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Political Conditioning in Poland after World War II and National Minorities, with the Jewish Community as an Example

INTRODUCTION

National minorities, their existence and their size, are directly connected with political and economic history, with changes in national borders, their establishment and disappearance, the processes of colonisation and economic migration. National and ethnic minorities played an important role in the history of the world. They were the reason behind wars, conflicts, the subject of persecution or, even, extermination. In this article, I wish to describe the exploitation, after World War II, of the Jewish minority in Poland, for short-term political purposes by the political authorities during the period of the Polish People's Republic.

After World War II, from an ethnic-religious minority of over three million (approx. 3.5 million), around 100,000 survived and found themselves in Poland in 1946. Including repatriated from the USSR in that same year, there were almost 250,000.² And today, in 2009, according to the 2002 census, there are 1,100.³ What happened, that was so significant, which resulted in today's Jewish minority being one of the smallest national minorities in Poland? I will endeavour to answer this question, applying two explanatory theories: a conspiracy theory and the concept of a scapegoat.

As a rule, national and ethnic minorities differ racially, ethnically, culturally, linguistically or religiously from the dominant nationality within a given state. Their cultural, linguistic and religious difference gives rise to prejudice or even to racial, religious or political hatred. Minority groups become easy targets for the authorities, as well as for the dominant nationality, to use as substitute objects for the venting of frustrated aggression during times of economic or political crisis. The Jewish minority in Poland was exactly such a substitute object that could be used by the political authorities of the Polish People's Republic after 1945.

The Jewish community in Poland, as elsewhere as in the world, is often portrayed in twin roles – first, as a group holding power and, at the same time, aspiring to world domination (the conspiracy theory) and second, as a group which becomes the "scapegoat" for the authorities and for the dominant nationality. In the first instance, it is a strong,

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² Zob. m. in. *Mniejszości narodowe i etniczne w Polsce*. Informator 2003. Red. L. M. Nijakowski i S. Łodziński, Wyd. Sejmowe, Warszawa 2003, s. 39 i n.

³ *Ibid.*, 307.

dominant structure while, in the second, it is the weaker group which can be humiliated and burdened with the blame for all failures.

It can be clearly seen that there is no logic here. The two theories are mutually exclusive. Either it is a strong group striving for world domination – such is the Jewish community positioned in the conspiracy theory and such a community will not allow itself to be harmed. Or it is a weak group, humiliated by being blamed for social or political frustrations and one which cannot be a strong and significant group, otherwise the authorities would be afraid to "use" it as a scapegoat.

Nonetheless, in politics, everything is possible because "politics is not logic" – it has its own specific rationale. For that reason, the Jewish community in Poland was portrayed in such twin roles and, sometimes, is still portrayed as such among the older generation.

A THEORETICAL PRESENTATION OF "THE CONSPIRACY THEORY" AND "THE SCAPEGOAT"

"The conspiracy theory is an anxiety in which the actual conspiracy is not present. A conspiracy refers to an act, a conspiracy theory refers to a perception. (...) Both these terms can overlap: the October Revolution really was a conspiracy organised by Lenin and others, however it also constitutes an example of conspiracy theories encompassing everything from the 18th Century Illuminati to the contemporary German socialists and the sages of Zion."⁴

Pipes divides conspiracy theories into marginal (limited-goal conspiracies) and worldwide (all-encompassing conspiracies)⁵. Marginal conspiracy theories are timeless, while worldwide conspiracies first appeared during the Age of Enlightenment 250 years ago. The theories contain three elements: a powerful, evil and conspiratorial organisation aspiring to worldwide hegemony; unconscious executors and agents, who subject the whole world to the influence of the said group to such a degree that it is barely a step away from achieving success; and, finally, a brave group, cornered from every side, which urgently needs one's help, in order to prevent catastrophe.

Conspiracy theories have a tendency to overwhelm the individual and become a means of perceiving one's entire life. Pipes calls this "conspirationalism", "a paranoid style" or a "hidden hand mentality". It begins with a belief in a fragmented conspiracy theory, e.g. that Jews triggered the Bolshevik revolution – and ends with a view of history which, in large part or entirely, is based on conspiracies of aspirations to gaining power over the world or of destroying humankind. A specific theory starts dominating one's life, and everything that exists is viewed through its prism.

⁴ D. Pipes, *Potęga spisku*, BEJ Service Warszawa 1988, s. 40.

⁵ *Ibid.*, terminy i pojęcia związane z „teorią spisku” zaczerpnąłem z rozdz. drugiego tejże pracy: *Dom luster*, s. 39-58.

Anti-Semitism, particularly, fits this outline. Conspiratorial anti-Semitism is probably the most venomous form of hatred of Jews, as it transforms them into the main enemies of everyone. Accusations against Jews are based upon various premises. Ancient pagans felt a dislike towards them because of the stressing of their separateness, Christians accused them of killing God, Enlightenment thinkers blamed them for Christianity, populists for modernity, racists made them out to be the root of all evil and Islamic fundamentalists as the avant-garde of western values.

The concept of a "scapegoat" is the reverse of the conspiracy theory. Here, the Jewish community is the victim. For a person or group to be chosen as a "scapegoat", they need be non-threatening to those who are frustrated, they must be visible socially due to their separateness and oddity, the centre of a traditional dislike, be distrusted and, as a rule, be the most defenceless, with the possibility of having punishment inflicted upon them. As a rule, they are those minority groups in such a society in which they are weaker than the dominant group, culturally different from the dominant group and, here, the Jewish community, being a minority in every country, becomes part of this concept along with the phenomenon of anti-Semitism⁶.

It should be added here that the concept of a "scapegoat" is connected with frustration⁷. Frustration arises when obstacles appear on the road to the realisation of goals, and may give rise to three effects: aggression, fixation (an irrational stiffening of behaviour) and regression (the appearance of primitive forms of behaviour, characteristic of the person's earlier developmental periods, e.g. crying). Most often, however, frustration breeds aggression. Aggression is directed variously. Firstly, at the obstacle which provoked the aggression. Secondly, the aggression is directed at an entity, an individual or group. Very often, when it is not possible to criticise a political leader, the aggression is directed at his collaborator. Thirdly, auto-aggression. In politics, this takes the form of self-criticism. Fourthly, aggression is directed towards a "scapegoat"..

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AS A CONSPIRATORIAL GROUP AND AS THE SCAPEGOAT

THE EVENTS OF KIELCE

The Kielce pogrom is an example of using the Jewish community as a "scapegoat", at which accusations are directed in order to provoke public actions with the aim of triggering acts of revenge on the Jewish community in order to, simultaneously, "cover up" this action with another action associated with the forging of a referendum by the then political authorities associated with the Polish Workers Party (PPR).

A referendum took place 30th June 1946. According to PSL figures, 10 million people voted against – however according to other, unofficial sources, that figure is

⁶ Szerzej zob. R. Girard, *Koziół ofiarny*, Wyd. Łódzkie Łódź 1991.

⁷ Z. J. Pietraś, *Decydowanie polityczne*, PWN Warszawa-Kraków 1998, s. 372 i n.

between 8.3 and 8.4 million. The referendum was, in reality, a plebiscite: whether you are for or against the ruling party, the PPR. The community was shocked by the unofficial information because the act of voting was one thing, the count and the official result were quite something else. The opposition was intimidated and was accused of everything of which it could possibly be accused. The authorities had the problem of how to alter the referendum result. One of the ways to change the results in order to benefit the current authorities was to falsify the results of the referendum. And the authorities did just that. But they had the serious problem of how to inform the community, both in Poland and overseas, without serious criticism from the opposition, both in Poland and overseas, and, especially, from the international community.

- 4th July 1946: A pogrom against the Jewish community occurs in Kielce. News of this Jewish tragedy spreads around the world in a short time.
- 6th July 1946: Władysław Gomułka begins his speech to a meeting of members of the PPR and PPS by saying, "The democratic camp has been victorious". He was obviously referring to the 30th June referendum.

These two dates are not linked by coincidence. The pogrom in Kielce "hid" and "neutralised" reporting of the falsified referendum of the 30th June. K. Kersten encapsulates it this way, "In such a tense atmosphere, when the authorities became convinced that, despite a huge propaganda campaign and despite actions intended to intimidate the population, a serious majority of society had refused to give its approval, and with the opposition having to deal with the falsified result of the national plebiscite – it all came to a bloody pogrom against the Jews in Kielce on the morning of the 4th July."⁸

The question arises regarding the news from Kielce of the 4th July. Was this event in some way provoked or was it merely an accidental event which became part of all the political events that were beneficial to the then authorities?

The answer to the above question is not easy, but the sequence of political events suggests that the then political authorities benefitted greatly, both politically and in the media, from the events in Kielce. According to many individuals, many actions and omissions of the then political authorities suggest that the special services of those years (the UB and NKVD) had a hand in the Kielce events. Nonetheless, the government had a different opinion and laid the blame on the anti-communist underground for provoking the Kielce pogrom which, according to the government, was supposedly "part of a master plan by underground gangs, in particular the NSZ and WiN, aimed at provoking a riot against the government". A third scenario accuses neither side, neither the government nor the anti-communist underground – the pogrom in Kielce was a spontaneous outbreak of local ignorance – that was the assessment by the British Ambassador. It pointed to a deep-seated

⁸ Ibid.

anti-Semitism within contemporary Polish society. A fourth scenario was also mentioned – that Zionists were behind the massacre, as they wished to impel Jews to emigrate to Palestine.

That last scenario is the least realistic and therefore, in my opinion, should be rejected. Of the first three, the least probable is the second scenario – that the Kielce events were provoked by the anti-communist underground. If the Kielce pogrom had been organised by the anti-communist underground, then the then political authorities would not have let slip the chance to discredit, and to lay blame for the huge massacre, on the anti-communist opposition. Apparently, the PPR authorities claimed that there was too little evidence to support this hypothesis. Everything was done in order to hush up the matter. Therefore, the second variant, associated with the opposition anti-communists as agents provocateur, should be completely rejected.

The two most realistic variants remain: that of provocation by the special services inspired by a desire to assist the government and that of an "ignorant" mob spontaneously reacting to information about the abduction of a small boy and the ritual taking of his life.

The "spontaneous mob" variant has its psychological, social and political bases. The psychological conditions are, above all, connected with the very real sinister superstitions and phobias concerning the Jewish community at the time under analysis. According to reports at the time, the Kielce pogrom was directly provoked by a rumour about the alleged ritual murder of a Polish child. To a large extent, it was certainly the result of the continuity of the centuries-old, aforementioned, Christian superstition where Jesus, as the Christian God, was executed by a Jewish king. In particular, this anti-Jewish phobia has lasted to this day in Polish society. If we accept the definition of "phobia" as "a persistent, pathological fear of specific situations, phenomena or objects"⁹, then it is still maintained in the consciousness of many Poles.

The social conditioning of the time was connected, above all, with anxieties that returning Jews would want to regain their pre-War possessions which, by that time, had already been taken over by the local community. One of the reports of the Government Delegation for Poland, sent to London, states that "when one or two Jewish families return to the small town which was once 90 per cent Jewish, they find themselves in a strange, hostile terrain". This conditioning, associated with Jewish possessions being taken over by the local community, also appeared in Kielce.

The other element of social conditioning, which generated a dislike of the Jewish community, was their alleged financial privilege. A Jew, in the imagination of many people, was synonymous with wealth and with enrichment at the cost of the Polish community. To a large degree, it is a myth connected with the fact that in feudal Poland, the Jew could undertake professions which were not reserved just for the nobility. For

⁹ W. Kopaliński, *Słownik wyrazów obcych i zwrotów obcojęzycznych z almanachem, Świat Książki, Warszawa 2000, s.176.*

that reason, he worked in the liberal professions, in science, and also in professions associated with finance (e.g. usury) and in running an inn where payments would be collected on behalf of the feudal lord. These last activities created the image of the Jew who, on the one hand, was financially affluent, but on the other hand, was enriching himself at the cost of the Polish community.

Political conditioning, in those post-War times, was connected with an alleged preference for the Jewish community in participation within the political authority of the time. An over-representation of the Jewish community in the political elite of the time, particularly within the special services, was exceptionally visible. It caused a prejudice, above all, amongst the political opposition. The cliché of "żydokomuna" (Jew-Communists) was very strong here.

All three conditionings, psychological, social and political, created a bad climate in relation to the Jewish community and were the bases of anti-Semitism in many generations of Polish society. It was the bedrock which could have provoked the aggressive activity against the Jewish community in Kielce and in other places in Poland. And this aggressive action was provoked. To this day, it is not possible to substantiate whether this action was spontaneous or whether it was provoked externally.

Circumstantial evidence and the political and media benefits which the political authorities of the time gained, indicate, to a large extent, the probability that it was the special services being used by the political authorities to provoke the Kielce pogrom. For that reason also, in my opinion, the Kielce events of 1946 rule out a self-contained, spontaneous mob action. The political authorities of the time, in my opinion, were the initiators of the special service activity which provoked the events in Kielce.

Firstly, both the government and opposition sides explicitly claim that the Kielce events were planned and were a provocation. They differ on one quite essential point: the authorities accused the opposition of provocation, while the opposition claimed that the government was the initiator of the Kielce events.

Secondly, everything was done in order to slowly hush up the matter of the Kielce events in the courts and in the office of the prosecutor. There was only one trial. Nine death sentences were passed and carried out. They were people from the mob: two policemen, a locksmith, a shoemaker, a barber, a janitor, a master paver, the owner of a former Jewish house and a baker. Only one professional, non-commissioned police officer had finished higher than the sixth grade at public school. Those who were not put on trial were Major Sobczyński – head of the WUBK in Kielce, Colonel Kuźmiński - Provincial Commander of the Civil Militia, Major Gwiazdowicz – Acting Provincial Commander of the Civil Militia as well as Lieutenant Zagórski, arrested on the orders of the Security Ministry as a result of a report by the commander of the Civil Militia flying squad. It is possible to state here that the Kielce events have remained the best-kept secret to this day.

Thirdly, many people were not permitted access to the site of the pogrom – the Deputy-Starosta as well as the Public Prosecutor. Priest Roman Zralek, the cathedral parish priest, was detained by soldiers and not permitted to enter the site of the pogrom. And so access to the site of the events was effectively blocked to people not connected with the uniformed forces or special services.

Fourthly, the role played by Major Pasowski was never disclosed (a Security Service operative). He supposedly first met nine-year-old Henryk Błaszczuk and spoke with him (the first PAP announcement stated that the Major had detained the boy in his own home). Also the roles were never clarified of individual operatives of the Civil Militia and Security Service who contributed to igniting and spreading the pogrom.

Fifthly, significant KBW forces (Internal Security Corps), which had been concentrated in Kielce and the most immediate surrounding area during the referendum, were withdrawn on the eve of Kielce events.

All the above-mentioned circumstances show explicitly that the forces of law and order did not want to allow to enter other people who could have eased the existing inflammable problem (the priest, the Deputy-Starosta, the public prosecutor) and also did not allow the stifling of the mob's aggression by means of force (withdrawal of the KBW forces the day before). Secondly, the unexplained role of the secret service officers and the armed forces explicitly points to their major role in provoking the crowd and directing its aggression towards the Jewish community (41 people died).

If, indeed, the secret service did provoke the Kielce events, and incorporating the suggestion from both sides that this action was planned, it is necessary to assume logically that some headquarters existed which inspired the action. And only the political ruling elite of the time could have given instructions to this special service headquarters. The circle is closing. (The noose is tightening.)

We know today what, indeed, were the potential benefits to be gained by the then political authorities: above all, they could accuse the opposition of provoking the events and they did accuse them. Secondly, they accused the clergy of contributing to the Kielce provocation, by maintaining the tradition in which Jews constituted a hostile element who, in history, had committed deicide (the killing of Jesus) and infanticide (ritual murders). Thirdly, and most important: the pogrom in Kielce "hid" and "neutralised" information about the falsified 30th June referendum. Adam Pragier, PPS activist and, also, a Minister in the Emigree Government in 1944-45, commented thus, "It is impossible to doubt either that the pogrom in Kielce was from, beginning to end, provoked and staged, or the aim of this provocation and staging. Above all, its concurrence with the time of the referendum is striking. This concurrence is even more glaring in the light of the results of the referendum. On the one hand, attention is being turned away from the referendum and the political

chicanery as revealed by the opposition while, on the other hand, they point the finger at the opposition, simultaneously raising the democratic status of the government.”¹⁰

The aim of the provocation was 100% achieved because, as K.Kersten writes, ”for many days, information regarding the Kielce massacre appeared in the headlines of the world press, obscuring, not only the referendum in Poland, but also the Paris conference of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the great powers which was devoted to the shaping of post-war Europe¹¹.

Under explanatory analysis, the Jewish community became the ”scapegoat” for the then authorities. Provoking aggression against Jews in Kielce enabled national and overseas opposition voices of criticism to be muffled, as well as neutralizing international criticism of the referendum chicanery. Simultaneously, it was also possible to indulge in criticism of the anti-communist opposition and of the Catholic Church in Poland.

A.Czubiński has a different opinion on this subject. He states that attempts were made to associate the Kielce pogrom with preparations for the peace conference and with the issue of the western border. In concluding this, he quotes an opposition activist as saying that ”the provocation in Kielce was organised as revenge for defeat in ‘the people’s vote’, as an introduction to a new wave of terrorism aimed not only against the Jews but, above all, against all Polish democracy activists. We have already discovered information of the murder, directly after the Kielce massacre, of quite a number of activists of Polish democratic parties [...]”¹². On the 5th July, Sejm member Rusin of the People’s Party (Stronnictwo Ludowe) was murdered. Two alternate scenarios are cited here which, in my opinion, do not have a *raison d’etre*. Firstly, as I stated previously, the then authorities hushed the matter up in the courts and so the opposition had little to argue about. Secondly, I personally cannot see the major relationship between the peace conference and the issue of the western border, with the pogrom.

The essential effect of the pogrom was an emigration of the Jewish community (approx. 100,000) from Poland after the events of Kielce.

THE EVENTS OF 1956

The Jewish community, as a pawn in political games in times of Polish political crises, was exploited by the political authorities in various, disparate ways. In the first ten years, the ruling elite, in accordance with doctrinal premises, proclaimed a fight against anti-Semitism, using it as an accusation against the political opposition for the purpose of ideologically and politically discrediting it. So, in part, the ruling camp used the Kielce pogrom to accuse the political opposition and the Catholic Church of anti-Semitism.

¹⁰ K. Kersten, op. cit., s.274.

¹¹ K. Kersten, op. cit., s. 273.

¹² Cyt. za A. Czubiński, op. cit., s. 163.

In the political crisis of 1956, the political authorities used the Jewish community in internal games within the framework of the ruling camp. This crisis revealed divergent attitudes within the authorities and within society regarding the Jewish community. It later became an element of Polish political life for a long time.

The diversity of attitudes within the authorities and within society was related to the role of Jews within the then political authorities. The political conditioning of those post-War times concerned the Jewish community being privileged in participating in the then political authorities. Over-representation of the Jewish community within the ranks of the then political elite, in particular the secret service, was exceptionally apparent. Within society and a large section of the political elite, above all, it was a cause of hostility which manifested itself in the form of anti-Semitism. It created the image of the Jew as the internal enemy, assigning him the role of a communist oppressor of the Polish people.

In 1956, in relation to their number within the community, they were accused of a disproportionately large participation in the exercise of power and in abusing that power to fight against the Polish national identity¹³. As a rule, they demanded the removal of people of Jewish origin from national and political positions, e.g. in Szczecin, they demanded the dismissal of the then head of the Security Services (UB), Elias Koton¹⁴. The settling of accounts by the community with the authorities sometimes took to the streets. Incidents occurred where people of Jewish origin were beaten up.

The over-representation of the Jewish community within the political authorities of the time resulted in, among others, a large number of them being in management positions, in particular within the security service apparatus and at the very peaks of power. Returning from the Soviet Union, Jewish communists identified themselves with the then political system and were readily accepted into the party, state and military apparatus, above all, because of a lack of any existing political cadres. This resulted in the rising of a "Jew-Communist" stereotype which, in moments of political crises, was exploited by political opponents. In 1956, the Jewish community's situation was complicated. On the one hand, they were considered as enemies of the Polish national identity, allied with the Soviet Union (through emigration). Particularly, this stereotype was apparent in society and, at the same time, was exploited by the political opposition. On the other hand, at the very peaks of power, two factions formed in 1956 – the "Pulavians" and the "Natolinians", who competed for political power. The Natolinians were labelled as dogmatic due to their dislike of the *inteligencja* – "uncouth". They often bandied about anti-Semitic slogans. "Suggestions put forward to eliminate Jews from the circles of power were supposed to authenticate its national character, to turn attention away from substantial problems, to lay

¹³ Zob. szerzej L. Olejnik, *Polityka narodowościowa Polski w latach 1944-1960*, Łódź 2003, s. 416-425.

¹⁴ J. Mieczkowski, *Zarys dziejów szczecińskiego oddziału Towarzystwa Społeczno-Kulturalnego Żydów*, (w:) *Żydzi szczecińscy. Tradycja i współczesność*. Red. K. Kozłowski i J. Mieczkowski, Szczecin 2004, s.59.

upon the Jews blame for all the evils of the past so as to free the communist party from any responsibility.”¹⁵

The Pulavians wanted to liberalise the Communist Party (PZPR) and the state. They contributed to the removal from power of Gomułka and, at the same time, were called ”Jews” due to the origin of some their members¹⁶. This multiple-perception of Jews – first as opponents of the Polish national identity and then as allies of political change – resulted in Gomułka slowly turning away from the Pulavians and gradually siding with the dogmatists. The Pulavians were gradually accused by Gomułka of revisionism. As a last resort, in 1967-68, he himself accused the Jewish community of sabotaging Poland.

The year, 1956, was a watershed in the perception of Jews in Poland. On the one hand, a section of the political authorities, the ”dogmatists”, exploited the ”Jew-Communist” stereotype in society to lay blame on the Jews for all past evils thereby freeing the community party from any responsibility. The Jewish community appears here as the ”power-wielding group”, thereby realising the concept of the ”conspiracy theory”. The Jew-Communists were the group wanting to dominate power and a stand needed to be taken. On the other hand, shifting responsibility onto them for all political and ideological evil (Stalinism) is the concept of the ”scapegoat” because, in the popular political awareness, it was the Jews who were to blame for the introduction and consolidation of Stalinism in Poland. And real aggression towards the Jewish community was often apparent (beatings, destruction of Jewish property). As a result of this aggression by the community and by the then political authorities and, at the same time, due to a lack of any realistic prospects, around 40,000 Polish citizens of Jewish origin emigrated. Thirdly, the picture of the Jew in Poland slowly altered. The ”Jew-Communist” stereotype disappears and the picture is created of the opposition-Jew, opposing the authorities. The change from the Jew-Communist image to that of the opposition-Jew provoked Gomułka, who from the beginning, accepted the Pulavian group (”Jews”), but later ceased the October reforms, to slowly remove them from power, accusing them of revisionism. In this manner, a very visible group of opposition party intellectuals was formed, in opposition to the authorities (L. Kołakowski, Michnik, Kuroń, Modzelewski and the like). A stereotype of Jews was created – the enemies of the People’s Poland.

THE EVENTS OF 1968¹⁷

March 1968 was a simple continuation of the politics of the dogmatists (the Natalonians) but, now, their program was taken over by Mieczysław Moczar’s ”partisan’s” and its full consequences were realised.”The Jew-Zionists” became the chief enemy of the

¹⁵ K. Kersten, op. cit., s. 319.

¹⁶ Zob. szerzej W. Jedlicki, „Chamy i Żydy”, Paryż 1963; A. Zambrowski, Rewelacje wyssane z palca, czyli Puławianie i Natolińczycy w 1956 roku, „Warszawskie Zeszyty Historyczne” 1988, z. 2, s. 49-78.

¹⁷ Szerzej zob. J. Eisler, Polski rok 1968, IPN Warszawa 2006, czy też jego wcześniejsza pozycja, Marzec 1968, PWN, Warszawa 1991.

People's Poland, namely those who controlled senior positions in the party, political, military and state security elite – we have a simple continuation of the "conspiracy theory" and, now, the "Jew-Zionist" became the pretext for an internal fight for political leadership in Poland between Mieczysław Moczar's group of "partisans" and Władysław Gomułka's group.

On the other hand, "the Jew-Zionists" became the "scapegoats" on whom everything that was evil could be "dumped". So that the "Jew-Zionists" became guilty of all the evil prevailing in Poland - above all, Stalinism. Mob aggression was directed at them. It came to extremely aggressive behaviour towards people of Jewish origin¹⁸.

The entire provocation of March 1968 was planned and prepared in the Ministry of Internal Affairs where Mieczysław Moczar was the Minister¹⁹. The beginning of the events of 1968 should be connected with the Six Day War between Israel and Egypt. The Polish media described this event as Israeli aggression against Egypt. In fact, it was the reverse. The Jewish community did not hide its preferences and rejoiced in the State of Israel's victory. This was another reason for it to be branded as an enemy of the People's Poland as it was contrary to the socialist state's official propaganda line. The secret political police had much to do. In this manner, the "Jew-Zionist" stereotype was created, an enemy of the People's Republic of Poland. "Spontaneous rallies" at workplaces condemned Israel and the Polish Jewish community as being disloyal to the authorities and to society.

In June 1967, Władysław Gomułka spoke at the Trade Union Congress in Warsaw. It was a typical speech as it raised the issue of the Jewish community's self-definition: Are they pro the People's Poland or pro Israel? The Jewish community, which did not condemn Israel, became, in Gomułka's speech, compared to a fifth column which, according to the First Secretary, was allied with Israel – the aggressor. The view of a Jewish conspiracy was presented with full stateliness – the Jewish community as a fifth column which carried out "underhanded scheming" for Israel and imperialist states. This was specific support for the, already commenced, purges within the state - political, military and security. Due to the witch-hunt atmosphere and an uncertainty regarding their own future (the anti-Zionist campaign), Polish Jews began leaving the country.

The culmination point of the anti-Zionist campaign was the events at the University of Warsaw on 6th March 1968. The incidents there were used as a direct pretext to do battle with the Zionists²⁰. The security service intensified its detection activity of any disloyalty within the Jewish community with regard to the authorities' official political

¹⁸ Zob. im. in. E. Krasucki, *Żydowski Marzec '68 w Szczecinie*, wyd. TSKŻ – Oddział w Szczecinie, Szczecin 2008, s. 18 i n.

¹⁹ Zob. P. Osęka, M. Zaremba, *Wojna po wojnie, czyli polskie reperkusje wojny sześciodniowej*, „Polska 1944/45-1989, t. IV, 1999, s. 226 – 230 czy D. Stola, *Kampania antysyjonistyczna w Polsce 1967-1968*, ISP PAN Warszawa 2000, s. 292-313.

²⁰ E. Krasucki, op. cit., s. 23.

line²¹. One could say that, from 1967, a collapse took place of Marxism as the prevailing ideology to be replaced by nationalist ideals (party nationalism)²². There followed an appeal to traditional, pre-War, Polish motifs of nationalism (the rhetoric of nationalist and Catholic writings)²³.

In concluding discussion of the events of 1967-68, it should be stated that, as in 1956, the Jewish community was merely a pretext to the struggle for political power in Poland, and now this mechanism was repeated. The "Jew-Zionist" stood as the main enemy of the People's Poland. Disloyal with respect to the official line, they controlled positions within the party, political, military and security elite. They stood as political saboteurs (a fifth column according to Gomułka's speech) - a "conspiracy theory" to the fullest. The "Jew-Zionist" was the pretext for the internal struggle for political leadership in Poland between Mieczysław Moczar's "partisans" and Władysław Gomułka's group.

On the other hand, the "Jew-Zionist" was the "scapegoat" upon whom everything that was evil could be "dumped", guilty of everything evil that prevailed in Poland – above all - Stalinism. Mob aggression was directed towards them. It led to extremely aggressive behaviour towards people of Jewish origin. As a result, around 20,000 Polish citizens, of Jewish origin, emigrated at that time.

CONCLUSION

In the events analysed here, the Jewish minority in Poland is viewed as a conspiratorial group which aspires to power and which, on the other hand, is also viewed as a "scapegoat" for the political authorities in Poland after 1945. Using the example of the analysed events (the Kielce pogrom, the 1956 crisis, the events of 1967-68), it can be clearly seen that the political authorities used the Jewish minority. They were an essential, political pretext – once as a "scapegoat" in order to provoke the Kielce riots which were to "distract" from the falsified referendum, and then they were used as part of a conspiracy theory (1965), exploiting the "Jew-Communist" stereotype in society. A section of the political authorities, the "dogmatists", exploited them in order to dump all the evils of the past upon the Jews, at the same time freeing the Communist Party from any responsibility. On the other hand, responsibility for all the political and ideological evils (Stalinism) is dumped on them. This is the concept of a "scapegoat" because within the common, political consciousness, it was Jews who were guilty for the introduction and strengthening of Stalinism in Poland.

The events of 1967-68 are a simple continuation of the politics of the dogmatists (the Natolinians). Their program was adopted by Mieczysław Moczar's "partisans" and its consequences were fully realised. The "Jew-Zionist" was seen as the main enemy of the

²¹ Ibid., s. 23 i n.

²² Ibid., s. 25; M. Zaremba, *Komunizm, legitymizacja, nacjonalizm. Nacjonalistyczna legitymizacja władzy komunistycznej w Polsce*, ISP PAN Warszawa 2005, s. 352.

²³ Zob. m. in. D. Pałka, *Kościół katolicki wobec Żydów w Polsce międzywojennej*, NOMOS Kraków 2008.

People's Poland, who dominated the high positions within the party, political, military and security elite (the "Jew-Zionist" stereotype). The other "Jew-Zionist" countenance was of a disloyal citizen of Poland, unwilling to conform to the official, political line (of Israel as the aggressor). We have here a simple continuation of the "conspiracy theory" and, at the same time, the "Jew-Zionist" became the pretext for internal battles for political power in Poland between Mieczysław Moczar's "partisans" and Władysław Gomułka's group. On the other hand, the "Jew-Zionist" became a "scapegoat" upon whom everything that was evil could be "dumped" – namely, that "Jew-Zionists" became guilty of everything bad that prevailed in Poland – above all – Stalinism and political disloyalty. Mob aggression was directed towards them.

As can be seen, the PRL authorities often exploited, for short-term political gains, the stereotypes associated with the Jewish community. To this day, the stereotype of the Jew as being "a foreigner" still exists²⁴. Today's Polish Amish, when expressing their opinion on the perception of them by Polish society, claim that they are taken for "Jews". Only after they have explained who they are do the local people change their minds. But it can be seen that, in provincial Poland, a phobia of Jews, as foreign to our culture and traditions, still "exists".

The analysed, political events (of 1946, 1956, 1967-68) resulted in an uncertain tomorrow for this minority and an inability to come to an understanding with Polish society, resulting in an emigration exodus (1946 – 100,000, 1956 – 40,000, 1967-8 – 20,000). Today, in the consciousness of society, the Jewish minority exists above all as a representative of a colourful culture and social tradition, as a community in Poland officially numbering around 1,100.

The "scapegoat" theory and the "conspiracy theory" have been, for many years, the subjects of research in the field of political decision-making. Whoever exploits a "scapegoat" should realise that, as a result, he creates aggression towards it, often with incalculable, extremely negative effects which can take the form of lynching or death of innocent people. But, in order to retain power, political elites will stop at nothing. That is the way it was with the Jewish community in Poland after 1945.

²⁴ A. Czubiński, *Polska i Polacy po II wojnie światowej(1945-1989)*, Wyd. Naukowe UAM, Poznań 1998, s.142 i n.

