles were common victims of Nazi aggression was dismissed as irrelevant in the context of support for an ethnically homogenous polity.

'In general the prevalent mood of the peasant population is that a post-war Poland has to be purely ethnically Polish and that the return to the pre-war situation, where Jews, Germans and Ukrainians had more rights and better work opportunities and enjoyed a wealthier life than Poles, is not acceptable. All the government's promises regarding ethnic minorities published in the [underground] press have been received with shock and mistrust. In fact, the population is convinced that these promises are simply propagated by German sources.'¹³²

The conclusion to be drawn from these records is that the level of support within the ethnic Polish population for the exclusion of Polish Jews from a future Poland was similar - if not higher to - that within the Polish underground political elites.

Even if one takes into account the possibility of exaggeration in some of these records, as argued by the Polish historian Krystyna Kersten, one cannot ignore the fact that the exclusion of Jews from a future Poland was one of the most popular political projects to be put forward in Poland since the regaining of its independence in 1918.¹³³

¹³¹Memorandum by Roman Knoll, Head of the Foreign Affairs Commission in the Office of the Delegate's Bureau. Reprinted in Ringelblum, Polish-Jewish. 257.

¹³²YVA, 02-25/22, the Delegate's Bureau: the Information and Press Bureau. Reports.

¹³³Kersten, Polacy. 3.

Furthermore, there are no accounts of any visible public criticism of this project during the Nazi occupation. On the contrary, public support for the project was estimated as high. After all, as I have already mentioned here, even the Communists used the concept of an ethnically homogenous Poland in their political programmes in order to gain public acceptance during the last two years of the war.

Furthermore, as argued by the historian Jerzy Terej, the popularity of the National Democrats, the core ethno-nationalist party, was on the increase during the war.¹³⁴ The National Democrats succeeded in reaching segments of the Polish population which prior to the war did not vote for the *Endecja*. This was due to its strong ethno-national, Catholic and anti-German ethos; values, which in the Polish case, constituted an important part of identification under conditions of war and German occupation.¹³⁵

Of course, throughout WWII, the National Democrats and its extreme offshoot organisations engaged in disseminating the message that the plight of 'Jews is not a Polish matter.' This takes us to the issue of a positive correlation between Polish exclusivist ethno-nationalism, and lack of concern for the predicament of the Jews, on the part of the ethnic Polish population.

The Myth and the Witnessing of the Holocaust

The first comprehensive report on Polish reactions towards the plight of Polish Jewry under the Nazi occupation, composed by the Polish courier Jan Karski in February 1940, reveals that exclusivist ethno-nationalism had considerably impacted on the way the ethnic Poles reacted towards the plight of Polish Jews. In fact, the nature of this impact on inter-ethnic relations between these two populations under German occupation, was so destructive that the report was subsequently amended. In its second version information concerning negative attitudes towards Polish Jews were omitted and the Polish population was depicted as 'united in its revulsion toward German anti-Jewish actions.' According to David Engel, the second version was prepared because 'Polish officials realised that Karski's original statements regarding the extent and nature of Polish anti-Jewish

¹³⁴On the subject of the increased influence of the National Democrats on the underground and population in the GG, see Terej, *Rzeczywistość*. 108-109.

¹³⁵On the issue of general identification of Poles during WWII, see Antonina Kloskowska, *Kultury Narodowe U Korzeni* (Warszawa, 1996), 299-321.

feeling could potentially, if discovered, discredit the Polish cause in the eyes of Poland's two chief allies, Britain and France'.¹³⁶

Here are two excerpts from the original report:

'Usually one gets the sense that it would be advisable were there to prevail in the attitude of the Poles toward them the understanding that in the end both peoples are being unjustly persecuted by the same enemy. Such an understanding does not exist among the broad masses of the Polish populace.

Their attitude toward the Jews is overwhelmingly severe, often without pity. A large percentage of them are benefiting from the rights that the new situation gives them. They frequently exploit those rights and often even abuse them...'

'The solution of the 'Jewish Question' by the Germans - I must state this with a full sense of responsibility for what I am saying - is a serious and quite dangerous tool in the hands of the Germans, leading toward the 'moral pacification' of broad sections of Polish society. It would certainly be erroneous to suppose that this issue alone will be effective in gaining for them the acceptance of the populace. However, although the nation loathes them mortally, this question is creating something akin to a narrow bridge upon which the Germans and a large portion of Polish society are finding agreement...

Furthermore, the present situation is creating a two-fold schism among the inhabitants of these territories -first, a schism between Jews and Poles in the struggle against the common enemy, and second, a schism among the Poles, with one group despising and resenting the Germans' barbaric methods [conscious of the danger in this], and the other regarding them [and thus the Germans, too !] with curiosity and often fascination, and condemning the first group for its 'indifference toward such an important question'¹³⁷

These excerpts inform us that a broad segment of the ethnic Polish population in the GG perceived the Polish Jews as an unwanted entity existing outside of the fabric of Polish society. Furthermore, they also reveal how this perception impacted on the way the Poles

¹³⁶David Engel, 'An Early Account of Polish Jewry under Nazi and Soviet Occupation Presented to the Polish Government-In-Exile, February 1940' in: Norman Davies, Antony Polonsky, eds., Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR, 1939-46 (London, 1991), 259. Hereafter Engel, 'An Early.' Hereafter Davies, Polonsky, eds., Jews.

¹³⁷Jan Karski's report 'The Jewish Problem In The Homeland'. The entire document cited in Davies, Polonsky, eds., Jews. 269.

were evaluating the outcome of German anti-Jewish actions; with one segment of the population unequivocally condemning the Nazi anti-Jewish actions and the other expressing ill-concealed joy that the Germans were solving the 'Jewish Question' for them. This division was similar to the perspective concerning the Nazi extermination of Polish Jews within the underground political elites, an issue discussed earlier in this chapter. Thus one can see that the indifference and acquiescence caused by the ethno-nationalist perception of the Jew as the Threatening Other was a serious social problem. This also suggests that the attitude of many ethnic Poles towards the Jewish victims of Nazi treatment can be explained in terms of 'the egoism of victimisation', in which there can be no real empathy for suffering experienced by a group's traditional enemy.¹³⁸

Similar observations to those of Jan Karski were often made by members of the Jewish ethnic minority. Reading Jewish records of that time it is clear that regardless of both the level of assimilation into Polish culture, and political affiliation, a noticeable segment of the community was profoundly shocked by the realisation that they were excluded from Polish society and that their own tragedy was not embraced in the tragedy of Poland. The expectation was that their fellow citizens - ethnic Poles - would sympathise with the plight inflicted by the common enemy - the Germans and would not acquiesce in Nazi anti-Jewish actions. As this expectation fell disappointment and bitterness took over in many cases. This suggests that during the war period, different sections of the Jewish minority continued to view Poland as their homeland.¹³⁹ Without that sense of civic affiliation to Poland and belief that they were members of Polish society and equal in rights and duties to those of the ethnic Polish population, they would not have been so shocked by their exclusion

¹³⁸The term egoism of victimisation was introduced by John E. Mack. This was cited by Vamik D. Volkan in 'The Need to Have Enemies and Allies: A Developmental Approach,' *Political Psychology*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1985, 222.

¹³⁹The issue of Polish Jewry's civic affiliation to Poland is beyond the scope of this work. However I would indicate that the participation of Polish Jews in the war of Polish defence against the Nazi invasion of September 1939 provides evidence that different sections of the Jewish ethnic minority identified with Polish state. See Shmuel Krakowski, 'Jews in the Polish Army in the Campaign of September 1939' in: Mendelshon and Shmeruk eds., *Studies*, 149-172, and Stefan Zwoliński, 'Żydzi w polskich regularnych formacjach wojskowych podczas II wojny światowej,' in: *Żydzi w obronie Rzeczypospolitej* 139-152. On the identification of Polish Jewry with the Polish state in the pre-war period, see Mendelsohn *The Jews*, 23, 29.

from the fabric of Polish society from the outbreak of the war onwards, as illustrated by the following:

'The Polish people, suffering perhaps more than any other nation from the yoke of misfortune together with the Jewish people, should have, above all, and at every opportunity, demonstrated sympathy, solidarity and brotherhood with the Jews. Alas, this is but a dream...'

'We know we must not generalise: there is often a compassionate silence, horror in the eyes, a mute expression of solidarity...but what the rabble, youngsters, peasant women, idlers, rascals, scoundrels and outcast...express in words, sets the tone, wounds the heart, hurts the dignity of the Jews who have not been granted the satisfaction of having friends and comrades among the Poles.'¹⁴⁰

The lack of concern over the fate of Jews on the part of a noticeable section of the Polish population was also registered by members of the Polish intelligentsia. In their war-time and post-war writings, including literary as well as non-literary forms, they boldly discuss the issue of indifference towards the fate of the Jewish minority during the Holocaust, and show how ethno-nationalist ways of thinking impacted on the way members of society related to the Holocaust. Here is an excerpt from a little-known short story 'Twigs of Acacia' (*Galazki akacji*), by the theatre critic Edmund Wiercinski, published in Poland in 1947.

"What happened to the Jewish orphanage?" - I asked the maid Marysia. "They said that the Germans threw a shell in there. Maybe a group of children was saved, maybe somebody was rescued". Marysia however, was mostly perturbed by the fact that according to rumour many of us Poles had been shot down in the ghetto. - 'Why did they go there?' - I asked Marysia. - 'For the goods the Jews left behind' - she replied'.¹⁴¹

Witnessing the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

Another good illustration of the influence of the myth on the way ethnic Poles related towards the Holocaust can be found in

¹⁴⁰ Archives of Emanuel Ringelblum, No. I/91, Polish-Jewish Relations. Cited in Kermish ed., *To Live*, 615-616.

¹⁴¹ Edmund Wierciński, 'Galazki Akacji.' *Twórczość*, No. 1, 1947, 47.

attitudes towards the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of April 1943, an event which marked the final destruction of Warsaw Jewry.¹⁴²

Historical records show that neither the underground military authorities nor the Warsaw civilian population was in a position to alter the course of the German destruction of the Warsaw ghetto. However, the city's general attitude toward the plight of Warsaw Jewry can be summarised as one of striking lack of concern or interest.

This lack of concern stood in sharp contrast to the attitude towards tragic events inflicted by the Germans on the ethnic Polish population. A case in point was the attitude of the Warsaw population towards the plight of two thousand Polish peasant children whose transport arrived at Warsaw in January 1943. The Germans had taken these children by force from their parents from the Zamosc region in South - Eastern Poland. According to Tomasz Szarota, the city was very much moved by the news of the children's dying of cold and hunger in trains at a Warsaw train station.¹⁴³ Furthermore, despite the German announcement that spreading news about the children's transport would be punishable by prison, all social classes made an effort to collect money to save them. Clearly, the plight of these children was recognised as a part of the Polish national tragedy.

In contrast, the plight of Warsaw Jewry was not recognised as part of Poland's tragedy. This was clearly visible in the attitudes of the underground towards the Uprising. Although most of the clandestine press praised the Uprising as a courageous Jewish revolt against the Germans, and condemned the Nazi destruction of the ghetto, the underground authorities and the majority of the political elites, with the exception of the Socialists and Democrats, viewed the event as outside of the Polish national effort at fighting the Nazi regime, and as outside of the Polish national tragedy. In fact, the Uprising was referred to as the German-Jewish War.¹⁴⁴

This lack of recognition of the plight of Warsaw Jewry as a part of Poland's tragedy was even more visible in the reactions of the

¹⁴²Yisrael Gutman, *Resistance. The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising* (Boston, New York, 1994), 228-235. Hereafter Gutman, *Resistance*.

¹⁴³On the reactions of the Warsaw population towards the children from the Zamosc region, see Tomasz Szarota, *Okupowanej Warszawy Dzień Powszechni* (Warszawa, 1973), 485-487.

¹⁴⁴On Polish reactions towards the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, see Gutman, *Resistance*. 228-235; Szapiro, 'Problem.' in Grinberg, Szapiro, eds., *Holocaust*. 291-322.

Warsaw population itself. The general attitude towards events taking place inside the ghetto was of indifference. Of course, I recognise that this indifference cannot be attributed only to the myth of the Jew as the chief Threatening Other, but to various psychosocial factors - such as powerlessness and fear caused by the severe conditions of the occupation, as well as by German legislation which decreed the death sentence for Poles rescuing Jews.¹⁴⁵ Still this does not prevent us from looking into how the myth influenced the attitude of the population. After all, such indifference both disturbed, and was unacceptable to some ethnic Poles at the time.¹⁴⁶ Moreover, evidence that exclusivist ethno-nationalism contributed to a great extent to this indifference can still be found in post-war Polish recollections:

'On the other hand my conscience is burdened with much heavier guilt...I have in mind the indifference bordering on cruelty to the fate of the Jews which amounted to saying: I could not care less about the people dying in the ghetto. They were 'them' not 'us'. I saw the smoke rising from the burning ghetto, I heard about what was going on inside, but they were 'them.'¹⁴⁷

The most visible sign of indifference towards the plight of Warsaw Jewry was the participation of a segment of the population in entertainment activities at Krasinski Square in Warsaw, where the Germans set up a merry-go-round in the spring of 1943. 'When the fighting [inside the ghetto] broke out, the merry-go-round did not stop; children, youngsters and passers-by crowded around it as before'.¹⁴⁸

Furthermore, ill concealed joy at seeing the remnants of Warsaw Jewry being murdered was expressed among the Warsaw population, both in private and in public. Evidence concerning this phenomenon can be found in war-time Jewish and Polish diaries and reports, as well as in post-war testimonies. Here are three examples:

In his work on Polish-Jewish Relations, Emanuel Ringelblum reports that these remarks were made even among people engaged in the rescuing of Jews. Here is one such case in which the rescued

¹⁴⁵Barbara Engelking, Zagłada i pamięć (Warszawa, 1994), 55-56. Hereafter Engelking, Zagłada. On Nazi legislation against Poles rescuing Jews, see Ruta Sakowska, Ludzie z dzielnicy zamkniętej (Warszawa, 1993), 235-236.

¹⁴⁶Moral discomfort in this respect was expressed by Czesław Miłosz in his well-known poem 'Campo Dei Fiori' written in Warsaw in April 1943. See Czesław Miłosz, The Collected Poems 1931-1987 (London, 1988), 33.

¹⁴⁷Janina Walewska, 'In A Sense I Am An Anti-semite,' Cited in Shmuel Krakowski, 'Jews and Poles in Polish historiography,' Yad Vashem Studies, Vol. 19, 321.

¹⁴⁸Blonski, 'The Poor.' 322.

Jewish child is exposed to an atmosphere of festivity over the burning Warsaw Ghetto within the circle of his rescuers' friends:

'Though the boy was very much liked, he had to leave this flat, since the landlord's antisemitic relatives did not acquiesce in hiding a Jew, and considered it a sin against the Polish nation. The boy had been through the 'the hottest' time for the Jews, the April 'action'. When the Ghetto where his father lived was burning and the explosions reverberated as walls were dynamited, the boy had to listen to antisemitic conversations, with the talkers frankly expressing their great satisfaction at the Nazi solution of the Jewish problem...I know an eight-year-old boy who stayed for eight months on the Aryan side without his parents. The boy was hiding with his father's friends who treated him like their own child. The child spoke in whispers and moved as silently as a cat, so that the neighbours should not become aware of the presence of a Jewish child...He often had to listen to the antisemitic talk of young Poles who came to visit the landlord's daughters...On one occasion he was present when the young visitors boasted that Hitler had taught the Poles how to deal with the Jews and that the remnant that survived the Nazi slaughter would be dealt with likewise.'¹⁴⁹

In his memoirs, Edward Reicher who lived on the Aryan side passing as a Pole in Warsaw during the war recollects:

'At Krasinski Square we were passing the market stalls. Near the merry-go-round people were in a jolly and playful mood. There was loud music and a few couples were dancing. It looked as though the rabble was celebrating the fall of the Warsaw Ghetto. A drunken man embraced me and said; 'What a joy, the Jews are burning'...In those days as a part of the ghetto was turning into ashes, life appeared so jolly on the Aryan side'¹⁵⁰

One of the Holocaust survivors interviewed by the sociologist Barbara Engelking also recollects:

'For me this was the most painful experience on the Aryan side. This was simply shocking. Crowds of people were on the way to visit their families and friends during the Easter Festival. And I myself with friends was also walking towards *Zoliburz* [one of the suburbs of

¹⁴⁹ Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish*. 141.

¹⁵⁰ YVA, Memoirs No. 033/2824, Edward Reicher, *Za Niepopełnione Winy. Wspomnienia Żydowskiego Lekarza 1939-1945* 178. Hereafter Reicher, *Za Niepopełnione*.

Warsaw]. Among the passing pedestrians I heard 'the Jews are burning and are spoiling our festival' ...I felt as if I was on Golgotha. People were dying and yet they were saying that their Festival was being spoiled. Not one person remarked how terrible it was.'¹⁵¹

Although it is impossible to establish what exact percentage of the Warsaw population perceived the Nazi destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto as a solution to the Jewish Question, one cannot escape the conclusion that such remarks were made openly and without embarrassment by members of different social classes. This indicates a level of public acceptance of an attitude expressing joy at the disappearance of the Jews. The repetitive character of these remarks also suggests that such an attitude could not have been limited to a marginal segment of the population but was rather more wide-spread.

The Myth and the Rescuing of Jews

The final issue which I shall now address is the impact of exclusivist ethno-nationalist belief-systems on the undertaking of rescue actions of Jews by individual Poles during the Holocaust - a subject, in my opinion, deserving a separate in-depth analysis.¹⁵² My general position here stands in agreement with the two scholars Jan Tomasz Gross and Michael Steinlauf who were the first to argue that the fact of a low societal approval for the rescuing of Jews cannot be explained solely on the grounds of fear of German reprisal, that such reasoning is misleading, and that the legacy of pre-war exclusivist ethno-nationalist perceptions of Jews has to be taken into account as one of the crucial factors determining the scope and nature of rescue activities.¹⁵³

Undoubtedly, the rescuing of Jews in Poland was a high risk activity, since providing shelter for Jews was classified by the German occupier as a crime punishable by death, a sentence, frequently announced by central and local German authorities between 1941 and 1943.¹⁵⁴ However, in the light of other important historical data, the

¹⁵¹Interview with H. M.. Cited in Engelking, *Zagłada*, 58.

¹⁵²According to the Polish historian Teresa Prekerowa, the number of Poles involved in rescue activities constituted one per cent, out of fifteen million ethnic Poles living in the GG. See, Teresa Prekerowa, 'The 'Just' and the 'Passive'' in Polonsky, *My Brothers*, 75.

¹⁵³See Gross, *Upiorna*, 25-60 and Steinlauf, *Bondage*, 30-42.

¹⁵⁴On the frequency of announcements of the Nazi decree of death for sheltering Jews, see, for example, Sakowska, *Ludzie*, 235.

fear of Nazi reprisal cannot be treated as the only cause of low societal approval of these activities. Firstly, during the war there was a noticeable discrepancy between the relatively low societal approval for the rescuing of Jews and the high societal approval for a range of underground activities also classified by the Nazi as illegal and incurring severe penalties, including death. This discrepancy was discussed by Michael Steinlauf :

'What limited Polish aid to the Jews was not just fear of the death penalty. In occupied Poland, death was mandated for a host of transgressions great and small, and was sometimes merely a result of being on the street at the wrong time. Nor did the fear of death keep hundreds of thousands of Poles from joining the underground.'¹⁵⁵

This discrepancy has also been noted by war-time survivors of the Holocaust who lived on the Aryan side in the GG. Here is one illustration;

'Hiding Jews was a very dangerous activity and no-one could expect from people such heroism. Nevertheless there was no need for denunciation of one's neighbour because he was hiding a Jew. I myself lived in constant fear that the Germans would kill me but I was even more afraid of Poles who were able to recognise that I was a Jew. Living on the Aryan side in occupied Poland I could have told strangers without any hesitation that my father worked for the underground or that he was engaged in sabotage of German military factories. The likelihood that these strangers would betray me to the Germans was quite low. However, telling a stranger or even an acquaintance that I was a Jew living on the Aryan side with false documents, would simply mean committing suicide. An act of denunciation of underground activities was regarded as socially unacceptable, whereas the denunciation of a Jew was acceptable.'¹⁵⁶

Secondly, it is important to keep in mind that ethnic Poles were generally much better able to recognise a Polish Jew passing for a Pole than German soldiers unfamiliar with the Polish cultural environment and language. By comparison with ethnic Poles, the Germans were less able to distinguish between cultural norms and phenotypes of different minority groups that they encountered on Polish territory.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵Steinlauf, *Bondage*. 41-42.

¹⁵⁶Emanuel Tanay, 'Passport to Life,' in Marian Turski ed., *Losy żydowskie. Świadectwo żywych* (Warszawa, 1996), 66. (in Polish)

¹⁵⁷See Engelking, *Zagłada*. 51-52.

Thus, were the Jews dependent on Poles for successful concealment of their identity.

Thirdly, there is evidence that low societal approval of the rescuing of Jews continued even after the defeat of Nazi Germany in the early post-war period between 1945 and 1947. During this period the newly set up organisation of Jewish Historical Commission in Poland began to publish records of Jewish survival, including the names of Polish rescuers. In many cases these rescuers would ask the local Commissions not to make their names public out of concern over potential negative reactions by their neighbours and acquaintances. This points to the societal isolation of Polish rescuers of Jews - even after the war had ended.

This fact was first raised by Maria Hochberg-Mariańska in her introduction to the testimonies of Polish Jewish Children, published in 1946. Hochberg-Mariańska, who survived the war on the Aryan side and herself participated in the rescuing of other Jews, wrote:

'In this book, in many testimonies, the names of the people who saved the Jewish children are given; in others, only initials are used. Why is this, if their names are known? I do not know if anyone outside Poland can understand the fact that saving the life of a defenceless child being hunted by a criminal can bring shame and disgrace upon someone, and can expose them to harassment.'¹⁵⁸

The request for non-publication of names in full, and concerns over negative reactions on the part of a rescuer's neighbours, was also noted by the historian Michał Borwicz, Director of the Jewish Historical Commission in Cracow in the early post-war period:

The Provincial Jewish Historical Commission in Cracow, of which I was then Director, was collecting among other things, accounts concerning the numerous Poles who had helped Jews during the Nazi occupation, very often at risk of their own lives. Within the context of the experiences of our witnesses, we began to publish these in journals quite early on. Many of those mentioned by names (and portrayed in especially good light) came to us with the accusation that by naming

¹⁵⁸ Maria Hochberg-Mariańska's introduction to Maria Hochberg-Mariańska and Noe Gruss, eds., *The Children Accuse* (London, 1996), 24. Originally published in Polish by the Jewish Historical Commission in Cracow in 1946.

them we were exposing them to unpleasant situations and even revenge.’¹⁵⁹

Evidence of low societal approval for such rescue activities can be found in the war-time and early post-war testimonies of both Polish rescuers of Jews and rescued Jews themselves, including those of children.¹⁶⁰ The consistent picture that emerges from these testimonies is that the actions of Polish rescuers of Jews were frequently met with disapproval or condemnation on the part of their neighbours, acquaintances, and even members of their families. These categories, referred to by the rescuers as ‘unreliable’ people (*niepewni ludzie*), unreliable neighbours (*niepewni sąsiedzi*) and unwanted people (*niepotrzebni ludzie*), were responsible for harassing and pressurising the rescuers to cease their rescue activities¹⁶¹ These testimonies point out explicitly - or more frequently implicitly - that the societal disapproval of rescue activities was not limited to the fear of German reprisal, but also included the legacy of the exclusivist ethno-nationalist evaluation of the Jews as existing outside of the fabric and concerns of the Polish nation.

Here are five illustrations:

In September 1945, Wanda Chrzanowska who sheltered two Czech Jewish children for over a period of two years in Warsaw, stated, that at the end of the war she experienced disapproval of her rescue activities on the part of some individuals in the bomb shelter where she and the rescued girls were hiding from the bombing .

‘The conditions of hygiene were dreadful in the shelter but what was worse were the comments of some bad people who were saying ‘the moment the Germans leave the Jews come back.’¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Michał Borwicz, ‘Polish-Jewish Relations , 1944-1947.’ in: Abramsky, Jachimczyk, Polonsky eds., *The Jews*. 193. Hereafter Borwicz, ‘Polish-Jewish.’

¹⁶⁰ My observations here are primarily based on the reading of sixty-four early post-war testimonies of Polish rescuers of Jews, and of rescued Jews, held in the collection of the Jewish Historical Institute of Warsaw, and the above mentioned Maria Hochberg-Mariańska’s collection of Polish Jewish children’s testimonies *The Children Accuse*. Since this subject of the link between low societal approval of rescue actions and the legacy of exclusivist ethno-nationalism constitutes just a small section in this chapter, I provide only a small sample of illustrations.

¹⁶¹ See, for example, YVA, No. 06/546, The Diary of Adela Domanus (*Historia jednej dziewczynki z czasów hitlerowskiej okupacji Warszawy*), 42. (in Polish)

¹⁶² Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute, in Warsaw: File No. 301/5127, Testimony of Wanda Chrzanowska, 9 August 1945. Hereafter Archives of ZIH.

Józefa Krawczyk, the rescuer of a Jewish woman with a child who had escaped from the Warsaw ghetto at the time of the outbreak of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, stated in her testimony of 1945:

'Events in the ghetto were moving so fast that we did not have much chance to think things over. On Monday 19 April 1943 Sara Lewin arrived at our place with her little boy. Things were really bad because she did not have any clothes or money with her. What could I have done? Throwing her out would have definitely meant her death, therefore [we decided that] she would stay with us. My son-in-law...arranged a false *Kennkarte* for her [the required identity document]. Our first action was to separate ourselves from the rest of the world. Anyone who wanted to visit me was told that I had gone away for a short while. And in fact I had to go away for a while in order not to raise suspicion. Even members of our own family were left in the dark about 'our matter,' as you never knew if someone intended to cause harm and call the Gestapo.'¹⁶³

Mrs A. Konarska, a care-taker in a Warsaw block of flats, who with her husband looked after a young Jewish girl Sabina Indyk, stated in 1946:

'During the German occupation I was constantly afraid of my neighbours who threatened me with denunciation to the police because I was looking after a Jewish child.'¹⁶⁴

Felicja Bolak, who with her husband was engaged in black market activities in war-time Warsaw, and was assisting two Jewish boys stated:

'With shrewd eyes people saw [the Jewish boys] and betrayed us to the Gendarmie, and then the hell began.'¹⁶⁵

Zygmunt Assman, the rescuer of Lusja Kampf a Jewish woman with a daughter, stated:

'When my neighbours began to speak openly that they would harm us if we continued to keep Jews in our place, we spoke to my brother-in-law and decided to move them somewhere else for a while.'¹⁶⁶

Sabina Kryszak, a Jewish woman whose child was saved by a Polish woman, described the problems of sheltering her son. He was

¹⁶³Archives of ŻIH, No. 301/4200. Statement of Józefa Krawczyk. (in Polish)

¹⁶⁴Archives of ŻIH, No. 5284. Statement of A. Konarska. (in Polish)

¹⁶⁵Archives of ŻIH, No. 5119. Statement of Felicja Bolak. (in Polish)

¹⁶⁶Archives of ŻIH, No. 4437. Statement of Zygmunt Assman. (in Polish)

not able to remain in the first shelter with her family's pre-war domestic help Genia, who intended to rescue him, because of the hostile attitude of Genia's friend towards the child:

'My sister...took my boy to our ex-servant Genia who was very friendly with the child. However he only remained with Genia for one day because of the arrival of Genia's friend...He told her that if she did not get rid of the 'Jewish bastard' he himself would sort him out. On the day of my son's departure, Genia behaved very well towards him and provided him with money.'¹⁶⁷

Szlama Kutnowski, born in 1929, stated that his rescuer Mr Ciemierych from the village of Zambska, was harassed by neighbours on his account.

'I had to work at Ciemierych's place but he provided me with enough to eat. He was very good to me. At first when he did not know that I was a Jew he used to send me to the Church to take Holy Communion...When he became aware that I was a Jew he remained good to me....People tried to persuade him to get rid of me but he insisted that his conscience would not allow him to do this and leave me without a roof over my head in the frosty winter.'¹⁶⁸

Conclusions

The general picture that emerges from the analysis in this chapter is that the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other did not undergo re-evaluation during and after the German destruction of ninety per cent of Polish Jewry.

Instead, the myth persisted and had an impact on ways in which a significant segment of underground political and military elites related to Polish Jews throughout the war. As in the inter-war period the Endecja and its offshoot radical organisations used the myth in its most elaborated and intensified form.

With the exception of the PPS and the Democratic Party, and other smaller left-wing groups in the non-communist underground camp, a significant segment of the clandestine political parties and organisations used the myth as a main reference point for their discourse on the Jewish ethnic minority and the future Polish nation-state and nationhood. The model of an ethnically homogenous future

¹⁶⁷ Archives of ŻIH, No. 1424. Statement of Sabina Kryszak. (in Polish)

¹⁶⁸ YVA, No. M-49/273-279. Memoir of Szlama Kutnowski. (undated, written approximately one or two years after the end of WWII)

Poland without Jews, who were categorised as the chief impediment to the development of the ethnic Polish population, was seen as the most desirable vision of a future Polish nation-state. The prevalence of this ethno-nationalist perspective, which contradicted the official stance of the government-in-exile, can be seen as conducive to the process of excluding the Polish Jews from the structure of the underground Polish state, and from the fabric of society in Nazi-occupied Poland, from the very start of the war.

The exclusivist ethno-nationalist perspective also had a noticeable impact on the way a significant segment of underground political and military elites related to the Jewish ethnic minority as victims of Nazi extermination. As a result, Polish Jews were perceived as a group of suffering human-beings, but as being outside of the 'universe of Polish national obligations,' and in many cases as deeply inimical to Polish values, interests and existence. At the same time, it must be stressed, that the greater majority of the Polish underground disapproved of the Nazi extermination of Jews and condemned it as a barbaric and anti-Christian practice. At no point did the Polish Underground collaborate with the Nazis in the Holocaust

On the level of daily interaction between the majority and minority groups, the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other can be seen as contributing both to a lack of concern over the plight of the Jews and to indifference towards the Holocaust. Next to fear of German reprisal, the myth can be seen as conducive to a low societal approval for the rescuing of Jews. In some cases, the myth can also be seen as conducive to an approval of the outcome of the Nazi genocide of Jews, and to hostile actions towards fugitives.

On the other hand, it must be stressed that the rescuing of Jews by individual Poles, and also in a more organised form (by the Żegota) took place, despite the Nazi decree of death issued against rescuers of Jews, and despite the disapproval of rescue activities by members of the Polish community. Furthermore, the underground Polish state condemned any form of anti-Jewish activities. The PPS and the Democratic Party, and members of Polish cultural elites, including writers such as Jerzy Andrzejewski and Czesław Miłosz, expressed in various ways their concerns over negative and indifferent attitudes towards Jews by a section of Polish society, and pointed to the grim moral implications of such phenomena.

In general terms, the example of the continuity of the myth of the Jewish minority as the Threatening Other within the Polish ethnic majority during the Holocaust, suggests that even the physical elimination of a large proportion of the minority group by an external social actor - the enemy of both the majority and minority groups, does not necessary affect the myth. Under conditions of continuous support for exclusivist ethno-nationalism on the part of the dominant nation, these social constructions show persistence and adaptability to different sets of historical and social contexts, and continue to be an important part of exclusivist ethno-nationalist mythology. War-time conditions generally lead to an increased focus on the suffering of a dominant nation, and to a detachment from the suffering of other minority groups subjugated to the same or even harsher treatment, which under conditions of thriving exclusivist ethno-nationalism become further intensified and exaggerated.

Chapter V.

Old Wine in a New Bottle: the Jews as Perceived in the Early Post-War Period, 1945-1949.

'It would seem that with barely one hundred thousand Polish Jews [three hundred thousand] remaining alive from among three million, a nation of more than twenty million, if it does not wish to blatantly contradict common-sense, cannot continue to feed itself tales of the Jewish Menace.'

Jerzy Andrzejewski, 'Zagadnienie polskiego antysemityzmu,' Odrodzenie, 28, June, 1946.

Introduction

In the previous chapter I examined the presence of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other in Polish society during the Second World War. In this chapter I analyse the presence of this myth in Polish society in the early post-war Communist period.

First, I shall look at the presence of the myth among the elites, and secondly, I shall focus on the impact of the myth on anti-Jewish violence - since exposure to violence, and a lack of physical safety was the common social experience of Polish Jews returning home during this period.¹ My main argument is that during the early post-war years, the myth, in various degrees of intensity, continued to play an important role in how Polish Jews were perceived among a significant segment of various elites, including the Catholic Church, and non-elites. The myth was evident in public statements by the anti-Communist elites, and its presence was particularly detectable in the reactions of these elites and their supporters to anti-Jewish violence. As in inter-war Poland, the myth was still used as a means of mandating, rationalising and justifying anti-Jewish violence. This violence was still perceived, by its perpetrators and supporters, as national self-defence. Thus, the myth played a similar role in this period to that of the in inter-war period, although a serious attempt at debating and challenging anti-Jewish attitudes and actions by a

¹On the subject of the lack of safety and violence affecting the remaining Jewish community, see Borwicz, 'Polish-Jewish.' 191-193; Cala and Datner-Spiewak, Dzieje. 15-22; David Engel, 'Patterns of Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland, 1944-1946.' Yad Vashem Studies, Vol. 26, 1998, 43-86. Hereafter Engel, 'Patterns.'; Gross, Upiorna. 93-113; and Józef Andelson, 'W Polsce Zwanej Ludową,' in Jerzy Tomaszewski, ed., Najnowsze Dzieje Żydów W Polsce (w zarysie do 1950 roku) (Warszawa, 1993), 400-404. Hereafter Andelson, 'W Polsce.'

segment of Polish cultural elites of progressive, liberal, and also Catholic provenance can be observed in this period.²

Before moving into the analysis I shall provide a brief outline of the socio-political context of the period under discussion.

Poland of the early post-war years was a ruined polity and one that had in many ways changed beyond recognition. Firstly, six million of its citizens - three million ethnic Poles and three million Polish Jews had died in WWII - the highest figure of any nation. Material losses were also high - many industries and cities, including the capital Warsaw, were heavily destroyed.³

Secondly, the state's pre-war western, eastern and northern borders had changed dramatically. As a result of the agreement of the Big Powers at Teheran (1943) and Potsdam (1945), Poland had lost territories in the East, including cities such as L'viv (*Lwów*) and Vilnius (*Wilno*), and gained territories in the west and north-west including cities such as Breslau (*Wrocław*), Szczecin (*Stettin*) and Danzig (*Gdańsk*). The new Polish eastern border with the Soviet Union was settled on the Curzon line, and the new western border with the newly created Socialist German state was along the Oder-Neisse line (*Odra and Nysa Łużycka*).

Thirdly, as a result of the war and the ensuing territorial-political changes, the pre-war multi-national Polish state, with one third of its population comprised of minorities, was transformed almost entirely into a homogenous nation-state. By the end of 1949, when the first major post-war migrations, transfers and repatriations had been completed - with two million nine hundred thousand Germans transferred to Germany, five hundred thousand Ukrainians, Belorussians and Latvians repatriated to the Soviet Union, and approximately one hundred and forty thousand Polish Jews emigrated (only between 1944 and 1947) - Poland had become ninety-eight per cent ethnically Polish.⁴

²An analysis of this debate is outside the subject of this thesis. Therefore I will limit my comments on this issue to very brief observations.

³On the subject of losses suffered by Poland in WWII and on territorial and ethnic changes, see, for example, Paczkowski, *Zdobycie*. 10-15; Bardach, Lesnodorski, Pietrzak, *Historia*. 632-635; and Schatz, *The Generation*. 199-201.

⁴The figure of one hundred and forty thousand Polish Jews, is not a complete figure. It represents only the number of Jews who emigrated with the help of Zionist organisations, see Andelson, 'W Polsce.' 414.

Approximately three hundred and eighty thousand Jews survived the war, a figure constituting ten per cent of the entire pre-war Jewish population. Seventy per cent of these people survived in the Soviet Union, and the remaining thirty per cent had survived in Poland - in concentration and death camps and on the Aryan side.⁵

Finally, the state's political system had also changed dramatically. Assisted by and under the control of the Soviet Union, the Communists (*PPR*) began to consolidate power in the second half of 1944. The establishment of the Polish Committee of National Liberation (*Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego, PKWN*) in Moscow on 21 July 1944, and its creation of the state administration on the Polish territories, marked the first major steps in the Communist take-over of political power from the London based government-in-exile.⁶

In June 1945, when the Temporary Government of National Unity (*Tymczasowy Rząd Jedności Narodowej, TRJN*) was established, the First Secretary of PPR, Władysław Gomułka (1905-1982) - nicknamed Wiesław - made it clear that the Communists were not going to share political power with anyone. During a political meeting of the Provisional Government of National Unity taking place the same month, Gomułka, known for his bold and expressive linguistic expressions, stated: 'Once we have taken power, we shall never give it up'.⁷ This became evident in the PPR's actions against the constitutional opposition PSL - chaired by Stanisław Mikołajczyk. PSL, which enjoyed the support of the majority and was regarded as the party of Poles ('our party'), was crushed by PPR in 1947, through intimidation, arrests, terror, and a number of political murders.⁸ The left-wing parties such as PPS and the Democratic party, a part of the coalition with PPR, were also forced to be subordinate to it.⁹

⁵Arieh Joseph Kochavi, 'Britain and the Jewish Exodus from Poland following the Second World War,' *Polin*, Vol. 7, 1992, 162. Hereafter Kochavi, 'Britain,'

⁶On the PPR methods of consolidating power, see, for example, Paczkowski, *Zdobycie*. 28-33, and Krystyna Kersten, *Między wyzwoleniem a zniewoleniem: Polska 1944-1956*. Hereafter Kersten, *Między*. 5-27. For a concise history of the PKWN, see Bardach, Lesnodorski, Pietrzak, *Historia*. 623-633.

⁷Archives of the Workers' Movement. Vol. 9, 110. Gomułka's statement cited in Paczkowski, *Zdobycie*. 5.

⁸On the constitutional opposition, see Andrzej Friszke, *Opozycja polityczna w PRL* (London, 1994), 23-44. Hereafter Friszke, *Opozycja*.

⁹Socialists leaders such as Kazimierz Pużak and Tadeusz Szturm de Szterm, among others, were arrested, others such as Zygmunt Zaremba left Poland. See, Friszke, *Opozycja*. 25-26.

At the same time PPR launched action against the illegal political and military opposition, whose intention was to bring down the Communist government and take power. The most active among these organisations were the National Democrats (the Endecja), the NSZ, and the Freedom and Independence movement (*Wolność i Niepodległość*, WiN). This last was the successor to the dissolved AK, and like AK, was comprised both of right-wing and left wing groups.¹⁰

By the end of 1947, Communist power was firmly established. Poland was moving under the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union.

The Communist Take-Over of Power and the Perceptions of the Jews by the Opposition

Historians agree that the illegal opposition - the core ethno-nationalist party Endecja, the radical NSZ, and a significant segment of WiN - frequently categorised the Communist take-over of power as the rule of Judeo-Communism.¹¹ The majority of the illegal press circulating in Poland - newspapers, brochures and leaflets disseminated this belief - which in its most extreme version was categorised as the actualisation of 'Judeo-Polonia'.¹²

Of course, such categorisation was not new. As I have already demonstrated the notion of the Jew as the creator of Communism and the executor of the policies of the Soviet Union, was widely advocated by Polish ethno-nationalists of various kinds and intensity during the previous inter-war and war-time periods, when Jews as a collectivity were categorised as Communists and Bolsheviks. The survivors of the Holocaust were also perceived in this way. Here is one typical illustration of post-war labelling of all members of the Jewish community as servants of the Soviet regime whose aim was to destroy the Polish nation:

'Every Pole is fully aware that every Jew works for the NKVD [the Secret Soviet police], belongs to PPR, and plays a crucial role in enslaving our nation.'¹³

¹⁰On the illegal opposition, see Friszke, *Opozycja*. 45-66 and Kersten, *Między*. 28-36.

¹¹See Paczkowski, *Zdobycie*. 58; Friszke, *Opozycja*. 62; and Kersten, *Między*. 37-46.

¹²Just such a statement was made by Feliks Koneczny in October 1945. Cited by Giertych, *Polski*. 34.

¹³Yad Vashem Archives, Collection of Antisemitic Leaflets in Poland 1945-1946, No. 06/91, WiN's publications, 2. Hereafter, YVA, No. 06/91.

The fact that a section of these remaining Polish Jews were Communists and that some of them held visible and highly ranked positions within the Communist party, and the state apparatus reinforced the notion of the rule of Judeo-Communism.¹⁴ Jewish Communists such as Hilary Minc, Minister for Industry (1944-1949), and Jakub Berman, Under Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1945-1952), were categorised as enemies of Poland and of the Poles, and as servants of a foreign power - the Soviet Union.¹⁵ In anti-Communist propaganda their names were set in the plural in order to emphasise the enormity of the Judeo-Communist take-over.¹⁶ Such linguistic manipulation was also to be used by the anti-Communist opposition in later periods:

'If Poland had regained its independence, everything would have developed differently...But Poland did not regain its independence and the fact that among the Communist elite there were so many Mincs, Bermans, Katz-Suchys, Rozanskis and Fejgs, had to weigh badly upon the future...'¹⁷

The fierce political struggle between the Communist and non-Communist political camps, sometimes described as civil war, and the use of terror and intimidation by the Communists against their political opponents intensified the main theme of the myth - the destructiveness of Jews. A typical illegal message circulating around the country went thus:

'Fellow Poles ! Do you know who is in charge of the trials against us? Jews ! Do you know who is murdering us? Jews! Do you know who is ruling over us ? Jews - and Bolsheviks !'¹⁸

Furthermore, the idea was disseminated that any ethnic Poles who joined or supported the Communists were simply puppets in the hands of cunning Jews, coming as they did from very disadvantaged backgrounds - poor, uneducated, peasant, and working class, and thus

¹⁴For an analysis of Jewish Communists and patterns of their positions and careers, see Schatz, The Generation. 211-230.

¹⁵ibid., 225.

¹⁶This fact was first pointed out by Schatz, The Generation. 206.

¹⁷Statement by Andrzej Lobodowski cited in Barbara Toporska, 'Wybieram watek najmniej popularny,' Wiadomości, No. 47, 1970. This article was reprinted in: Jan Mackiewicz and Barbara Toporska, Droga Pani (London, 1984), 121.

¹⁸Message written at the back of a illegal leaflet circulated in Kielce in August 1945, published by Danuta Blus-Węgrowaska, 'Atmosfera pogromowa,' Karta, No. 18, 1996, 101. Hereafter Blus-Węgrowaska, 'Atmosfera.'

unaware of the 'true' political reality. Even ethnic Polish members of the Central Committee of PPR were portrayed as having no power over decision making.¹⁹

Consequently in 1947, in some circles, the Jews were categorised as responsible for Polish losses on both sides - Communist and anti-Communist between 1945 and 1947.²⁰ In this interpretation the Poles were the victims and the Jews the perpetrators - the basis of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other. The expression of such belief can be found in an illegal leaflet signed by the Committee Against The Jewish Influence, circulated in Bydgoszcz in October 1947:

'What a disgrace ! A disgrace ! A handful of degenerate Jews have taken over the state and are ruling over millions of stupid Slavs... Forty-five thousand Poles from the AC, the NSZ and WiN have been shot or hanged, and thirty thousand Poles from the PPR and the Secret Police (*UB*) have been killed between 1946 and 1947. This is the result of the bloody regime of the Jewish clique, Jews are our mortal enemy.'²¹

The chief leadership of the constitutional opposition - PSL - abstained from any remarks concerning the Jewish minority and was careful not to raise the subject just as during WWII. Nevertheless, elements of the myth of Judeo-Communism can be found in the comments of the rank and file of the peasant movement. Here are three illustrations:

During a local meeting of PSL in Cracow on 19 August, 1945 Lesniak , a PSL activist from Limanowo stated thus:

'The Poland that we have is not the Poland we have been waiting for. This is a Jewish Poland. Jews are occupying all high

¹⁹This phenomenon was first pointed out and analysed by Krystyna Kersten. See Kersten, *Polacy*. 78-80.

²⁰According to estimated data, approximately six thousand members of the opposition were killed between 1945 and 1946 and another forty-five thousand arrested. The losses on the Communist side were ten thousand, the majority killed between 1945-1946. In 1947, another two thousand members of the opposition were killed and twenty five thousand arrested. Paczkowski, *Zdobycie*. 44, 74.

²¹This illegal leaflet was published in the Bulletin of the Ministry of Public Security No. 17, 1947. Cited in the published collection of the Bulletins of the Ministry of Public Security, entitled *Biuletyny Informacyjne Ministerstwa Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego 1947. Źródła do Historii Polski XX Wieku - ze Zbiorów Centralnego Archiwum Ministerstwa Spraw Wewnętrznych*. Seria C. Vol. 1, (Warszawa, 1990), 182-183. Hereafter *Biuletyny*.

positions in the Public Security Office . They should be arresting Jews not the Poles.'²²

In its resolution, made in the autumn of 1945, the young peasant movement 'Wici' stated the following

'We demand the elimination of 'International Jewry' from the state apparatus. Happiness, for the Jews, is the destruction of all other nations.'²³

During the PSL Congress of 19-21 January 1946, a Warsaw correspondent of the Jewish Chronicle, a weekly published in London, received the following statements from his interviews with peasant activists:

'Charges [against Jews running the secret police] were repeated at the recent Peasant Congress in Warsaw where some three thousand delegates met to listen to Mr Mikołajczyk - Mikołajczyk condemned excesses against workers and peasants but did not say anything about the Jews. Some peasants told me that the reason the security policy often took 'drastic measures' in areas where outrages occurred was 'because there are a lot of Jews in the police and these Jews are taking revenge on us.'²⁴

How many Jews were members of the infamous civilian security service, commonly known as Bezpieka ?

Bezpieka was a part of the Polish security apparatus which during the early post-war period was totally controlled by the Soviet secret police. According to available data - a record prepared in the autumn of 1945 for Bolesław Bierut (1892-1956) the future President of Poland(1947-1956) - Bezpieka numbered twenty-eight thousand employees with Jews numbering four hundred and thirty-eight persons equal to one point three per cent of its total employees. Among its five hundred managerial cadre were sixty-seven Jews, equal to thirteen per cent of this strata.²⁵

At the end of 1949, Bezpieka was increased to fifty thousand employees operating through a network of approximately one hundred and fifty thousand informers.²⁶ The whole of its insitution,

²²YVA, No. 06/91. Anti-Jewish Propaganda within PSL, 5.

²³YVA, No. 06/91, Anti-Jewish Propaganda within PSL, 5.

²⁴'Jews and Polish Government. Vicious Campaign of Slander,' Jewish Chronicle, 1 March, 1946, 1.

²⁵Data cited by Kersten, Polacy. 83-84.

²⁶Data cited by Schatz, The Generation. 223.

including its head Stanisław Radkiewicz, an ethnic Pole, was categorised as Jewish in the anti-Communist press. Even if one assumes that the percentage of Jews had increased between 1946 and 1949, this institution cannot be viewed as Jewish since the total Jewish population in Poland at the beginning of 1949 was only one hundred and ten thousand. Thus, the probability that all the remaining Jews were employees of the Bezpieka is very unlikely if not impossible. Furthermore, the size of the Jewish population continued to shrink between 1949 and 1951. Thirty thousand left Poland between 1949 and the end of the following year, and by 1951 the Jewish community was reduced to fifty-seven thousand.²⁷

Were all the remaining Jews Communists? A close look at the early post-war Jewish community shows this not to be the case. Between 1945 and 1949 there was a short-term re-birth of Jewish religious institutions and political organisations - as in the inter-war period, the Jewish community was characterised by a diversity of political affiliation. In the Central Committee of Jews in Poland (*Centralny Komitet Żydów w Polsce, CKZP*) - the 'umbrella' institution, established in November 1944 - the following organisations were active: the Socialist Bund, all Zionist organisations, (except for the banned revisionists who were active illegally), and the Jewish section of PPR, which existed between 1945 and 1949. This diversity lasted until 1949, when the state began to put an end to all Jewish organisations except for the Communist one. Support for Communism was not high. In 1946, the Jewish section of PPR numbered three thousand members, expanding to seven thousand the following year, while the membership, for example, of just one Zionist organisation - Ichud - was estimated in 1947 to be between seven and eight thousand.²⁸

The subject of the self-identification of Communist Jews is outside the scope of this thesis, but it is worth noting that Communist Jews active in the Jewish section of PPR were viewed by their own

²⁷On the subject of the demography of the Polish Jewish community in the early post-war period, see Andelson, 'W Polsce.' 389-390, 417 - 420.

²⁸On the activities of various Jewish political parties and organisations, and their membership, see Andelson, 'W Polsce.' 433-450.

community as the 'Jewish Jews', while Jews in the PPR party were seen as 'non-Jewish Jews' ('Aryan Jews').²⁹

In the latter group, many had a long-standing record of membership in the pre-war KPP, disbanded by Stalin in 1938. As in the KPP, these Communists played an influential role in the central apparatus of the PPR in the early-post war years.

However, PPR cannot be viewed as a Jewish party run by Jews for Jews in order to oppress ethnic Poles. Two facts - the size of the party, and of the Jewish community itself, contradict such a view. In late 1945, PPR numbered two hundred and thirty thousand members - already sixty-one per cent of its rank and file had working class backgrounds and twenty-eight per cent were peasants. In the autumn of 1946, the membership of the party increased to four hundred thousand, and by 1947 had reached the figure of eight hundred thousand.³⁰ Given the fact that between 1946 and 1947, the highest figure for Polish Jews on Polish territories can be estimated at two hundred and fifty thousand, the perception of the PPR as a Jewish party established in order to oppress ethnic Poles is simply incongruent with reality.

Thus, one can see that the myth of the rule of Judeo-Communism in early post-war Poland, as disseminated within the anti-Communist opposition, was a powerful social construction, which offered a simplistic and comforting explanation for the contemporary political and social upheaval. And one which prevented the realisation that the Communist regime was not a Jewish invention, but a Soviet imposed government in which both Communist Jews and Poles had actively participated, and that the increasing number of ethnic Poles

²⁹The categorisation of Jewish Communists by the sociologist Percy Cohen can be useful in understanding the problem of the self-identification of Communist Jews in Poland. Cohen differentiates between two categories of Communist Jews: Jewish Radicals - and Radical Jews. The former are those Jewish Communists purely committed to the Communist cause and for whom their ethnicity is of no importance. The latter group are those, who, while Communists, are also affiliated to Jewish organisations, see Percy S. Cohen, Jewish Radical and Radical Jews. (London, New York, Toronto, 1980), 85-88. On the self-identification of the Polish Jewish Communists, see Schatz, The Generation. 236-242; and interviews with such Communists in Teresa Torańska, Them. Stalin's Polish Puppets. (New York, 1987).

³⁰Data concerning the membership of the PPR is cited in Paczkowski, Zdobycie. 34, 79.

joining the rank and file of the Communist Party reflected a desire for the normalisation of life after five years of experience of war.³¹

This again confirms the aptness of the pre-war thesis of Aleksander Hertz that the mythologisation of the Other as the enemy can continue, regardless of the actual social position of the mythologised subject.³²

Perceptions of Jews within PPR

I shall now briefly discuss perceptions of the Jews within the Communist party and state apparatus - a more complex and less obvious case than that of the anti-Communist opposition.

A perusal of the policies and practices of PPR and the Communist state shows a number of clear contradictions regarding equality of rights for Polish citizens. On the one hand, PPR officially declared recognition of equality of rights for all citizens - a declaration already part of the PKWN manifesto of July 22 1944, which was expressed thus:

'...the restoration of all democratic liberties, the equality of all citizens, regardless of race, creed, or nationality' [and that] 'Jews who have been subjected to inhuman tortures by the occupier are guaranteed full rehabilitation, and legal, as well as actual equality of rights.'³³

On the other hand, in various addresses to the Polish population, leading Communists such as Alfred Lampe, Bolesław Bierut and Władysław Gomułka emphasised the PPR's commitment to the creation of a homogenised [ethno-national] model of the Polish state.³⁴ Such statements, as previously indicated, had already been made during WWII and were to continue in the post-war period. In fact, this development led some historians to conclude that the chief goal of the pre-war nationalists [exclusivist ethno-nationalists] had

³¹According to Paczkowski, in 1947, one in ten Poles actively supported the new Communist regime, including financial donations. Paczkowski, *Zdobycie*. 79.

³²Hertz, 'Swoi.' 159.

³³The PKWN manifesto of 22 July 1944. Cited in Bernard. D. Weinryb, 'Poland,' in: Paul Meyer et al., *The Jews in The Soviet Satellites*. (Syracuse, N. Y. 1953), 258. Hereafter, Weinryb, 'Poland.'

³⁴The use of national and religious ceremonies, and the emphasis on creating a homogenised Polish nation-state in Communist propaganda was pointed out and discussed by Kersten, *Między*. 12-13 ; and Marcin Zaremba, 'Partia i naród. PRL: internacjonalizm w cudzośćwie,' *Polityka*, No. 48, 1995, 72.

been advocated and paradoxically attained by the Communist regime.³⁵

Of course, this development had been noted and criticised by some members of both the Jewish and ethnic Polish communities of the time. For example, as early as 1945, members of the Jewish section of PPR had raised their concerns over the emphasis in creating 'a homogenised nation-state of one people' [ethnic Poles]' and the negative effect of such a notion on equality of rights for ethnic minorities.³⁶ They argue, furthermore, that there was a noticeable link between the advocacy of the notion of a homogenised nation-state and the on-going displacement of other minorities and increase in anti-Jewish hostilities.³⁷ Records of the meetings of CKZP contain statements expressing such concerns. Here is one example:

'National consolidation is increasingly growing and following the line of ousting national minorities from the life of the state.'³⁸

Stanisław Ossowski, a leading post-war Polish sociologist, was perhaps one of the first members of the Polish intellectual elite to share such concerns. In an article entitled 'The Background to the Events at Kielce' [the Kielce pogrom] (*Na tle wydarzeń kieleckich*), published by the left-wing monthly *Kuznica* in September 1946, he expressed criticism of the manipulation and channelling of nationalist resentments by the Communist press. Moreover he argued that this practice was an important factor in the increasing intolerance and hatred towards ethnic minorities, particularly the Polish Jews.³⁹

³⁵This general conclusion has been made by Norman Davies, *The Heart of Europe. A Short History of Poland*. (Oxford, 1986), 325-326; Jerzy Jedlicki, 'Nationalism and State Formation,' in Andrea Gerrits and Nanci Adler, eds., *Vampires Unstaked. National Images, Stereotypes and Myths in East Central Europe*. (Amsterdam, Oxford, 1995), 130; Łepkowski, *Uparte*. London, 1989; Steinlauf, *Bondage*. 43.

³⁶One hundred and twenty thousand Ukrainians dwelling within the territory of post-war Poland were uprooted from their homes and dispersed all over the state. This was part of the Communist action against the Ukrainian nationalist movement (UPA). See Paczkowski, *Zdobycie*. 74-75.

³⁷This problem of critical reactions of the Jewish section of PPR towards the advocacy of a homogenised Polish nation-state for Poles, and the negative effects of such a notion on ethnic minorities has been noted by Krystyna Kersten, 'The Polish Stalinism and the Jewish Question,' in: Leonid Luks, ed., *Der spatstalinismus und die 'judische Frage:' zur antisemitischen Wendung des Kommunismus* (Weimar, 1998), 222-223. Hereafter Kersten, 'The Polish.'; and Maciej Pisarski, 'W Nowej Polsce,' *Karta*, No. 18, 1996, 114. Hereafter Pisarski, 'W Nowej.'

³⁸Statement of Marek Bittner made at a session of the Jewish faction of the PPR in the autumn of 1945. Cited in Kersten, 'The Polish.' 222.

³⁹Stanisław Ossowski, 'Na Tle Wydarzeń Kieleckich,' *Kuznica*, No. 38, 1946, 123-125.

Major contradictions can also be detected in the perception and treatment of Polish Jews by ethnic Polish Comrades within the Party and Communist-run state apparatus. PPR was generally viewed, including by the West, as the party that fully committed to fighting antisemitism, since its predecessor, the pre-war KPP, had a strong record of condemning all anti-Jewish activities. Nevertheless, there was a clearly noticeable discrepancy between its theory and practice.

Although PPR issued declarations of fighting against antisemitism no substantial measures, such as legislation to make antisemitism a state-crime, were introduced.⁴⁰ Moreover, historical records suggest that members of local PPR committees and officials of the state apparatus themselves expressed negative attitudes towards the remaining Jews, and did not in fact treat them as equal citizens with the same civic rights as ethnic Poles. This situation was particularly evident in South-Eastern and Central Poland, including the province of Kielce.⁴¹ Here are two such illustrations:

Firstly, on 23 February 1945, the Voivode of Kielce province issued the following letter to members of Municipal Councils:

'The Minister of Public Administration has been informed that citizens of Jewish nationality living in the [Kielce] province are not properly treated by our institutions and offices. Therefore an instruction has been issued that all citizens have to be treated correctly. Officials who breach this instructions will face penalties.'⁴²

Secondly, at the meeting of 14 May of 1945, the Jewish Committee of Kielce province made the following observations:

'Ostrowiec [Ostrowiec Świątokrzyski] - the size of the Jewish community - one hundred and ninety-three members. State of safety very poor - there are cases of assaults and robberies. Recently, some local officials have stated that German legislation still applies to the Jews. There are cases of common hooliganism - Jews are beaten up and policemen present at these assaults have said: 'Beat him up I do not see anything.' Jews are arrested for corruption, while the murderers of four persons go free - just before the Red Army entered

⁴⁰See Weinryb, 'Poland,' 258-263.

⁴¹See, Andelson, 'W Polsce.' 400 -403; Cała and Datner Spiewak, 'Dzieje.' 16-18; and Blus-Węgrowka, 'Atmosfera.' 87-99.

⁴²Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem, HM 2/8112 -8134 / No. 2, Letter of 23 February 1945 of the Voivode of Kielce Province, signed by M. Lewaniewski. Hereafter CAJP, HM 2/8112 - 8134.

this province, a certain Polish family murdered a Jewish family. They were arrested, but later released. In the Ostrowiec area leaflets are circulated, saying 'death to any remaining Jews'.⁴³

According to an analysis of historical records by Blus-Węgrowka, many local PPR committees failed to take any preventative measures against the anti-Jewish violence spreading in 1945 in Poland.⁴⁴ In some cases, PPR committees ignored Jewish petitions for help to put an end to anti-Jewish hostilities. In other cases, local Communist authorities discontinued investigations into the murders of individual Jews despite sufficient evidence, including witness testimonies. In yet other cases, representatives of the state apparatus, the army and particularly the police (the militia), not only allowed anti-Jewish hostilities to take place but themselves participated in such events.

Additionally, an increase of negative attitudes towards Jewish Communist comrades, who constituted ten per cent of all the employees of the state, can also be detected within the rank and file of the PPR and state apparatus during this period.⁴⁵ Records of such attitudes, which clearly point to a breach of the Communist principles of internationalism, brotherhood and friendship, can, for example, be found in the Bolesław Bierut Archives, held in the Archives of New Documents (ANN) in Warsaw.⁴⁶ They can be summarised by the simple statement 'There are too many Jews among us and we do not want them.'⁴⁷

⁴³CAJP, HM 2/8112-8134, Minutes of the Meeting of the Jewish Committee of Kielce Province, 14 May 1945.

⁴⁴See Blus-Węgrowka, 'Atmosfera.' 87-88 and 98-99.

⁴⁵Data cited in Cała and Datner-Spiewak, 'Dzieje.' 171.

⁴⁶I express my gratitude to Prof. Andrzej Paczkowski of the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences for proving me with access to a sample of Bierut's notes. Access to these archives was made to historians only after the political changes of 1989.

⁴⁷Jonathan Frankel discusses the general pattern of replacing Jewish Communists with members of (territorially based) majority nations during the period of Communist consolidation of power, in his article 'The Soviet Regime and Anti-Zionism,' in: Ezra Mendelsohn, ed., Essential Papers On Jews And The Left. (New York and London, 1997). 449-451. Hereafter Frankel, 'The Soviet.'

It is worth mentioning here that some historians argue that Jewish Communists were used by Stalin in the Sovietisation of Poland and that they constituted the reinforcement, qualitatively and numerically, of the meagre Polish Communist cadre available to him in 1944. See Davies and Polonsky, Jews. 51-52; and Schatz, The Generation. 180-181.

Perhaps the most important evidence of such attitudes is a conversation between the First Secretary of PPR, Władysław Gomułka, and the head of the Soviet Communist Party and Soviet State, Joseph Stalin (1879-1953). This conversation, which took place on 9 December 1948 - the day before PPR and PPS was merged into the United Polish Workers' Party (*Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR*), was confirmed in writing in Gomułka's letter to Stalin of 14 December 1948.

Addressing the membership of the PPR and state apparatus, Gomułka indicated that there was a need for 'regulation of the cadre along national [ethno-national] lines' - meaning a reduction of Jews and increase in numbers of ethnic Poles, particularly within the high rank of the PPR. Furthermore, Gomułka made a particularly negative evaluation of Jewish Comrades - accusing them of 'national nihilism' - an accusation which was to play an important role in anti-Jewish propaganda within the Communist party in the 1950s and 1960s.

'Basing my views on some observations, I can state with certainty that a segment of Jewish Comrades does not have a strong attachment to the Polish nation and therefore cannot have a strong attachment to the working class. In fact, their position can be defined as national nihilism. I have plenty of evidence, that their present employment situation within high levels of the party and state apparatus, causes bitterness and discontent [among ethnic Polish comrades]. Furthermore, a particular atmosphere...in which no-one is allowed to criticise this issue openly, has been created since the Eighth Plenum of the Party took place. Nevertheless, discontent is expressed covertly....In my opinion, it is important to put an end to the increase in numbers of Jewish Comrades both in the Party and state apparatus. In fact, the number of Jewish Comrades should be decreased, particularly at the higher level.⁴⁸

One can argue here, that Gomułka's position on the constituency of the PPR and state apparatus, resembles the pre-war ethno-nationalist argumentation for the polonisation of the cities and provision of jobs for ethnic Poles (the peasants) at the expense of the Jewish population, as I have discussed in the second chapter. In both cases, Jews were categorised as an impediment to the development of

⁴⁸Gomułka's letter of 14 December 1948 to Stalin. Published in *Dzis*, No. 6, 1993, 108-109. (with an introduction by Andrzej Werblan).

ethnic Poles - a claim central to exclusivist Polish ethno-nationalism (Gomulka's position representing a moderate form of such claim).

One should ask here what do the above contradictions between the PPR ideology and official Party line, and some of its actual policies and practices indicate. In general one can see that PPR presented two different images of itself - first declaring its adherence to the principles of equality for all citizens of Communist Poland, and secondly emphasising the homogenisation of the Communist Polish nation-state - a process already taking place as a result of the war and the ensuing transfers of populations and changes of borders.

The first image can be seen as particularly directed at the Western powers, which paid attention to such declarations, given the pre-war Polish record of the negative impact of exclusivist ethno-nationalism on policies and practices concerning ethnic minorities - particularly the Jewish minority.

The second image was directed at the ethnic Polish population - the majority over whom the Communists wished to exercise political power. In its efforts at seeking legitimacy in the eyes of ethnic Poles, PPR used the core ethno-nationalist notion, 'Poland for [the ethnic] Poles' - a strategy, arguably brought by the Party's awareness of the wide-spread support within the ethnic Polish population for ethnic nationalisation of Poland. Of course, in resorting to this strategy the Party can once again be seen as contradicting the core Communist principle of internationalism and brotherhood. Was this strategy a purely instrumental means of achieving legitimacy ?

Reactions towards members of the Jewish community suggest that an ethno-nationalist perspective with clearly anti-Jewish overtones, had been internalised / absorbed within the ethnic Polish rank and file of the PPR and Communist state apparatus. This perspective, noticeable in contacts between members of the Jewish community and members of the PPR and state apparatus, particularly on the local level, can be seen as leading to the following developments: unequal treatment of Jewish citizens by institutions and offices, prejudiced attitudes towards Jewish petitions concerning their safety, and in some cases - participation in anti-Jewish hostilities.

The same perspective was noticeable in attitudes of some ethnic Poles within the Party and PPR and state apparatus towards their fellow Jewish Communist Comrades - as manifested in employment

and promotion. Ethnic Polish Comrades were to be given preference in employment and promotion over Jewish Comrades, whose number within the Party and state apparatus was to be drastically reduced.

Thus, one cannot deny that the so-called process of the ethno-nationalisation of Communism, here with strongly anti-Jewish elements, was beginning to take place within the ethnic Polish segment of the PPR and state apparatus.⁴⁹ In my next chapter, I shall discuss in detail the problem of the further development of the ethno-nationalisation of Polish Communism with its anti-Jewish elements in the late 1960s.

The Myth and the Rationalisation and Justification of Anti-Jewish Violence

I shall now move on to a discussion of the impact of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other on anti-Jewish violence in the early post-war period. As in my analysis, in chapter three, of anti-Jewish violence in inter-war period, by the term 'violence' I understand here the following types of actions: inflicting damage on Jewish properties, verbal and physical harassment, assaults and murder.

As previously mentioned, a lack of safety, fear of assault and robbery, and fear for one's life constituted the salient aspect of social experience of Polish Jews returning home in the early post-war period.

A good illustration of the presence of such fear within the Jewish community of the period are the Minutes of the Meeting of the Jewish Committee of Kielce Province of 14 May 1945, in which the following observations were registered:

'Town of Szydłowiec - size of the Jewish community one hundred, personal safety very bad.

Zwoleń - size of the Jewish community forty-seven - they all wish to leave the town.

Radom - size of the community four hundred and two - they are depressed and live in fear. Attitude of local Polish population hostile and raises concerns.'⁵⁰

Accounts of hostility, ranging from verbal harassment to robbery, beatings and even murder were frequently recorded in

⁴⁹ On the subject of the link between Communism and nationalism/ethno-nationalism, see, for example, the introduction by Klein and Reban, in Klein and Reban, eds., *The Politics*. 1-7.

⁵⁰CAJP, HM 2/8112-8134, Minutes of the Meeting of the Jewish Committee of the Kielce Province, 14 May, 1945.

individual statements, diaries, and official records of the CKZP and PPR. A typical phenomenon of this period was the circulation of anonymous letters and leaflets directed at the Jewish communities, ordering them to leave under threat of punishment. Here are two examples of such communication:

1. 'To the Jewish Community of Jedlińsk, 9 July 1945.

It has been observed that many of you work in intelligence in the service of government brutally imposed on us and that therefore you are acting against the well-being of Polish society. As a representative of the Polish people, I order all Jews to get out of Radom city and province by 15 August 1945. I warn you that if you do not leave by this date or if you attempt to ask the local government for help, you will be punished.'⁵¹

2. 'Jewish hordes, if you do not leave the city by 15 May, we will take appropriate action !'⁵²

In the summer of 1945, the CKZP became alarmed by the frequency of anti-Jewish attacks in Central and Eastern parts of Poland where one hundred people had been murdered over a period of only two months. The following year with the repatriation of Jews from the Soviet Union that started on 8 February 1946, anti-Jewish hostilities spread all over the country.⁵³ Even in the Western 'Recovered Territories' (*Ziemie Odzyskane*), where both ethnic Poles and Polish Jews were new-comers, anti-Jewish hostilities had become noticeable by the spring of 1946.⁵⁴ By the end of 1947, the overall death toll had reached an estimated figure of between one thousand and five hundred and two thousand individuals, including two hundred

⁵¹CAJP, HM 2/8112-8134. No. 5, 11, A leaflet of 29 July to the Jewish community of Jedlińsk, 1945.

⁵²This leaflet is cited in Blus-Węgrowaska, 'Atmosfera,' 98.

⁵³It is estimated that among the two hundred and fourteen thousand two hundred and ten repatriates from the Soviet Union, between 8 February and 31 July 1946, one hundred and thirty -six thousand five hundred and seventy-nine were Jews, see Andelson, 'W Polsce,' 397-398.

⁵⁴According to Blus-Węgrowaska, the new influx of Polish- Jewish repatriates from the Soviet Union contributed to the spread of anti-Jewish propaganda in Lower Silesia and Pomerania in the spring of 1946. Blus-Węgrowaska, 'Atmosfera,' 97-98. On anti-Jewish hostilities in the Western Territories, see also Ossowski, 'Na tle.' 124 ; and Albert Stankowski, 'Emigracja Żydów Z Pomorza Zachodniego W latach 1945-1960.' in: Jerzy Tomaszewski ed., *Studia z dziejów i kultury Żydów w Polsce po 1945 roku* (Warszawa, 1997), 83-102.

persons killed in the so-called 'train actions' (*akcje pociągowe*), orchestrated by units of the illegal military group NSZ.⁵⁵

The anti-Jewish violence of the early post-war period has been evaluated by scholars as the most severe in the history of hostilities in Poland and, the most severe of this period for the entire region of East-Central Europe.⁵⁶ The Kielce pogrom of 4 July 1946 was the worst such case, when ordinary civilians, together with soldiers and militiamen, murdered forty-two members of the Jewish community and injured another more than one hundred persons.⁵⁷ This event also stands out as the only case of post-war anti-Jewish violence to have been widely discussed in both scholarly and popular works in Poland.⁵⁸

One of the main features of this violence in comparison to the inter-war period was the extreme intensification of brutality, and the high number of people killed in individual attacks - including women and children.⁵⁹ These phenomena can be attributed to factors such as the impact of the war, in particular the familiarity with the Nazi Holocaust, and the ongoing civil war type situation, and the Communist take-over.⁶⁰

⁵⁵This is an estimated figure. For other estimates, see Cała and Datner-Spiewak, *Dzieje*. 15.

⁵⁶See Cała and Datner-Spiewak, *Dzieje*. 15; Steinlauf, *Bondage*. 51; and Kersten, *Polacy*. 135.

⁵⁷For a detailed historical description of the Kielce pogrom, see Bożena Szaynok, *Pogrom w Kielcach 4 Lipca 1946* (Wrocław, 1992). Hereafter Szaynok, *Pogrom*.

⁵⁸Polish discussion of the Kielce pogrom has been limited to two aspects: description of the event itself, and an investigation into 'forces' responsible for the master-minding of it. Concerning this latter aspect, two main historical theories have been put forward by Polish historians: first, that the pogrom was orchestrated by Soviet security forces - a stance mostly supported in Polish historiography; and secondly, that the pogrom was a spontaneous grass-root event - as advocated by a minority of historians such as Andelson, 'W Polsce.'. There is also a theory that claims that the pogrom was orchestrated by Zionists themselves in order to force the Jews to emigrate from Poland, and that the Poles, not the Jews, were the main victims of the Kielce pogrom, as advocated by Józef Orlicki, *Szkice z dziejów i stosunków polsko-żydowskich 1918-1949* (Szczecin, 1983). On the subject of different approaches to the anti-Jewish violence of 1945 and 1947, in Polish and also Jewish historiography, see Daniel Blatman, 'Polish Antisemitism and 'Judeo-Communism,' *East European Jewish Affairs*, Vol. 27, No. 1, 1997, 35-41.

⁵⁹For a comparison of anti-Jewish violence for these periods 1945-1947 and 1918-1939, and a more detailed description of casualties in post-war period, see Joanna Michlic-Coren, 'Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland, 1918-1939 and 1945-1947,' Forthcoming *Polin*, Vol. 13, 2000, 34-61. Hereafter Michlic-Coren, 'Anti-Jewish.'

⁶⁰See Engel, 'Patterns.' 84-86 and Michlic-Coren, 'Anti-Jewish.' 61.

Yet, despite differences in intensity and in political and social contexts, it is possible to point out two important features common to both the inter-war and early post-war periods: firstly, the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other as provider of grounds for the rationalisation and justification of anti-Jewish violence; and secondly, the use of post-war violence as primarily a means of forcing out the remaining Jews, and thus purifying the polity.⁶¹ In fact, this violence contributed, to a high degree, to the emigration of the remaining Polish Jews from Poland. In August of 1946 alone, one month after the Kielce pogrom, approximately thirty-three thousand Jews left Poland.⁶²

A close look at anti-Jewish leaflets circulated in early post-war Poland, shows the use of the same vocabulary as that of the inter-war period. Jews as a collectivity are once again continuously referred to as a 'menace,' 'plague' and 'curse'. Some of these leaflets are extremely aggressive and can be seen as incitement to violence in the name of national self-defence against the alleged subjugation and destruction intended for the Poles by the Jews. Here is one such example, a leaflet in rhyming verse circulated in the towns of the Western Territories - Frydland and Wałbrzyk in May 1948:

'Attention !

....A Jewish plague has swamped our town

each of the townsmen agrees...

that Jewish faces and deceitful eyes

look at us as if to say: We will show you Poles !

....however we are not afraid

and we are going to beat the Jews back on each and every street
until this Jewish plague is gone'.⁶³

Cases such as the Kielce pogrom reveal that hostile anti-Jewish sentiments proliferated among members of the non-elites and that they were not afraid to repeat expressions of such to representatives of the Communist regime at public meetings held with the purpose of condemning the Kielce pogrom. Here is one example, a report, prepared by one of the special teams of Comrades sent by the leaders

⁶¹Other reasons for emigration were: wanting to join families living abroad, Zionist conviction, strong negative attitudes towards Communism. See Schatz, *The Generation*, 203-204; and Borwicz, 'Polish-Jewish.' 190.

⁶²For data on the emigration of Jews from Poland 1945- 1947, see Yehuda Bauer, *Flight and Rescue: Brichah* (New York, 1970), 7-10.

⁶³Blus-Węgrowka, 'Atmosfera.' 98.

of the Party and state to investigate anti-Jewish hostilities after the Kielce pogrom, about their meeting with workers of the Deblin railway factory on 11 July 1947:

'The meeting lasted two hours and was very stormy. Comrade Chodkiewicz and I both made our statements. During the speeches people shouted back 'Get rid of the Jews ! It's a disgrace that they have come to defend Jews !' Those shouting received a big round of applause from the workers...We did have control over the meeting, but I knew that the prepared resolution would not be accepted because of the hostile atmosphere so I didn't bother to read it out. After the meeting the workers spoke among themselves. I heard them saying: 'They are servants of the Jews, fuck them all !'⁶⁴

The notion of Jews as a physical threat to the Polish nation can also be seen as triggering heated and spontaneous violent reactions against members of the Jewish minority, and, in fact, as responsible for the most brutal beatings and killings - such as in the Kielce pogrom of 4 July 1946.

Importantly, in the early post-war period, the notion of the Jew as physical threat to the Polish nation acquired a particular dimension, hitherto uncommon in the anti-Jewish violence of the inter-war period - namely the accusation of ritual murder. In fact this accusation became the prime cause triggering anti-Jewish hostilities in the early post-war period.⁶⁵

How can one explain such a willingness to believe in an old medieval myth dating back to the twelfth century? Without doubt, the myth of ritual murder grew on psychologically well-prepared soil, after all the whole of Polish society had been exposed to cruelty beyond any human understanding over five years of war and German occupation. Moreover, the experience of war had generated a profound sense of insecurity among many Poles which was only

⁶⁴ Report of Stefan Tomaszewski, head of the Warsaw Department of Communication, Deblin 10 and 11 July 1946. First published in *Puls* with an introduction by Andrzej Paczkowski. Andrzej Paczkowski, ed., 'Raporty o pogromie', *Puls*, No. 50, 1991, 109-110. Hereafter, Paczkowski, 'Raporty'. English translations of these reports, with an introduction by Joanna Michlic-Coren, will be published in the forthcoming *Polin*, Vol. 13, 2000, 253-267. It must be stressed that these reports were prepared only for a very limited circulation among the most high ranking leaders of the PPR.

⁶⁵The ritual murder allegation (blood libel) was a medieval religious belief which asserted that Jews were required by their religion to murder Christian children in order to use their blood to bake the Passover bread (matzoz).

reinforced by the terror, arrests and murders orchestrated by the new Communist regime. Historians stress that during the early post-war period, the population felt a deep fear not only over material goods but over health and life itself.⁶⁶ This fear was sometimes manifested in the most incredible rumours circulating around the country.⁶⁷ Given the openness, at the time, to superstitious beliefs, and to the myth of the Jew as the new ruler of the Polish nation-state, it becomes even more clear how a psychological fear of losing one's life could find its ultimate non-rational expression in the ritual murder accusation.

What also needs to be taken into account here is that the ritual murder accusation as a belief was persistently upheld by a segment of the Polish Catholic Church both in the pre-modern and modern historical periods which includes the inter-war period.⁶⁸ This situation somehow persisted into the early post-war period when the Catholic Church enjoyed a particularly high moral authority.⁶⁹ Historical records of this period show that the belief in ritual murder continued to be detectable not only among lower clergy but also among high ranking ones, with the clear exception of clergymen such as Dr Bishop Teodor Kubina of Czestochowa.⁷⁰

For example, records of the British Embassy in Warsaw contain information concerning the belief in ritual murder among high clergy. Here is one illustration. One and a half months after the Kielce pogrom, Victor Cavendish -Bentinck, British Ambassador to Poland, wrote the following telegram:

⁶⁶ Andrzej Paczkowski, *Półwieku PRL* (Warszawa, 1996), 149.

⁶⁷ On the subject of rumours circulating in the early post-war period, see Dariusz Jarosz, Maria Pasztor, *W Krzywym Zwierciadle . Polityka Władz Komunistycznych w Swietle Plotek i Pogłosek z Lat 1949-1956* (Warszawa, 1995), 132-135.

⁶⁸ For a summary of the presence of ritual murder belief in the Polish Catholic Church from the sixteenth century up to 1939, see Modras, *The Catholic*. 194-198, 203-207.

⁶⁹ According to a survey conducted by Alina Cała, belief in ritual murder persisted among peasants even in the 1970s. Among the sixty peasants she interviewed during her field-work, only twelve firmly rejected the concept of the ritual murder accusation, see Alina Cala, *The Image of the Jew in Polish Folk Culture*. (Jerusalem, 1995), 3-5.

⁷⁰ Bishop Teodor Kubina issued an appeal to the population of his diocese in which he refuted the accusation of ritual murder: 'no Christian, either in Kielce, Czestochowa, or anywhere else in Poland has been harmed by Jews for religious or ritual purposes...We therefore appeal to all citizens of Czestochowa not to be influenced by criminal rumours, and to counteract any excesses against the Jewish population.' Appeal of 9, July 1946. This appeal broadcast by Warsaw Radio in Polish. Poland's Radio for Overseas. Archives of the Wiener Library, PC. 8189. 22. A.

'Dear Rubin,

Bishop Bienik, Auxiliary Bishop of Upper Silesia, astonished me yesterday by stating that there was some proof that the child [Henryk Blaszczyk] whose alleged maltreatment by Jews had provoked the Kielce pogrom, had in fact been maltreated, and that the Jews had taken blood from his arm. If a bishop is prepared to believe this, it is not surprising that uneducated Poles do so too.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Holy See.' 71

There is also evidence that some Catholic churches of this early post-war period held religious artefacts commemorating alleged victims of ritual murder. For example, in the church of the Jesuits in Leczyca, a little coffin with a skeleton of a child allegedly killed by the Jews in 1639 was exhibited with an accompanying manuscript describing the event and a painting depicting a group of religious Jews actually committing the murder on the child. In November 1946, during the re-location of the Jesuits from the church, the artefact and the painting disappeared.⁷²

Thus, the psycho-social and political contexts of the early post-war period, together with the long tradition of ritual murder allegations within a segment of the Catholic Church, can be seen as conducive to the outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence. The ritual murder allegation in the national context of this period reinforced the belief in a Jewish enemy who murdered Christian Polish children and who plotted Polish servitude. In such a way were the Jews perceived as a powerful Other with the ability to destroy future generations of Poles.

This theme of ritual murder was to repeatedly emerge during the many attempts at creating panic and anti-Jewish pogroms before, during and after the Kielce pogrom. On 11 August 1945 rumour spread in Krakow that the bleeding corpses of Polish children were lying in the Kupa synagogue at Miodowa Street. Instantly a crowd broke into the synagogue and started to beat up members of the Jewish congregation who were praying at the Saturday morning Sabbath service. The synagogue was demolished and violence spread to other

⁷¹Telegram of 28 August 1946 sent by Victor Cavendish -Bentinck. Cited in Aryeh Joseph Kochavi, 'The Catholic Church And Antisemitism In Poland Following World War II As Reflected In British Diplomatic Documents,' *Gal-Ed*, Vol. 11, 1989, 123.

⁷²Three documents concerning this matter were published by Danuta Blus-Wegrowska in *Karta*, No. 18, 1996, 120.

parts of the city. Among the many injured were four dead - including two women.⁷³

A similar situation occurred in Kielce during the infamous pogrom of 4 July 1946. Mojżesz Cukier, an eye-witness who lived at 7 Planty Street remembered thus: 'At about nine o'clock, on 4 July, crowds started to surround the building. I heard voices from the crowd: 'you Jews have killed fourteen of our children ! Mothers and fathers unite and kill all the Jews !'⁷⁴ The rumour that a nine-year old boy Henryk Blaszczyk had escaped from Jewish captivity and that other Polish children had been killed led to the pogrom. Records of the CKZP show that thirty more Jews were murdered in several trains on that day as the result of the spreading of this rumour .⁷⁵

Referring to the public mood in Kalisz after the Kielce pogrom, an official report, prepared by one of the previously mentioned special Communist teams, stated the following:

'The rumour grew. People were talking about four, eight and twenty-four boys being killed. One woman, who was not identified, said that she had seen fourteen boys' heads, and that their flesh had been taken by Ukrainians or Soviets, and their blood drunk by the Jews.'⁷⁶

Recent research reveals that even in 1949, in cities like Czestochowa and Krakow, there were attempts at inciting anti-Jewish hostilities by spreading rumours that Polish children had already been killed or were being targeted by Jews.⁷⁷

As in the inter-war period, some individuals actively involved in anti-Jewish hostilities were categorised by a section of society as

⁷³The Krakow pogrom was the first major anti-Jewish riot of the post-war era. However very little has been written on this event. Tomasz Polanski, 'Pogrom Żydów w Krakowie,' Echo Krakowa, 10/12, August, 1990. The Stalin files also contain information about the Krakow pogrom, see Siergiej Kriwienko, 'Raporty z Polski,' Karta, No. 15, 1995, 30-32.

⁷⁴Mojżesz Cukier, eye-witness account cited in: Stanisław Meducki and Zenon Wrona, eds., Antyżydowskie Wydarzenia Kieleckie 4 Lipca 1946 roku (Kielce, 1992), 113. Hereafter Meducki and Wrona, Antyżydowskie.

⁷⁵Statement by Itzhak Cukierman from the minutes of the CKZP, 10 July 1946. Document published in Marian Turski, 'Pogrom Kielecki w Protokołach Centralnego Komitetu Żydów w Polsce,' Almanach Żydowski, 1996/1997, 57.

⁷⁶Paczkowski ed., 'Raporty.' 107.

⁷⁷See Dariusz Jarosz, 'Problem antysemityzmu w Polsce w latach 1949-1956 w świetle akt niektórych centralnych instytucji państwowych i partyjnych,' Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego, No. 2, 1997, 49-52. Hereafter Jarosz, 'Problem.'

national heroes and martyrs. Such was the case of the nine persons sentenced to death on 11 July 1946 at the first trial of the Kielce pogrom.⁷⁸ Their execution took place on 12 July 1946.

A perusal of historical records reveals that a segment of the population was against the executions of these nine persons and that they were in fact categorised as patriots fighting for the dejudaisation of the Polish nation-state. Such a position can be found in statements made by members of the uneducated classes and among the clergy. Here is the first illustration of such a position in an anonymous priest's letter sent to the Prime Minister Edward Osóbka-Morawski in July 1946. In this letter he explicitly describes the people involved in the pogrom as patriots committed to the national cause and warns the government about the potentially hostile mood of the nation should executions take place. Moreover, it appears that such an execution would be seen as a crime directed against the entire Polish nation.

'On behalf of the entire nation I warn you that the sentencing to death of these great Polish patriots [the nine people sentenced to death] who acted only in self-defence and despair after six years of fighting for their lives....will be the beginning of your ruin and will cause harm to the whole nation. Instead of getting rid of the Jews from Poland now when there is a good chance, you are instead murdering your own brothers. In any case, you should protect this eight-year-old hero [Henryk Błaszczyk - the child allegedly kidnapped by Jews], otherwise the Jews will try to poison him as an inconvenient witness⁷⁹

In the second illustration of such a position, in big cities, factory workers launched protest actions against the sentences. In some cases, these actions were transformed into sit-down strikes. Such a situation occurred in Radom where railways workers went on strike, and in Lodz in all the textile factories. One of the previously mentioned special reports states the following:

'The social situation in Łódź is very bad. The strikes have moved swiftly from one factory to another and the women are very aggressive...Women are calling for revenge if the death sentences are carried out... Their antisemitic arguments are as follows: 'a pregnant Jewess gets sixty thousand zlotys and I get nothing! The Jews are

⁷⁸For the records of the trial of 11 July 1946, see Meducki and Wrona, eds. *Antyżydowskie*. 192-205.

⁷⁹This anonymous letter was cited by Kersten, *Polacy*. 113.

running Poland! The Jews of Łódź insist that there is an atmosphere of pogrom in the city. In trams people spread rumours that Jews have killed a child in Baluty [the poorest suburb of Łódź]. The Provincial Party Committee organised a meeting...It was decided to mobilise the whole Party to take counter-action against reactionary movement [according to the official Communist interpretation it was the reactionary forces that were responsible for the Kielce pogrom] that is spreading anarchy in the factories.⁸⁰

The tendency of shifting responsibilities for anti-Jewish violence onto the victims themselves - the Jewish minority - even among institutions that in principle condemned this violence, can also be detected in the early post-war period. The most salient example of this phenomenon was again the Polish Catholic Church.

The general position of the Church on anti-Jewish violence in the early post-war period can be seen as similar to its position taken on the same issue in the inter-war period; on the one hand condemning physical violence and on the other hand blaming Jews themselves for anti-Jewish incidents and reinforcing the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other. The only significant difference was the use of different elements of this myth. In the inter-war period, the Church, as discussed in chapter three, accused Jews of a variety of 'crimes' against the Polish nation; that of spreading atheism, Communism and permissiveness, and of destroying the culture, economy, and morale of the Polish population, while, in the early post-war years, the Church focused on just one issue; Judeo-Communism and Jewish responsibility for enforcing the Communist regime upon the Polish nation. Here are three illustrations of such a position:

After the Kielce pogrom, in July 1946, the Jewish delegation of the Lublin district met Bishop Stefan Wyszyński of the Lublin diocese.⁸¹ A report of this meeting, prepared by two members of the delegation M. Szylckraut and S. Słuszny, states the following:

'The delegation presents its analysis of the political situation in the country that is contributing to anti-Jewish excesses. Bishop

⁸⁰Report of Comrades Dolinski, Domagała, Krych and Fir, cited by Paczkowski, ed., 'Raporty.' 111.

⁸¹Bishop Wyszyński's position on the anti-Jewish violence of 1945 to 1947, was first raised by Michał Borwicz, see Borwicz, 'Polish-Jewish.' 195. It is worth adding here that in the 1960s Wyszyński, then Primate of Poland, was to protest against 'the events of 1968,' including general protest against the anti-Jewish campaign of that period.

Wyszynski disagrees with this analysis, stating that the reasons behind anti-Jewish excesses are far more complex, and are based on the population's anger against Jews who take a very active role in the present political system, and that the Germans murdered the Jewish nation because the Jews were the propagators of Communism....The Bishop stresses that the Nazi [concentration] camps had their roots in the Soviet [labour] camps which were the first schools of barbarism for the Germans.

According to the Bishop, the contribution of the Jewish community to Polish life is minimal....The Bishop condemns all kinds of murders from the perspective of Christian ethics, and regarding the Kielce incident, has nothing particular to add or condemn, as the Church has always condemned evil....[He states that] in Poland, not only are Jews murdered but also Poles. Many Poles are in [Communist] jails and camps.'⁸²

In the aftermath of the Kielce pogrom, a similar statement was issued on 11 July by Cardinal August Hlond to foreign journalists who were surprised by the Primate's views that anti-Jewish violence was a reaction of the frustrated Polish population against the rule of the Communist Jews.⁸³ It went thus:

'Secondly, the course of the highly regrettable events in Kielce shows that they did not occur for racial reasons as they grew up on a totally different, painful and tragic foundation...Numerous Jews in Poland are alive today because of the help of Poles and Polish priests. The fact that this condition is deteriorating is to, a great degree, due to Jews who occupy leading positions in Poland's government and endeavour to introduce a governmental structure that a majority of the people do not desire.'⁸⁴

⁸² Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, File No. 248, CKZP, Legal Department, Sprawozdanie z audyencji u Jego Ekscełencji księdza biskupa Wyszynskiego delegacji wojewódzkiego Komitetu Żydów w Polsce w Lublinie, 1.

⁸³This position has been proved to be biased. According to an analysis conducted by David Engel, there were significant differences in gender and age in casualties between the members of the Jewish community and the non-Jewish Communist political camp - twice as many Jewish youths under the age of seventeen were killed than Polish youths of the same age group and twenty per cent of the overall casualties were Jewish women as opposed to seven per cent ethnic Polish women. This discrepancy indicates that Jews were not killed because of their Communist affiliation but because of their ethnicity, see Engel, 'Patterns.' 69-70.

⁸⁴Press Archives of the Wiener Library. No. 2B, 208, Cardinal August Hlond's statement from W. H. Lawrence 'Cardinal Puts Blame on Some Jews for Pogrom'

The most elaborated example of such a position can be detected in a statement signed by Reverend R. Zalek, found in Kielce Cathedral on 12 January 1952.⁸⁵ The following excerpt is taken from its conclusions:

'Our impression of the incident [Kielce pogrom] is that the Jews have become an embodiment of the present political oppression, and of the hated government. The crowd was often heard to shout, 'Get rid of the Jewish government!' during the incident.

The actions of the Kielce population during the incident of 4 July was an unusual reaction of an oppressed nation against a new regime dominated by Jews....

The entire incident was not directed against Jews as a different religious or ethnic group, but against Jews as rulers over the country. This is the opinion of the whole of society after the Kielce incident.'⁸⁶

One can see here that anti-Jewish violence is justified on the grounds of national self-defence and that in fact the Kielce pogrom is thus seen as a 'guilt free event.'

This takes us to the final issue, namely the use of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other as a means of minimising of the unethical and criminal nature of anti-Jewish violence.

In the case of the chief apparatus of the Communist regime, anti-Jewish violence was clearly condemned. Yet it is important to keep in mind that such violence was officially categorised as one of the elements of anti-state activities that was orchestrated and perpetrated by the so-called reactionary forces and the enemies of the working class - the political opposition and its supporters. Thus, in official Communist statements condemning this violence, stress was placed on fighting the opposition, thereby categorised as solely responsible for the anti-Jewish hostilities. Furthermore, this approach was always intertwined with accusations against the opposition of slandering the good name of the Polish nation.

and 'Poles to Be Hanged,' New York Times, 12 July 1946. See also 'Cardinal Hlond,' Manchester Guardian, 17 July 1946.

⁸⁵Four documents were found in the offices of Kielce Cathedral on 12 January 1952. According to Dr Bożena Szaynok of University of Wrocław, they all are deposited in a private archives in Poland.

⁸⁶Rev. R. Zalek, 'Uwagi i ostrzeżenia na temat zająć kieleckich z dnia 4 lipca.' (Comments on the Kielce Incident of 4 July 1946). I would like to express my gratitude to Doctor Bożena Szaynok for giving me a copy of this document.

Characteristically, issues around the Polish Jews themselves were carefully omitted. No reflections were made on the spread of anti-Jewish hostilities among society at large, and no serious attempts were made at questioning and challenging anti-Jewish propaganda. The topic of anti-Jewish hostility within the rank and file of the Party and the state apparatus was also entirely omitted. Here is one typical example of this official position:

'The incidents of the 4 July in our town [Kielce] have been caused by irresponsible elements of society and have tarnished Poland's reputation. Our nation has always been well-known for its tolerance. Irresponsible individuals have exploited the crowd, which gathered as a result of false and biased news spread by hired servants of the aristocracy....

In the name of the innocent blood shed on the paving stones of our town, we appeal for calm and urge you to resist those elements within society which incite hatred and deliberately attempt to sabotage the rebuilding of Poland.'⁸⁷

As already mentioned, a tendency to play down anti-Jewish violence as directed against Jews was clearly noticeable within the Party and state apparatus on a local level, including institutions of law and order. Cases of the discontinuity of investigations into anti-Jewish violence were common as were lenient sentences concerning anti-Jewish hostilities.⁸⁸ The third trial of the Kielce pogrom, which took place in December 1947, can be seen as a good example of such very lenient treatment as received by two men responsible for the development of the pogrom - Major W. Sobczyński, Chief of Kielce Public Security and Colonel W. Kuźnicki, Chief of the Provincial Police. Both men were simply acquitted of any responsibility.⁸⁹

In the case of the constitutional opposition PSL, any condemnation of anti-Jewish violence was ambiguous. The chief press organ of PSL, People's Gazette (*Gazeta Ludowa*) avoided any clear condemnations.⁹⁰ Of course, the reason for this was the prominence within PSL itself and among its supporters (including right-wing political elites excluded from official public life) of the myth of the Jew as

⁸⁷Official appeal of 4 July 1946 to the Kielce public. Document cited in Szaynok, Pogrom. 112.

⁸⁸See Blus-Węgrowaska, 'Atmosfera.' 88.

⁸⁹See Szaynok, Pogrom. 90-93.

⁹⁰On the reactions of PSL to anti-Jewish violence, see Borwicz, 'Polish-Jewish.' 197.

a highly 'rationalised' vision of reality, any condemnation of anti-Jewish violence was impossible.

Of course, this position was most noticeable in the case of the illegal opposition itself. Here the Jew was most commonly and in unspokenly categorised as an enemy. Thus, anti-Jewish violence was clearly perceived as an element of political conflict rather than an unethical and criminal activity. The most extreme version of this position was represented by the NSZ forces, which themselves perpetrated acts of anti-Jewish violence in the name of national self-defence.

Perhaps the most interesting interpretation of this position is the reaction of the illegal opposition to the Kielce pogrom, a reaction which can be seen as uniform for the various illegal political and military groups. Statements made by this opposition accused the Communist government of master-minding the pogrom in order to turn international attention away from the results of the rigged Referendum of 30 June, and to destroy the reputation of the anti-Communist political camp in the eyes of the Western democratic world.⁹¹ Furthermore, the pogrom was chiefly categorised as a ruse of to defame the good name of Poland. Unsurprisingly, no reflection was made about the Jews as victims of crime.

Here is an excerpt of such a typical statement, published in the issue No. 8 August, 1946 of the chief press organ of WiN, Honour and Homeland (*Honor i Ojczyzna*):

'This anti-Jewish pogrom was neither the first such event, nor an isolated incident. We should not deceive ourselves. It was neither the first nor the last incident in a chain of murders committed by Public Security. The Kielce pogrom is a classic example of provocation...

The following are the facts which shed some light on the methods of the NKVB and the UB, and on the secret tactics of Bolsheviks in Poland.

⁹¹ The referendum of 30 June was regarded as the pivotal political event of 1946. Polish society was supposed to decide on three key issues: agrarian reform, the Polish-German border on the Oder-Neisse line, and a single-chamber parliament. In general, the Polish opposition insisted on voting 'No' on all three issues, whereas the Communists insisted on voting 'Yes' on all three times. The official results of the referendum were falsified. See Krystyna Kersten, Narodziny systemu władzy. Polska 1943-1948 (Poznań, 1990), 249.

The Kielce incident should be considered as part of a broader issue: Communism - Jews - reactionary movements

Among the small numbers of Jews in Poland, the majority of them, four out of five, are employed by Public Security... Thus, the Warsaw government has created perfect conditions for the spread of anti-Semitism and racism, which in turn has led to the West's hostile attitude towards Polish nationalism, and has finally given Moscow the excuse it has been waiting for - to provoke the Polish population, and then to repress it.⁹²

The same point of view, presenting Poles as the actual victims of the Kielce pogrom, can be found in leaflets and anonymous correspondence addressed to local Jewish communities in the aftermath of the Kielce pogrom. Here is one such example - a letter sent to the Chairman of the Jewish Community in Włoszczów:

'As I know you personally from our village I would have feelings of remorse if I were not to warn you. Something bad might happen to your people. No-one is going to forgive you for Kielce. Revenge is on its way for you have treated Poles badly. Nothing can help your people, not even Public Security. A terrible revenge against you is coming from the entire country. I advise you to leave for the Promised Land, otherwise there will be bloodshed in the spring.'⁹³

On the other hand, it must be stressed that a segment of the Polish cultural elites unambiguously condemned anti-Jewish violence. Left-wing journals such as Kuźnica and Rebirth (*Odrodzenie*), and the Catholic Common Weekly (*Tygodnik Powszechny*) - the main representative of the so-called 'open church' in the post-1945 period, published articles addressing and questioning some aspects of the anti-Jewish perspective within Polish society.⁹⁴

Also, Rights of Human Beings (*Prawo Człowieka*), the monthly journal of the All -Polish Anti-Racist League (*Polska Liga do Walki z Rasizmem*), set up in the spring of 1946, published articles questioning anti-Jewish prejudices and actions in Poland.⁹⁵ However, only three

⁹²'Kielce', Honor i Ojczyzna, No. 8, August, 1946. Cited in Krystyna Kersten, 'Pogrom Kielecki- znaki zapytania,' in: Wrzesiński, ed., Polska. 158-159.

⁹³Letter published in the Bulletin of the Ministry of Public Security, No. 1, 30 March 1947. Cited in the published collection of these bulletins, Biuletyny. 16.

⁹⁴On the issue of the Polish cultural elites opposing anti-Jewish actions and prejudice in the early post-war period, see, for example, Borwicz, 'Polish-Jewish.' 196.

⁹⁵On the issue of the All -Polish Anti-Racist League and its activities and publications challenging anti-Jewish perspectives within Polish society, see the article

issues of the Rights of Human Beings were allowed to be published by the Communist regime. Furthermore, in 1948, the All -Polish Anti-Racist League was ordered by the Communist authorities to drop the issue of anti-Jewish hostilities and prejudices in Poland altogether, and instead to concentrate on racism in the Capitalist world - such as the situations of the Blacks in the USA.

Overall, one can also interpret the situation of the Polish Jews in the early-post-war period in terms of 'moral panic' as the Jewish minority was perceived as a threat to the rest of society.⁹⁶ As in the inter-war period, all five essential elements of 'moral panic' can be detected in the early post-war period: expressions of concern over the behaviour of the Jewish minority - with the Jews allegedly responsible for the Communist take-over of Poland and Communist crimes against the anti-Communist opposition and Polish society at large; wildly exaggerated claims of this threat - the Jew as ultimate destroyer of Poland and its people; a wide consensus among the illegal political opposition, a segment of the constitutional opposition, the Catholic Church and society at large on the threat posed by the Jewish minority; an increased level of hostility towards members of the Jewish minority and outbursts of violent attacks; and a sense of the self-righteousness of such a position.

Conclusions

My main aim in this chapter was to demonstrate that the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other, in varying degrees of intensity, continued to persist within a significant segment of Polish society in the early post-war period. In its most elaborated form, the myth was present within the illegal political and military opposition where it served both as a source of information on the Jewish minority and as a point of reference in interpreting the contemporary political and social reality - particularly the Communist take-over of Poland.

Furthermore, major dynamic developments within the Communist Party and state apparatus, led to the emergence of anti-Jewish perspectives of an ethno-nationalist type within its lower and middle levels.

by Władysław Bartoszewski one of its prominent members, 'The Founding of the All-Polish Anti-Racist League in 1946,' Polin, Vol. 4, 1989, 243-254.

⁹⁶On the subject of 'moral panic', see chapter three.

I have also demonstrated that the myth played an important part in outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence between 1945 and 1948. In fact, as in the inter-war period, the myth constituted a salient factor in both rationalising and justifying this violence.

On a more general level, the continuity of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other in the early post-war period shows once again the persistence and adaptability of such a myth to different set of historical, political and social contexts. The emergence of an anti-Jewish position within the Communist Party can be viewed as a good example of such processes.

Chapter VI.

'Party Free of Jews, Poland Free of Jews.' The Fusion of Communism and Exclusivist Ethno-Nationalism, 1967-1968.

'Antisemitism persists within us as a vestige of old prejudices and not as a phenomenon typical of Socialist countries. Comrade Werblan very interestingly said that the moment we come to face to face with the construction of Socialism, each Marxist Party finds itself faced with the responsibility for its own nation. On these grounds our internationalism has gone through defined evaluations. Now we too are trying to unite two phenomena: responsibility for one's nation and our internationalist obligations. These matters are not as simple as they had appeared in theory.'
Comrade Włodzimierz Sokorski, in a discussion on Adam Schaff's work Marxism and the Human Individual. Cited in Nowe Drogi, No. 12, 1965, 111.

One of the popular beliefs about the post-1945 Communist regimes in Poland and other Eastern European polities was that they suppressed all expressions of ethnicity, nationalism and national traditions and sentiments throughout the region. In the last two decades, this belief has been successfully contested by various scholars researching links between Communism and nationalism. These scholars have concurred that a particular process - the so-called ethno-nationalisation of Communism - took place in all Communist states. Thus, while in theory Communist regimes preached the Marxist ideology of internationalism, working-class brotherhood and friendship, in practice they used ethnicity, national traditions, and the sentiments and myths of the dominant nation to legitimise their rule.¹

'Nationalism, in its particular Communist form, was a constituent part of the post-war experience. All Communist regimes attempted to legitimise their rule by placing it in the framework of

¹There is a fast growing body of literature on links between Communism and nationalism, see, for example, Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (London, New York, 1990), 11-14; Roman Szporluk, Communism and Nationalism. Karl Marx Versus Friedrich List (New York, Oxford, 1988), 223-240. Hereafter Szporluk, Communism.; introduction by George Klein and Milan J. Reban to Klein and Reban, eds., The Politics.; Gerrits, 'Paradox.' 88-109; and Elemer Hankiss, 'In Search of a Paradigm.' Daedalus, No. 119 (1), 1990, 183-214.

national history and tradition. The fact that these endeavours largely failed does not in itself diminish the relevance of nationalism.'²

In the previous chapter, I have discussed the process of the crystallisation of the ethno-nationalisation of Communism with anti-Jewish elements in the early post-war period, 1945-1949, when these elements emerged within the rank and file of the Party and state apparatus, but were not officially endorsed as part of political propaganda by any factions within the Party. In this chapter, I shall focus on the further development of the ethno-nationalisation of Communism with anti-Jewish elements in the 1950s and early 1960s, and on the apogee of this process which took place in the late 1960s.

My three main questions are : What are the similarities and differences between the ethno-nationalist Communist version of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other and the original version of the myth disseminated by the non and anti-Communist ethno-nationalist political elites ? In what ways was the ethno-nationalist Communist version of the myth manifested; And what social functions did it have in political culture of the mid 1950s and late 1960s?

My main argument here is that firstly, in the ethno-nationalist Communist version of the myth, the original notion of the Jew as the Communist and therefore ideological enemy of the Polish state and its people was supplanted by the notion of the Jew as an anti-Communist and therefore ideological enemy of the Polish state and its people. This was the major difference between the two versions of the myth. Secondly, that the myth was disseminated to varying degrees and intensities by different factions within the PZPR in the 1950s, the early 1960s, and particularly in the late 1960s. In the last period, the myth was expressed in political culture in the most elaborated and aggressive way. Thirdly, that the myth was used by the Party in order to raise its popularity in the eyes of society, and to purify both the Party and state apparatus, and mass media and various scientific and cultural institutions, from the presence of the remaining Polish Jews, who, at the time, numbered thirty thousand - a figure constituting one tenth of one per cent of the population.

The year 1968 is considered to be one of the most dramatic moments in the post-war Communist period in Poland. Apart from the purge of the majority of Jews from the Party, cultural and scientific

²Gerrits, 'Paradox.' 100.

institutions, and the state, it was also marked by a deep ideological and political crisis within the Party and by student demonstrations against state censorship and the lack of democratic reforms. The leading participants of these demonstrations were to become, in time, prominent members of the political opposition to the Communist system.

Over the last two decades, the events of 1968 have been the subject of academic conferences, and had been widely discussed in scholarly literature, particularly in Poland, where collections of secret Party and state documents and press of that period have also been published.³ The most detailed descriptive historical work on the events of 1968 has been written by the historian Jerzy Eisler.⁴ The most important works on the anti-Jewish aspect of 1968 have been written, among others, by Josef Banas, Łukasz Hirsowicz and Paul Lendvai.⁵ Michał Głowiński, a historian of Polish literature, has conducted a valuable analysis of the language of official anti-Jewish propaganda within the Communist press of 1968, revealing its repetitious and schematic character.⁶

Given the repetitious character of such anti-Jewish propaganda, and being confined in this thesis by limits of space, I shall cite only the main illustrations of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other of the period.

³Among published works on the outcomes of conferences, see, for example, Marzec 68. Sesja na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim 1981. (Warszawa, 1981), (samizdat publication). Hereafter Marzec 68. Sesja; and Marcin Kula, Piotr Osęka and Marcin Zaremba, eds., Marzec 1968. Trzydzieści lat później. Vol. 1 - Referaty. (Warszawa, 1998). Hereafter Kula, Osęka and Zaremba eds., Marzec. Among works including publication of historical material, see Marcin Zaremba ed., Marzec 1968. Trzydzieści lat później. Vol. 2 - Dzień po dniu w raportach SB oraz Wydziały Organizacyjnego KC PZPR (Warszawa, 1998). Hereafter Zaremba, ed., Trzydzieści; Grzegorz Sołtysiak and Józef Stępień, eds., Marzec '68. Między Tragedią a Podłością (Warszawa, 1998); and Piotr Osęka, Syjonisci, inspiratorzy, wichrzyciele. Obraz wroga w propagandzie Marca 1968 (Warszawa, 1999). Hereafter Osęka, Syjonisci.

⁴Jerzy Eisler, Marzec 1968. Geneza, Przebieg, Konsekwencje (Warszawa, 1991). Hereafter Eisler, Marzec.

⁵See Paul Lendvai, Antisemitism in Eastern Europe (London, 1971). Hereafter Lendvai, Antisemitism; Josef Banas, The Scapegoats. The Exodus of the Remnants of Polish Jewry (London, 1979). Hereafter, Banas, The Scapegoats; Łukasz Hirsowicz, 'The Jewish Issue in Post-war Polish Communist Politics,' in: Abramsky, Jachimczyk and Polonsky, eds., The Jews, 199-208. Hereafter Hirsowicz, 'The Jewish.'

⁶Michał Głowiński, Nowomowa po Polsku (Warszawa, 1991), 63-67 and Pismak 1863 i inne szkice o różnych brzydkich rzeczach (Warszawa, 1995), 60-94. Hereafter Głowiński, Nowomowa. and Pismak.

Prelude to 1968 : the Jews as Perceived within the Party between 1956 and 1966.

1956 saw the end of the Stalinist era, officially announced in Moscow by the Soviet Party leader Nikita Khrushchev, in February of the same year, at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The end of the Stalinisation period began in Poland with the dismissal from the government and the Politburo of the most discredited of the Stalinist politicians, such as Jakub Berman, major changes within the infamous security apparatus, and with the announcement in April of a mass amnesty for prisoners of the Stalinist era.⁷ These developments were followed by the events of October 1956 which constituted the starting point of a political thaw (*odwilż*) lasting one year and which resulted in some important political, social and economic changes in Poland - such as the abolition of any further collectivisation of farms, the establishment of a new relationship between the State and the Church, the introduction of Catholic religion in schools, and the lifting of censorship on publishing.⁸

The politician given credit for all these changes was Władysław Gomułka, re-elected as First Secretary of the Party in October 1956 to the applause of the majority of the population. He was seen, at that time, as a national hero, and the only Communist leader able to conduct in-depth reform of the political and economic system, and thus introduce the Polish version of socialism - the so-called socialism with human face (*socjalizm z ludzką twarzą*).⁹ The policies and practices implemented by him from late 1957 were to prove how wrong were such estimates of Gomułka as the true reformer of the Communist system. Factors which contributed to his high popularity in 1956 were his ethnic Polish and working-class origin, and his record of having been removed from the Party in November 1949 and of having been placed under home arrest between 1951 and 1954 by the Stalinists.

One of the accompanying features of the end of the Stalinist era, and the period of political thaw between October 1956 and October

⁷See Schatz, *The Generation*. 264-267.

⁸On political, social and economic changes brought about by the political thaw of October 1956, see, for example, Marian K. Dziewanowski, *The Communist Party of Poland. An Outline of History* (Cambridge Massachusetts, and London England), 1976, 282-293. Hereafter Dziewanowski, *The Communist*.

⁹On the popularity of Władysław Gomułka in October 1956, see, for example, Dziewanowski, *The Communist*, 286 and Paweł Machcewicz, *Polski Rok 1956* (Warszawa, 1993), 184-191. Hereafter Machcewicz, *Polski*.

1957, was the overt public presence of anti-Jewish attitudes and sentiments simultaneously emerging within the rank and file of the PZPR and state apparatus and some segments of society at large.¹⁰

Within some segments of the intelligentsia and working-class, such sentiments were particularly high in April, May and October of 1956 in Łódź and Lower Silesia where there was a high concentration of members of the Jewish minority. These sentiments and attitudes were sometimes manifested in anti-Jewish hostilities both verbal and physical on the part of adults and school-children.¹¹ Frequently, personal animosities and conflicts between ethnic Poles and Polish Jews were evaluated in collectivist way - as antagonism between suffering Poles and Jewish perpetrators - an important aspect of the exclusivist ethno-nationalist position on Jews rooted in late nineteenth century discourse.¹²

Significantly, clear similarities existed between anti-Jewish positions within some segments of society at large and anti-Jewish positions within some segments of the rank and file of the Party and state apparatus.¹³ Among, both groups were shared similar convictions that 'Jews ruled over Poland' and constituted an impediment to the development of ethnic Poles, and both groups made similar demand for the removal of Jews from the Party, the state apparatus, and even from the Polish polity. This indicates the continuity of the pre-Communist ethno-nationalist perception of the Jews.

1956 saw another important development, when for the first time, an anti-Jewish position was endorsed by a faction within PZPR as part of its programme and strategy to delegitimise its internal

¹⁰ On anti-Jewish sentiments and attitudes within society at large and in the rank and file of the PZPR and the Party apparatus in 1956, see Machcewicz, *Polski*, 216-231. Machcewicz's findings concerning the scale of the anti-Jewish position within society in 1956 challenges the popular proposition that such sentiments were confined only to some factions within the Party.

¹¹ For a description of cases of anti-Jewish disturbances in 1956, see Machcewicz, *Polski*, 217-222; Schatz, *The Generation*, 273; and Jarosz, 'Problem,' 52-55. On anti-Jewish hostilities among youths, see Jadwiga Siekierska, 'O sprawach drażliwych słów kilka,' *Nowe Drogi*, No. 6, 1956, 3-4.

¹² One such illustration is the following example. In Lodz, the mother of a child who had been fighting with his Jewish class-mate, made a public outcry that 'Jewish children beat up Polish kids and no-one takes any action.' This case, described in the documents of the Archives of New Acts (VI, 237/VII -3835) is cited in Machcewicz, *Polski*, 219.

¹³ This phenomenon is also shown in Machcewicz, *Polski*, 220-224.

opponents, a phenomenon, clearly in breach of the Communist ideology and the ethos of equality and brotherhood. This faction, the so-called *Natolin* group appeared on the political scene approximately around late March 1956, simultaneously to its main opponent the faction so-called *Putawska* group.¹⁴

The *Natolin* group consisted of strongly pro-Soviet, mostly second-rank, and purely ethnically Polish Party leaders 'who wanted to replace the old discredited leadership but were opposed to any reforms of doctrine and political methods which could exceed the political reforms of the Soviet Party.'¹⁵ Its members were known for their dogmatism and, support for authoritarian rule, and anti-intelligentsia position.

In contrast, the *Putawska* group was internally much more diverse than the *Natolin* faction and was comprised of both ethnic Polish and Polish Jewish Comrades. The group advocated a more independent stance in relation to the Soviet Party and enjoyed the support of the Party's intelligentsia. It was regarded as the reform-oriented faction, since many of its members 'out of ideological disillusionment or for opportunistic reasons' were in favour of conducting the liberalisation and democratisation of the political system.¹⁶ Some of its members were also to become the main revisionists of institutionalised Marxism in the early 1960s.

In general, both groups competed for political power within the Party and state between 1956 and 1960. October 1956 brought about a short-term defeat for the *Natolin* group and a short-term victory for the *Pulawska* group but Gomulka's departure from the course of reform in late 1957 changed this situation. In the political realities of the early 1960s both factions lost their prominence.

The rivalry and animosity between these two factions was reflected in the names the groups called each other. 'Boors' (*Chamy*) - a pejorative term meaning slow-witted peasants, was used by the *Putawska* group to describe members of the *Natolin* group, and 'Yids' (*Zydy*) - a pejorative form of the word Jews (*Żydzi*), was used by the

¹⁴The *Natolin* and *Pulawska* groups were named after places where these factions of the Party used to hold their meetings. On the history of these groups and their membership, see Eisler, *Marzec*, 22-30. See also Hirszowicz, 'The Jewish,' 201-203; and Schatz, *The Generation*, 267-269.

¹⁵Schatz, *The Generation*, 267.

¹⁶*ibid.*, 268.

Natolin group to describe the *Puławska* group - a good example of imitation of the long-lived ethno-nationalist strategy of the labelling political opponents as Jews.

Although within both groups there were Comrades with clear records of a 'Stalinist past,' members of the *Natolin* group emphasised that the Jews as a group were responsible for the errors of the Stalinisation era and called for their removal from important positions within the Party and the state apparatus.¹⁷

A good illustration of such a position is Zenon Nowak's speech of July 1956 at the Seventh Plenum of the Central Committee of the PZPR. Nowak, (1905-1970), who was at the time deputy Premier of State and member of the Politburo, introduced the theme of Judeo-Stalinisation into the vocabulary of the Party by placing sole blame on the Jewish apparatchiks for the Party's past failures, errors and repressions.¹⁸ Neither Stalinist Soviet apparatchiks in Poland between 1945-1956, nor the Stalinist ethnic Poles were held responsible for the crimes of the Stalinist period. Furthermore, Nowak accused the Jews and 'other alien powers' of responsibility for another and more recent event, namely the workers' demonstrations in Poznan on 28 June of the same year.¹⁹ Nowak also called for 'national (ethno-national) regulation of the Party and state apparatus cadres', arguing that the presence of Jews within the Party and state apparatus had generally had a bad affect on the popularity of the Party among the people. At the same time he insisted that his position was not antisemitic.

The *Natolin* group's project of purification of the Party from the Jews was not realised in 1956. In April 1957, the Central Committee of the Party issued a letter to all Party committees condemning antisemitism.²⁰ This letter also urged Jewish Comrades to persuade members of the Jewish community not to leave the state. The presence

¹⁷This point, the presence of members with a 'Stalinist past' within both the *Natolin* and *Puławska* groups is raised by Jerzy Eisler, see Eisler, *Marzec*. 25; and also Cała and Datner-Spiewak, *Dzieje*. 91.

¹⁸For excerpts of Nowak's speech, see Cała and Datner-Spiewak, *Dzieje*. 145-147. On Nowak's speech, see, for example, Schatz, *The Generation*. 268; and Lendvai, *Antisemitism*. 221.

¹⁹During the Poznan demonstrations conducted under the slogans of 'more bread,' and 'more freedom and Catholic religion in public life,' fifty-three workers were killed by soldiers on the orders of the Party. See Machcewicz, *Polski*. 77-111.

²⁰Schatz, *The Generation*. 273.

of anti-Jewish sentiments and attitudes within society at large and within the rank and file of the PZPR was undoubtedly one of the main factors which contributed to the further emigration of Polish Jews during the late 1950s. It is estimated that between 1956 and 1958 approximately forty thousand Jews left Poland, including twenty thousand Jews, who had returned to Poland from the Soviet Union in 1956.²¹ By the early 1960s, the remaining Jewish community in Poland numbered thirty thousand members.

The first six years of the 1960s, described by the Polish poet Tadeusz Rozewicz as the time of 'small stabilisation' (*mala stabilizacja*), were characterised by a growing stagnation of reforms in political, economic and cultural matters, and by social opportunism and petty compromise. The Party establishment led by Gomulka, launched a major campaign against any interpretations of Marxist doctrine, different from the official institutionalised version.²² And thus revisionism of Marxist thought became one of the main enemies of the Party, which, by the middle of 1960s, had increased to one and a half million members, and which, in 1967, reached a figure of two million.²³ This was the result of the Party's new recruitment policy which offered new opportunities for social advancement.

Although there was a decrease in the level of overt anti-Jewish statements within the PZPR at that time, anti-Jewish sentiments and attitudes did not disappear from political culture. Public utterances of anti-Jewish statements by important members of the Central Committee of the Party took place and were immediately covered up. A good illustration of such a development is Zenon Kliszko's lecture at a meeting of historians in Cracow in 1966 - a meeting described by Lendvai in his work Antisemitism in Eastern Europe. In this lecture, Kliszko, one of the closest associates of Gomulka and one of the theoreticians of the Party, 'praised the patriotic spirit of the pre-war Endecja (National Democrats) and hinted at the 'diabolic role' of Jewish intellectuals.'²⁴ The full text of this lecture was never published and Kliszko himself ordered the destruction of the tape recording.

²¹For data concerning the size of the Jewish community in the 1950s and 1960s, see Cała and Spiewak-Datner, Dzieje. 175-176; and Schatz, The Generation. 273.

²²See Eisler, Marzec. 83-85; and Schatz, The Generation. 283-286.

²³For data on membership of the PZPR, see Schatz, The Generation. 286.

²⁴Lendvai, Antisemitism. 226.

In general, during the first half of the 1960s, it is possible to differentiate two main developments concerning anti-Jewish positions within the PZPR:

Firstly, denial of the presence of any anti-Jewish positions within the Party, and the use of charges of 'bogus antisemitism' against any members of the Party who raised the issue of the presence of such sentiments and attitudes within the Party and society at large.

The best illustration of the use of such a charge, during the first half of the 1960s, was the response of the Central Committee of the Party to Adam Schaff's work entitled Marxism and the Human Individual (*Marksizm a jednostka ludzka*), published in 1965. Schaff, a Jew, was at the time a member of the Central Committee and Director of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. He enjoyed the reputation as one of the chief theoreticians of Marxism in Poland. His work, Marxism and the Human Individual, raised a heated discussion within the Party, one which was published in New Ways (*Nowe Drogi*), the main theoretical and political press organ of the Central Committee of the PZPR. His work was evaluated by a majority of Comrades as revisionist and thus dangerous. In some of the negative evaluations, clear anti-Jewish overtones were present. For example, Comrade Andrzej Werblan called it 'a talmudist approach to the theory of the classics of Marxism.'²⁵ Schaff's general argument that antisemitism was a serious social problem in Communist states including Poland, and that it had not been properly tackled by Communist governments, met with general condemnation. Though there were some exceptions such as Comrades Włodzimierz Sokorski and Jerzy Wiatr. For example, by way of condemnation, Comrade Wincenty Kraśko stated:

'Comrade Schaff sharply flays the alleged absence of the struggle with antisemitism in our Communist countries...

Undoubtedly, antisemitism is a very painful and revolting phenomenon, but equally painful and revolting is the charge of antisemitism - a charge that is both unjust and groundless.'²⁶

Denial of the presence of antisemitic views, frequently accompanied by the advocacy of anti-Jewish positions, can be viewed

²⁵ Andrzej Werblan in 'Discussion of Adam Schaff's book Marxism and the Human Individual', Nowe Drogi, No. 12, 1965, 59.

²⁶ Wincenty Kraśko in 'Discussion of Adam Schaff's book Marxism and the Human Individual', Nowe Drogi, No. 12, 1965, 76.

as an important feature of ethno-nationalist Communism with strong anti-Jewish elements, found not only in the Socialist Polish Republic, but also in other polities of the Soviet Bloc, including the Soviet Union itself.²⁷ In Poland, this feature, which was already present in the 1950s among members of the *Natolin* group, was to become an important aspect of the use of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other in political culture between 1967 and 1968.

Secondly, the unprecedented preparation and collection of data on remaining Jews active in public life, including also converts to Catholicism, their spouses Jewish and non-Jewish, their children and even in-laws. The index cards of Jewish members of the Party and of the government were prepared by a section of the Ministry of Internal Affairs that dealt with Jewish matters. A similar system of index cards of names of Polish Jewish officers remaining in the Army was prepared by military counter-intelligence for the Ministry of Defence.²⁸ These index cards, which were completed by the end of 1964, were to be used in the anti-Jewish purge of 1968.

Simultaneously, there was a gradual demotion and forced early retirement of some of the Polish Jewish Comrades from the Central Committee of the PZPR, of Polish Jewish personnel employed at the Ministry of Interior Affairs, and of some Polish Jewish military men serving in the Army.²⁹ This new personnel policy, conducted in a discreet and unpublicised manner, was supported by the Soviet leaders, and sometimes also affected ethnic Poles married to Jews, or ethnic Poles accused of revisionism.³⁰

The Rise of the Partisans - the Chief Disseminator of the Ethno-nationalist Communist Myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other.

The faction of the Party, most actively involved in preparations of index cards of Jewish names and in orchestrating the removal of

²⁷On the same problem within the Soviet Union, see Frankel, 'The Soviet.' 441.

²⁸See Schatz, The Generation, 290.

²⁹On the practices of discreet and unpublicised removal of Jewish personnel from the Ministry of Interior Affairs and from the Army, see, for example, Schatz, The Generation, 289-294; and Tadeusz Pióro, 'Czystki w Wojsku Polskim,' Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego, No. 2, 1967, 61-63. Hereafter Pióro, 'Czystki.'

³⁰Soviet leaders' encouragement of the policy of 'dejudaisation' of the Party, the state apparatus, and the Army is briefly discussed in Schatz, The Generation.' 290; Pióro, 'Czystki.' 64; and Dziewanowski, The Communist. 298-299.

Jewish personnel, was the informal Partisan group which emerged in the early 1960s as the most dynamic faction of the PZPR.³¹

The Partisan group (*Partyzanci*) was comprised of former members of war-time Communist military forces based in German occupied Poland, who were placed in secondary political positions from 1949 to 1956. In a short span of time it succeeded in taking control of all important positions within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the security apparatus and the police. The Partisans, like the *Natolin* group of the 1950s, was characterised by strongly authoritarian, anti-intellectual, and anti-Jewish positions. Unlike the *Natolin* group, the Partisans did not advocate complete subservience to the Soviet Union and in fact portrayed themselves as anti-Soviet in a subtle and covert manner designed to gain them public support.³²

The driving force of the Partisan faction and its unquestioned leader was Mieczysław Moczar (1913-1986) - head of the local security apparatus in Lodz from 1945 to 1948 when he was dismissed from this position as a result of accusation by Stalinists of holding 'right-wing nationalistic position.' In 1956 he returned to his job in the security apparatus in as vice-Minister of Interior Affairs. In 1964 he was nominated as Minister of Interior Affairs. That same year he was also elected President of the Union of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy (*Związek Bojowników o Wolność i Demokrację, ZBOWiD*) - an organisation, which, according to Moczar himself, was 'the guardian of patriotism, love and of service for one's homeland'.³³

From its origins as a small irrelevant Communist organisation, ZBOWiD was transformed by the Partisans, in the early 1960s, into a 'body uniting all those who fought for Poland, irrespective of their political conviction or former affiliations, including some members of the former AK.'³⁴ Given the fact that Moczar was, after all, a former head of the infamous security apparatus, and had remarked in 1948 that 'a good member of the AK is a dead one', this was a remarkable success.³⁵ In the first two years of the 1960s ZBOWiD reached

³¹On the history of the Partisan group and its leader Mieczysław Moczar, see, for example, Eisler, *Marzec*, 39-70; and Lendvai, *Antisemitism*, 227-230.

³²Lendvai, *Antisemitism*, 226.

³³Mieczysław Moczar's speech of 4 May 1968 at the Executive meeting of ZBOWiD. *Za Wolność i Lud*, 16-31 May 1968, 4. Cited in Oseka, *Syjonisci*, 46.

³⁴Dziewanowski, *The Communist*, 291.

³⁵Moczar's saying of this in 1948 is cited in Eisler, *Marzec*, 44.

approximately a quarter of million members.³⁶ Michael C. Steinlauf accurately notes:

'The support of ZBOWiD, in turn, gave Moczar and his associates popular legitimation to appropriate the entire heritage of anti-Nazi resistance....ZBOWiD, which hinted that it represented, better than the Party, the interests of all Poles, became Moczar's ideological base, the driving force of anti-Jewish campaign of 1968.'³⁷

Another organisation supportive of Partisans' anti-Jewish campaign of 1968, was the government-sponsored Catholic organisation Pax, chaired by Boleslaw Piasecki, a former pre-war leader of the extreme ethno-nationalist group *Falanga* and later a Soviet agent in post-1945 Poland.³⁸ The main role of Pax was to neutralise the influence both of the Catholic Church and of groups of progressive Catholic intelligentsia concentrated around the two previously mentioned papers - Common Weekly (*Tygodnik Powszechny*) and Sign (*Znak*).³⁹ Piasecki's Communist-Catholic world-view was promoted in Pax's own papers such as the daily Common Word (*Słowo Powszechne*), the Catholic Weekly of Wrocław (*Wrocławski Tygodnik Katolicki*), and the monthly Directions (*Kierunki*). In 1968, these papers were to play an important role in disseminating the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other.

Importantly, among those who supported Moczar were former members of Endecja and its offshoot radical organisations, groups, which, as discussed in chapter four, had propagated the extreme and elaborated version of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other during WWII. The close links between individuals such as Czeslaw Pilichowski - a former member of the pre-war ONR, and the Partisans resulted in their promotion to high positions in important institutions such as the High Commission to Investigate Nazi Crimes in Poland (*Komisja do Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce*), where they assumed the role of 'the guardians of national history and national

³⁶Dziewanowski, The Communist. 291.

³⁷Steinlauf, Bondage. 79.

³⁸On Boleslaw Piasecki's pre-war and post-war political affiliations and activities, see the important political biography by Antoni Dudek and Grzegorz Pytel, Boleslaw Piasecki. Proba biografii politycznej. (Londyn, 1990). Hereafter Dudek and Pytel, Proba.

³⁹ibid., 158-189.

traditions.’⁴⁰ The year 1968 was to show that these individuals excelled also in the dissemination of the ethno-nationalist Communist version of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other. Their presence among Communist political elites both before and after 1968, points out how porous was the border between some factions of Polish Communist movement and the Polish pre-war core and extreme ethno-nationalist parties, and how easily this border could be crossed in the so-called ‘climate of national unity’ of the time.

The Ethno-nationalist Communist Myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other and Zionism, in the late 1960s.

One of the problems of analysing the ethno-nationalist Communist version of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other, as propagated in Poland in the late 1960s, is the fact that during that period the term ‘Jew’ was, as a rule, substituted with the term ‘Zionist’. Popular slogans of that time were ‘Purge the Party of Zionists’ (*Oczyścić Partię z Syjonistów*), ‘Zionists, go to Zion’ (*Syjonisci do Syjonu*) and ‘Zionist represent Israel and not Poland’ (*Syjonisci reprezentują Israel nie Polaków*).⁴¹

The reason for the substitution of the term ‘Jew’ by the term ‘Zionist’ can be explained by the reluctance of the Party’s leadership at that time to openly express anti-Jewish position, knowing that it would breach the Communist ethos and be contradictory to the Party’s official position of opposing antisemitism - a position, which, it must be stressed here, was held throughout the entire period of the anti-Jewish campaign of the late 1960s.⁴²

The other problem in analysing the myth lies in the fact that during the period in question, the term ‘Zionism’ carried two other meanings in PZPR propaganda - Zionism understood as an instrument of imperialism and thus an enemy of Communism, and Zionism as the ‘source’ of the Israeli campaign against the Arab world

⁴⁰For a discussion of the case of Czesław Pilichowski as Director of this Commission, a position he held between 1968 and 1984, see Steinlauf, *Bondage*, 82-83.

⁴¹For other slogans of that time, see *The Anti-Jewish Campaign In Present-Day Poland. Facts, Documents, Press Reports*, published by the Institute of Jewish Affairs in London (London, 1968), 21. Hereafter *The Anti-Jewish Campaign*.

⁴²This point is also raised by Głowiński, *Pismak*, 76-78.

which at that time was the official ally of all the states of the Soviet bloc - including the Polish Socialist Republic.⁴³

The two meanings cited above can be seen to correspond with the use of the term 'Zionism' in official Soviet propaganda of the late 1960s, whereas the use of the myth of the Zionist/Jew as the enemy of the Polish state, its people and the people's spiritual essence can be seen as having domestic roots in Polish exclusivist ethno-nationalist traditions, which were integrated into Polish ethno-nationalist Communism.⁴⁴

Importantly, all three strands were intertwined and interplayed to varying degrees and intensities within PZPR propaganda, particularly within the Partisan faction. Of course, Zionism as a movement and ideology was non-existent among the Jewish minority of the 1960s in Poland, since all Polish Zionist organisations, as indicated in the previous chapter, had been closed down by the Stalinists between 1949 and 1950. Furthermore, any remaining Jews of Zionist political affiliation had almost certainly left Poland in the various post-war waves of emigration between 1945 and 1957. Thus it was that the Party's 'hunt' for Zionists was conducted in a reality in which no Zionists were present.

The criteria for singling out a person as Zionist were not openly stated. However, it is possible to differentiate two ways in which this was done. The first criteria was of biological and racial origin and was advocated by the Partisan group, which treated all remaining Polish Jews, including individuals of partly Jewish origin as the biological polluters of the Polish state. This explains the reference to the Partisans as 'fascists' by those who condemned their anti-Jewish actions at that time.⁴⁵ The second criteria was the subjective notion of belonging and of love for one's country - Poland, as stated by Gomulka in his speech of 19 March 1968 to three thousand Party activists in

⁴³In differentiating between these meanings, I have drawn on an important analysis of various uses of the term Zionism within official Soviet propaganda, provided by Jonathan Frankel. See Frankel, 'The Soviet.' 440-441.

⁴⁴In accordance with Michael Steinlauf, I reject the proposition that the anti-Jewish campaign of 1967-1968 in Poland was Soviet organised - as, for example, put forward by Dziewanowski, *The Communist*. 296-298. For a critical analysis of this proposition, see Steinlauf, *Bondage*. 78.

⁴⁵See Jerzy Jedlicki, *Złe urodzeni czyli o doświadczeniu historycznym. Scripta i postscripta* (Londyn-Warsaw, 1983), 65-72.

Warsaw and broadcast on radio and television.⁴⁶ Gomulka divided Polish Jews into three categories: those persons attached by 'reason or emotion to Israel', who would leave Poland; that group of cosmopolitans and national nihilists who considered themselves neither Polish nor Jewish; and those persons who regarded Poland as their sole homeland.

One should ask which criteria was the most popular and accepted within the Party? Records of various reactions to Gomulka's speech which was criticised as not being strong enough in terms of dealing with the Zionists, indicate that the Partisan criteria, of singling out Zionists on primarily biological grounds, was the one most popular among significant segments of the rank and file of the Party.⁴⁷

Interestingly, the fact that the term 'Zionist' was understood to be the equivalent of term 'Jew' within the Party, was somehow admitted by Comrade Zenon Kliszko in his speech of 8 July 1968 at the Twelfth Conference of the Central Committee of the PZPR.⁴⁸ This speech was a mixture of references to Zionism as a dangerous ideology of the recent past, while at the same time suggesting that this danger was no longer relevant.

'The anti-Socialist actions in March of this year were the work of the alliance of various reactionary forces. The common denominator of these forces was revisionism. Zionism, as one of the reactionary tendencies, also joined this struggle. This is a tendency, which in recent times has been particularly vicious in its hostility towards our Party...At present, when this problem [Zionism] has been explained, we should remove it from the Party's agenda...In some Party organisations, especially in offices, an atmosphere of struggle against Zionism is artificially maintained. This atmosphere sometimes becomes tense, preventing a calm analysis of the real sources of the current difficulties and problems and the recognition of the true opponent of our Party... and the real enemies of Socialism and our nation. A Jew is identified as Zionist, and thus a justified suspicion of

⁴⁶Gomulka's speech of 19 March 1968 is cited in The Anti-Jewish Campaign. 30-32. It is of interest here that Gomulka's wife Zofia Gomulkowa was herself a highly culturally assimilated Polish Jew. This perhaps explains why Gomulka did not use the same criteria as the Partisan group in singling out Zionists.

⁴⁷Such disappointed and negative reactions to Gomulka's speech of 19 March can be found in secret Party reports. See Zaremba, ed., Marzec. Vol. 2, Raporty. 179-175. See also Mieczysław Rakowski, 'Cała władza w Ręce.' Gazeta Wyborcza, 6 March 1998, 20-21.

⁴⁸Kliszko's speech was in accord with Gomulka's thesis circulated at the Conference.

a concrete individual case turns into generalised suspicion of all persons of Jewish origin. Particularly severe measures are applied in cases of minor offences committed by persons of Jewish origin, offences which are ignored when committed by non-Jews.’⁴⁹

This speech can be viewed as a sign of retreat from the use of the term ‘Zionism’ in political culture, and of attempting to put an end to the intense anti-Jewish campaign initiated by Władysław Gomułka the head of the Party, twelve months earlier on 19 July 1967, at the Sixth Congress of Polish Trade Unions. On this occasion, broadcast over radio and television, Gomułka had first made reference to Zionists as an internal enemy. Referring to the subject of Israel’s victory over the Arabs in the Six-Day War of June 1967, Gomułka condemned all those in Poland, who allegedly supported ‘the Israeli aggressor and politics of imperialism,’ labelling such people ‘a Fifth Column’.

‘We cannot remain indifferent towards people, who in the face of a threat to world peace, that is, also, to the security of Poland and the peaceful work of our nation, support the aggressor, the wreckers of peace and imperialism ...We do not wish a Fifth Column to be created in our country.’⁵⁰

The expression ‘Fifth Column,’ which was used, for example, during WWII to describe collaborators with the Germans, suggested the presence of an internal enemy within the state. Moreover, it closely resounded to popular pre-1939 anti-Jewish expressions of core ethno-nationalists slogans such as ‘the Jews as the Fourth Partition.’

Although, this reference was completely removed from any further publications of Gomułka’s speech, it reappeared as a popular slogan of the time ‘Down with the New Fifth Column’ (*Zniszczyć nową piątą kolumnę*), displayed by workers at meetings condemning Zionist activities, organised by the Party all over the country.

Gomułka’s speech of 19 June 1967 paved the way to the emergence of the myth of the Zionist / Jew as the enemy of the Polish

⁴⁹Archives of the Jewish Institute for Policy Research, File No. 323. 0 (180) , Zenon Kliszko’s Speech of 8 July 1968 at the Twelfth Conference of the Central Committee of the PZPR, 8. Hereafter AIJPR.

⁵⁰Władysław Gomułka’s speech of 19 July 1968 at the Sixth Congress of the Polish Trade Union. Cited in *The Anti-Jewish Campaign*. 11. For the background to and description of this speech, see, for example, Eisler, Marzec. 134-136. and *The Anti-Jewish Campaign*. 10-12.

myth was in fact disseminated in the majority of mass media, both on a national and local level, which at that time were controlled to a great extent by the Partisan faction. Among those leading papers which propagated the myth were the People's Tribune (*Trybuna Ludu*) the PZPR's central ideological press organ; the Banner of the Youths (*Sztandar Młodych*) the official youth paper; Warsaw Life (*Życie Warszawy*) the most popular Warsaw daily; the weekly Law and Life (*Prawo i Życie*), and the previously mentioned Pax's papers.

The Structure and Functions of the Ethno-nationalist Communist Myth of the Zionist/Jew as the Threatening Other

As in previous periods, the ethno-nationalist Communist version of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other was versatile and many faceted, although the myth was repetitious and limited in expression in comparison with previous periods. The reason for this was two-fold - official denial of the advocacy of anti-Jewish position, and official Socialist language which itself put constraints on vocabulary and expression.⁵² Nevertheless, an examination of the press of the time reveals the narrative of the destructive presence of the Zionists within the Polish polity.

As in previous periods, the Zionist enemy was linked with other external enemies of the Polish state, in this case, 'the imperialist USA' - the most powerful ideological enemy of Socialism, and Israel, and West Germany - the latter state which did not then recognise the post-1945 Polish western border.⁵³ Here is one typical example of such a linkage in an article published in Masovia Tribune (*Trybuna Mazowiecka*), on 25 March 1968, in which members of the Social and Cultural Society of Jews, one of the few Jewish organisations still in existence, were accused of representing foreign interests, slandering the good name of Poland, and of spreading 'bogus antisemitism'.⁵⁴

⁵²See Głowinski, Nowomowa. 63.

⁵³In December 1970, West Germany recognised the post-1945 western borders in its treaty with Poland. See Dziewanowski, The Communist. 303-304.

⁵⁴The concept of a campaign of slander of the good name of Poland refers here to the portrayal, in the western media of Polish attitudes towards the Jews during WWII and the Holocaust. On this particular subject, which is outside the scope of this analysis, and on reactions of Polish official historiography at that time, see Steinlauf, Bondage. 75-88.

'The Zionists seem to forget that the Poles are in their own home and they are not. They would like to impose on the people of Poland the policies of Israel, the German Federal Republic and of imperialism. And as they are failing to so do and will continue to fail, they have begun to clamour about the antisemitic traditions in Poland. While they impute to us all kinds of barbarism and crimes, they 'smile' at the German henchmen of their relatives in West Germany... We would like to know whom we are living with under the same roof. And what is to be the attitude of Society towards these slanderous and hostile attacks against Poland.'⁵⁵

Characteristically, in this text the Polish [ethnic Polish] nation is portrayed as the host nation from which members of the Jewish minority are excluded. This shows the application of an ethno-nationalist interpretation of the concept of nationhood taking place under conditions of Communism.

As in previous periods, contemporary developments and events were incorporated into the myth. The first such event was the ideological crisis of doctrine and the presence of revisionist theories opposing the official version of Marxism - a problem previously discussed in this chapter. Among leading revisionists of that time were some Polish Jews such as Adam Schaff, Zygmunt Bauman and Jerzy Morawski, and non-Jews such the philosopher Leszek Kołakowski - a representative of the so-called humanistic school of Marxism. In official PZPR propaganda, these individuals were accused of being Zionists, or, in the case of non-Jews, of being Zionist sympathisers. Consequently, their intellectual work and positions on Communist doctrine was evaluated as anti-Polish.⁵⁶

The second event incorporated into the anti-Jewish narrative was the student demonstrations at the University of Warsaw of 8-9 March 1968 against censorship and suppression of individual freedoms.⁵⁷ These demonstrations were brought about by the ban on 31 January 1968, of Adam Mickiewicz's national drama Forefathers

⁵⁵AJJPR, File No. 323. 0 (180), The Situation in Poland, excerpts of the article 'Who Are you?' Trybuna Mazowiecka. 25, March 1968, 3.

⁵⁶On the presentation of revisionism as Zionist activity, see the Anti-Jewish Campaign. 42-44. At the Conference of the Central Committee of 9 July 1968, Gomulka himself admitted that an equation had been made by the Party between Zionism and Revisionism. See AIJPR, File No. 323 0 (180), Polish Facts and Figures, Gomulka's Thesis, 4.

⁵⁷On the student demonstrations, see Eisler, Marzec. 224-320; and Banas, The Scapegoats. 123-132.

(*Dziady*), from the stage of the National Theatre in Warsaw, and the subsequent suspension from the university of two Jewish students from university, both Jews Adam Michnik and Henryk Szlajfer, for organising a peaceful protest against the ban.

The first student demonstration, which took place in Warsaw on 8 March was brutally suppressed by the police. News of this suppression spread around the country and led to a new wave of student demonstrations in other major universities. In official PZPR propaganda, these demonstrations were attributed to the destructive impact of Jews on the youth and intelligentsia. This was done in a subtle and implicit way without direct reference to Zionists or Jews. Instead, well-known names of Jewish students as Adam Michnik, Józef Dojczgewicht, Aleksander Smolar, Wiktor Górecki and Irena Lasota were cited as the 'ring-leaders' of the demonstrations. Additionally, the names of Jewish individuals such as Adam Zambrowski and Ewa Zarzycka - who had not taken part in the demonstrations - but were siblings of well-known remaining high ranking Jewish Comrades, were added to the list of demonstrators. Such individuals were referred to as 'Commandos,' 'banana youths,' 'infant-revisionists who worshipped 'the revisionist sky on which stars of the first magnitude such as Prof. Adam Schaff, Prof. Włodzisław Brus and Kolakowski, Bauman, Baczko, Morawski were glittering.'⁵⁸ They were frequently described as representing foreign interests and of being 'hostile, aggressive, anti-Polish, anti-Socialist, as in revolt against the Socialist law.'⁵⁹ Here are two examples:

On 14 March 1968 Edward Gierek, the then First Secretary of the PZPR in Silesia and future First General Secretary of PZPR made a speech addressed to one hundred thousand people gathered in Katowice. Although Gierek was not a Partisan man, but the leader of his own faction within the PZPR - the so-called Technocrats, his speech was similar in content to typical comments on the student demonstrations issued by members of the Partisan faction.⁶⁰

⁵⁸AJPR, File No. 323. 0 (180), excerpt from a translation of Ryszard Gontarz's article entitled 'Shut up or Lie', *Prawo i Życie*, No. 23, November, 1968, 1.

⁵⁹AJPR, File No. 323. 0 (180), excerpt from a translation of 'Alliance of Hatred' by Alina Reutt and Zbigniew Andruszkiewicz, published in *Walka Młodych*, No. 47, November, 1968. 12.

⁶⁰The Technocrat group, like the Partisan group, emerged in the early 1960s. It was characterised by the advocacy of professionalism and pragmatism over ideological zeal, and by the representation of middle-class values and attitudes. See Schatz, *The Generation*. 227.

'...It is a fact that Michniks, Szlajfers, Grudzinskis, Werfels...and the like have found themselves through the logic of events automatically outside the boundary of the general mass of students. But we would be short-sighted if we ascribed these excesses only to that hair-raising group among students whose names I have mentioned...One should ask oneself the following questions: whose interest would best be served by leading youth astray? Who has an interest, for example, in incitement against the Soviet Union? Who has an interest in slowing down the pace of work for the people of Poland? The answer to all these questions is not difficult to find...It is a matter of old political speculators who act without any scruples, it is a case of people who wish to slide on stage by devious means. The cause of Socialism has no meaning for them. Whom do these people serve? What kind of people are they? These Zambrowskis, Staszewskis, Slonimskis and their cohorts, and men like Kisielewski, Jasienica and others have irrefutably proved that they serve foreign interests.'⁶¹

What is noticeable in this speech is the use of the plural form in the listed names who with the exception of Kisielewski - were known in some circles of society as Jewish or of Jewish origin. A strategy which was used by the anti-Communist political elites in the early post-war period to emphasise the scale of Jewish participation in the introduction of the Communist system into the state. And a strategy that was very common in PZPR propaganda of the late 1960s, when it was used to give an impression of a large scale internal enemy.

The second example of presenting the student demonstrators as the Zionist enemy is an official statement on student demonstrations issued by the ZBOWiD on 12 March 1968. The characteristic element of this statement is its accusations against 'the enemy for perfidiously misleading our youth' and for causing 'the painful incidents' - an accusation frequently voiced in commentaries on student demonstrations. This can be seen as an attempt by the Party to shift responsibility for the brutal suppression of these demonstrations onto the Jewish students and away from the police.

'The constant development of our country and our achievements have caused an increase in the ideological -political

⁶¹AJJPR, File No. 323 0 (180), Situation in Poland, Edward Gierek's speech of 14 March 1968, 3 This speech was published in Trybuna Ludu, on 15 March 1968.

campaign conducted by the imperialist and revanchist centres of the USA and West Germany...In this slanderous campaign against Poland and Socialism, a particularly active role is being played by international Zionism and its agencies. The enemy employs propaganda and lies...Recent incidents in Warsaw [student demonstration] supply evidence of this. We know the instigators of these painful incidents...they are, principally, the very same people who have been known for a long time for their national nihilism. Today they ...operate under the slogans of freedom and patriotism...we are convinced that they will be punished, irrespective of whatever position they occupy, and that they will meet with general condemnation, not only for inspiring painful incidents, but first and foremost, for perfidiously misleading our youths.⁶²

Importantly the notion of Judeo-Communism had undergone a major transformation in its ethno-nationalist Communist version, into the notion of the Jew as the ideological enemy of the Polish Socialist system and therefore once again as the enemy of Poland and its people. As a rule, the Jew was evaluated as the polluter responsible for all the ideological and political errors of the Party. Furthermore, the notion of the Jewish Comrade as the polluter of the PZPR was invariably accompanied by the basic ethno-nationalist notion of the Jew as a polluter of the Polish polity in general. The important message conveyed was that if it were not for the Jewish Comrades, Polish Communism could develop in an agreement with Polish national traditions, and would thus be a popular people's ideology and that Poland would be a prosperous country for all its citizens - a notion that resembled the belief propagated by the core ethno-nationalists in the inter-war period. This can be viewed as the Party's attempt to present itself as the people's Party, and to achieve a higher popularity within a highly ethnically homogenous society.

Here are two typical examples of presenting Zionist/Jewish Comrades as elements both anti-Communist and anti-national within the Party. The first example is an excerpt from rare personal public statement by Moczar in a interview of 12 April, given to a journalist of the Polish Press Agency, PAP. The second example is excerpts from the article 'A Contribution to the Genesis of the Conflict,' (*Przyczynek*

⁶²Statement by ZBOWiD on student demonstrations, *Trybuna ludu* 13 March 1968. Cited in *Anti-Jewish Campaign*. 22.

do genezy konfliktu) by Andrzej Werblan, published in the June 1968 edition of the Literary Monthly (*Miesięcznik Literacki*). In his presentation of the history of the Communist movement in Poland from its beginnings until 1968, Werblan - political secretary to the Stalinist politician Bolesław Bierut in the early 1950s and Chief of the Department of Science and Learning in the PZPR in the late 1960s, went as far as to claim that with regard to the Jews their qualities and ethno-cultural make-up rendered them incapable of being good Polish Communists.⁶³ Moreover, his perspective on the membership of the Polish Communist movement can be viewed as one of ethno-nationalist orientation and as exclusionary in respect of Jewish Comrades. According to Werblan, a purely ethnically Polish composition of the Party in post-1945 Poland would have guaranteed the proper development of Communism, with no deformations.

1. 'The arrival in our country - together with the heroic soldiers of [the Kosciuszko Division - the first Polish military group to be set up in the Soviet Union [under the Communist patronage], of certain politicians masquerading in officers' uniforms, who later were of the opinion that it was they and only them - the Zambrowskis, the Radkiewiczs, the Bermans - who had the right to leadership, who had a monopoly on deciding what was right for the Polish nation... from that moment, that arrival, began the evil that was to last until 1956. Although their mouths were full of phrases of unity, they did not like it that our Party was disseminating beautiful policies on a broad-based front, a front in which there would be room for every Polish patriot who wanted to raise up his fatherland, make it more prosperous, wiser and more beautiful...for that reason men such as Radkiewicz, Romkowski, Różański, Świątko, and Feigin persecuted spokesmen of the broad-based patriotic, national front, calling it a swamp. To these men Polish patriots were nothing but a swamp.'⁶⁴

2. 'A group of activists with sectarian cosmopolitan tendencies sought to dominate the Party through a specific cadres policy... One of the peculiar characteristics of this policy was to give people of Jewish origin particular responsibilities in certain organs of the power

⁶³On this article by Werblan, see, for example, Anti-Jewish Campaign, 40-51; and Adam Ciołkosz, 'Anti-Zionism in Polish Communist Party Politics,' in Robert S. Wistrich, ed., The Left Against Zion Communism, Israel and the Middle East (London, 1979) 145-147.

⁶⁴Mieczysław Moczar's interview of 12 April, 1968. Cited in The Anti-Jewish Campaign, 39.

apparatus, in propaganda, the Foreign and Home Ministries....the majority of whom [people of Jewish origin] no longer had anything in common with the leftist movement of the pre-war period, and who were frequently derived from among well-to-do city dwelling strata of the Jewish bourgeoisie, who during WWII had sought asylum from 'Hitlerism' in the Soviet Union....The participation of these people in the ranks of the 1st Polish Army in the fight against 'Hitlerism' was their duty as Polish citizens. But it did not explain why people like Brus , Baczko, Bauman, and many others made such swift political careers...Objective circumstances meant that these activists [Communists who spent WWII in the Soviet Union] did not undergo the renewing and refreshing ideological therapy of underground work in German occupied Poland, in which new Party cadres grew up and became politically educated, in which the Party's bonds with the broad masses became established, in which the Party of the working-class became the Party of the people.' ⁶⁵

Here, the accusation against Jewish Comrades of responsibility for the 'errors' of the Party during the Stalinist period had its roots in the non-Communist ethno-nationalist notion of Judeo-Communism and Judeo-Stalinisation. The first group within the PZPR to have integrated this notion into Party political discourse was the *Natolin* group in the 1950s. However, this notion did not cease to be advocated by some segments of the anti-Communist political elites of Endecja origin, and was to continue in the post 1968 reality.⁶⁶ The notion of Jews as agents of Stalinist crimes committed against the Polish nation can still be found to some degree in public discourse, where it is used as justification for the anti-Jewish violence of the early post-war period.⁶⁷

In the late 1960s, not only were the Jews portrayed as polluters of the PZPR, but also as polluters of Polish culture. As in the pre-1945 period, Jews - or people of Jewish origin active in cultural life - were evaluated as carriers of values spiritually alien to Polish national

⁶⁵ Andrzej Werblan, 'Przyczynek do genezy konfliktu,' *Miesięcznik Literacki*, June 1968. Cited in *Anti-Jewish Campaign*. 47-48.

⁶⁶ On the presence of this notion among some segments of anti-Communist political elites of the 1970s and 1980s, and within intellectual discourse, see Irwin-Zarecka. *Neutralising*. 172.

⁶⁷ A good example of such a position can be found in the writings of the respectable popular historian and journalist Jerzy Micewski. See Andrzej Micewski, *Między Dwoma Orientacjami*. Warszawa, 1990. 11-28.

traditions. Their contribution, particularly in areas of literature, history, and film was portrayed as cosmopolitan and lacking in national values, and additionally as having a negative and demoralising influence on Polish youth. Next, their works were accused of polluting public morale and of spreading eroticism - an accusation regularly voiced against Polish Jewish artists in the Catholic press of the inter-war period. The fact that the same accusation could be imitated by the Communist press of the 1960s shows how the same elements of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other could be present in political and social groups otherwise ideologically opposed.⁶⁸

Here is one such representative illustration, presenting the Jews as polluters of Polish national culture. In a resolution of 16 March of the Congress of the Association of Polish Journalists, the following statement was made:

'These are forces ideologically alien to Polish culture which in their nihilism and cosmopolitanism are capable of sowing unrest and poisoning the minds and hearts of our youths.'⁶⁹

What social functions did the myth of the Zionist / Jew as the Threatening Other have in the political culture of the 1960s in Communist Poland ?

As in previous periods, the myth was characterised by its poly-functionality. The ethno-nationalist Communist elites used it in four main ways. Firstly, the myth was used as rationale and justification for the purification of the Party from all remaining Jewish Comrades of differing political orientations - such as revisionism or liberalism. This purification also included non-Jewish Comrades who were accused of Zionist and revisionist sympathies, or who protested against the dismissal of their Jewish colleagues.⁷⁰ Individuals from both groups were dismissed from positions within the Party, the state apparatus, the Army and various other institutions, and were expelled from the Party.

Secondly, the myth was used as rationale and justification for the purification of scientific and cultural institutions, publishing

⁶⁸For an analysis of press articles on the immoral, cosmopolitan and anti-Polish nature of works by Polish Jewish artists, see Oseka, *Syjonisci*. 47-51.

⁶⁹AJPR, File. No. 380.0 (180), Situation in Poland, the Resolution of Polish Journalists of 16 March 1968, 28.

⁷⁰See Eisler, *Marzec*. 378-390.

houses, press, and radio and television stations of the remaining Polish Jews employed by these institutions, the majority of whom were members of the middle class and intelligentsia. These people were removed from their positions of employment and replaced by those members of society faithful to the PZPR.

Thirdly, the myth was used as a rationale for the purification of the Polish polity from the remaining Polish Jews. Both Jewish Comrades and Polish Jewish members of the middle class and intelligentsia comprised a large part of that group of people who were forced to relinquish their Polish nationality and leave the country.⁷¹ The majority of these emigrants were highly assimilated into Polish culture, and, in many cases, to use an expression of Paul Lendvai, they were 'Jews by force' and 'not by choice.'⁷² This emigration lasted until the end of 1970 and totalled approximately twenty thousand people out of a community numbering thirty thousand.⁷³

Fourthly, the myth was used by ethno-nationalist Communist elites as a means of cleansing the PZPR of its 'dark past' and thereby raising its popularity among society at large. Historians of 1968 have divided opinions on the issue of public response to the anti-Jewish campaign and purge orchestrated by the Communist state. According to Jerzy Eisler, society at large watched the events from a distance without being engaged, whereas Marcin Zaremba claims that the anti-Jewish campaign was received in a positive way by a significant segment of society, and that in the sphere of national values, the Party was perceived as the 'people's Party at that time. It is worth adding here that Zaremba's proposition is based on research on secret reports of the Ministry of Interior Affairs and Party Committees dealing with

⁷¹I am aware that at the Twentieth Anniversary of March 1968, the Polish government passed a law in which the forced emigrants resulting from the anti-Jewish campaign of 1968 have a right to claim back their Polish nationality. See, for example the editorial 'Obywatelstwo polskie,' in Gazeta Wyborcza, 16 March, 1998, 2.

⁷²See Lendvai, Antisemitism, 3. On the sociological position of the Polish Jewish emigrants of 1968, see Banas, Scapegoats. 122-123, 163-165. As a background to the sociological position of post-1945 Polish Jewry, see important study conducted in the early post-war period by Irena Hurwic-Nowakowska, A Social Analysis of Post-War Polish Jewry (Jerusalem, 1986).

⁷³On the purge of Polish Jews from the state, and the ways in which the policy of emigration was enforced, see, for example, Banas, The Scapegoats. 133-150; and Anti-Jewish Campaign. 59-69.

the mood of society in 1968, material which in previous decades was not available to historians.⁷⁴

Fragmentary data concerning the membership of the PZPR during March 1968 - the peak of the anti-Jewish campaign - can be seen as supportive of Zaremba's claim that the Party enjoyed social legitimacy at that time. For example, six hundred and seventy new members joined the local Warsaw PZPR organisation during that month, in comparison to one hundred and seventy-nine new-comers in January 1968.⁷⁵ However, it is difficult to establish whether such a dynamic increase in membership was caused exclusively by PZPR's anti-Jewish campaign or whether other social and economic factors were involved.

On the other hand, it must be stressed that a significant segment of the intelligentsia was against the anti-Jewish campaign and purge of 1968. Among those against these events were some segments of academic youths, liberals, and also Catholic intelligentsia concentrated in the group *Znak*. Furthermore, a segment of Communist elites concentrated around the weekly *Politics* (*Polityka*), edited by Comrade Mieczysław Rakowski, refused to participate in the anti-Jewish campaign.

It is also worth noting here, that in the post-1968 realities, the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other did not disappear from political culture, but continued to be used, in a very basic form, and with varying intensity and frequency. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Communist regime used the myth, to some extent, against the political opposition - the Committee for the Defence of the Workers (*Komitet Obróńców Robotników, KOR*) and the Solidarity movement.⁷⁶ Leaders and prominent figures of these organisations, regardless of their ethnic origin, were 'portrayed' as 'non-Polish' and 'anti-Polish elements who wanted to take over power in order to use it against the Polish nation'. The collapse of Communism in 1989 witnessed another short-term intense re-occurrence of the myth this time within a segment of the

⁷⁴See Eisler, *Marzec*, 389-399; and Marcin Zaremba, 'Biedni Polacy 68. Społeczeństwo polskie wobec wydarzeń marcowych w świetle raportów KW i MSW dla kierownictwa PZPR,' in: Kula, Oseka and Zaremba, eds., *Marzec 1968. Vol. 1 Referaty*, 144-170.

⁷⁵This data is cited in Eisler, *Marzec*, 398.

⁷⁶On the portrayal of the political opposition as Jewish and anti-Polish, by the Communist elites in the 1970s and 1980s, see, for example, Hirszowicz, 'The Jewish,' 206-207.

anti-Communist political elites and within a segment of society at large, a phenomenon which I briefly cover in the second chapter.

Conclusions

My aim in this chapter was to demonstrate the development of the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other in the Communist political culture of the 1950s and 1960s - particularly of late 1960s. I have shown that the ethno-nationalist Communist version of the myth was characterised by the transformation of the original notion of the Jew as pro-Communist and therefore as the ideological enemy of the Polish state and its people into the notion of the Jew as anti-Communist and therefore the ideological enemy of the Polish state and consequently of its people. Apart from this adjustment, the ethno-nationalist Communist version of the myth did not differ much from the version advocated by non and anti-communist political elites.

I have also shown that the ethno-nationalist Communist version of the myth was present to varying degrees and intensities within significant segments of the PZPR in all periods under discussion. In the last period of 1968, the myth was expressed in its most elaborated and aggressive form, particularly by the Partisan faction and by those affiliated to its organisations.

The late 1960s was a period most significant for the impact of the myth both on the remaining Jewish minority and on the political culture. During this period, the myth was the driving force of the anti-Jewish campaign and purge which lasted a year and resulted in a wave of forced emigration of two thirds of the remaining Polish Jewish minority. During that time, the myth was successfully used as a rationale and justification for the purification of the Party, the state apparatus, and various scientific and cultural institutions and mass media from the remaining members of the Jewish minority. It was moreover, used as rationale for the purification of the Party and state apparatus from its internal critics and opposition. The myth was also used as means of improving the Party's image and popularity within society at large, since all past errors of the Party and inadequacies of the political system could be attributed to the presence of Jewish Comrades.

In general terms, the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other can be seen as an important indicator of the ethno-nationalisation of Polish Communism.

Overall Conclusions

I have demonstrated that the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other has had a profound and long-lasting impact on modern Polish political culture and the Polish collective mind. It has had a similar impact on inter-communal relations between the dominant Polish nation and the Jewish minority, from the late nineteenth century when the myth emerged in its fully-fledged form, up to the year of 1968 - when a majority of the remaining Jewish minority was forced to leave the polity by the ethno-nationalist Communist groups in power at the time.

Throughout this entire period the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other was used by ethno-nationalists of all kinds and varying degrees of intensity as the background of all discourse on national life. In its most explicit, aggressive and elaborated form, the myth had always been applied most consequentially by the core ethno-nationalist party Endecja and by those organisations and movements with strong adherence to its political ethos.

Overall, within the context of political culture, the myth has had two important social functions. The first was to raise national cohesion and thereby unify opposing strata of society, through the general message that everything negative in Poland and in Polish society was the result of the pernicious pollution of the Jews who were to blame for all political, social and economic problems.

This indeed has been a dangerous and counter-productive strategy which injured inter-communal relations, and led in practice to the exclusion of the Jewish minority from the fabric of society. Furthermore, far from providing actual benefits to the ethnic Polish community it retarded the development of Polish society along the lines of a modern inclusive civic nationalism advocating values of pluralism.

The second function of the myth has been as a means of discrediting political opponents, individuals and groups as representative of Jewish rather than Polish interests. Here the word 'Jew' has simply become a term of political abuse and has not required the actual presence of Jews for its use in political propaganda, as clearly revealed in the post-1968 reality.

The presence of the myth in political culture has generally reflected a lack of political sophistication and an uncritical approach to the exclusivist ethno-nationalist heritage of the late nineteenth century.

In terms of its impact on the Jewish minority, I have demonstrated that the myth has had two important consequences. Firstly, the myth provided a rationale for the project of the purification of the Polish polity by means of mass emigration of the Jews, a project, which despite the wishes of ethno-nationalists, was not successfully implemented by the state up to 1939. During the Second World War, the German occupier achieved this project by means of extermination of ninety per cent of Polish Jews, a means never contemplated by Polish exclusivist ethno-nationalists, with the exception of marginal political groups. In the post-1945 period, the project of purification of the polity from the Jews by means of emigration was, in fact, taken up by the ethno-nationalist Communist elites, and finally realised in 1968 against the then numerically insignificant Jewish minority - a minority moreover characterised by a high level of assimilation into Polish culture.

Secondly, the myth served to rationalise and justify anti-Jewish violence in the inter-war and early post-war periods. In both these periods, such violence contributed to the departure of many members of the Jewish community from Poland.

Yet, this is not to say that the whole of the political and cultural elites (and non-elites) have always accepted the myth. Indeed, as I have indicated in each of the chapters, the myth was not accepted by an important segment of the political elites of liberal and democratic provenance, particularly of PPS and Democratic Union origin, nor was it accepted by some members of the cultural elites which included prominent public figures and well-known intellectuals. These above groups expanded in the post-1945 period as members of the Catholic intelligentsia and clergy representing the so-called 'open Church' joined in opposition against the use of the myth.

In my opinion, there is a need for a detailed analysis in a historical context of that trend in Polish political culture which advocated a positive evaluation of the Jews within society and treated them as part of the Polish nation in a civic sense. This analysis could form part of a broader study of Polish civic nationalism and its failure to establish itself as the main matrix of the nation.

A significant obstacle in challenging the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other within the political (and popular) culture of all the historical periods under discussion has been the high degree of rationalisation of the myth as a social truth. As a result the myth manifested itself in political and social institutions and groups, such as the Catholic Church, which had traditionally condemned and dissociated itself from violent forms of antisemitism. This phenomenon also shows a clear qualitative distinction between the perception of the Jews as the Threatening Other and the advocacy of violent anti-Jewish actions. This reveals the failure by such groups to realise that the myth itself represents in principle a form of anti-Jewish discrimination. It is disturbing that such a position can also be found in Polish intellectual discourse on the history of the Jewish minority, up to the recent period.

I have included some examples of Jewish responses to the myth, which show that some of their representatives had a good understanding of Polish exclusivist ethno-nationalism and its damaging consequences. An examination of these responses would be worthwhile - as would a comparative analysis of the use of the myth of the foremost Internal Threatening Other in various national communities. Both subjects, however, are beyond the scope of this thesis.

My findings reveal that constructions such as the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other can be powerful and emotive. The persistence of the myth during the Second World War and in the post-1945 period clearly exposes the crucial aspects of such constructions - namely their prejudiced and non-rational nature and easy adaptability to varying historical, social and political circumstances. Such constructions have proved to be long-lived and extremely resistant. Whether the myth of the Jew as the Threatening Other can be successfully challenged and deconstructed in contemporary Poland remains to be seen.

Abbreviations

AK	Home Army (<i>Armia Krajowa</i>)
CKZP Komitet	Central Committee of Jews in Poland (<i>Centralny Żydów w Polsce</i>)
GG	Generalgouvernement (<i>Generalna Gubernia</i>)
FOP Polski)	Front for the Rebirth of Poland (<i>Front Odrodzenia</i>)
KPP	Communist Party of Poland (<i>Komunistyczna Partia Polski</i>)
NPR	National Workers' Party (<i>Narodowa Partia Robotnicza</i>)
NSZ	National Arms Forces (<i>Narodowe Siły Zbrojne</i>)
ONR	National Radical Camp (<i>Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny</i>)
OWP	Camp for a Greater Poland (<i>Obóz Wielkiej Polski</i>)
OZON	Camp of National Unity (<i>Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego</i>)
PKWN Komitet	Polish Committee of National Liberation (<i>Polski Wyzwolenia Narodowego</i>)
PPR	Polish Workers' Party (<i>Polska Partia Robotnicza</i>)
PPS	Polish Socialist Party (<i>Polska Partia Socjalistyczna</i>)
PSKL	Polish Catholic and People's Union (<i>Polskie Stronnictwo Katolicko-Ludowe</i>)
PSL	Polish Peasant Party (<i>Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe</i>)
PZPR	Polish United Workers' Party (<i>Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza</i>)
WiN	Freedom and Independence (<i>Wolność i Niepodległość</i>)
WWII	Second World War
ZBOWiD	Union of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy (<i>Związek Bojowników o Wolność i Demokrację</i>)
ZSP	Union of Polish Syndicalists (<i>Związek Polskich Syndykalistów</i>)

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