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“RZEKA,” “ATLANTYK,” “GIEŁDA” ... A REVIEW OF CASES
CONDUCTED BY THE SECURITY APPARATUS AGAINST
THE JEWISH POPULATION IN 1945–1956*

In terms of political history, the first ten post-war years for Jews in Poland can be divided into two periods. The first one (1945–1949) was characterised by political pluralism, with as many as eleven legally operating Jewish parties as well as cultural, educational and social institutions, plus the Central Committee of Jews in Poland, composed of legal party members.¹ During the second period (1949–1956), the communists redefined their approach to the newly-established state of Israel and adopted an anti-Zionist line. This resulted in ending the political quasi-autonomy of the Jewish community that had existed until then and intensified control of this community through surveillance and various forms of repression. From the authorities’ perspective, the Ministry of Public Security (*Ministerstwo Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego*, MBP) played a role in all these areas. The MBP answered to the ruling party, whose powers and methods were typical of secret political police whose operations were intended to help build a totalitarian state.

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¹ The committee consisted of: the Jewish faction of the Polish Workers’ Party, Bund, Ihud, Left-Wing Poale Zion, Right-Wing Poale Zion, and Ha-Shomer ha-Tsa’ir.

This text contributes to the existing research studies published on the operations of the security apparatus directed at the Jewish community after the war. Aleksandra Namysło, Bożena Szaynok, Martyna Grądzka-Rejak, Anna Sommer, Arkadiusz Słabig, Grzegorz Berendt, Jarosław Syrnyk, and others have written about many various aspects of this subject.² The literature on the postwar history of Jews in Poland is even more extensive.³ For this reason, detailed data on the structure of the MBP and its voivodeship branches, which dealt with the surveillance of the Jewish community, was deliberately omitted. The often-repeated information about the postwar history of the Jewish people who survived the war was likewise omitted.

² M. Grądzka-Rejak, “‘Zbierać informacje o akcji przygotowawczej i sytuacji w organizacji...’ Działalność referenta do spraw żydowskich przy WUBP w Krakowie w latach 1947–1950,” *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 2 (2021), pp. 540–563; B. Szaynok, *Z historią i Moskwą w tle. Polska a Izrael 1944–1968* (Warsaw, 2007); M. Semczyszyn, B. Szaynok, “Kwestia ludności żydowskiej,” in *Aparat bezpieczeństwa wobec mniejszości narodowych w Polsce w latach 1944–1956*, ed. J. Syrnyk (Warsaw, 2019), pp. 26–58; “Instrukcja MBP dla rozpracowania partii i organizacji działających w społeczeństwie żydowskim z 1946 r.,” ed. A. Namysło, *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 2 (2004), pp. 341–358; A. Sommer, “Działalność służb bezpieczeństwa wobec środowiska żydowskiego na terenie województwa krakowskiego w latach 1949–1954 na przykładzie rozpracowania obiektowego o kryptonimie ‘Jordan’ i ‘Zator’,” *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów* 4 (2007), pp. 435–451; J. Syrnyk, “‘Po linii’ rewizjonizmu, nacjonalizmu, syjonizmu... Aparat bezpieczeństwa wobec ludności niepolskiej na Dolnym Śląsku (1945–1989) (Wrocław, 2013); A. Słabig, *Aparat bezpieczeństwa wobec mniejszości narodowych na Pomorzu Zachodnim w latach 1945–1989* (Szczecin, 2008); G. Berendt, “‘Społeczność na pokaz.’ Problematyka żydowska w działaniach władz w PRL w latach 1976–1989,” in *Między ideologią a socjotechniką. Kwestia mniejszości narodowych w działalności władz komunistycznych – doświadczenie polskie i środkowoeuropejskie*, ed. by M. Semczyszyn and J. Syrnyk (Warsaw–Szczecin–Wrocław, 2014), pp. 317–367.

³ See e.g., *Następstwa zagłady Żydów. Polska 1944–2010*, ed. by F. Tych and M. Adamczyk-Garbowska (Lublin, 2012); A. Namysło, *Utracone nadzieje. Ludność żydowska w województwie śląskim/katowickim w latach 1945–1970* (Katowice, 2012); J. Mieczkowski, *Między emigracją a asymilacją. Szkice o szचेиńskich Żydach w latach 1945–1997* (Szczecin, 1998); N. Aleksyus, *Dokąd dalej? Ruch syjonistyczny w Polsce (1944–1950)* (Warsaw, 2002); B. Szaynok, *Ludność żydowska na Dolnym Śląsku 1945–1950* (Wrocław, 2000); P. Wiczorek, *Żydzi w Wałbrzychu i powiecie wałbrzyskim 1945–1968* (Wrocław–Warsaw, 2017); G. Berendt, “‘Zjednoczenie Syjonistów Demokratów ‘Ichud’ – ‘z biało-niebieskimi sztandarami w morzu czerwonych sztandarów’,” in A. Grabski, G. Berendt, *Między emigracją a trwaniem. Syjoniści i komuniści żydowscy w Polsce po Holocauście* (Warsaw, 2003), pp. 101–191; A. Grabski, *Centralny Komitet Żydów w Polsce (1944–1950). Historia polityczna* (Warsaw, 2015); P. Kendziorek, *Program i praktyka produktywizacji Żydów polskich w działalności CKŻP* (Warsaw, 2016); A. Rykała, *Przemiany sytuacji społeczno-politycznej mniejszości żydowskiej w Polsce po drugiej wojnie światowej* (Łódź, 2007); J. Sadowska, “Żydzi w Białymstoku po II wojnie światowej jako przykład społeczności zanikającej,” *Przeszłość Demograficzna Polski* 40 (2018), pp. 274–300; M. Rusiniak-Karwat, *Nowe życie na zgliszczach. Bund w Polsce w latach 1944–1949* (Warsaw, 2016); A.M. Rosner, *Obraz społeczności ocalałych w centralnej kartotece Wydziału Ewidencji i Statystyki CKŻP* (Warsaw, 2018); A. Kichelewski, *Ocalali. Żydzi polscy po Zagładzie* (Warsaw, 2021).

This paper focuses on the directions of the MBP's operations targeting Jewish communities and attempts to assess how effective they were. Based on a search query in the surviving archival materials and recording aids stored at the Institute of National Remembrance Archives, cases conducted by the security authorities in this field were also reviewed.

From "Preventive Surveillance" to the Fight against Zionism

Out of the 3.3 million Jews who lived in the Second Polish Republic before the Second World War, about 425,000 (12.7%) survived the Holocaust. During Operation Reinhardt in the Treblinka, Belzec, and Sobibor extermination camps and in mass executions, Germans murdered 1,710,000 or so Polish Jews. Hundreds of thousands more were killed in ghettos, slave labour camps and other extermination camps (Auschwitz-Birkenau, Majdanek, Kulmhof, and others). Others perished as a result of indirect forms of extermination (from starvation to diseases). The majority of Polish Jews survived in the USSR: in labour camps (called in sg. *spetsposelok* [special settlement]), militarised labour battalions, and various places of settlement, to which they had been sent by the Soviet authorities as deported citizens of the Second Polish Republic, inhabitants of the eastern territories occupied in 1939–1941 by the USSR, and the refugees from the area occupied by the Third Reich or evacuated just before the Wehrmacht invaded the Eastern Borderlands (*Kresy Wschodnie*) in 1941.

According to various estimates, 80,000–120,000 or so Polish Jews survived in the occupied territories, including 30,000–60,000 in hiding places and with Aryan papers, 10,000–15,000 in survival groups hiding in forests and as partisans, 20,000–40,000 in German concentration camps in the Polish territories occupied by the Third Reich. Some survived by fleeing to neutral countries.⁴ In July 1946,

⁴ R. Hilberg, *Zagłada Żydów Europejskich*, vol. 3, transl. J. Giebułtowski (Warsaw, 2014), pp. 1544–1563; A. Stankowski, P. Weiser, "Demograficzne skutki Holocaustu," in *Następstwa zagłady Żydów*, pp. 15–38; D. Boćkowski, "Losy żydowskich uchodźców z centralnej i zachodniej Polski przebywających na Kresach Północno-Wschodnich w latach 1939–1941," in *Świat niepożegnany. Żydzi na dawnych ziemiach wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej w XVIII–XX wieku*, ed. K. Jasiewicz (Warsaw–London, 2004); *Widziałem Anioła Śmierci. Losy deportowanych Żydów polskich w ZSRR w latach II wojny światowej. Świadectwa zebrane przez Ministerstwo Informacji i Dokumentacji Rządu Polskiego na Uchodźstwie w latach 1942–1943*, ed. and foreword by M. Siekierski and F. Tych (Warsaw, 2006); *Syberia Żydów polskich. Losy uchodźców z Zagłady*, ed. by L. Zessin-Jurek and K. Friedla (Warsaw, 2020).

after repatriation from the Soviet Union, 240,489 Jewish people were listed in the Central File of the Department of Records and Statistics of the Central Committee of Polish Jews (*Centralny Komitet Żydów Polskich*, CKŻP). In recent years, researchers have lowered this number to 213,000 because some people who moved many times would register more than once in different departments of the CKŻP. The analysis of the CKŻP collection of records suggests that there were slightly more male survivors (53%) and, understandably, when we consider the chances of surviving the war, most survivors were people in their prime (20–50 years old).

The data only sheds scant light on the demography of the post-war history of the survivors. The incompleteness of sources and the constant migrations of the Jewish population in that period are among the causes of inaccurate estimates, which should also include, for example, the inability to determine the number of people who did not reveal their Jewish origin, did not register in CKŻP branches and who left the country soon after the war.⁵

In the initial years after the war, the official course of the communists ruling the country towards the Jewish population was quite liberal. Many political, social, cultural and economic initiatives made up Jewish autonomy. It was accompanied by freedom of association, party pluralism, the activities of institutions and associations and their cooperation with international organisations. At least until 1948, the vibrant socio-political life and the accompanying opening up of the Jewish population to new professions within the framework of the so-called productivisation corresponded with the emancipatory slogans proclaimed by the communists. At the same time, the attempt to rebuild Jewish life in Poland on new principles was intended to assimilate (bring closer – as it was said at the time) Jews to Polish society within the framework of creating a new communist social project. Jewish autonomy gave the illusion of building a system based on democratic principles in Poland and, at the same time, was an argument in the efforts to legitimise the communists in the international arena.

With the establishment of the pro-Western state of Israel, there was a reorientation of the internal policy towards Jews and the external policy towards the new state. Before this happened, however, the concept of rebuilding a “Jewish settle-

⁵ Rosner, *Obraz społeczności ocalałych*, pp. 203–204; see also Rykała, *Przemiany sytuacji*.

ment” in Poland lost out to the mass emigration to Palestine, promoted by Zionists, which was rampant during the first post-war five years. The rise in emigration was influenced by a variety of factors, including a lack of prospects, a reluctance to remain in a land marked by the stigma of the Holocaust, the increased popularity of Zionist ideas, and anti-Semitic violence in Poland, which had resulted in more than a thousand Jewish deaths, according to the latest findings.⁶

One of the features of the quasi-liberal character of the communists’ policy towards the Jewish minority after 1945 was limited trust, reflected in the results of the work of several divisions of the secret political police. Taking into account the scale of the cases conducted, we can conclude that the most important link used by the MBP to collect information and run surveillance on Jews was the MBP’s 5th Department (social and political), established in September 1945, and the section for Jewish affairs operating within its framework.⁷

However, we do not know everything about the work of these units. The legacy of the People’s Poland security organs resembles a scattered, incomplete jigsaw puzzle. It is difficult to draw unambiguous conclusions from the content of the surviving documents and files, which researchers sometimes come across entirely by accident. This sometimes leads to a demonisation of the role of the security apparatus and sometimes, conversely, to ignoring the actions undertaken by officers and their impact on the fate of citizens. If we assume that the scale of the activities of the security apparatus depended on political demand, then, in the case of the small Jewish community, they were, until 1950, of a minimal and preventive nature, i.e. one that was not, in principle, accompanied by open repression. The Office of Public Security (*Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego*, UBP) functionaries were mainly interested in foreign contacts, the activities of Jewish parties and associations, illegal trade, illegal emigration and border smuggling during this period.

The oldest MBP instruction known to historians, which comprehensively regulated the actions of the security organs towards the Jewish population, is a docu-

⁶ J. Kwiek, *Nie chcemy Żydów u siebie. Przejawy wrogości wobec Żydów w latach 1944–1947* (Cra-cow, 2021).

⁷ More in: Semczyszyn, Szaynok, “Kwestia ludności żydowskiej,” pp. 33–35; D. Stola, “Jewish emi-gration from communist Poland: The decline of Polish Jewry in the aftermath of the Holocaust,” *East European Jewish Affairs* 1 (2017), pp. 169–188.

ment dated 24 October 1946.⁸ According to these guidelines, the security forces should infiltrate all legally operating Jewish political and social structures, except for the Jewish fraction of the Polish Workers' Party, to protect their activists from the influence of "anti-state elements" and illegal organisations (Revisionist Zionists, Agudat Yisrael). In cities with large Jewish communities (Szczecin, Lodz, Katowice, Lublin, Rzeszow, Cracow and Wroclaw), these matters were dealt with by the units for Jewish affairs of the 5th Department of the relevant Voivodeship Office of Public Security (*Wojewódzki Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego*, WUBP) (see Appendix). The surviving materials show that the operational activity of these units consisted primarily in collecting information on the quantity and activities of various organisations: secret police officers compiled lists of members and their profiles, recorded their statements, and drafted reports about cultural events and political rallies.

Over the years, the MBP's stance towards Jewish parties and organisations became tougher. The ministry's subsequent guidelines from 1947–1948 emphasised increased surveillance of the activists of various organisations and the recruitment of agents.⁹ With the establishment of the State of Israel and the escalating tensions in the Middle East (the First Israeli-Arab War), the Eastern Bloc countries started to liquidate the Zionist parties and organisations. In Poland, this was regulated by an instruction of the Ministry of Public Administration in November 1949 (with an implementation deadline of February 1950). At the same time, for propaganda purposes, Zionists were presented as "national Fascists" and aggressors. In its instructions, the MBP began to emphasise the role of the Right-Wing Zionists and the need to uncover alleged members of the Revisionist Zionist movement. Activists of other banned Jewish organisations and parties were accused of working "for imperialist intelligence services," of having "bourgeois views," of spreading "emigration propaganda," and of "slandering the People's Republic and the Polish nation at home and abroad." They were also blamed for spreading fabricated

⁸ See "Instrukcja MBP."

⁹ Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, hereinafter AIPN), 01439/91, Instruction No. 12 by the Director of Department V, Julia Brystygier, 28 February 1948, p. 55; *ibid.*, Instruction No. 17 by the Director of Department V, Julia Brystygier, 19 March 1948, p. 60.

rumours about anti-Semitism, murders of Jews, etc., and even for collaborating with the Third Reich as part of the Judenrats.¹⁰

From 1948, the MBP tried hard to find connections between Jews living in Poland and the British and American intelligence services. This direction was part of the espionage obsession, a characteristic feature of communist countries in the era of Stalinism. The stigmatisation of Jews as capitalists, nationalists and spies was accompanied by the regulations facilitating emigration, introduced in 1949–1951. In this manner, controlled by the MBP, about 30,000 Jewish people left the country at that time without the right of return. Another 15,000 applications were rejected.¹¹

Even after this wave of emigration, the Jewish community of no more than 50,000 people who remained in Poland was presented in the MBP documents as a threat. According to the guidelines issued in 1951 by Julia Brystygier, the director of the MBP's 5th Department, it was necessary to continue the investigation of persons associated in the past with Zionist organisations and the Bund to survey the Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland and the Religious Union of the Jewish Faith, and to fight against "Jewish speculation" and trade.¹²

Let's take a closer look at the security apparatus's four most characteristic lines of work in this area: the mass illegal emigration of Jews, scrutinising Joint employees and Right-Wing Zionists, and the diplomatic mission of the State of Israel.

Illegal Emigration

Historians estimate that about 140,000 Jews emigrated illegally from Poland in 1945–1947. Emigration routes through Romania, Czechoslovakia, Austria, German occupation zones, France and Italy led to camps for displaced persons in Western Germany and Austria or to seaside ports from which emigrants sailed towards Palestine.¹³ This great emigration movement was run mainly by Zionist

¹⁰ AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 1, Symptoms, forms and methods of hostile activities of Zionist organizations and tasks of the BP [Public Security] apparatus, Warsaw, 9 April 1953, pp. 14–15.

¹¹ AIPN, 01439/90, Circular No. 1/52 of the director of the MBP 1st Department, Stefan Antosiewicz, and the director of 5th Department, Julia Brystygier, 4 February 1952, pp. 62–63.

¹² AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 1, Information design for the site as a basis for work along the lines of the Jewish question, 3 April 1951, pp. 39–45.

¹³ See. K. Person, *Dipisi. Żydzi polscy w amerykańskiej i brytyjskiej strefach okupacyjnych Niemiec 1945–1948* (Warsaw, 2019); Z.W. Mankowitz, *Life between Memory and Hope. The Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany* (Cambridge, 2002).

organisations, including *Bricha* (Hebr. escape), established especially for this purpose. Bricha activists arranged exit documents, organised trans-border transport and smuggling, and bribed border guards and Soviet soldiers.¹⁴

After the pogrom in Kielce (4 July 1946), an unofficial agreement was reached between the state authorities and representatives of the Zionists involved in Bricha's activities. The authorities agreed to an unimpeded crossing of the Polish-Czechoslovak border by groups of Jews wanting to leave the country. This "semi-legal exodus" continued until the first half of 1947, when the border was closed again due to concern about Britain's reaction on the international stage. However, this did not stop the activities of cross-border smugglers, who helped Jews (and not only) in the following years.¹⁵

As early as 1944, Bricha began its activities in the former Eastern Borderlands of the Second Polish Republic. There, among the Jewish partisans of Vilnius and Volhynia, plans were made to convey the Jews who survived the Holocaust to Romanian Black Sea ports. According to documents in Ukrainian, Russian and Lithuanian archives, already in 1945, the NKVD put under surveillance the organisers of Bricha's transfer routes (in Vilnius, Chernivtsi, and Lviv, among other places), and, a year later, began to liquidate them.¹⁶ At that time, also in

¹⁴ Y. Bauer, *Flight and Rescue. The Organized Escape of Jewish Survivors of Eastern Europe 1944–1948* (New York, 1970); M. Semiczszyn, "Nielegalna emigracja Żydów z Polski 1944–1947 – kontekst międzynarodowy," *Dzieje Najnowsze* 50/1 (2018), pp. 95–121; *eadem*, "Polski szlak Brichy. Nielegalna emigracja Żydów z Polski w latach 1944–1947," in *Między ideologią a socjotechniką*, pp. 255–276.

¹⁵ For more, see A. Namysło, *Ministerstwo Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego wobec nielegalnej emigracji Żydów z Polski w latach 1945–1950. Główne kierunki działań* in Paryż, Londyn, Monachium, Nowy Jork. *Powrzeźniowa emigracja niepodległościowa na mapie kultury nie tylko polskiej*, vol. 2, ed. by V. Wejs-Milewska and E. Rogalewska (Białystok, 2016), pp. 781–795.

¹⁶ Derzhavnyi Arhiv Lvivskoi Oblasti (State Archives of Lviv Region), fond 3, op. 1, case 441, Report of the head of the MGB [Ministry of State Security] Board of the Lviv Region A. Voronin to the secretary of the Lviv regional committee of the CP(b)U [Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine] I. Grushecki on the activities of the anti-Soviet Zionist group, May 1946 (in Russian), pp. 185–188; Lietuvos ypatingasis archyvas (Lithuanian Special Archives), fond. K-1, op. 58, case 20669/3, The case concerning the organisation of illegal cross-border crossings by the Zionists, on the routes from Vilnius to Poland and further to Palestine; Report of the secretary of the Lviv regional committee of the CP(b)U [Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine] I. Grushecki for the secretary of the Central Committee of the CP(b)U Nikita Khrushchev on the detection and liquidation of the illegal border crossing to Poland, 28 March 1946 (in Russian), in M. Micel, *Evrei Ukrainy v 1943–1953 gg.: ocherki dokumentirovannoj istorii*, Kyiv 2004, pp. 90–94 (the translation of the document into Polish in *Po zagładzie Żydów (1944–1948)*, ed. J. Grzesik [Lublin, 2011], pp. 249–256); I. Slutskiy, *Khagana – yevrey-skaya boyevaya organizatsiya v Erets-Israel*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1979), pp. 197–199.

Poland, the Ministry of Public Security and the Nationalities Division of the Political Department of the Ministry of Public Administration collected information on the emigration activities of the Zionists.¹⁷ In the following years, the 5th Department of the MBP and its field counterparts (divisions of the 5th WUBP) collected information among Jewish settlers on the activities of the Zionist parties' kibbutzim as centres of illegal emigration, on the forgery of departure documents, the organisation of smuggling, the distribution of Zionist literature, and also on contacts between organisers of departures and Haganah and Irgun Tswai Leumi emissaries.¹⁸ Nevertheless, until 1947, arrests of Bricha activists occurred sporadically and were carried out mainly by officers from the Border Guard Troops (*Wojska Ochrony Pogranicza*, WOP) or Soviet soldiers stationed in border towns.¹⁹ Cases of illegal Jewish emigrants were generally treated as common or economic crimes (smuggling of goods and foreign currency) and were brought before municipal or regional courts or the Special Commission for Combating Embezzlements and Economic Sabotage.

In the saved documents of the security apparatus, there are several reports from 1945 to 1946 from interrogations of people associated with Bricha. They support the claim that the officers of the secret political police were well aware of its activities. Despite this, the Zionists organising border crossings were not harassed for political activities during this period. The situation changed when the border with Czechoslovakia was sealed off for the exodus.

¹⁷ Namysło, *Ministerstwo Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego*, pp. 781–795. Reports on this case and correspondence between the 5th Department of the MBP and the WOP Department, see AIPN, 00231/146, vol. 2.

¹⁸ AIPN, 01206/108, Message from the director of the 5th Department of the MBP, Julia Brystygiel, to the head of the MBP Legal Department, p. 14. See also the surviving object cases concerning the Zionists in Łódź and Szczecin: Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Łodzi (Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Łódź, hereinafter AIPN Łd), Pf 10/690, vol. 1, Matters concerning members of Zionist organisations in Łódź, 1946–1953; *ibid.*, vol. 3, Jewish political organisations, associations active in Łódź: Poale Zion, HeHalutz-Pioneer, Hitachdut [Zionist Labour Party], Bund, 1945–1953; Oddziałowe Archiwum Pamięci Narodowej w Szczecinie (Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Szczecin Branch, hereinafter AIPN Sz), 009/622, vol. 1–4, Jewish organisations in Szczecin, 1946–1949.

¹⁹ Yad Vashem Archives, Testimonies Department, file 8535, Szymon Menszer's account of his participation in the activities of Bricha in Szczecin (in Russian).

In 1947, organisers of illegal travel abroad first started to be arrested. On 16 November 1947, Section II (Independent) of the MBP's 5th Department initiated an agency crackdown in Bielawa with the code name "Rzut", resulting in the detention of a group of 30 illegal emigrants who had set off from Lodz (23 men and seven women) towards the German border. Among the detainees were Hitachdut (Warsaw) party member and Bricha activist David Tajtelbaum vel Michał Dudecki and members of the Ichud party: Majer Rapaport, Jakub Singer and Marian Szałat.²⁰ The investigation focused primarily on Bricha, an illegal organisation. At that time, the services already had information about its leadership (known as the Zionist Coordination), goals, funding sources, activities in individual kibbutzim and the participation of Zionist parties in organising illegal border crossings. The Security Office was also interested in recruiting Jews willing to leave with the help of organisations such as the Haganah and Irgun Tswai Leumi.²¹ Despite this, it was not yet decided to attack the Zionists openly. In November 1947, Arkadiusz Liberman, the head of Section II of the MBP, wrote that, although Bricha's activities caused much harm to the state (such as propaganda about Polish anti-Semitism spread by the Zionists, corrupting the authorities and the WOP, and providing cross-border routes to "enemy elements"), the "current political situation does not permit us to organise a trial."²² Liberman probably had the international situation in mind. Thus, it was decided to keep Dudecki, Szałat and Rapaport in pre-trial detention and continue the operation to expose them while the remaining detained Jews were brought before the municipal court and charged with smuggling.

The UBP's interest in illegal border crossing and the smuggling of goods increased in the late 1940s and the early 1950s, becoming one of the most important directions of the ministry's activities against the Jewish minority. Most cases concerning this issue were handled by UBP offices in the west of the country. People who had participated in Bricha's operation in the preceding years and smugglers were watched and followed. Several cases resulted in trials before military courts.

²⁰ AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 1, Report for the director of MBP 5th Department, Julia Brystygier, on the capture of a smuggling group, 24 November 1947, pp. 138–141.

²¹ AIPN, 00231/146, vol. 2, Message from the Deputy Director of the MBP 5th Department, Witold Gadomski, to the head of the WUBP 5th Department in Wrocław, 19 May 1947, p. 23.

²² AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 3, Information on the results of the investigation concerning the "Rzut" case, [November 1949], p. 131–134.

In Szczecin, the individuals accused by UBP officers of participating in a “smuggling organisation” included Lipa Kielich, Moshe Juskiewicz, Maks Mittelman, Salomon Bleiberg, Shlomo Zylberwasser, Shulim, and Maier Kąkol,²³ as well as Hersh Majerowicz.²⁴ In addition, in 1955, the 2nd Section of the local WUdsBP (counterintelligence) initiated a case codenamed “Giełda” (Stock Exchange) about “people of Jewish nationality residing in West Berlin, who had left the country illegally and were involved in cooperating with the intelligence services of capitalist countries [...] and in running people of Jewish nationality across the border.”²⁵

The operational-investigative case codenamed “Warta,” conducted in 1950–1951 by WUBP in Wrocław, ended tragically. As a result of the investigation, cross-border smugglers Jakub Frydland and Henryk Wasserman, aka Aron Pułowski, who had been involved in Bricha’s activities in Lower Silesia in the 1940s, were sentenced to death. The sentences were carried out.²⁶ Another trial in Wrocław concerned Bolesław Maciukowski, aka Kryński, who was detained while trying to cross the border near Zgorzelec in 1949. The indictment in his case included belonging to Bricha and helping about 4,000 people cross the border to Czechoslovakia.

²³ In 1947–1950, these individuals were sentenced for helping in the illegal emigration of Jews and Polish underground soldiers who fought for the country’s independence, together with their families: Salomon Bleiberg to 21 months in prison, Shlomo Zylberwasser to ten years in prison, Maks Mittelman to 18 months in prison, Lipa Kielich to two years in prison, Moses Juskiewicz to one year in prison, Szulim Kąkol to one year in prison, Majer Kąkol to six months in prison. In addition, Maks Mittelman (a Bricha activist), Lipa Kielich, Moses Juskiewicz, and the Kąkol brothers were accused of participating in an illegal Revisionist Zionist organisation. See AIPN Sz, 006/30, vol. 1, Control files of the investigation into a smuggling group; AIPN Sz, 158/4, vol. 1–2, Files of the criminal case on Lipa Kielich and others. After being released, Lipa Kielich escaped to West Berlin, but both he and Moses Juskiewicz, who remained in the country, were still under surveillance by the UB (cases codenamed: “Kanał” [Canal], “Barka” [Barge] and “Bagno” [Swamp] conducted in 1952–1953 and the case codenamed “Giełda” [Stock Exchange] in 1955–1956).

²⁴ AIPN Sz, 009/884, Operational files on Hersh Majerowicz. In 1946–1948, Majerowicz was active in the Bricha organisation in West Berlin. Upon his return, he was sentenced for smuggling goods to 18 months in a labour camp. In 1948–1955, the 5th Department of the WUBP in Szczecin conducted an operational case against him, suspecting him of organising the smuggling of Jews to Israel by sea through Sweden. The suspicions were not confirmed.

²⁵ AIPN Sz, 009/1396, Order to set up a subject file “Giełda” (Stock Exchange), 8 July 1955, p. 6.

²⁶ Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej we Wrocławiu (Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Wrocław, hereinafter AIPN Wr), 024/567, Investigative files on cross-border routes codenamed “Warta”; AIPN Wr, 049/166, Characteristics of Bricha, an illegal Zionist organisation; AIPN Wr, 155/621, Files of the Military District Prosecutor’s Office on the case of Jakub Frydland and others.

Maciukowski was sentenced to 12 years in prison.²⁷ The WUBP in Katowice was also interested in Jewish smugglers who led people across the Polish-Czechoslovak border.²⁸

In 1953, people involved in organising transfer channels for the Jewish population to the West (including within Bricha) after the war, as well as Jewish black-market currency traffickers and people smugglers, were still under observation from the MBP's 5th Department. According to a circular from Director Brystygier, those people kept in touch with Zionists living abroad. They planned to resume illegal cross-border running of people, which was supposed to be a cover for "espionage activities of the imperialist intelligence services." Outposts of the Security Office (*Urząd Bezpieczeństwa*, UB) across Poland were ordered to analyse their materials on the Zionist groups, black-market currency traffickers and people smugglers. The task was broad in scope because, apart from collecting documents, it also included checking the archives of the UB, the Citizen Militia (*Milicja Obywatelska*, MO) and the prosecutor's offices to take down the names of every one of Jewish origin who had featured in cases related to the smuggling of people and goods since 1945. Next, after determining the current place of residence and occupation of these people, the officers were ordered to take "operational care" of them.²⁹

Apart from Bricha, the Vaad Hatzalah (Hebrew: Rescue Committee) organisation was also involved in the illegal emigration of Jews. It was founded in 1939 at the initiative of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada to rescue Jews in occupied Europe. After the war, it continued its operations in Poland and in other countries. The organisation's head office in Poland was located in Katowice, but it had branches in several cities (Cracow, Bytom, Legnica, Walbrzych, and Sosnowiec). People involved in the Vaad Hatzalah's operations

²⁷ AIPN, 01251/359, Files of pre-trial proceedings conducted against Bolesław Maciukowski vel Kryński; AIPN Wr, 21/4079, Bolesław Maciukowski's case files compiled by the Military District Court.

²⁸ Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Katowicach (Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Katowice, hereinafter AIPN Ka), 032/68, t. 1, Message by Julia Brystygier, the director of the MBP 5th Department to the head of the 5th WUBP Division in Katowice, 5 October 1948, p. 14.

²⁹ AIPN, 01439/90, Circular No. 2/53 by the Department Director, Julia Brystygier, [no later than 1 October] 1953, pp. 81–82.

included orthodox rabbis, orphanage caretakers, Zionists, Joint workers and Haganah emissaries. Recha Sternbuch, the head of the Vaad Hatzalah in Switzerland, coordinated all its activities.³⁰ The main goal of Vaad Hatzalah was to get as many Jewish children and rabbis who had survived the Holocaust out of Poland as possible, along with relics of Jewish material culture. As early as 1946, the UB's Katowice office became interested in this organisation under the pressure of MBP's 5th Department.

The case codenamed "Nielegalni" (Illegals), conducted in 1946–1949 by Jakub Bronstein, a clerk of the WUBP's 5th Department in Katowice, became one of the most important UB operations in the country concerning the Jewish minority. About 35 people were tracked, but the expected results were not achieved. People associated with the Vaad Hatzalah, fearing exposure and arrest, were rapidly departing from Poland, but others appeared in their place. In addition, rabbis and activists of international Jewish organisations had access to the authorities and, often by paying for them, were able to obtain visas and other documents necessary for emigration. In April 1947, Capt. Liberman, the head of the 2nd (Independent) Section of the MBP 5th Department, submitted a motion to close the "Nielegalni" case and arrest its primary "people of interest." However, since the evidence (arranging emigration documents, corrupting the authorities) was based on reports from the intelligence services, the official reasons for the arrests were to be allegations of financial embezzlement – without disclosing the "political aspects of the case."³¹ Searches ordered in the homes of rabbis Levin Bielecki and Samuel Ornsztein prompted their decision to emigrate illegally. Several other rabbis and Vaad Hatzalah activists also left the country. The "Nielegalni" case ended in 1949 with the arrest of several people, including a few Poles, who helped cross the Polish-Czechoslovak border.³²

³⁰ Recha Sternbuch (1905–1971), born in Cracow, from 1928, she lived with her husband in Switzerland. During the Second World War, she took part in saving European Jews, this included arranging Paraguayan visas and passports.

³¹ AIPN, 0192/433, t. 3, Report on the Vaad Hatzalah organisation, 21 April 1947, pp. 155–156.

³² AIPN Ka, 063/39, Materials related to the Security Office inquiry of the Jewish Vaad Hatzalah organisation; A. Gontarek, "Waad Hacza okiem bezpieki (1946–1949). Kryptonim 'Nielegalni,'" *Kolbojnik. Biuletyn Gminy Wyznaniowej Żydowskiej w Warszawie* 2 (2014), pp. 37–41.

Undercover Operation Codenamed “Rzeka” (River): Fight against the Right-Wing Zionists

The beginning of the 1950s saw a period of struggle against the right-wing nationalist deviation in the Eastern Bloc countries. In the case of the Jewish minority, this was associated with the Zionists. High-profile trials of people of Jewish descent took place in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania, including the trials of Rudolf Slánský, the former general secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, and his associates, as well as of the head of Hungarian state security Peter Gabor, and the former Romanian foreign minister Ana Pauker.³³ In 1948–1952, the trial of people associated with the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee occurred in the Soviet Union. 110 people were convicted, 10 of whom were sentenced to death. On Stalin’s order, another anti-Semitic case was initiated – known as the conspiracy of Kremlin doctors or doctors’ plot (1952–1953).³⁴

There were no such political repressions on the scale of the Slánský trial in Poland during this period, though Zionists were arrested and accused of “right-wing nationalist deviation.” The campaign against the Zionists resulted in the arrests of actual and alleged supporters of the Revisionist (right-wing) movement, which was illegal after the war. They were accused of “propagating fascist literature” and participating in Bricha operations involving organising illegal border crossings for Jews.³⁵

In pre-war Poland, the Revisionist Zionist movement, and its youth wing, Betar, had many supporters.³⁶ After 1945, a few revisionists continued their activities in

³³ Szaynok, *Z historii i Moskwą w tle*, pp. 162–165.

³⁴ For more information see *Gosudarstvennyy antisemitizm v SSSR. Ot nachala do kul’minatsii. 1938–1953*, ed. by G. Kostyrchenko and A. Yakovlev (Moscow, 2005); *Yevreyskiy antifashist-skiy komitet v SSSR, 1941–1948: Dokumentirovannaya istoriya*, ed. by S. Redlich and G. Kostyrchenko (Moscow, 1996); E. Krasucki, “Narzędzie władzy. Państwowy antysemityzm w ZSRR w latach 1945–1953,” in *Między ideologią a socjotechniką*, pp. 31–32; H.-D. Löwe, *Antisemitism in Russia and the Soviet Union* in *Antisemitism: A History*, ed. R.S. Levy (Oxford, 2010), pp. 166–195.

³⁵ AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 3, Note on the Revisionist Zionists, 9 August 1952, pp. 125–126.

³⁶ The Revisionist movement was initiated before the Second World War by Vladimir (Ze’ev) Jabotinsky. The revisionists emphasised the military struggle for Palestine (both against the Arabs and the British), criticised the sluggishness of traditional Zionism which focused mainly on settlements, and resorted to terrorist methods. The Jewish state was to cover the entire British Mandate of Palestine. As early as the 1930s, Jabotinsky was accused of being fascinated by fascism, and of modelling his programme on totalitarian methods. Years later, these accusations were used by the communist secret police.

a limited way, not legalised by the authorities. Until 1949, the revisionists published their newsletter *Wiadomości* (Hebrew: *Yedijot*) in Lodz, which was the centre of the movement where its leaders, David Draznin, Shlomo Perla, and Perc Laskier, lived. Pre-war members of the New Zionist Organisation and Betar also joined the legal parties, Ihud and Mizrachi. In August 1946, at a rally of Jewish demobilised soldiers organised by Ihud, a Maawak division of about 300 people was founded, becoming a *de facto* revisionists' centre. Its chairman was Izaak Nejter and Henryk Zussman was its secretary. The revisionists, whose programme differed from the rest of the Zionist movement, tried to find their own methods of getting people across the border. As part of their ideological framework, they supported the terrorist activities of the Irgun Zvai Leumi in Palestine and advocated the creation of a Jewish state on both sides of the Jordan River.³⁷

In 1949, in Lodz, on the order of the director of the MBP 5th Department, the lawyers David Draznin [in 1946 a legal counsel of the WKŻP (Regional Committee of Polish Jews) in Szczecin], Ozjasz Raczko and Shlomo Perla were all arrested. They were accused of leading an illegal Revisionist Zionist organisation in Poland and of the participation of representatives of right-wing Zionists in the structures of Bricha. During the investigation, attempts were made to prove the existence of an illegal Revisionist Zionist organisation. As a result of the testimonies given by Draznin (sentenced to three years in prison), Raczko (two years in prison) and Perla (four years in prison),³⁸ other alleged revisionists were arrested: Moses Juszkiewicz, Shulim and Maier Kąkolow, Lipa Kielich, and Maks Mittelman in Szczecin (the sentences ranged from six months to two years in prison)³⁹ as well as Józef Brust in Lodz (the case was dropped for lack of evidence).⁴⁰

³⁷ According to Dominik Flisiak, in mid-1946 there were about one and a half to two thousand Right-Wing Zionists in Poland. See D. Flisiak, *Działalność syjonistów-rewizjonistów w Polsce w latach 1944/1945–1950* (Lublin, 2020), p. 111; *idem*, “Memorandum organizacji Irgun Cwai Leumi dotyczące stworzenia państwa żydowskiego w Palestynie. Przyczynek do badań nad działalnością syjonistów-rewizjonistów w powojennej Polsce,” *Jewish Studies. Almanac* 7/8 (2017–2018), pp. 143–158.

³⁸ AIPN, 01178/1140, Registration questionnaire of Ozjasz Raczko AIPN, 01237/135, Files of agent “Kryński” (Dawid Draznin); AIPN, 01236/1041, control and investigation files in the case of Dawid Draznin and others.

³⁹ AIPN Sz, 158/4, vol. 1–2, Files in a criminal case against Lipa Kielich and others.

⁴⁰ AIPN Ld, Pf 12/458, the Józef Brust investigation files.

Undercover Operation Codenamed “Atlantyk”: Joint Comes under the Lens of the Ministry of Public Security

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (known commonly as Joint) was one of those institutions that, in the late 1940s, was classified by the authorities as a hostile, imperialist organisation. From 1914, Joint provided financial support to Jews around the world; after the Second World War it resumed legal activity in Poland.⁴¹ The organisation’s funds were used to set up hospitals, workshops and lodging places, and to support the budget of the CKŻP, Jewish cooperatives and Zionist parties.

After 1948, along with the changing policy of the Soviet Union toward the Middle East, the existence in Poland of an agency of an institution financed by American Jews became highly undesirable. The structures of Joint were described in one of the special UBP reports as an extension of “the espionage and subversive activities of American intelligence centres.” It was written that Joint was an “agency of American-Jewish capitalists” that, by financing Jewish organisations and institutions, aimed at “subordinating them to Jewish financiers in America so that they can exert influence on relations in Poland in the interests of American imperialism, and that a US intelligence network can be created on their basis.”⁴²

In 1949, the 2nd Division of MBP’s 5th Department initiated an undercover operation codenamed “Atlantyk”. It included surveillance of the Joint employees – William Bein, the representative of the Committee for Poland, and Józef Gitler-Barski, the secretary general of the Polish branch, among others.⁴³ The investigation into Joint explored various aspects, from Bein’s contacts with the Polish government-in-exile to the alleged cooperation between the former director of the organisation, David Guzik, and the Gestapo, including his participation in financing illegal emigration (Bricha) as well as the activities of Revisionist Zionists. The Polish branch of Joint was closed by the communist authorities on

⁴¹ For more see A. Sommer-Schneider, *Sze’erit hapleta: ocaleni z Zagłady. Działalność American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee w Polsce w latach 1945–1989* (Cracow, 2014).

⁴² AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 1, Symptoms, forms and methods of hostile activities of Zionist organizations and tasks of the BP [Public Security] apparatus, Warsaw, 9 April 1953, p. 4.

⁴³ AIPN, 0192/433, t. 3, Summary of the undercover operation codenamed “Atlantyk,” 12 November 1949, pp. 47–49.

1 January 1950. The same happened to its branches in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary. During the liquidation of the office of Joint, the UB officers not only seized items and documents they found in the rooms, but also questioned the employees. The investigation by the UB continued for the next three years.

On the wave of anti-Semitic trials in the Soviet Union (the case of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee and the Kremlin doctors' conspiracy), functionaries of the security authorities in the People's Republic of Poland started to act openly. In February 1953, arrests of people associated with Joint began. Józef Gitler-Barski was arrested on charges of spying for the United States (he was acquitted after several months in custody). Jakub Egit, the chairman of the WKŻP in Lower Silesia, was also imprisoned. This Jewish activist from Lviv faced more serious charges: efforts to secede Lower Silesia from Poland and create a Jewish enclave subordinate to Israel in this area (the support from Joint), as well as forming a Jewish army (this concerned the setting up the Haganah training camp in Bolków, which the authorities had approved).⁴⁴ The scale of repression against Polish Jews differed from the Soviet template, and the vehemence of the anti-Semitic campaign diminished with the death of Stalin (in July 1953, the Soviet Union resumed diplomatic relations with Israel). In 1957, Egit immigrated to Canada. Nevertheless, the question of Zionist conspiracy and espionage had become a permanent part of the UB activities directed against people of Jewish origin living in Poland.

Object Case Codenamed "Jordan": Staff and Clients of the Israeli Diplomatic Mission in Poland

In 1950, the director of MBP 1st Department, Colonel Stefan Antosiewicz, issued a special instruction related to the activities of the diplomatic mission of the State of Israel, in which he ordered all 1st departments of the WUBP (and 4th divisions) in the country to initiate the so-called object case (undercover operation) codenamed "Jordan," covering:

- the Israeli diplomatic mission in Warsaw (4th Division of MBP 1st Department),
- Israeli citizens living in the Polish People's Republic,

⁴⁴ Szaynok, *Z historią i Moskwą w tle*, pp. 229–230.

- Jewish repatriates and re-emigrants from Israel and Western countries,
- anyone residing in Poland on the basis of Polish consular passports issued in Israel,
- all contacts of citizens of the Polish People's Republic with the diplomatic mission of Israel.

That instruction also listed other groups and organisations of Jewish socio-political life “predestined for spy work,” which were traditionally dealt with by the 5th Department of the MBP and its voivodeship equivalents. These were:

- anyone who had been refused permission to immigrate to Israel (former Zionists, Bundists, PZPR members expelled from the party for registering to leave without the consent of the party authority),
- Zionists and former Joint employees,
- Jewish legal institutions – Jewish committees, the Jewish Cultural Society (artists, journalists, reporters), the Religious Union of the Jewish Faith, committees of compatriots in various cities,
- other Jewish groups and organisations (schools, dormitories, hostels, students, cooperatives),
- Jewish speculators and smugglers, especially in the western territories.⁴⁵

Similar tasks had been specified a year earlier in a note for the 2nd Division of MBP 5th Department officers: they sought connections between the Zionists with the Israeli diplomatic mission and organisations financed by Jews living in the Western countries (AJDC Joint).⁴⁶

With the initiation of a nationwide undercover operation codenamed Jordan, the Israeli diplomatic mission in Warsaw, which had been in place since 1948, became the main object of interest of the security services. The Legation (first in the Bristol Hotel on Krakowskie Przedmieście, then at what is now Szucha Avenue and was then 1 Armii Wojska Polskiego Avenue) was under constant surveillance by officers of intelligence, counterintelligence and the MBP's 5th Department. The correspondence of the diplomatic mission was

⁴⁵ AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 1, Instruction No. 1 of the Director of the 1st Department, Stefan Antosiewicz, on the investigation of contacts with the state of Israel, 7 October 1950, pp. 22–25.

⁴⁶ AIPN, 00231/102, vol. 1, Object case codenamed “Jordan,” Tasks for the Independent 2nd Division of the MBP 5th Department, June 1949, p. 255.

checked, its employees were secretly photographed, and the attaché's personal notes were stolen. Diplomats were monitored, including Chargé d'Affaires Baruch Niv and Józef Lernon and Envoy Aryeh Leon Kubowitzki. In the autumn of 1951, five MBP agents operated at the diplomatic mission.⁴⁷ According to the documents, the hostile activities of Israeli diplomacy included the management of Zionist organisations, recruitment to the Haganah, contacts between representatives of the diplomatic mission and Polish citizens, agitation to depart for Israel, espionage and subversion for Israel (which was recognised as a "US semi-colony").⁴⁸

In January 1952, the directors of the MBP 1st and 5th departments ordered the voivodeship UB to interrogate anyone who had visited the diplomatic mission. Applicants were also arrested as soon as they left the premises of the Legation. The questions, compiled in a special form, were about the life of the Jewish community in the town where the applicant came from and the applicant's attitude towards Jewish parties, religions and the state of Israel, among other things.

In November 1952, Aryeh Lerner, an employee of the consular section of the diplomatic mission, was arrested on charges of spying for the United States, Israel and France.⁴⁹ In subsequent diplomatic notes sent to Israel, the authorities tried to use the investigation into Lerner's activities and his testimony as an argument for having Aryeh Kubowitzki recalled from Poland. Years later, Lerner described the actions of the UB functionaries as "building up the Polish version of the Slánský trial."⁵⁰ He was sentenced to 10 years in prison, but the prosecutor dropped the charges due to an appeal against the verdict of the first instance court – after Stalin's death. Lerner was released in 1955 and soon after emigrated to Israel. The surveillance of the Israeli diplomatic mission continued for decades, with the central theme of the activities being the threat of "espionage and sabotage work" by its staff.

⁴⁷ Szaynok, *Z historii i Moskwą w tle*, p. 211.

⁴⁸ AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 1, Information note on sorting out the Israeli question, 16 March 1950, f. p. 98.

⁴⁹ AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 1, Information note on the fight against the hostile activities of the employees of the Israeli Legation among the Jewish population in Poland, 31 July 1952, pp. 19–21; Szaynok, *Z historii i Moskwą w tle*, pp. 219–227.

⁵⁰ Szaynok, *Z historii i Moskwą w tle*, p. 220.

Scale and Quality of the Activities of Voivodeship public Security Offices

According to a report prepared in 1953 in the 5th Department of MBP, there were 13,000 Jews (21% of the total Jewish minority living in Poland at the time)⁵¹ covered by the operational and registration of the UB. However, the information in the surviving documentation indicates that, apart from putting successive names in the operational register, the quality of the actions taken, especially in voivodeship and county offices, did not meet the expectations of the directorship of the ministry.

For as long as the MBP existed, post-inspection reports of the 5th Department listed only problems: lack of competent officers, issues with the agent network and superficial handling of cases. The intensity and diversity of the local UB units' activities concerning Jews also resulted from objective conditions. In localities where not many Jews settled after the war, the officers' tasks were more modest. For example, in Rzeszow, as early as 1947, a separate desk for minority affairs was included in the general affairs desk of the 5th Department. The official responsible for Jewish affairs (Marcus Dornfest, and later Józef Olszowy) dealt primarily with the surveillance of people associated with the Jewish Religious Congregation and the issue of foreign currency trading.⁵² In 1948, in Rzeszow, there were only two object cases, one looking into Bund activists (16 people) and the other concerning the WKŻP, as well as several evidence-seeking cases (currency trading and smuggling). The operational work was based on reports from two informers. An inspection commissioned in 1948 by the MBP 5th Department showed that "the section works without a plan, chaotically and off and on."⁵³

Sometimes problems were caused by members of the staff. In 1946, a functionary of the 1st Division (for Jewish affairs) of the 5th WUBP Department in Katowice, Jakub Tyszler, conducted one evidence-seeking case without any informers.⁵⁴

⁵¹ AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 1, Information from the head of the 3rd Section of the 3rd Division of the 5th Department of the MBP, Lipa Aichen, 11 February 1953, p. 70.

⁵² AIPN, 00231/146, vol. 2, Work plan of the Section for General Affairs of the 5th Department of WUBP in Wrocław "along the line of the Jewish minority," 12 November 1948, p. 257.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Evaluation of the work of the Section for General Affairs of the 5th Department of WUBP in Rzeszow, 12 November 1948, pp. 258–259.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Decadal report on the undercover operational work of the 1st Division for Jewish Affairs of the 5th Department of WUBP in Katowice, 28 April 1946, p. 441.

It was not until the initiation of the operation codenamed Nielegalni (directed at the Vaad Hatzalah organisation) and the appearance of one of the investigators, Jakub Bronstein, that the situation improved from the point of view of the headquarters. In 1947, due to personnel problems, the WUBP in Cracow did not send any reports to the MBP on the activities of the minority section.⁵⁵

While inspecting the divisions dealing with Jewish matters in the other voivodeship public security offices, numerous shortcomings in their work with agents, inconsistency in keeping documentation and the lack of real results of their operations were pointed out. Recommendations from the headquarters, inspections, special briefings and training for employees in units of Jewish affairs, organised by the MBP, changed little in this regard.⁵⁶ In subsequent reports, accusations similar to those that the head of the WUBP in Szczecin received in writing in 1953 kept recurring: "Hostile communities have not been actively tackled as a separate issue. Materials were collected on a case-by-case basis. There were no isolated issues, and everything was treated as a whole – the Jewish community."⁵⁷

The information of 11 February 1953, signed by Lipa Aichen, the head of the 3rd Section of the 3rd Division of MBP 5th Department, proves that operational work in the voivodeship units did not bring satisfactory results. At the same time, it well illustrates the state of the WUBP's activities regarding the Jewish minority. Although one-fifth of Jewish people remaining in the country were former members of Zionist parties and organisations anticipating departure for Israel, as well as former Bundists, "until now, the operational enquiry into the hostile element in the Jewish community has been conducted sporadically," Aichen admitted. This state of affairs continued in 1950 when the 2nd Section (Independent) was liquidated at the headquarters, and its duties were included in the broad framework of activities conducted by the 3rd Section of the 3rd Division of the MBP 5th Department. From then on, at the central level, Jewish affairs were in the hands of two department employees. Following the example of the MBP, the positions of people responsible

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Message from Witold Gadomski, the Deputy Director of the MBP 5th Department to the head of the WUBP in Cracow, 10 April 1947, p. 380.

⁵⁶ One of such meetings took place in Warsaw on 4 and 5 February 1948, another on 20 October 1949. AIPN, 00231/146, vol. 2, Messages of the Director of the MBP 5th Department, Julia Brystygier, 22 January 1948 and 10 October 1949, pp. 386 and 530.

⁵⁷ AIPN, 1206/104, Report on an official trip to WUBP in Szczecin, 20 February 1953, p. 4.

for Jewish affairs in voivodeship offices were also liquidated. Most functionaries were moved to the 1st, 2nd or 4th Division of the 5th Department or other units.⁵⁸ Although, as early as 1951, Director Brystygier ordered that field offices appoint an employee whose sole responsibility was to collect information on the Jewish community, subsequent checks and inspections showed that only the WUBP in Cracow and Lodz created such posts (in fact, in the opinion of the central authorities, the officers employed there were not fit to carry out their assigned tasks). Lipa Aichen suggested that at least one employee responsible solely for the “Jewish issue” should be appointed in the WUBP in Szczecin, Cracow, Katowice and Lodz, and two in Wroclaw. In addition, he postulated increasing the staffing of the 3rd Division of the MBP 5th Department to three employees and appointing one clerk in each of Poviats Public Security Offices (PUBP) located in Legnica, Dzierżoniów and Wałbrzych.⁵⁹ Subsequent correspondence with headquarters indicates that operational work in the field did not improve much. This time, the poor results were attributed to some of the new employees not having sufficient knowledge about the Jewish community and due to the dynamically changing demographic situation of the Jewish population in Poland.

According to dozens of reports from various units of the security apparatus, the Achilles’ heel of the functionaries was the network of agents. The situation was no different in the 5th Department. The guidelines signed by the deputy director of this department, Romuald Gadowski, in January 1947, discussed the need to make use of specific attributes of the Jewish society when recruiting agents: the rivalry between parties and associations, as well as differences in policy and worldview that divided Jews living in Poland.⁶⁰ He also suggested that informers should be sought primarily among the leadership of Jewish parties and organisations to be able to steer their activities through them.

⁵⁸ For example, in WUBP in Szczecin, a senior clerk for Jewish affairs (3rd Section), Leon Goldner, moved to 7th Section in July 1950, then he was deputy head of the 10th Division. AIPN Sz, 0023/1182, Personal files of Leon Goldner). The 7th Section also included clerks for Jewish affairs in Cracow and Katowice.

⁵⁹ AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 1, Information from Lipa Aichen, the head of the 3rd Section of 3rd Division of the MBP 5th Department, 11 February 1953, pp. 70–72.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Instruction for operational enquiry into parties and organisations operating in Jewish society, January 1947, p. 135.

However, the guidelines of the directorate did not help much, since already in 1949, there were complaints: "Six months ago, there was a breakthrough in our apparatus in the field of work with agents. Was this breakthrough also made by a clerk for Jewish affairs? Unfortunately not. There is an old, undisturbed quietness in this area [...] Practically speaking, this disqualifies clerks for Jewish affairs [...]. With some exceptions, the agents' work is shallow and dishonest. They provide general information and gossip, stringing you along."⁶¹

In 1948, the 2nd Section of the MBP 5th Department had one agent and twelve informers.⁶² In the voivodeships, the sections dealing with the surveillance of the Jewish population had, on average, several informers at their disposal. At the turn of 1948 and 1949, the 1st Section for Jewish minority affairs of the 5th Division of WUBP in Lublin conducted as many as seven object cases concerning Jewish organisations; four of these did not have a single informer.⁶³

The situation worsened after the liquidation of the Jewish Affairs sections in 1950. Afterwards, many operations were run randomly, like in the WUBP in Cracow. In 1952, the head of the local 3rd Section of the 5th Department, in a message to the 5th Department, explained the lack of progress in the "Ocaleni" case (covering the Religious Association of the Jewish Faith and Jewish inhabitants of Cracow), blaming problems with the section's personnel and a total lack of informers. A year later, an object case codenamed "Zator" focused on Jewish issues concerning Zionists in Cracow. It was led by a clerk of the 3rd Section of the 5th Division, Maks Leibel. The officer had four informers – former Zionist parties activists.⁶⁴

The situation was similar in other security offices in the country. No informers were available for the undercover operation codenamed "Krzemień" (Flint),

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Analysis of our work to date and guidelines for the future, October 1949, pp. 82–83. Work with the network of agents in poviats left much to be desired. AIPN, 00231/146, vol. 2, Memo from the head of the 5th Department of WUBP in Wrocław to the MBP's Minorities Department, 28 March 1947, p. 16.

⁶² AIPN, 0649/4, vol. 1, Report of the MBP 5th Department for the period 1 January – 31 March 1948, p. 12.

⁶³ Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Lublinie (Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Lublin), 059/9, Report of the 5th Division of the WUBP in Lublin for January 1949, p. 7.

⁶⁴ AIPN, 0192/433, v. 4, Profile of the object codenamed "Zator," 2 July 1953, pp. 73–76.

“Rzut” (Throw), initiated in March 1953, directed at former Zionists in Lublin.⁶⁵ The object case “Łudziciel” (concerning Zionists), conducted from 1953 by the 3rd Section III of the 5th Department of WUBP in Warsaw, was based on information obtained from two agents, where the activities of one of them covered the area of as many as four counties.⁶⁶ In 1952, the 3rd Section of the 5th Department of WUBP in Szczecin had four informers for Jewish matters (out of a total of 24): two recruited as part of cross-border smuggling cases and two from the Bund community; however, during an inspection ordered by the MBP 5th Department, only one was assessed approvingly.⁶⁷

The surviving documentation shows that the agents and informers came from the Jewish milieu. Most of them were members of Jewish parties and organisations, often recruited based on compromising materials (pre-war activities, speculation) or promised benefits (visa to Israel, housing). Informers working in offices and institutions coming into contact with the Jewish population (e.g. voivodeship commissariats for the productivity of the Jewish population), as well as people from the cross-border smuggling groups, were also used as sources of information. In 1950, on the occasion of initiating the nationwide operation codenamed Jordan, the guidelines coming from the headquarters suggested that agents should be recruited on the basis of the materials drawn up by the MO Investigation Department, the Special Commission for Combating Fraudsters and Causers of Economic Harm, the Tax Protection Section, etc., to find people with a suspicious, compromising past – speculators, currency traders, smugglers, former members of the Judenrats and kapos. Attention was also directed towards people who, for various reasons, had been refused permission to emigrate to Israel and at applicants at the Israeli Legation in Warsaw.⁶⁸

Towards the end of the 1940s, some cases conducted by the security organs in the Jewish community began to be accompanied by open repression. Out of

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Report on the initiation of an operation to expose former members of Zionist organisations in their community in Lublin, pp. 84–95.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Analysis of materials and plan of operational undertakings concerning the object code-named “Łudziciel,” pp. 191–198.

⁶⁷ AIPN, 1206/104, Report on official trip to WUBP in Szczecin, 20 February 1953, p. 5.

⁶⁸ AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 1, Instruction No. 1 by Department I Director Stefan Antosiewicz concerning exposing operation “along Israel’s lines,” 7 October 1950, p. 24.

a total of 49 surviving operational cases from 1945–1956 (see Appendix), the four discussed in this paper ended in trials exploited for propaganda purposes: the case codenamed “Atlantyk” involving agent surveillance of the Polish branch of AJDC (Joint), the case codenamed “Jordan” concerning the inquiry into the Israeli diplomatic mission in Poland, the case codenamed “Rzeka” involving surveillance of Revisionist Zionists by agents, and the case of operational surveillance code-named “Warta” concerning former participants in the Bricha operation and the smuggling of people across the border.

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SUMMARY

This text constitutes a supplement to the already existing scientific works dealing with the activities of the security apparatus directed at the Jewish community after the war. It is mainly a short analysis of the directions of the Office of Public Security (*Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego*) activities concerning the Jewish community and an attempt to assess their effectiveness. It also includes a list of cases conducted by the security authorities in this field, which was compiled based on a query in the surviving archival materials and registration aids kept in the Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance.

KEYWORDS

- Security apparatus of the Polish People's Republic • Jews
• Polish-Jewish relations

APPENDIX

Examples of operations directed at the Jewish population in 1945–1957 (excluding registration questionnaires and agent files)

Type and codename of the case	Running unit	Description of the scope of the case and the persons targeted
Agency surveillance operation “Atlantyka”	2nd Section (Independent) of MBP 5th Department (in cooperation with MBP 1st Department), 1949–1953	Polish branch of the American Jewish Distribution Committee Joint William Bein, Józef Gitler- Barski, Marek Wirecki, Iza Winer
Agency surveillance operation “Rzut”	2nd (Independent) Section of the MBP 5th Department, 1947	Illegal trafficking across the border organised by Bricha, David Tajtelbaum, Michał Dudecki and others
Object surveillance operation “Jordian”	1st Department of MBP and its voivodeship branches, from 1948	Israeli diplomatic mission in Poland
Object case “Reszta”	3rd Section of 5th Division of WUBP in Warsaw, 1953	Former Zionists from the Warsaw voivodeship, maintaining contact with the Israeli Legation
Object case “Łudziciel”	3rd Section of 5th Division of WUBP in Warsaw, 1953	Former Zionists from Warsaw voivodeship
Agency network case “Rabin”	2nd (Independent) Section of the MBP 5th Department 1947–1949	Rabbi David Kahane, Chief Polish Army Chaplain
Agency surveillance operation “Rzeka”	2nd (Independent) Section of the MBP 5th Department 1948–1949	Revisionist Zionists and their illegal activities in the country; David Drażnin, Ożjasz Raczko, Shlomo Peła-Finkielsztejn
Agency surveillance operation “Damy”	2nd (Independent) Section of the MBP 5th Department 1948	Anyone with fake passports obtained from the Joint Directorate
Agency surveillance operation “Igła”	5th Division of WUBP in Cracow in cooperation with 2nd (Independent) Section of MBP 5th Department, 1948	Members of the Bund from Cracow, who allegedly had links with former activists PPS-WRN (Polish Socialist Party – Freedom, Equality, Independence)

Type and codename of the case	Running unit	Description of the scope of the case and the persons targeted
Object case "Ocaleni"	3rd Section of 5th Division of WUBP in Cracow, 1952	Religious Association of the Jewish Faith and Jewish population in Cracow
Object case "Zator"	3rd Section of 5th Division of WUBP in Cracow, 1953	Former Zionists in Cracow
Agency surveillance operation "Nielegalmi"	5th Division of WUBP in Katowice (in cooperation with 3rd Section of the WUBP 1st Department and 2nd Section of the MBP 5th Department), 1946–1949	Vaad Hatzalah and its participation in moving Jews across the western borders; 35 "targets", including rabbis Lewin Bielecki and Samuel Ornsztejn
Operational and surveillance case "Warta"	WUBP in Wroclaw, 1950–1951	Persons involved in trafficking people abroad, former members of the Bricha organisation. The District Military Court (WSR) in Wroclaw sentenced two main suspects to death, Jakub Frydland and Henryk Wasserman.
Object case "Starcy"	5th Division of WUBP in Wroclaw, from 1947.	Members of the Union of Zionist Democrats Ihud in Lower Silesia
Object case "Wulkan"	5th Division of WUBP in Wroclaw, from 1947	Members of the Jewish Workers' Union Bund and a youth organisation Tsukunft in Lower Silesia
Object case "Starożytni"	5th Division of WUBP in Wroclaw, from 1947	Jewish Religious Congregation
Object case "Władza"	7th Section of the 5th Section of PUBP in Legnica, 1949	Jewish Committee in Legnica
Object case "Niewierni"	7th Section of 5th Desk of PUBP in Legnica, 1949	Former members of Poale Zion Hitahdut

Type and codename of the case	Running unit	Description of the scope of the case and the persons targeted
Object case "Walka"	5th Desk of PUBP in Legnica, 1949	Union of Zionists Democrats Ihud in Legnica
Object case "Czasowi"	5th Desk of PUBP in Legnica, 1949	Poale Zion in Legnica
Object case "Wschód, Zjednoczenie"	5th Desk of PUBP in Legnica, 1949	Hashomer Hatzair in Legnica
Object case "Prawica" "Likwidacja"	5th Desk of PUBP in Legnica, 1952	Former Bund members in Legnica (68 people)
Object case "Reszta"	5th Section of MUBP in Wałbrzych, from 1952	Former members of Zionist organisations in Wałbrzych
Object case "Likwidacja"	5th Section of MUBP in Wałbrzych, from 1953	Former Bund members in Wałbrzych
Object case "Jordan"	5th Desk of PUBP in Żary, 1946–1953	Zionist organisations and parties in Żary
Problem case "Jerozolima," "Tel Aviv," "Jordan"	5th Desk of PUBP (PUDsBP) in Dzierżoniów, 1950–1955	Former activists of Jewish parties and organisations in Dzierżoniów
Object case "Nowe Życie"	5th Desk of PUBP (PUDsBP) in Świdnica, 1947–1950	activists of Zionist parties and organisations in Świdnica
Object case "Wyznawcy"	5th Desk of PUBP in Świdnica, 1947–1949	Jewish Religious Congregation in the Świdnica poviat
Object case "Międzynarodowcy"	5th Desk of PUBP in Świdnica, 1947–1949	Bund – the General Union of Jewish Workers in the Świdnica poviat
Object case "Oaza"	5th Section of WUBP in Szczecin, from 1946.	Voivodeship Committee of Polish Jews (WKŻP) in Szczecin
Object case "Bułan"	5th Section of WUBP in Szczecin, 1947–1949	Bund – the General Jewish Workers Union in Szczecin

Type and codename of the case	Running unit	Description of the scope of the case and the persons targeted
Object case "Port"	5th Section of WUBP in Szczecin, 1947–1949	United Jewish Workers Party Poale Zion in Szczecin
Object case "Halina"	5th Section of WUBP in Szczecin, 1947–1949	Zionist Socialist Workers Party Hitahdut in Szczecin
Object case "Trys"	5th Section of WUBP in Szczecin, 1947–1950	Union of Zionist Democrats Ihud in Szczecin
Agency surveillance operation "Zysk"	5th Section of WUBP in Szczecin, from 1948	Jewish smugglers and profiteers milieu in Szczecin
Agency surveillance cases "Barka" and "Kanal" were combined into one agency surveillance operation "Bagno" in March 1953	3rd Section of 5th Division of WUBP in Szczecin, from 1952	Persons suspected of smuggling and currency trading, of maintaining contacts with West Berliners, and of Revisionist views, Moses Juszkiewicz, Lipa Kielich
Issue file "Gielda"	2nd Section of WUdsBP in Szczecin, 1955–1956	Jews who illegally fled the country, residing in West Berlin
Object case "Krzemień"	Section for the Jewish minority affairs of 1st Section of 5th Division of WUBP in Lublin, 1947–1953	Activists and members of WKZP in Lublin
Object case "Omega"	Jewish Minority Desk of 1st Section of the WUBP 5th Department in Lublin, 1947–1950	Jewish Religious Congregation in Lublin
Object case "Alfa"	Jewish Minority Desk of 1st Section of the WUBP 5th Department in Lublin, 1947–1950	Union of Zionist Democrats Ihud in Lublin
Object case "Beta"	Jewish Minority Desk of 1st Section of the WUBP 5th Department in Lublin, 1947–1950	Bund – the General Jewish Workers Union in Lublin

Type and codename of the case	Running unit	Description of the scope of the case and the persons targeted
Object case "Gama"	Jewish Minority Desk of 1st Section of the WUBP 5th Department in Lublin, 1947–1950	United Jewish Workers Party Poale Zion in Lublin
Object case "Nil"	Jewish Minority Desk of 1st Section of the WUBP 5th Department in Lublin, 1947–1950	Zionist Socialist Workers Party Hitahdut in Lublin
Object case "Delta"	Jewish Minority Desk of 1st Section of the WUBP 5th Department in Lublin, 1947–1950	Hashomer Hatzair w Lublinie
Object case "Krzemien" "Reszta"	3rd Section of the WUBP 5th Department in Lublin, from 1953	Former Zionists in Lublin maintaining contacts with the Israeli Legation (17 people)
Object case "Mgła"	2nd Independent Section of the 5th WUBP Department in Lodz, 1947–1950	Zionist Socialist Workers Party Hitahdut in Lodz
Object case "Zawierucha"	2nd Independent Section of the 5th WUBP Department in Lodz, 1947–1950	Union of Zionist Democrats Ihud in Lodz
Object case "Trapez", "Zator"	5th Desk of PUBP in Tarnow, 1951–1956	Former members of Zionist organisations and of Bund in Tarnow Poviast
Object case "Czarny"	5th Desk of PUBP in Wloclawek, 1946–1950	Jews in Wloclawek – Jewish parties and organisations, lists of people leaving for Israel